



Montana Flood Map Modernization Program



Background

In support of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA and the State of Montana has undertaken a massive effort of flood hazard identification and mapping to update Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for much of the State. These maps are created to reflect the base flood event, defined as the flood having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (also referred to as the 100-year flood).

Map Production Phases

Mapping Needs Assessment:

- Mapping needs are identified and reported to the DNRC Floodplain Program.
- Additional data are collected including future file information, Letters of Map Change, other historical flooding data, GIS data, aerial photos, digital orthophoto data, and topographic maps/data.
- FEMA and the State hold a Pre-Scoping Meeting as necessary to inform community of the program and process.

Initial Scoping Meeting:

- Held by the State, meeting will include local officials of impacted communities, mapping contractors, and regional agencies.
- Discuss a draft scope of work, identify resources available and needed, establish priority levels, define format and content.
- All aspects of the project are discussed and outlined.

Additional Scoping Meetings and Teleconferences:

- Additional meetings may be necessary to address comments and concerns following the initial scoping meeting, select study methods, identify topographic data needs and resources, and evaluate existing data.
- Develop a schedule and cost estimates.
- Mapping Activity Statement will be developed by the State and submitted to FEMA detailing the scope of work to be studied.

Map Production Phase:

- All aerial photos, topography, field survey, and engineering data are gathered and processed to prepare a preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and FIRM.
- All engineering data are submitted for Quality Control assessments and assurances.

Preliminary FIS and Digital FIRM (DFIRM) and Community Review Period:

- Preliminary FIS and FIRM are issued to all impacted communities.
- Community officials complete a 30-day Review Period of the preliminary DFIRM and FIS.



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Public Participation Meetings:

- The State and community officials host at least one public Preliminary DFIRM Community Coordination Meeting to explain the new maps, the review and comment process, and insurance coverage and premiums rates.
- According to FEMA procedures, two notices of Base Flood Elevation (BFE) changes are published in local newspapers. (Second notice begins a 90-day appeal period. Any property owner or lessee within an impacted community can file an appeal or protest.)
 - An appeal disputes a new or revised BFE and must be based on technical and/or scientific information.
 - A protest disputes new or revised data other than BFEs.
- During the formal FEMA appeal period, the DNRC will also undertake its public process (per MCA 76-5) to adopt the flood maps on a statewide level.
- Appeals and/or protests are resolved. (An additional 30-day comment period begins on appeal or protest resolutions.)

Final Determination:

- Letter issued by the State of Montana and FEMA which begins the six month community adoption period.
- Dates of the effective DFIRM and FIS are published in the Federal Register.
- Unless lawsuits are filed, DFIRM is final.
- Data may, however, be submitted at any time, and if warranted, update the maps through a Letter of Map Change process.

Final FIS and FIRM Effective:

- FIS report and FIRM panels are published and become effective.
- Maps are distributed to all impacted communities and many other users by FEMA's Map Service Center.

More Information

For more information regarding the flood map production process, please contact the Montana DNRC Floodplain Program at:

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