

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING UPDATE – CHANGES IN FLOODPLAIN LOCATION(S) FOR PROPERTIES IN ORANGE COUNTY:

As you may already be aware from past correspondence, Orange County has been a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since approximately 1976.

In 1968 Congress created the NFIP to help provide a means for property owners to financially protect themselves from the possible damage of structures resulting from flood events. The program is intended to supplement typical homeowner insurance policies, which do not cover damage to structures resulting from a flood. The NFIP offers flood insurance to homeowners, renters, and business owners if their community participates, specifically through the adoption and enforcement of regulations designed to mitigate/reduce flood risk, in the program.

Part of the ‘regulations’ at our disposal are Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) denoting those areas of the County that are susceptible to flooding. The County utilizes these maps to verify the anticipated ‘elevation’ of flood waters during a storm event and works with property owners to ensure structures are not located in areas where flooding is a possibility. Through the enforcement of our flood damage prevention regulations, the County requires incorporation of design standards (i.e. elevation of structures and utilities, installation of flood vents, prohibition of specific activities, etc.) all in an effort to reduce the risk of loss during a flood. Our original FIRM became effective on March 16, 1981, with the latest becoming effective on February 2, 2007.

In accordance with our responsibilities as a member of the NFIP, Orange County has adopted its own flood regulations, currently embodied within the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). These regulations, now part of the Special Flood Hazard Overlay District are located within Section(s) 4.3 *Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)* and 6.6.1 *Additional Standards for Overlay Districts – SFHA* of the UDO. This document can be found utilizing the following link: <http://orangecountync.gov/planning/Ordinances.asp>.

In August 2000, the State of North Carolina established the North Carolina Floodplain Mapping Program (NCFMP), with a mandate to maintain the flood hazard data and the flood insurance study (FIS) data for all counties within the State of North Carolina. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) entered into an important partnership by designating the State of North Carolina a Cooperating Technical State (CTS). With this designation, North Carolina was given primary responsibility and ownership of the FIRMs for all North Carolina communities by the NFIP.

The State has recently completed an update of the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and FIRMS. These maps are now being reviewed as part of a public outreach program to inform and educate local property owners/residents/interested parties on changes from existing to these proposed new maps.

Orange County residents, property owners, and members of the business community will have the opportunity to review and ask questions about the preliminary flood hazard data on newly updated digital Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Orange County.

- View preliminary flood hazard data for Orange County
- Locate your property on the flood risk information system
- Discuss how the flood hazard data are connected to flood insurance and floodplain management
- Speak with representatives from the NC Emergency Management about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

The North Carolina Floodplain Mapping Program (NCFMP) would like to invite you to attend a public meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at 4:00 PM about the newly released flood hazard and flood risk data on the preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for the areas of Orange County. This meeting is hosted by Orange County and is regarding the recently updated FIS for portions of Orange County, as well as bordering areas of Alamance and Chatham County flood hazard areas that are affected by these updates. At this meeting residents and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to review the revised data and ask questions of NCFMP staff.

The meeting will be held in the Chapel Hill Public Library, Meeting Room ‘A’ located at 100 Library Street in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The first hour of the meeting will be conducted as an open house where citizens will have the opportunity to view the preliminary flood hazard data from among a number of computers, and ask staff questions specific to the flood risk of their property. The meeting will then have a brief presentation by NCFMP staff on the flood study update process, how the FIS can be used to reduce future losses due to flooding, and how the preliminary FIS relates to flood insurance and floodplain management. After the presentation, representatives from Orange County’s communities and the NCFMP will continue to be available to answer detailed questions and hear concerns. A demonstration may also be given of the North Carolina Flood Risk Information System, a tool allowing the public and local officials to view the new flood hazard data online (<http://fris.nc.gov/fris/>).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact staff, specifically Michael Harvey, Jennifer Leaf, or Michael Kelly, at (919) 245-2575 for additional information. Please note additional open house meetings will be held in January, February, and March by the Orange County Planning Department to allow for additional review of the preliminary map data and to answer questions related to our flood management program. The dates and times of these meetings will be announced in the near future.

Thank you.