

FEMA FLOOD STUDY UPDATE FOR AREAS OF LOWNDES COUNTY

As a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is currently performing Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates for Lowndes County. As part of this project, DNR’s mapping contractor, Dewberry and its sub-contractors Columbia Engineering and Wolverton & Associates, will conduct surveys for flood studies on a variety of streams within the county. The data collection in Lowndes County will take place between September 2017 and February 2018. All efforts will be made to collect the survey data with a minimum of inconvenience for the affected property owner. There may be times when field crews will need to enter a property to get better access to the stream or collect information on the building.

Data to be collected on the building is part of a special initiative being piloted jointly by DNR and Lowndes County that will result in Lowest Floor Elevation and Lowest Adjacent Grade elevation information for selected buildings that are most vulnerable to flooding. The goal of the pilot project is to have a better understanding of the flood risk posed to the individual structure. This information may aid in identifying mitigation strategies that could reduce or eliminate the flood risk. The information may also be beneficial in assessing flood insurance options.

Members of the field crews will have letters on hand describing the project and their purpose for those individuals that want to verify their presence. The data collection is permitted by and in accordance with Georgia Law Title O.C.G.A. § 12-2-4, which states:

“The department shall make such examination, survey, and mapping of the geology, mineralogy, and topography of the state, including their industrial and economic utilization, as it may consider necessary.”

It is estimated that this project will take 5 years to complete. Once all the engineering has been completed then there will be a Public Open House held for the county and the incorporated communities to come view the revised FIRM and FIS. The open house will provide property owners the opportunity to see the preliminary maps, learn about their risk of flooding, and ask questions about what the new maps will mean for their property. Property owners will be able to meet one-on-one with a variety of specialists who will be available to talk about flood insurance, engineering, building permits and more. This meeting is not scheduled to occur until early 2020 and will be advertised at that time.

If you have questions, please contact Mr. Haydn Blaize, Georgia NFIP Coordinator, at Haydn.Blaize@dnr.ga.gov or via phone at 404-463-4935 or Paige Dukes, Lowndes County Public Information Officer, at pdukes@lowndescounty.com or 229-671-2400.