



FEMA



# Levee Seclusion Mapping

## *Information for Local Community Officials*

In March 2011, FEMA made a commitment to update the way flood hazards for non-accredited levee systems were analyzed and mapped. As a result, some ongoing Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates that included non-accredited levee systems were delayed or otherwise impacted while FEMA developed the updated levee analysis and mapping approach. Seclusion mapping was developed by FEMA as a process to allow the release of these impacted FIRM updates. Levee seclusion mapping will maintain the flood hazard information as depicted on the current effective FIRM (the FIRM in effect before the ongoing update) with map notes explaining that these flood hazards will be updated at a later time when the updated levee analysis and mapping approach is applied. Levee seclusion mapping will allow FEMA to provide community officials, residents, and business owners with updated information about their local flood hazards, while identifying those areas where the levee-related flood hazards were not updated.

### **Eligibility for levee seclusion mapping**

Levee seclusion mapping is not appropriate for all FIRM updates. Levee seclusion is intended to allow updated flood hazard information not associated with levees to be released without delays associated with the application of the updated levee analysis and mapping approach to projects, which are already underway. To be eligible for levee seclusion, the ongoing FIRM update must meet the following criteria:

- The ongoing FIRM update was initiated before the July 2013 release of the document titled, Analysis and Mapping Procedures for Non-Accredited Levees - New Approach.
- The ongoing FIRM update is active and results in changes to flood hazard information outside the area impacted by the non-accredited levee system.

### **Definitions**

**Levee:** Per 44 CFR 59.1, a manmade structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed in accordance with sound engineering practices to contain, control, or to divert the flow of water so as to provide protection from temporary flooding.

**Levee System:** Per 44 CFR 59.1, a flood protection system that consists of a levee, or levees, and associated structures, such as closure and drainage devices, which are constructed and operated in accordance with sound engineering practices.

**“Non-Accredited” Levee System:** A levee system that has not been demonstrated to meet all requirements outlined in Section 65.10 of the NFIP regulations (44CFR65.10).

### **Resources & Related Links**

**Code of Federal Regulations:**  
[www.ecfr.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.ecfr.gpoaccess.gov)

**Guidelines and Standards:**  
[www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping](http://www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping)

**Living with Levees:**  
[www.fema.gov/living-levees-its-shared-responsibility](http://www.fema.gov/living-levees-its-shared-responsibility)

**Updated Analysis and Mapping Procedures for Non-Accredited Levees:**  
[www.fema.gov/final-levee-analysis-and-mapping-approach](http://www.fema.gov/final-levee-analysis-and-mapping-approach)

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- The community does not confirm that a Natural Valley analysis, as outlined in the updated levee analysis and mapping approach and the aforementioned July 2013 document, would sufficiently depict the flood risk reduction associated with the non-accredited levee system.
- The FEMA Regional Office determines that levee seclusion is the appropriate approach for the subject area, in accordance with FEMA Guidelines and Standards.

### Restudy of flood hazards associated with the secluded levee

Community officials should understand that the use of levee seclusion mapping does not preclude the levee system from being analyzed with the updated levee analysis and mapping approach for non-accredited levees, or from communities seeking levee system accreditation. Levee system accreditation requirements, as outlined in 44CFR65.10, can be found here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2002-title44-vol1/pdf/CFR-2002-title44-vol1-sec65-10.pdf>.

FEMA will continue coordination with the community to prioritize the restudy of the secluded areas that require the application of the updated levee analysis and mapping approach.

If, at any time, the community would like to submit a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) request or a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) request to revise a portion of the effective FIRM, the updated levee analysis and mapping approach can be applied and a CLOMR/LOMR request may be submitted to FEMA. As with any CLOMR/LOMR request, the community will be responsible for submitting required supporting data and documentation.

### How this will be depicted on the FIRM

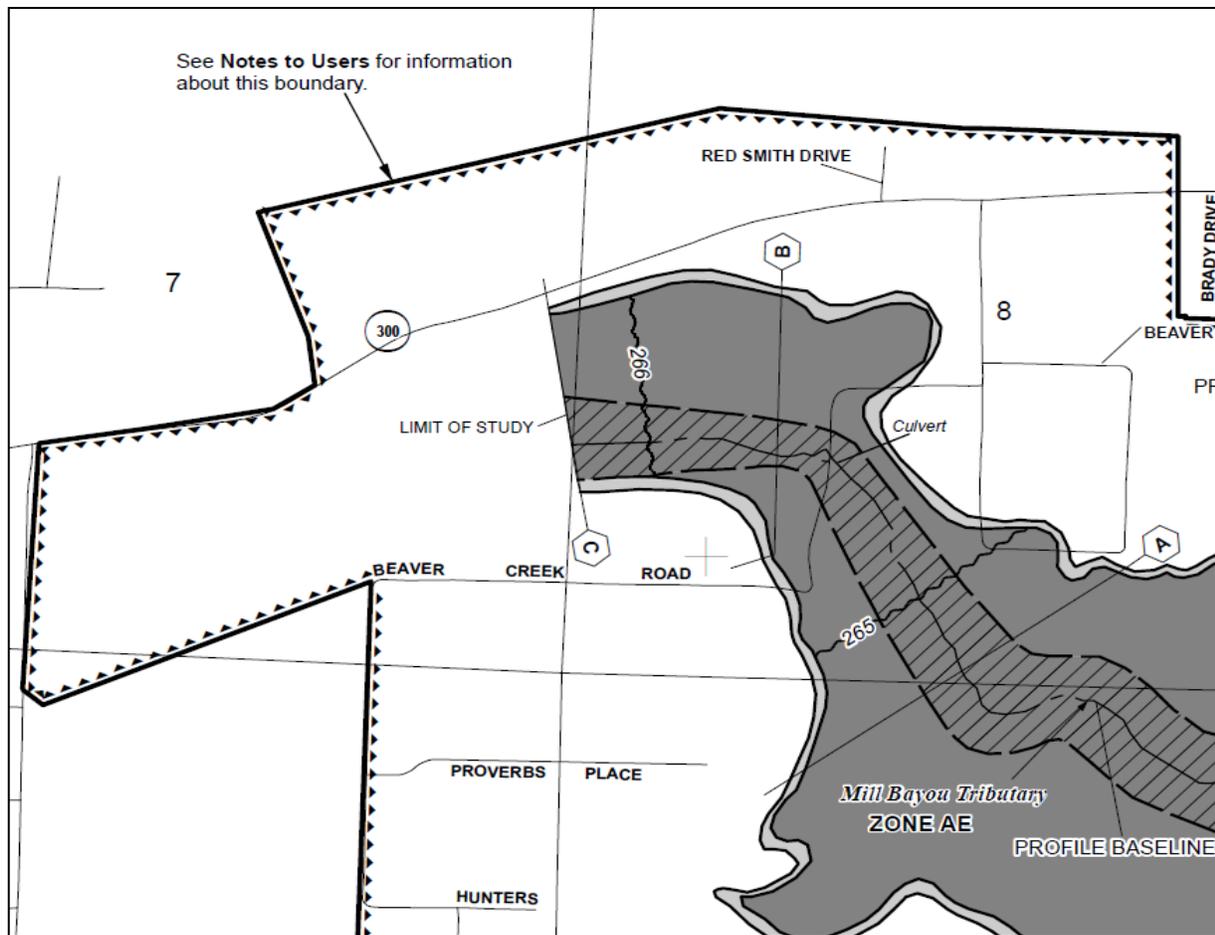
The secluded area will be outlined by a solid black line with triangles pointing toward the areas subject to flood hazards from the non-accredited levee system (or systems) awaiting later study using the updated levee analysis and mapping approach. The FIRM and associated Flood Insurance Study report will identify the information that has not been updated through explanatory map notes and notes to users.

A FIRM that includes a secluded area will include the following information, as further described in the November 2014 Levee Seclusion guidance:

**Inside the Levee Secluded Area** – The seclusion boundary will be noted by a solid black line with triangles to define the secluded area, as shown in Figure 1. Flood hazards related to the non-accredited levee system(s) will remain as depicted on the current effective FIRM. Flood hazard determinations and the applicable flood insurance purchase requirements and building requirements will not change from what was in effect within the secluded area(s). In certain cases, FEMA may be aware of updated flood hazard information that has not been subjected to regulatory due-process requirements, and may be willing to share this with the community as best available data. Any updated flood hazard information of this sort cannot be used for flood insurance premium rating or flood insurance purchase requirements, but could be used to encourage sound floodplain management locally.

**Outside the Levee Secluded Area** – Existing and updated flood hazard information not associated with the non-accredited levee system that falls outside the seclusion boundary will be depicted on the FIRM without any qualifying notes and will not have any special treatment. This information should be used to rate flood insurance policies and to make flood hazard determinations based on the updated information.

**On the FIRM Collar** – The Notes to Users section of the FIRM will include clarification that the secluded area depicts a levee system that has not been demonstrated to meet the accreditation requirements of 44CFR65.10. There will also be an explanation that the flood hazard information shown within the seclusion boundary was transferred directly from the effective FIRM without change and will be revisited at a later time to apply the updated levee analysis and mapping approach.



**Figure 1:** The areas associated with non-accredited levee systems (the secluded area) will be identified with special map symbology and map notes as shown in this figure and as further detailed in the November 2014 Levee Seclusion guidance.

***The following clarification will be included in the “Notes to Users” section on the FIRM panel:***

The levee, dike, or other structure that impacts flood hazards inside this boundary has not been shown to comply with Section 65.10 of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations. As such, this FIRM panel will be revised at a later date to update the flood hazard information associated with this structure.