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**For More Information Contact:**  
Janel Favero  
DNRC Public Info. Officer  
(406) 444-7919  
[jfavero@mt.gov](mailto:jfavero@mt.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DNRC Kicks off Digital Floodplain Mapping in Missoula County and Flathead County**

**Helena, Mont** - The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Floodplain Program is heading up a new program to modernize current Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) across the state. Funded via annual grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the DNRC Floodplain Program will oversee the creation of digital flood hazard maps on a county-by-county basis. These new digital maps will be based on the current paper copy flood hazard maps, and will also include new flood hazard information where feasible. The new products will be called Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps or "DFIRMs".

Projects funded in 2005 include Missoula County and Flathead County. Projects slated for further scoping and mapping during 2006 include Lewis & Clark County and Yellowstone County. If there is sufficient funding in 2006, Lake County, Ravalli County and/or Cascade County will be addressed next. Otherwise they will be the top priority for the 2007 funding.

The DNRC will work closely with city and county representatives and FEMA throughout the life of each project. As the result of a competitive selection process, DNRC awarded the contract for this year's work in Missoula and Flathead Counties to PBS&J, formerly Land & Water Consulting, Inc., who began work on the project in September. While most of the work will involve digitally converting current flood hazard information, the Missoula County project has three small areas of new mapping, and the Flathead County project has one area. Affected landowners will be notified by mail if a new flood study will be located in their area, and public information meetings will be held prior to and during the study.

Each countywide project is expected to take two years to complete. Preliminary maps will be officially released by FEMA for comment in July/August 2006. Final maps must be adopted by the federal, state and local governments by September 2007. The DNRC will offer the public opportunities to comment on the draft working maps next spring before the preliminary maps are officially released by FEMA. Further information will be made available at the DNRC website <http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/home.htm>, and at the soon to be released Montana Map Mod Website [www.montanadfirm.com](http://www.montanadfirm.com)

If you would like additional information about this process, please contact Laura Pfister, Map Mod Program Manager, at (406) 444-6656 or via email at [lpfister@mt.gov](mailto:lpfister@mt.gov).

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**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION**  
**Helping to ensure that Montana's land and water resources provide benefits for present and future generations**