



**Case Concentration:** Cook County, Illinois, FEMA, and others use extensive coordination of data and stakeholder input to update the flood hazard maps of 134 communities.

### Scope of the Project:



In 1996, 134 Cook County communities were in dire need of revised flood hazard mapping as some of the communities had not been updated for more than 20 years. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (IDNR/OWR), Cook County, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and FEMA's contractor teamed to restudy 250 miles of stream in the largest study of its kind in the region and one of the largest in the nation. The team began by meeting with a wide array of groups including community officials and representatives from State and county agencies to devise a plan for remapping these communities into a countywide DFIRM.

### Mapping Activity:

The ambitious plan to update the flood hazard maps for all 134 communities required analysis of floodways and review of regulatory requirements.

### Outreach:

#### Activities

To build support for the new maps, the team worked closely together to establish, encourage and maintain communication with the communities.

**Community Meetings:** To reach as many stakeholders as possible, six meetings were organized and held in strategic locations across the county. The team continued to meet with community officials as more analyses were submitted, keeping them informed of the "conveyance-only" floodway analyses and regulatory requirements. These meetings were crucial in gathering sufficient information and building consensus to begin procedures to finalize revised map panels with few appeals.

## Tools

- **Letters:** Letters from the team kept community officials informed of various stages of the study including the initiation of the study, the preliminary maps, the start and end of the 90-day appeal period, and apprised them of the steps prior to the finalization of the maps. FEMA's Region IV office sent letters explaining the process of compliance and ordinance adoption.
- **Meeting Materials:**
  - **Action Items:** FEMA's contractor created a list of action items at key coordination meetings with Cook County, IDNR/OWR, FEMA, and other State agencies throughout the process and maintained task-based timetables critical to keeping the mapping on schedule.
  - **Communication Channels:** The Region, State, and FEMA's contractor made sure to inform all the affected communities about upcoming deadlines and meetings and tracked information on non-responsive communities for the County, State, and FEMA.
- **Website Development:** INDR/OWR enhanced its extensive website to provide access to online publications, such as "Guide to Floodproofing" and "Our Community and Flooding." This site offers insight on flood control planning, program development, and project implementation. The site also features Cook County Flood Plain Management programs.
- **Brochures:** A technical brochure, "Quick Guide to Floodplain Management," designed for community officials, is accessible on the IDNR/OWR, Water Resources Management website. Another publication, "Flooding and Our Community," on the IDNR/OWR website is geared toward the general public.
- **Logos:** The logo design appears prominently on the website and is complementary to the State's Natural Resources logo.



<http://dnr.state.il.us/>

## Results

Over 130 communities, State and county agencies, FEMA, and FEMA's supporting contractor worked together to successfully complete the restudy of one of the largest DFIRMs in the nation. Extensive coordination efforts ensured technical accuracy of the data while providing ample opportunities for stakeholder involvement throughout the process.

*"A Nation Prepared" is FEMA's vision, and all at FEMA are dedicated in its mission to lead America in preparing for, preventing, responding to and recovering from disasters. If you would like more information on FEMA's Multi-Hazard Flood Map Modernization Initiative and how we may provide expert resources for you and your community, please visit our website at <http://www.fema.gov/fhm> or call 1-877-FEMA-MAP. You may view flood hazard maps at the FEMA Map store - <http://www.msc.fema.gov/>.*