



Introduction

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) flood hazard maps are one of the essential tools for flood mitigation in the United States. Unfortunately, many of these maps in Montana have become outdated, especially in high growth and development areas. FEMA has established a broad goal of modernizing flood hazard maps nationwide.

As part of a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) Agreement with FEMA, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) has accepted delegation and responsibility of the Map Modernization Program for the State of Montana. This effort is primarily focused on the 126 Counties and Municipalities that have flood hazards identified by FEMA to date and are participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

How the Map Modernization Program Will Be Managed

The DNRC will facilitate the implementation of FEMA's Map Modernization Program through direct management and support of all regulatory, engineering, and mapping activities within the State of Montana. The DNRC is committed to developing a fully integrated floodplain management program that incorporates:

- Project scoping,
- Hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) modeling,
- Floodplain delineation,
- An internal Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) process for any new H&H modeling work,
- Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) production,
- Post preliminary DFIRM processing, and potentially
- Long-term map maintenance.

For its plan to be effectively implemented, the State will need the full support and involvement of user communities. To ensure the full engagement of its partners, the State will commit a significant amount of resources to manage stakeholder expectations through up-front coordination and outreach.

The DNRC vision for the Map Modernization initiative is to develop a statewide program that provides more accurate and complete flood hazard information for counties and communities within the state. At the end of the Map Modernization process, the majority of Montana counties and municipalities will have updated Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) that incorporate updated base mapping, and where feasible new detailed studies and/or approximate studies. The new DFIRMs will be in a countywide format.

How Montana Counties, Communities and Citizens will benefit from this program:

- The updated flood hazard data will provide current, and easier to use information for Montana communities and property owners to make sound siting and design decisions when building new structures and infrastructure, and when retrofitting existing structures.
- The use of updated flood hazard data by communities for floodplain management will help reduce long-term flood losses in the State of Montana.
- Updated flood hazard data will alert those at risk of flooding of the need to purchase flood insurance.
- It will be faster and cheaper to update DFIRMs.
- Current, updated base maps and the digital format of the DFIRMs will allow users to make more precise flood risk determinations.
- The digital format if the DFIRMs will utilize the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer programs for analysis and planning.
- The digital GIS format will allow online access to all maps 24 hours a day.
- Any Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) utilized in the DFIRM production may be useful for many engineering and planning application, such as site design, Stormwater management, transportation planning and design, etc.

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