

News Releases

Public invited to two open houses to help develop Sarasota County flood insurance maps

December 31, 2009

Editor's note: See included map of county and watersheds

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is gathering input needed to improve identification of flooding risks in the county.

The District is serving as a cooperating technical partner for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on their national effort to update and modernize the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Most of the current FIRMs are 10 to 30 years old and are outdated because of natural and physical changes caused by land use, development and erosion.

The District is holding two open houses in Sarasota County to present preliminary floodplain information and explain the basis behind the findings. This information will be used to identify areas of flood risk, which are based on watershed boundaries.

The first open house is for residents living in the Roberts Bay and Island of Venice watersheds. It will be held Jan. 5, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Venice Elementary School located at 150 E. Miami Avenue in Venice. The second open house is for residents living in the Alligator Creek watershed. It will be held Jan. 6, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the Venice Community Center located at 326 S. Nokomis Avenue in Venice. Residents affected by changes have received letters advising them of the need to contact the District and attend an open house. Future open houses will be scheduled for additional watersheds as preliminary models are completed.

During the meetings, preliminary models and floodplain information will be presented to the public for review and comment. After addressing the comments, the floodplain information will be finalized and presented to the District's Governing Board for permission to develop the preliminary FIRMs for submittal to FEMA.

Upon receipt of the preliminary FIRMs, FEMA will begin its FIRM adoption process, which includes:

- A technical review by FEMA
- Review by Sarasota County
- Public input
- A 90-day appeals period
- Issuance of a letter of final determination that informs Sarasota County and the public of the date when the FIRMs will be considered effective

The floodplain information will be used by the county for land use and



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zoning decisions, to help manage development in and around floodplains and wetlands, reduce flood risks, preserve land and water resources, and planning for emergencies. It will also provide valuable information to the public for decisions about purchasing and protecting property.



For more information or to find out which watershed you live in, please visit www.WaterMatters.org/floodrisk/. You can also call the District at (352) 796-7211, ext. 4297.