



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

FEMA has worked to update the area's floodplain maps. They are available to view at www.ci.florence.or.us and msc.fema.gov. Public comments are due by January 2019.

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FEMA Regional Flood Engineer David Ratté made the introductory presentation.

His goal was to introduce residents to the new techniques and scientific tools that the agency believes will more accurately assist in the determination of areas likely to be flooded and the degree to which these parcels would be inundated.

"The main purpose of the presentation was to provide an overview of the flood insurance study update — with respect to the purpose, hazard analysis, timelines pertaining to the due process steps and anticipated completion — as well as opportunities and requirements to incorporate any additional analysis or data," Ratté wrote in an email to the Siuslaw News.

New maps have been created using data gathered over the last year using LIDAR, a technique that uses laser light and sophisticated radar, to map coastal and riverine water systems.

At the meeting, large paper maps and two-sided paper handouts with multiple flood plain and river watershed maps, as well as digital property maps shared on laptops, were

employed by numerous presenters from the City of Florence, Lane County and FEMA.

"Simply, previous mapping is out of date in areas, and we had a commitment and opportunity to bring in partners to use updated data and methodologies to better understand and depict the floodplains more accurately," Ratté said.

The last update to Florence's floodplain maps occurred in 1999.

The presentation also served to provide guidance to residents who will be affected by the changes that will result from the implementation of these newly mapped flood-prone areas.

For local property owners, these results may directly impact insurance rates and the ability to obtain insurance.

Florence Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell was the point person for Florence's participation in the forum.

"Florence, Dunes City and Lane County jurisdictions are the implementing agencies for the federal flood plain maps, and the resulting regulation of construction in and around the flood plain," she said. "In order for the properties to be eligible for flood insurance and federal mortgages, jurisdictions must participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. And to participate, we must have floodplain regulations. The next step for the city is a revision of our flood plain development policies to be compliant with any new state and federal regulations."

Ratté agreed with FarleyCampbell's assessment of the situation and pointed out the reasoning behind the updates.

He said the study was focused on two primary needs: to update the coastal flood hazard analysis and the river flood risk along the western portion of the county. In the end, he hoped up-

dated analysis would lead to the implementation of best practice policies which would result in fewer unexpected ramifications from a flood.

"This project was funded through FEMA's Risk MAP program, which does not end with updating floodplain maps," Ratté said. "The key elements for this phase are for property owners to better understand the flood risk and potential impacts to their properties and then to start asking questions about what can be done to protect these areas. Future steps will include collaborating with the local governments, state agencies and other federal agencies to explore options to mitigate vulnerable communities from floods as well as other natural hazards. We look forward to being involved in continuing those discussions."

One of the terms heard most throughout Ratté's presentation was "mitigation," which Merriam-Webster defines as "to make less severe or painful."

That is the perfect description of the work being done by Ratté and his colleagues.

Ratté, FarleyCampbell and their teams are working to warn landowners before the dangers of a tsunami, earthquake or other severe weather condition occurs.

This will hopefully allow for those determined to be at risk to plan for proper insurance and to make other emergency preparations.

According to FEMA's website, "Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters."

The agency is now including state, tribal and community entities as part of long-term mitigation efforts to create a comprehensive plan for dealing with natural disasters.

FEMA is also developing

strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events. The agency points to mitigation plans as key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage.

As part of the discussion of flooding, the presentation also looked at the rules and criteria for qualifying for and purchasing flood insurance

The National Flood Insurance Program aims to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures. It does so by providing affordable insurance to property owners, renters and businesses and by encouraging communities to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations.

These efforts help mitigate the effects of flooding on new and improved structures. Overall, the program reduces the socio-economic impact of disasters by promoting the purchase and retention of general risk insurance, but also of flood insurance, specifically.

For more information on the updated Risk MAP, contact the City of Florence Planning Department.

The updated maps are available to view at www.ci.florence.or.us/planning/fema-coastal-floodplain-map-update-open-house.

According to the City of Florence, the revised maps are available until January 2019 for public review and comment. Property owners are encouraged to review the revised flood map to identify their property's flood risk. This information will empower property owners to make more informed decisions about their safety and finances.

Additional information is available by calling the FEMA Map Information eXchange (FMIX) at 877-336-2627 or by visiting FEMA's Flood Map Service Center at msc.fema.gov.

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Florence residents can participate in Recycling Round-up

How can Florence residents participate in recycling of some of their plastic? Precious Plastics Florence, EMAC, FOR Environmental Team and the Climate Alliance are working together with the Master Recyclers to make Lane County's Sept. 30 Recycling Round-Up in Eugene happen locally.

The collection of #2, #4 and #5 plastics that have been thoroughly cleaned, and clear of both labels and adhesive, can be brought to Michelle La Blanc's home here in Florence before Thursday, Sept. 27. The plastic should be in boxes or paper bags only.

Call LeBlanc at 541-997-1275 for more information or to arrange for a drop-off time.

Dunes City seeks applicants

Dunes City is seeking applicants for appointment to a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC will review and provide recommendations on proposed changes to Dunes City's Flood Damage Prevention Code, Chapter 153 of Title XV.

The proposed code changes are in response to new FEMA requirements and adoption of a new Flood Insurance Rate Map for Dunes City. Applicants must complete an Application for Appointive Office form available at Dunes City Hall or from www.dunescity.com/permits-and-forms.

Applications may be mailed or delivered to Dunes City Hall, 82877 Spruce St. in Westlake, or planning@dunescityor.com.

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