



FEMA

March 5, 2007

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Mitigation Division Directors  
Regions I - X

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Bellomo".

**FROM:** Doug Bellomo, P.E., Acting Chief  
Risk Analysis Branch

**SUBJECT:** Procedure Memorandum No. 44 – Protocol for Publishing Base Flood  
Elevation (BFE) Notices on the Web

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** All studies for which appeal period will start on or after April 1, 2007\*

**Background:** National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations require the publication of Base Flood Elevation (BFE) notices for every map revision and flood study that includes proposed or modified BFEs. The notices must be published twice in the affected community's newspaper of record and once in the *Federal Register*. The regulatory 90-day appeal period, which allows interested stakeholders to comment on proposed or modified BFEs, begins on the day the notice is published for the second time in the local newspaper.

To make these notifications more cost effective, FEMA implemented the BFEs on the Web initiative to publish BFE notices on its Web site, thereby significantly reducing the overall cost of newspaper notifications. With this approach, FEMA will publish a standard legal notice in local newspapers to direct interested citizens to the location on FEMA's Web site where the proposed BFE changes are shown.

**Issue:** Currently, newspaper notices describe the proposed changes and list effective and modified BFEs for each community. Because these notices can be lengthy—often two letter-size pages or more, depending on the number of flooding sources affected—FEMA pays a significant amount of money each year to publish the notices in local newspapers and the *Federal Register*. In order to make BFE notices more cost-effective and available to a broader stakeholder audience, FEMA will begin publishing BFE notices on its Flood Hazard Mapping Web site, which will significantly reduce the cost associated with newspaper publications.

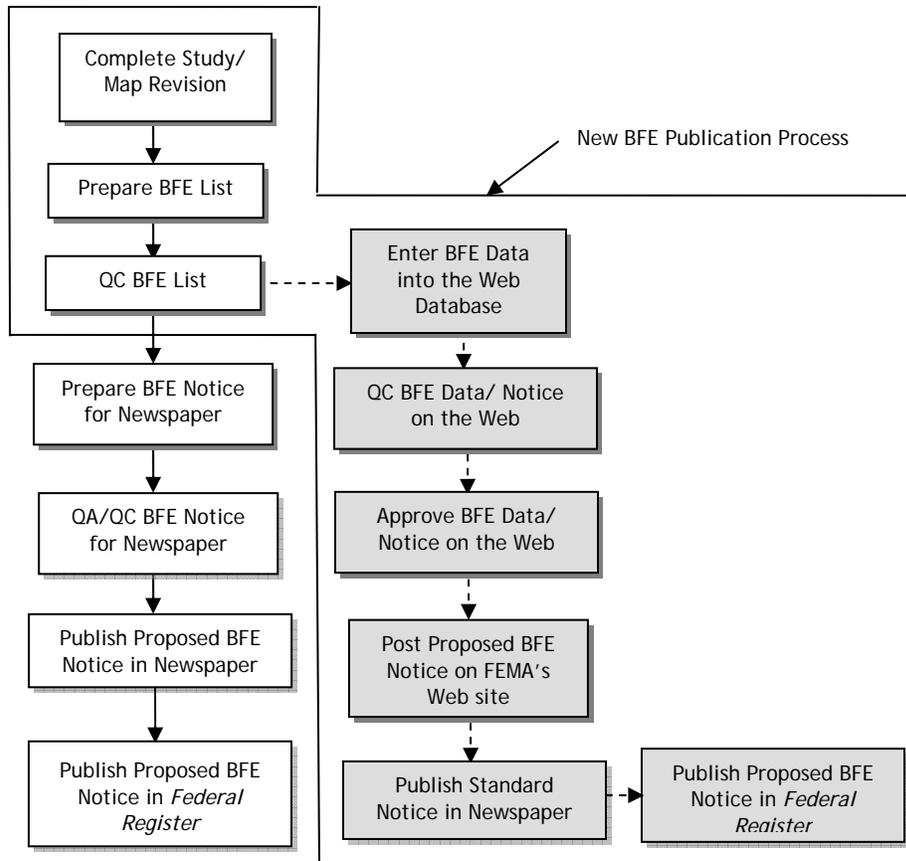
**Action Taken:** All mapping partners, including Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contractors and Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs), that are tasked with performing post preliminary activities must use the BFEs-on-the-Web tool to create BFE notices for studies and Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs) that result in new or modified BFEs. Adherence to this requirement will save FEMA a significant amount of money each year.

Publishing BFEs on the Web will require only minor modifications of the historic publication process. The greatest benefit will be realized when traditional BFE notices that formerly appeared in newspapers are replaced by short standard notices directing readers to the Web site and FEMA's Map Assistance Center for

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\* Mapping partners may begin using the BFEs on the Web and the protocol outlined in this memorandum immediately.

the entire notice, including the lists of BFE changes. FEMA’s Map Assistance Center can be reached toll free at 1-877-FEMA MAP (1-877-336-2627). The new standard newspaper notice is provided in Attachment 1. The change in the BFE publication process is illustrated below.



Initially, BFE notices will be available through the existing Status of Map Change Requests page ([www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st\\_main.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st_main.shtm)) and the newly created BFE Notices page ([www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/bfe](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/bfe)) on FEMA’s flood hazard mapping website. Subsequently, BFE notices will be integrated into FEMA’s Mapping Information Platform (MIP) study status reporting functionality.

When BFEs are published on the web and in the Federal Register, both effective and modified BFEs must be listed and referenced to the North American Vertical Datum 1988 (NAVD88) (if the modified BFEs have been determined in NAVD88). Therefore, if there is a datum change, and the effective FIRM is referenced to NGVD, the BFEs must be converted to NAVD88 so the community will be able identify the true BFE change.

An additional requirement has been added to the BFE notice that includes the collection of latitude and longitude coordinates that coincide with the description of the downstream and upstream BFE change (see Attachment No. 2). These coordinates must specify the center of the stream at the BFE change referenced and must be defined in degrees, minutes, and seconds (DDD MM SS.SSS). The requirement to incorporate these coordinates into the BFEs-on-the-Web tool will be effective beginning with studies for which appeal period will start on or after April 1, 2007.

The National Service Provider (NSP) will administer, perform quality control, and publish all BFEs on the

web. The NSP will be responsible for the following activities:

- Perform a final quality control of all BFE web notices and 101/155 letters
- Publish all BFE notices on the web
- Administer BFE's on the Web Tool (including log-in account establishment)
- Prepare and publish all BFE changes in the Federal Register

cc: See Distribution List

**Distribution List** (electronic distribution only)

Office of the Mitigation Division Director

Risk Assessment Branch

Risk Identification Branch

Risk Communications Branch

Federal Insurance and Mitigation Divisions in FEMA Regional Offices

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of General Counsel

National Service Provider

Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance Contractor

Map Service Center

Cooperating Technical Partners

FEMA Contractors

**Attachment 1**

**Standard Newspaper Notice for the New BFE Publication Process**

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

Proposed Base Flood Elevation Determination for [NAME OF COMMUNITY, COUNTY, AND STATE]. The Federal Emergency Management Agency solicits technical information or comments on the proposed Base (1-percent-annual-chance) Flood Elevations (BFEs) shown in the Preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and on the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for your community. These proposed BFEs are the basis for the floodplain management measures that your community is required to either adopt or show evidence of having in effect in order to qualify or remain qualified for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). For a detailed listing of the proposed BFEs and information on the statutory period provided for appeals, please visit FEMA’s Web site at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/bfe> or call the FEMA Map Assistance Center toll free at 1-877-FEMA MAP (1-877-336-2627).

**Attachment 2**

Community	Flooding Source	Description of Location	Lat/Long Coordinates	*Elevation in feet (NGVD) <sup>1</sup> +Elevation in feet (NAVD) <sup>2</sup>	
				Existing	Proposed

<sup>1</sup>National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929, rounded to nearest whole foot

<sup>2</sup>North American Vertical Datum of 1988, rounded to nearest whole foot