

The Flood Record

September 2023

NEW Elevation Certificate and Floodproofing Certificate Released

The new certificates are available at [National Flood Insurance Program Underwriting Forms](#). **THE NEW FORMS CAN BE USED AS OF JULY 7, 2023.** Use of the previous forms has been extended to November 1, 2023.

If you have had trouble opening the new Elevation Certificate (EC) form, use the following steps to open and save the form:

- Go to the link above and scroll down to the Elevation Certificate form.
- DO NOT SELECT DOWNLOAD, instead right click on the Download File link, and choose Save Link As.
- SAVE to your computer as a PDF and ignore any Download folder pop up.
- Go to the folder where the file is saved and OPEN the PDF.

Training for using the new EC will be provided (see webinar dates below). Also, there is a review checklist at the Community Rating System website that anyone can use to insure completeness and accuracy: [EC Review Checklist](#).

Here are few important things to know about the new certificates:

- ECs are NOT required to get a federal flood insurance quote. They help to get an accurate quote but are no longer required for any building.
- A surveyor, engineer or architect is not required to complete the EC for submittal for flood insurance purposes. Sections A, B, E, F and H may be completed by a property owner or their representative.
- Photos are required now for all ECs; front, rear, left, and right.
- Completing Section G is recommended (but not required) by all communities.
- Community Rating System communities are required to complete Section G and provide name, signature, and date.
- When completing Section C, the current form does not accept N/A where an elevation does not apply. The comment section should be used.
- The Comment section must be used for detailing the machinery and equipment detailed in the instructions for Item C2.e.

Illinois and FEMA Floodplain Management Webinars

Illinois has added three webinars to the four remaining FEMA monthly webinar series. We hope that some of these one-hour virtual training sessions will fit into your schedule. Please share this information with your building inspectors, permit staff, engineers, and public work staff. Use the links below to register or add to your calendar. Webinar attendance for FEMA-led webinars will be submitted to ASFPM for CECs for CFMs.

- 9/19/23 (Tues), 11 am-12 pm, [How to Use and Review the New EC for Compliance](#)
- 9/27/23 (Wed), 9-10 am, [FEMA Preparedness: Substantial Damage Planning](#)
- 10/24/23 (Tues), 11 am-12 pm, [Floodplain Permits and Ordinance Administration](#)
- 10/25/23 (Wed), 9-10 am, [FEMA Floodplain Management Higher Standards](#)
- 11/14/23 (Tues), 11 am-12 pm, [Enforcing your Ordinance, Variances and Violations](#)
- 11/29/23 (Wed), 9-10 am, [FEMA Natural and Beneficial Functions](#)
- 12/12/23, (Tues), 11 am-12 pm, [Web-Based Maps and Other Resources](#)
- 12/20/23 (Wed), 9-10 am, [FEMA Community Rating System \(CRS\)](#)

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Illinois Floodplain Management Office Hours

IDNR staff will continue to host monthly virtual Office Hour sessions on the dates listed below (second Wednesday of the month). All Office Hour session start at 10:30 am. Save the links below to your 2023 calendar and join us with any floodplain related questions. No registration is required.

[September 13th](#) , [October 11th](#) , [November 15th](#) , and [December 13th](#)

Basement Flooding Claims Assistance

If any of your residents are having problems with a basement flooding claim for sanitary sewer backup or sump pump flooding they can [File a Complaint](#) with the Illinois Department of Insurance (IDOI). The IDOI website also provides some guidance information on their [Consumer](#) and [Disaster](#) webpages.

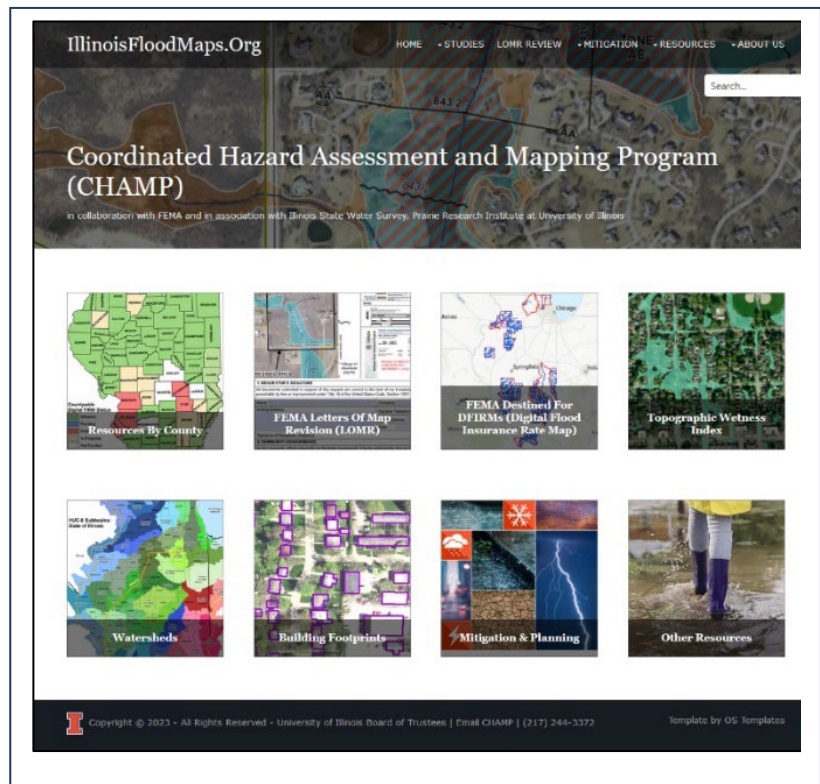
Check Out the New Illinois State Water Survey Illinois Flood Maps Website

In June 2023, the Coordinated Hazard Assessment and Mapping Program (CHAMP) at the ISWS launched its redesigned website: IllinoisFloodMaps.org. The website improves communication between ISWS, local communities, and other project stakeholders. The updated format makes the website easier to use on a phone or tablet and you will more easily find information on the floodplain mapping activities across the state.

The tiles on the updated Home Page include:

- **Resources by County**, with a state map of counties where you click on a county to see the flood map resources for each county. (See FEMA Mapping Status article for an image of the map.)
- **FEMA Letters of Map Revision** provides help on the flood map revision application process.
- **FEMA Destined for DFIRMs** includes a map displaying areas of current hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) studies to eventually be incorporated into DFIRMs.
- **Topographic Wetness Index**, mapping that can be used to indicate areas of ponding due to local topography.
- **Watersheds** provides information for watersheds across the state, with links to projects in eleven watersheds including the Chicago, Kishwaukee, Upper and Lower Fox, Lower and Middle Wabash, and Lower Rock rivers.
- **Building Footprints**
- **Mitigation & Planning** includes information for county hazard mitigation plans currently in progress at ISWS and provides links to two password-protected databases related to flood risk for buildings in the floodplain and floodplain buyouts.
- **Other Resources** provides links to over fifty federal, state, and other agency websites.

If you have feedback or questions on the website redesign, please contact Zoe Zaloudek at CHAMP-ISWS@illinois.edu.



FEMA Mapping Status and Updates

The goal of digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for all Illinois counties is getting closer. The mapping status for each county is shown on the map below.

Some floodplain studies do not impact all FIRM panels in a county. These studies are usually completed for a watershed or defined stream network. This type of update is referred to as a limited panel Physical Map Revision (PMR). Three counties have PMRs moving through the mapping process.

- Lake County has new mapping along Lake Michigan and in a few additional waterways. These maps received a Letter of Final Determination (LFD) setting an effective date of October 5, 2023.
- Cook and Kane Counties have new mapping within the Poplar Creek and Spring Creek watersheds. The project area touches 25 panels in Cook County and two panels in Kane County. A statutory 90-day appeal period is expected to start soon for this PMR.

Preliminary countywide digital FIRMs have been issued for six counties, listed below. The 90-days appeals period has begun for Monroe, St Clair, and Madison counties. Communities affected have received letters outlining the appeals process. The three other counties, Clay, Effingham, and Stark, are progressing towards an appeal period.

For information on mapping or on filing an appeal contact Erin Conley, State Floodplain Manager at erin.c.conley@illinois.gov.

Soon to be Effective Maps:

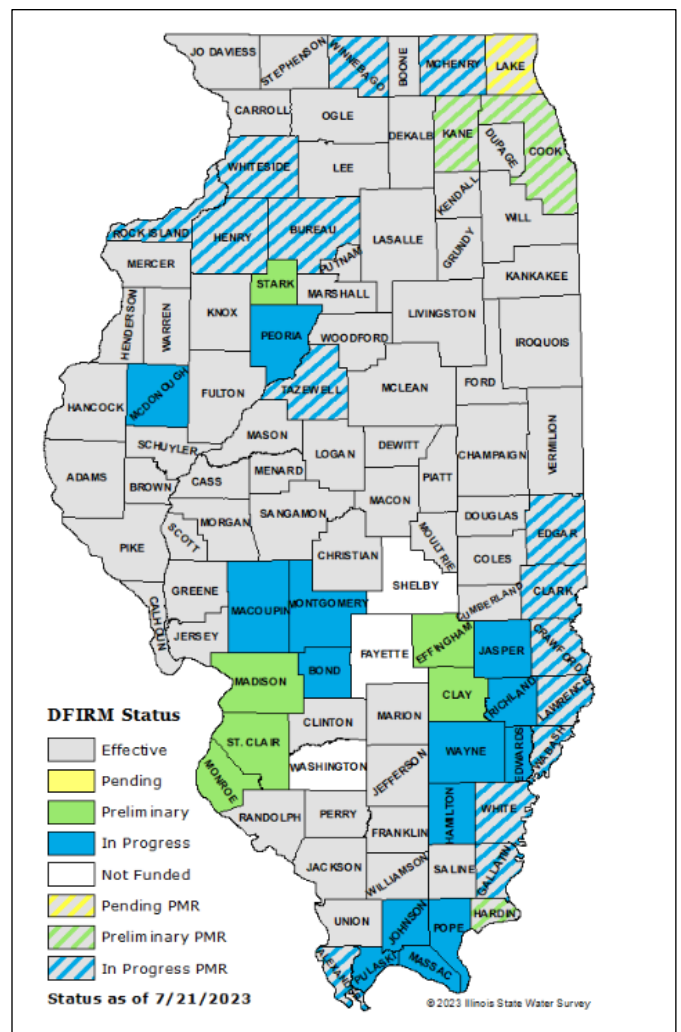
Lake County PMR, effective 10/5/2023

Upcoming Final LFD

Cook and Kane Co. PMR, estimated for Spring 2024

Preliminary Maps:

- Madison Co. Countywide, issued 8/12/2022, Appeals Period deadline October 19, 2023
- Monroe Co. Countywide, issued 7/15/2022, Appeals Period deadline October 10, 2023
- St. Clair Co. Countywide, issued 8/10/2022, Appeals Period deadline October 28, 2023
- Stark Co. Countywide, issued 12/15/2022
- Effingham Co. Countywide, issued 07/21/2022
- Clay Co. Countywide, issued 07/21/2022



Pilot Program for Economically Disadvantaged Communities – Grant Opportunity

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is launching a pilot program to fully fund small water resources projects for economically disadvantaged communities. The purpose of the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) is to plan and implement projects of limited size, cost, scope and complexity. While CAP projects typically require a cost-share with a non-Federal sponsor, this pilot program will fully fund the selected projects. The deadline to apply is October 20, 2023. A link to the Federal Register notice, a Pilot Program Fact Sheet, a template Letter of Intent, and details on how to apply and what information is needed in project proposals can be found at: https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Project-Planning/Legislative-Links/wrda_2020/.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District - July 2-3, 2023, Storm Follow-Up

(Reprinted from July 5, 2023, MWRD Press Release)

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) works around the clock to provide flood protection for Cook County while protecting our greatest asset, the source of our drinking water, Lake Michigan. We monitor the weather, and prior to major storms, we draw down the waterways to provide maximum capacity in the waterways, tunnels, and reservoir system.

However, when there is an extreme weather event such as what happened July 2 and 3, we must reverse the flow of the Chicago River when the river level exceeds the elevation of Lake Michigan. During this past weekend's storm, the elevation of the North Shore Channel topped the elevation of Lake Michigan, and we opened the gates at 2:16 p.m. on July 2. The gates remained open until 9:47 p.m. on July 2. The elevation of the Chicago River downtown exceeded Lake Michigan's elevation, so the locks were opened at 4 p.m. on July 2 and the reversal ended at 2:30 a.m. on July 3. Reversing to the lake only happens in extreme situations. Reversals dating back to 1985 are listed at this link:

https://mwrld.org/sites/default/files/documents/Lake_Michigan_Reversals_0422.pdf

In other words, when the Chicago area waterway levels are higher than Lake Michigan, only then can the MWRD open control structures to move as much water as possible out of the system. We cannot open the gates and lock before that time. There is NO MAGIC KEY OR BUTTON to use at will. Opening the gates and lock not only provide overbank flooding protection but they allow for more capacity for stormwater. **As a result, the MWRD can only reverse the waterway to the lake when the river level is ABOVE Lake Michigan levels. If we were to open the lock and gates too early, Lake Michigan would have a tsunami effect, overtaking the river and flooding everything in its path in downtown Chicago and along the waterways, totally decimating the riverwalk and municipalities downstream, on the South side and on the North side. The destruction that would be caused by opening the gates and lock too early is unimaginable.**

According to the National Weather Service, "rainfall totals in and in the immediate vicinity of Chicago ranged from roughly 3 to 7 inches, though a few localized areas received over 8 inches of rainfall. The worst of the flooding occurred on the west and southwest sides of Chicago and in the near west and southwest suburbs." This includes Cicero and Berwyn. There is no system able to handle that much water in just a few hours.

https://www.weather.gov/lot/2023_07_02_Flooding.

Consistent with the MWRD's mission of protecting Lake Michigan from pollution, every effort is made to minimize the amount of floodwater discharged to the lake during extreme storms. In a combined sewer system like we have here, sanitary sewage and stormwater drain into the same pipes. Homes, businesses, and street drains are connected to the local sewers, which are owned and maintained by municipalities. Local sewers flow by gravity into the MWRD intercepting sewers, which then convey the flow to MWRD water reclamation plants for treatment.

To combat this, we have partnerships with municipalities and other organizations throughout the county to fully or partially fund green infrastructure and other stormwater projects to improve resilience within that community. The 34 Space to Grow® green infrastructure projects that convert asphalt into permeable surfaces at local schools is just one example of a partnership improving communities one neighborhood at a time.

Links for additional information and explanations about the MWRD's infrastructure and waterway system:

Tunnel and Reservoir Plan: <https://mwrld.org/tunnel-and-reservoir-plan-tarp>

Chicago Area Waterway System works: <https://mwrld.org/chicago-area-waterway-system>

How to prepare for stormwater: <https://mwrld.org/flood-prevention-101>

How sewers work: <https://mwrld.org/understanding-your-sewer>