

Waterlines Express - News from DNR Division of Water

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Thank you for subscribing to the Indiana DNR Division of Water's (DOW) email newsletter and your interest in the division's mission to protect, enhance, preserve, and wisely use water resources for the benefit of Indiana's citizens through professional leadership, management, and education.



'Functions' of Floodplains

By Doug Wagner

You may intuitively know that a floodplain is a generally flat area of land next to a river or stream. You may recognize the areas on your property or in your community that are most likely to flood. Government agencies and emergency planners use specific definitions for identifying and managing development in floodplains.

A floodplain, or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), refers to lands within a community subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year. SFHAs are designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Flood Insurance Rate Maps, Flood Insurance Studies, Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps, and Flood Hazard Boundary Maps as zones A, AE, AH, AO, A1-30, A99, or VE. The SFHA includes areas that are flood-prone and designated from other federal, state, or local sources of data, including but not limited to best available flood layer maps provided by or approved by the DNR, historical flood information reflecting high water marks, previous flood inundation areas, and flood-prone soils associated with a watercourse.

Floodplains serve several important functions in natural ecosystems and for human communities:

1. **Flood control:** Floodplains naturally absorb and spread out floodwaters, reducing the intensity of floods downstream.
2. **Water filtration:** As water moves through floodplains, vegetation and soil help filter out pollutants and sediments.
3. **Groundwater recharge:** Floodplains allow water to slowly percolate into the ground, replenishing aquifers and maintaining water table levels.
4. **Ecological habitat:** Many species of plants and animals rely on floodplain environments for breeding, feeding, and shelter.
5. **Soil enrichment:** Periodic flooding deposits nutrient-rich sediments, enhancing soil fertility in floodplain areas.
6. **Climate regulation:** Floodplain vegetation, especially in larger systems, can help moderate local climate conditions.
7. **Cultural and recreational value:** Many communities use floodplains for parks, nature trails, and other recreational activities.

These functions highlight the ecological and societal importance of preserving natural floodplain systems. By limiting or avoiding development in floodplains, we can minimize future damages and maintain these functions and natural beauty for generations to come.

You can do a virtual exploration of the areas designated as floodplain on your property and in your community on the [division's website](#).

And learn more about DNR's role in floodplain development through an [ArcGIS StoryMap here](#).

Division of Water Upcoming Events

L-0273: Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program

Aug. 5-8, Danville

DOW has recently partnered with Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) to host the L-0273 course: Managing Floodplain Development Through the NFIP. This course meets the requirements of the floodplain management act. The course will be offered Aug. 5–8, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET daily. For more information or to register, view the [flyer](#). Registration may be limited to the first 35 registrants.

Indiana Flooding and Flood Tools Awareness Workshops

Monday, Aug. 19, 9 a.m.-noon, Plainfield; Made @ Plainfield Facility 1610 Reeves Road, Plainfield, 46168

Wednesday, Aug. 28, 9 a.m.-noon, Evansville; American Red Cross Facility 29 S Stockwell Road

Thursday, Sept. 12, Michigan City (part of the INAFSM annual conference)

<https://www.in.gov/dnr/water/events-and-training/>

Presented by the Indiana Silver Jackets federal and state-level partners: Indiana DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Emergency Management Association, National Weather Service, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Polis Center at IU Indianapolis and more.

This three-hour workshop will address the common types and causes of flooding in Indiana, as well as flood-related regulations, mitigation best practices, and climate change impacts. A significant focus of this meeting will be on the flood risk reduction tools available, including flood risk management (FRM) data and tools, stream and lake gauges; flood inundation maps (FIMs); available data sources (i.e., Indiana Floodplain Information Portal); and partner agency FRM programs.

Division of Water Open House

Wednesday, Sept. 4, Alexandria, IN

You are invited to attend a DOW open house on Wednesday, Sept. 4 from 5-7 p.m. at the [Emery Lee Building](#) in Alexandria. This event is free and open to the public. The evening will provide open public question and answer opportunities. Staff from all DOW programs will be available to answer questions. There will be no formal presentation. Attendees are encouraged to arrive any time from

5-7 p.m.

Join the DOW staff in a discussion about our state's vital water resources and how they impact you. Representatives from the DOW will share information about their work in Floodplain Management, Floodplain Mapping, Water Resource Assessment & Availability, Water Rights & Use, Dam & Levee Safety, Watershed Stewardship, Floodway and Lake Permits, and Compliance.

Questions about the event can be submitted via the [DOW website](#).

Invite Friends and Colleagues to *Waterlines Express*

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