

## FEMA issues new procedural rules for partial county-wide mapping

**FEMA's** recently issued procedural memorandum for partial county-wide mapping evaluation discourages such mapping, while recognizing that it may sometimes be necessary. County-wide mapping will thus be allowed, but if this format is pursued there will be quite a bit of additional work involved.

As part of its mid-course adjustment (March 30, 2006), FEMA determined that the goal of having a National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) of flood hazard mapping information with all county-wide mapping formats could be delayed in favor of focusing instead on high-risk and high-population areas. This process may "better meet the near-term needs of map users in the U.S. by concentrating the available flood mapping funds where they will serve the greatest concentrations of population with the greatest needs for updated flood hazard mapping" (*Procedure Memorandum No. 46*).

FEMA found that partial county-wide maps are currently being inefficiently published because new panel layout schemes differ from prior panel layouts, which results in a partial overlap of un-revised panels surrounding the updated area with the panels for the revised area. This results in increased costs because the overlapping panels must be modified to avoid duplicate coverage and must be republished. FEMA also noted that there has not been a published guidance publication for partial county-wide mapping. *Procedure Memorandum No. 46* is meant to fill that need.

There is another problem; FEMA notes that neither the DFIRM Tools on the Mapping Information Platform (MIP) nor other FEMA mapping software supports a partial county-wide format. Because of this, the burden and cost of producing partial county-wide maps may outweigh the benefits of

pursuing a partial county-wide format.

Although partial county-wide mapping will be allowed, FEMA intends using a set of standard criteria to evaluate submittals. If a mapping partner wants to use a partial county-wide mapping format, the company must submit a request to the FEMA Region Office, send a copy each to FEMA headquarters and to the Regional Management Centers. The request must include a cost comparison to the standard county-wide format, written justification for the decision taken to pursue county-wide mapping, and answers to the following questions:

1. How many panels will the partial county-wide entail?
2. How many existing panels will be unaffected?
3. How many existing panels will need to be republished as "See Panels"?
4. How will these panels be produced,, since they cannot be produced through DFIRM tools?
5. How many communities are in the county?
6. How many communities will be completely mapped using partial county-wide mapping?
7. How many communities will only be partially mapped as a result of the limits of partial county-wide mapping?
8. How many of these communities have an effective Flood Insurance Study (FIS) that will need to be revised and republished?
9. Will adding additional panels to the partial county-wide mapping plan complete any of these communities and eliminate their single community FIS?
10. How many existing, detailed flooding sources are there in all communities?
11. What are the existing map formats?
12. How many Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs) will be incorporated into the par-

tial county-wide mapping?

13. How many LOMRs will not be incorporated?
14. How many detailed flooding sources will be fully mapped in the partial county-wide mapping?
15. How many detailed flooding sources will only be partially mapped as a result of the limitations of partial county-wide mapping?
16. How will the cross-section lettering appear on the partial county-wide panels and the existing un-revised panels where traditional continuous lettering series are not possible now?
17. Is there going to be a datum issue created by the partial county-wide mapping limits?
18. Will adding additional panels to the partial county-wide mapping simplify any of the cross-section re-lettering and datum conversion challenges?

FEMA Region will evaluate the requests on a case-by-case basis and approve or disapprove each request based on the information provided by the mapping partner. FEMA Region will let the mapping partner know of its decision in writing and will send a copy of that decision to FEMA Headquarters and to FEMA's National Contractor.

FEMA also set forth the following guidelines, which are to be followed if partial county-wide mapping is pursued:

**Title Block:** Use County-wide Title Block. All jurisdictions in the county will be listed, but the ones not included in the partial county-wide will be noted as having their FIRMs and FISs published separately. All community repositories will be listed on the map.

**Suffix:** Determine suffix for partial county-wide considering all suffixes in use in all

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communities being revised and use the next highest one for partial county-wide maps.

**Panel Numbers:** Assign panel numbers for the entire county, just as for full county-wide. Only the panel numbers for the panels involved in the partial county-wide will be shown on the new index. Numbering of county-wide panels must consider the numbering of existing panels so as not to create two panels with the same number. Start county-wide numbering by going up to the first even one thousand above the highest existing FIRM panel number.

**Index:** Produce a single Index with both existing layout and quad-based layouts. Any non quad-based index representation requires special handling as it is not supported by current DFIRM Tools on the MIP. Any partial county-wide Index will require special handling outside of the current DFIRM Tools environment.

**Overlap Interface Index:** When producing a new partial county-wide quad-based panel layout, there will be some existing FIRM panels which are only partially covered by the new quad-based panels. To avoid duplicate coverage, areas shown on quad-based panels must be blanked out on existing non quad-based community panels which must then be republished. Most of these are manually produced panels. The blanked area is labeled with a reference to the new county-wide panel which begins with "See Panel ...", thus we refer to the existing panels with the blanked out areas as "See Panels."

Additionally, any "See Panels" which exist in Standard format must be converted to Map Initiatives Format (e.g., A-numbered Zones converted to AE Zones; B and C Zones converted to X Zones; and floodway boundaries and cross sections must be added, as necessary).

**FIS:** The county-wide FIS format must be used and must list all communities on the front cover, with the communities not included noted as having separately published FIRMS. Communities not included in the partial county-wide will retain their existing FIS and FIRM. Communities divided by the partial county-wide limit may need to be partially included and have their own FIS revised.

**Datum Conversion:** All DFIRMs are to be mapped in NAVD88 datum. Since most

existing FIRMs are referenced to NGVD29, partial county-wide mapping will create dual datum FIRMs for the counties at a minimum. Profiles and floodway data tables (FDTs) within all individual FIS will now be potentially referenced to either datum. This will increase the complexity of production and quality control reviews. To minimize datum shifts within individual profiles and FDTs, minimize the number of detailed flooding sources only partially mapped as a result of the partial county-wide limit by careful selection of FIRM panels to include in the partial county-wide layout.

**Lettered Cross Sections:** In a traditional county-wide process, the entire length of a detailed stream is re-lettered into a continuous sequence. In a partial county-wide, some portions of the detailed stream may fall on panels not planned for publication making a continuous lettering series impossible. To minimize lettering discontinuities, minimize the number of detailed flooding sources only partially mapped as a result of the partial county-wide limit, and consider expanding the number of panels included in the new partial county-wide layout to accomplish this.

FEMA expects that partial county-wide mapping will be used for counties with low density population and low flood hazard, as well as for remapping (only) of areas where new flood hazard data are needed. For more information, see *FEMA's Procedure Memorandum No. 46—Partial County-wide Mapping Evaluation*.

Laurence Soggi  
The C. L. A. Group  
ACSM Government Affairs Consultant

## NATIONAL FLOOD HAZARD LAYER UPDATE

On July 14, 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) started updating the National Flood Hazard Layer daily. New Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) data are now reflected on the NFHL as of their effective dates, providing users with access to the most current flood hazard information. Online NFHL services, including MapViewer - Web, NFHL Web Map Service (WMS), and Google Earth™ utilities, provide access to these data immediately. The updates also are included in the monthly releases of NFHL Geographic Information System (GIS) data, which is packaged by individual state. For more information, visit the FEMA Map Service Center website at <http://msc.fema.gov> or call toll-free at 1-800-358-9616.

David Taft  
Michael Baker Jr.  
(703) 960-8800

### 2009 PLSO Annual Conference

January 28-30, 2009  
Portland, Oregon

Professional Land Surveyors of Oregon will hold their annual conference at the Red Lion Hotel on the River, Portland, Oregon, from January 28-30, 2009.

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