



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW PRELIMINARY FLOOD MAPS ISSUED **Updated Maps Show Flood Risks Have Changed**

Thursday, March 31, 2016 -- Camden County is today releasing updated, digital flood hazard maps for public review and comment prior to their final adoption. The maps, known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), show the extent to which areas recently re-mapped in Camden are at risk for flooding. Used to help determine flood insurance and building requirements, the new maps replace maps that were based on studies up to 8 years old.

Residents and business owners can use the maps to obtain reliable information about their flood risk on a property-by-property basis. The maps also provide flood zone and elevation data to help community planners, engineers, builders and others decide where and how new structures, developments, and remodeling projects should be built. The maps can be viewed online at www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com or in person with your local flood plan manager; Scott Brazell for Camden County; Paul Speich for Kingsland; and Michelle Wood for St. Marys. A series of Open House meetings will also be held to review the maps.

"Flooding is an increasingly frequent and costly problem throughout this part of Georgia, and not just in high-risk areas," said Scott Brazell, Floodplain Manager. "Having more accurate and easily accessible maps is an important step in understanding the risk, so we can take steps to protect and insure against it."

The maps were developed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Camden County. The process included an extensive, multi-year review of the changes brought about by environmental, land use and other forces, use of state-of-the-art aerial mapping and risk modeling techniques, and a comprehensive pre-release review.

In reviewing the new Camden County maps, many property owners may find that their risk is higher or lower than they thought. If the risk level for a property changes, flood insurance and building standards requirements can change as well.

Public meetings have been scheduled during the month of April so that residents can view the new maps, understand how their properties may be affected, review options that they have and learn more about financial and material steps that they may need to take to protect their investment. Your local floodplain manager will also be available Monday – Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM to answer questions and address residents' concerns about the new flood maps.

The updated FIRMs are still preliminary and have not yet been officially adopted. In addition to the public meetings, there will be a Public Comment Period 90 day after the Open House where property

owners can submit appeals and comments if they can show that the maps are in error. Once all appeals and comments are received and addressed, the maps are expected to become effective in Mid-2017. At that time, the new flood insurance requirements will take effect.

While the federal flood insurance requirements won't be based on the new FIRMs until they take affect Camden County has elected to use the preliminary flood risk information to manage development in the floodplain where it shows a higher risk than the current effective map that is 8 years old.

Residents can learn more about the re-mapping project, view the new preliminary flood maps and find a schedule of upcoming meetings at www.camdencountyga.gov. Individuals with general questions about the local map update efforts can also call your local Floodplain Manager at Camden 912-510-4320; Kingsland 912-729-5613; and St. Marys 912-510-4025.

For information about flood insurance, contact your local insurance agent or visit www.FloodSmart.gov.

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