

## LEARN YOUR PROPERTY'S FLOOD RISK

Hurricanes, tropical storms and slow moving storms can create serious runoff and coastal flooding problems in south-central Florida. The result is frequent and costly flooding, not only in high-risk areas but in moderate- to low-risk areas as well. About 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from lower-risk areas.

The Banks County, the Town of Homer and the City of Maysville new digital flood maps show flood risks property-by-property. Your level of risk helps determine minimum building requirements and your cost of flood insurance. So, learn your risk. Go to [www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com](http://www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com) to view the maps.

### Questions about Georgia's Flood Map Modernization Program?

Visit [www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com](http://www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com).

### Questions about flood insurance?

Visit [www.FloodSmart.gov](http://www.FloodSmart.gov) or speak with your insurance agent.



*Flooding occurs in all 50 states and is the nation's most costly natural disaster*

## FROM RELEASE TO FINAL ADOPTION

New flood maps are targeted to become effective in Summer of 2010. At that time, any related flood insurance requirements will also take effect. The map adoption process includes a round of community meetings, and a review of citizen concerns. Some property owners may feel that even though part of the property is in a high-risk area, the house or commercial structure itself sits high enough to warrant a lower flood insurance rate. An owner who wishes to challenge the new designation will need to prove that the structure is sufficiently above the elevation that a major flood would reach (known as the base flood elevation). For more details on the appeals and protest process, visit [www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com](http://www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com).

### MAPPING MILESTONES

Summer 2009 — Preliminary flood maps released

January 5, 2010 — Open House Held (11:30 -1:00 p.m.); Public Review

January 5, 2010 — Start of 30-day Public Comment Period (for filing of appeals and protests)

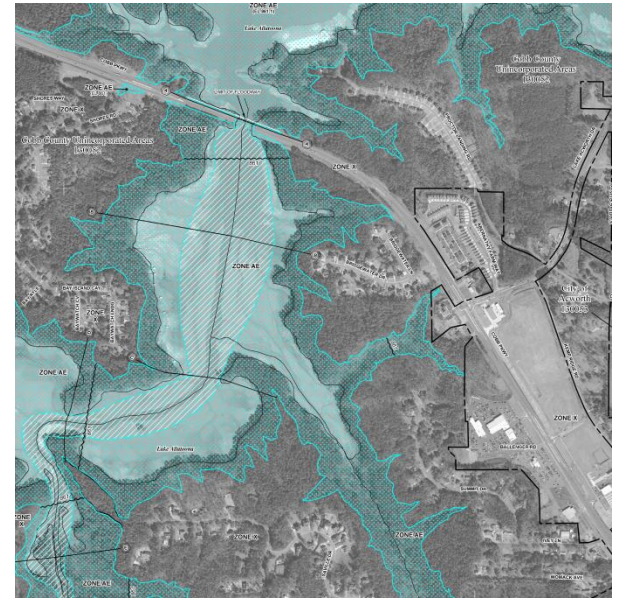
Summer 2010\* — New flood maps take effect; new flood insurance requirements also take effect

Visit [www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com](http://www.GeorgiaDFIRM.com) to learn more about the mapping process and where and when meetings may be held

**For General Information Call:**  
FEMA @877-336-2267

Open: Monday thru Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

\* Date subject to change pending completion of review process



## MAPPING THE RISK

New Flood Hazard Maps For

BANKS COUNTY

TOWN OF HOMER

CITY OF MAYSVILLE

*What Property Owners Should Know*

## MAPPING THE RISK

Flood risks vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and even property to property, and they can change over time.

The likelihood of flooding in some areas has increased due to new development and environmental changes.

New detailed, digital flood hazard maps have been developed to show current risk levels for Banks County, the Town of Homer and the City of Maysville. The new maps, known as Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) replace maps that are very outdated.. Planners, local officials, engineers and builders will use the maps to determine where and how to build new structures and developments.

Residents and business owners can use the maps to learn their flood risk, and decide the financial and physical steps they need to take to protect against damage and loss.



## FLOOD MAPS AND FLOOD INSURANCE

With the release of the new flood hazard maps, some property owners will learn that their risk is higher, or lower, than they thought. Others may find out that their Base Flood Elevation (BFE)<sup>1</sup> has changed. A change in risk level can affect what you pay for flood insurance. Flood insurance is a federally underwritten program that helps homeowners, business owners, and renters repair or replace structures and belongings after a flood.

If you have a loan through a federally regulated or insured lender and are in a high-risk area (flood zones labeled with letters beginning with A or V), the federal government requires you to carry flood insurance as a condition of your loan.

However, if you already have a flood insurance policy in place when you are mapped into a high-risk area, your premium can be calculated using the lower risk zone shown on the earlier map. This type of rating is called grandfathering. So, having a policy in advance not only will protect you, but can save you money. The chart below helps explain your options.

If New Maps Show...	These Requirements, Options And Savings Apply
<p><b>Change from low or moderate flood risk to high risk (flood zone B, C, or X to zone A, AE, AH, AO, A99, AR, V or VE)</b></p>	<p><b>Flood insurance is mandatory.</b> Flood insurance will be federally required for most mortgage holders. Insurance costs may rise to reflect the true (high) risk.</p> <p><b>“Grandfathering” can offer savings.</b> The National Flood Insurance Program has “grandfathering” rules to recognize policyholders who built in compliance with the flood map in effect at the time of construction or who maintain continuous coverage. Sometimes, though, using the new flood maps can actually result in a lower premium, especially if the home is high enough above the BFE.</p>
<p><b>Change from high flood risk to low or moderate risk (e.g., flood zone A, AE, AH, AO, A99, AR to X or shaded X)</b></p>	<p><b>Flood insurance is optional but recommended. The risk has only been reduced, not removed.</b> Flood insurance can still be obtained, and at lower rates. About 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from moderate-to-low-risk areas.</p> <p><b>Conversion offers savings.</b> An existing policy can be easily converted to a lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy, if the building qualifies. Note that lenders always have the option to require flood insurance in these areas.</p>
<p><b>Increase in the Base Flood Elevation (BFE)</b></p>	<p><b>An increase in BFE can result in higher premiums; however, “grandfathering” can offer savings.</b> The National Flood Insurance Program grandfathering rules allow policyholders who have built in compliance with the flood map in effect at the time of construction to keep the earlier base flood elevation to calculate their insurance rate. This could result in significant savings.</p>
<p><b>No change in risk level</b></p>	<p><b>No change in insurance rates.</b> However, this is a good time to review your coverages and ensure that your building and contents are adequately protected.</p>

<sup>1</sup> A BFE is the level that flood waters have a one-percent chance of reaching in any given year