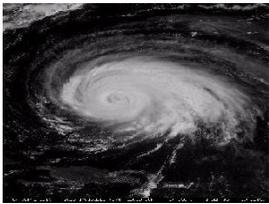


THE FIRST STATE WATERMARK



Delaware's Floodplain Management Newsletter

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COASTAL BARRIER AREA CHANGES IN LEWES

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Coastal Barriers are Coastal barriers are landscape features that shield the mainland from the full force of wind, wave, and tidal energies. They can take on a variety of forms including islands, spits, or mangrove trees.

Congress passed the Coastal Barrier Resource in 1982 to address problems caused by coastal barrier development. CBRA restricted Federal expenditures and financial assistance, including Federal Flood Insurance, in the Coastal Barrier Resource System, a defined list of undeveloped coastal barriers mapped along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts.

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Act

Three important goals of this Act are to:

- minimize loss of human life by discouraging development in high risk areas
- reduce wasteful expenditure of Federal resources
- protect the natural resources associated with coastal barriers

Federal monies can be spent within the System for certain exempted activities, after consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Examples of such activities include emergency assistance, military activities for National defense, and maintenance of existing Federal navigational channels.

The coastal barrier legislation is not intended to prevent or regulate development in these high-risk areas, it only directs that federal dollars not be spent for development purposes. Therefore, individuals who choose to live and invest in these hazard-prone areas bear the full cost of that instead of passing it on to American taxpayers.

OTHERWISE PROTECTED AREAS

Otherwise Protected Areas (OPAs) are undeveloped coastal barriers within the boundaries of lands reserved as wildlife refuges, parks, or for other conservation purposes. New construction in OPAs cannot receive Federal

flood insurance unless it conforms to the purposes for which the area is protected. No restrictions are placed on other Federal expenditures. Land within Delaware's State Park System have generally been identified as OPAs.

BOUNDARY DISPUTE IN LEWES

Property owners in part of the Cape Shores development in Lewes realized that they had a problem when insurance agents informed them that Federal Flood Insurance was not available. The City of Lewes discovered that the designed OPA for Cape Henlopen State Park inadvertently included part of Lewes (the east end of the Cape Shores community).

Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) sponsored legislation to redefine the boundary correctly and this legislation passed in 1999.

NEW FLOODPLAIN MAPS

On December 20, 2000, new Flood Insurance Rate Maps were issued for this area showing a revised OPA designation *excluding* all of the Cape Shores development. Federal Flood Insurance is now available in this area.

Property owners or insurance agents who believe they may be affected by this boundary change may contact Michael Powell at (302) 739-4411.

Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Update:

FUNDAMENTAL POLICY CHANGES SOUGHT BY ASFPM

The Association of State Floodplain Managers publicly released a landmark document, *National Flood Programs in Review 2000*, that both analyzes and calls for fundamental shifts in national policies and programs for coping with flood losses and managing floodplain resources in the United States.

THE STATUS OF FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

The report notes that, although considerable programmatic and technical progress has been made towards managing flood risks, losses, and resources in the last several years, disaster costs continue to rise – now approaching \$5 Billion to \$8 Billion annually. The principal reasons for this are twofold:

First, we continue to intensify our use of flood-prone areas. This occurs because many, many local, state, and federal policies of all sorts encourage such unwise uses. These policies favor short-term thinking in local/state/national development. They promote an improper assessment of the risk of flooding and foster false senses of security. They allow benefit/cost analyses to be the last word in situations in which not all economic, social and environmental factors can be quantified.

Second, vague and overly generous criteria for formal disaster declarations have created disincentives for citizens, local communities, and states to take responsibility for addressing their flood hazards or protecting their floodplain resources. Federal disaster relief payments have become a "humanitarian" entitlement, both for individuals and for local governments. This policy mistakenly and foolishly separates these expenditures from the cost-effectiveness tests that govern most other decisions about how taxpayer funds are spent.

CHANGES NEEDED

Floodplain management must become an integral component of society's approach to living with and cooperating with its environment, rather than trying to control it. The ASFPM therefore is calling for fundamental changes in our thoughts, knowledge, and attitudes about the environment; policies and programs that bear on floodplain lands; and the roles and responsibilities of various players, public and private. The ASFPM sees five principal needs, described below.

1. Foster responsibility and capability at individual, local, and state levels.

Incentives - technical, financial, and other - need to be developed at the state and federal levels to encourage communities and individuals to adopt a longer-term, sustainable approach to floodplains, and to undertake comprehensive mitigation activities. Unfortunately, the strong role adopted by

the federal government in certain situations in the past (like disaster relief) may have unwittingly encouraged the perception on the part of individuals - as well as state and local governments - that they need not make floodplain management their own priority. All taxpayer-funded flood disaster relief should be contingent upon taking flood mitigation action. Citizens, businesses, and local and state legislators need to better understand that the federal government will not always bail them out after a flood. They must bear their fair share of the risk and the costs.

2. Refine policies, programs, and coordination.

Numerous federal and state laws, policies, and programs are in place to help manage the nation's floodplains, but not all of them operate effectively. In addition, some primary links are missing:

- a national floodplain management policy;
- high-level federal coordinating mechanism for the myriad of programs, policies, regulations, etc. that deal with water resources;
- strong regulatory standards for nationwide programs;
- generous funding along with promotion of those activities that make the most sense over the long term, such as purchase of permanent easements, preservation of open space, restoration of habitat, watershed-based planning and management, and others.

3. Assemble and improve necessary data and tools.

Federal leadership and resources are paramount in the collection, development, and maintenance of many types of comprehensive data. This is an appropriate federal role because it relates to the federal interest in and responsibility for interstate commerce, and to the prevention of future disasters and minimization of federal disaster costs. There is a desperate need for comprehensive, accessible flood damage data, both historical data and the sort that is gathered immediately after floods, including comprehensive maps that include flood hazards, residual risk below dams and behind levees, and other hazards.

4. Enhance education, training, and public awareness.

The sustainable use of the nation's floodplains can only be achieved at the hands of an educated cadre of professionals from various fields and with the support of an informed public. The principles of sustainability themselves will need to be brought into sharper focus as they apply to floodplain management, and as they pertain to the public at large. We need professional certification for

those people guiding development decisions; better interpretations of forecasts; the incorporation of the importance of floodplain management and floodplain resources into the curricula of schools, training facilities, and continuing education for professionals; and an improved understanding of flood risk, including less confusing terminology.

5. Assess and evaluate programs.

There needs to be an independent, comprehensive assessment of the effects of policies and programs in force - particularly the National Flood Insurance Program - on both quantity and quality of floodplain occupancy throughout the United States. Are our efforts reducing overall vulnerability to floods? We need an assessment of the status of all the nation's flood control structures; periodic reviews of state and local activities to see what works so we can capitalize upon it; and a revisiting of the standards used to determine the cost-effectiveness of proposed projects and programs.

ASFPM ACTION PLAN

The ASFPM believes that, in most instances, we already know what the solutions to flood losses are in a given situation. In addition, we often know what techniques and procedures will be successful. The focus of effort and action needs to be at the local community level. Localities must be helped to understand and use nonstructural techniques, multi-objective management, and comprehensive local plans that fold floodplain management into all community needs and problems. Existing successes - of which there are many - can be shared, expanded, and capitalized upon. Responsibility at citizen and local levels must be fostered by the right policies. To do that, the ASFPM has designed a five-year plan that will tackle ways to further the five needs described above. Because nearly half of the professionals in the floodplain management field are somehow involved in ASFPM, we have the ability to have a major impact on how the nation views and deals with flood risks and floodplain resources in the years and decades to come. For the first year, ASFPM will concentrate on the first and fourth needs as described above, namely:

- Foster responsibility and capability at individual and local levels by advocating policies that encourage citizens, localities, and states to accept their responsibility.

- Improving and promoting training, re-training, and education. These are essential to the floodplain management profession itself and to the public, whose support is necessary to effectuate policy change.

To disseminate this message to its members, citizens, all levels of government, and the private sector, the ASFPM is planning a broad outreach effort. It will encompass:

- mass distribution of Flood Programs in Review-2000 report via Internet, email, and print;
- presentations in a variety of forums;
- notices, articles and interviews in the print media;
- a speakers' bureau;
- articles in professional/trade and local newsletters;
- public service announcements and radio and television ads and interviews; and
- other mechanisms.

Also in the works is a "tool kit" for educational efforts, which will include sample press releases, PowerPoint presentations, posters, brochures, public service announcements, and the like. Training sessions (or presentations at them) for floodplain management and related professions will be developed.

CONCLUSION

These action items will be the focus of ASFPM effort over the next five years in our work with state and local governments, federal agencies, the insurance industry, the development industry, Congress, consultants and other individual professionals in floodplain management as well as related fields, and our many other colleagues and partners in both the public and private sectors. We invite all those who are dedicated to the future well-being of this nation to join us in working toward an enhanced level of resiliency in the face of flooding, reduced overall flood losses, and a society with a sustainable relationship to its riparian and coastal lands.

National Flood Programs in Review 2000 can be obtained by accessing the ASFPM's website at www.floods.org or calling the Executive Office of the Association of State Floodplain Managers at (608) 274-0123.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS AT DEMA

The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), in its Emergency Operations Center at Smyrna, is fine-tuning its preparations for Hurricane Season 2001.

The season is predicted to be somewhat more active than usual this year. Meteorologists are calling for 12 named storms (tropical storms or hurricanes) in the Atlantic basin, which is above the average of 10. Of these, 7 are expected to become hurricanes (the average is 6). Of the seven hurricanes, 3 are expected to be major, that is, reaching the intensity of category 3 or higher. Category 3 hurricanes generate sustained winds of 110 mph or higher, and produce storm surges along the coastal areas of 9 feet or higher.

In addition, the probability of landfall of major hurricanes is higher this year. Normally there is a 50 % chance of a major hurricane making landfall along the US east coast from Florida to Maine. This year the probability has risen to 65 %.

In addition to preparations within the State, Delaware is cooperating with Maryland and Virginia in preparing the Delmarva Peninsula for hurricane response. The recently-formed DelMarVa Emergency Task Force is a cooperative effort of Delaware and the counties of Maryland and Virginia on the peninsula. This organization was formed shortly after a study of US coastal evacuation considerations was published in 1992. The study listed the 10 most difficult geographic areas to evacuate, and the Delmarva Peninsula was third from the top. (The top two were southwest Florida, and New Orleans).

On June 6th of this year, the DelMarVa Emergency Task Force conducted a peninsula-wide hurricane exercise, with the emergency operations centers of the states, counties and many municipalities being activated.

At the national level, FEMA, the National Weather Service, and the National Hurricane Center are working with Delaware to enhance hurricane preparations. A major project in this group is to generate a scenario for a worst-case hurricane impact on the peninsula, and develop appropriate response strategies.

Meanwhile, staff natural hazards planners at DEMA continue to daily monitor conditions in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico basins for tropical developments.

How to reach the First State Watermark:

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E-mail	mpowell@state.de.us

The citizens of Delaware and visitors from other states should be thinking about their own personal preparations, especially when considering sheltering or evacuation from threatened areas. DEMA will shortly issue a hurricane brochure with details of how to conduct these preparations. Also, see the

DEMA website for more information on Hurricane Season 2001. The address: <http://www.state.de.us/dema/index.htm>.

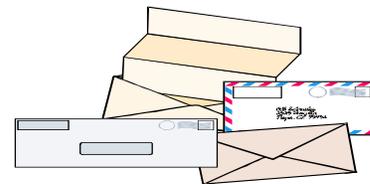
Upcoming Events

October 7, 2001. Coast Day, College of Marine Studies, University of Delaware, Lewes, DE

October 30, 31. FEMA Coastal Construction Manual two day course. Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, Rehoboth Beach DE

For information about these or other events or training opportunities please contact Michael S. Powell, Delaware National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator.

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