

Endangered Species and Habitat Identification Tool for Community Rating System (CRS) Communities

Purpose

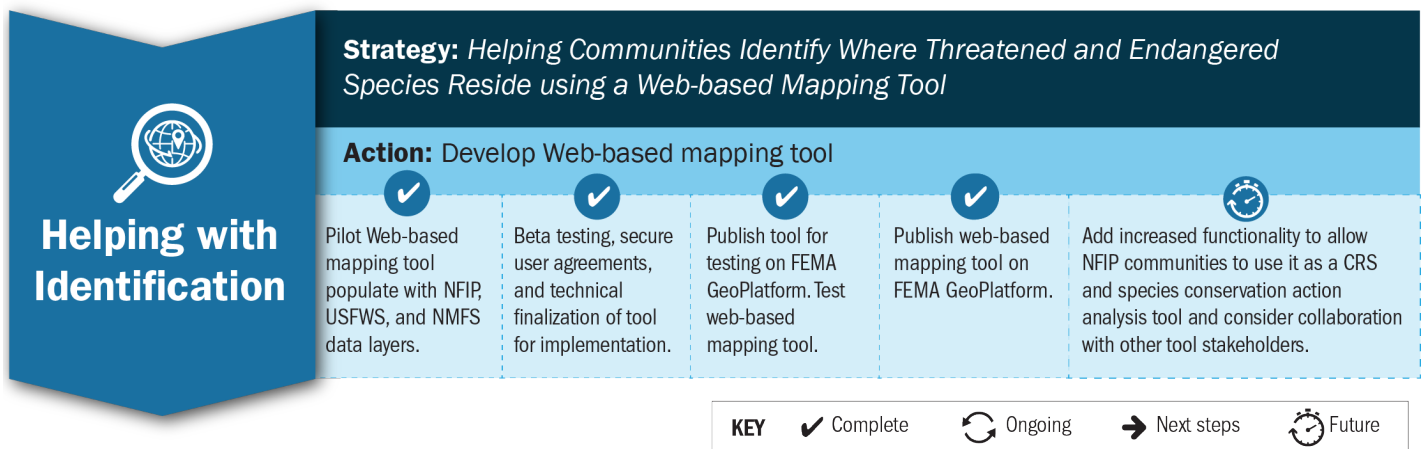
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worked collaboratively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), collectively known as “the Services”, to utilize its authorities under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to further the conservation of threatened and endangered listed species pursuant to Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The resulting NFIP ESA Section 7(a)(1) Conservation Action Program leverages existing FEMA flood risk mitigation priorities by promoting the creation, maintenance, and preservation of naturally functioning floodplains that benefit native flora and fauna generally, and threatened and endangered species and their habitat specifically.

FEMA’s [Flood Risk and Endangered Species Habitat \(FRESH\) web-based mapping tool](#) is an integral part to the National Flood Insurance Program’s (NFIP) Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(1) Conservation Action Program. The FRESH mapping tool helps build awareness, assists with identification of federally listed threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitats, and promotes incentives or opportunities for NFIP participating communities to further incorporate conservation through NFIP implementation. FEMA’s FRESH mapping tool can be used to identify federally listed species ranges and critical habitats, along with Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). The FRESH mapping tool enables users to visualize and analyze community-specific environmental data to achieve as much habitat and species conservation as possible to balance with social and economic needs.

[Figure 1](#) outlines the mapping tool strategy to help communities identify local threatened and endangered species.

Functionality

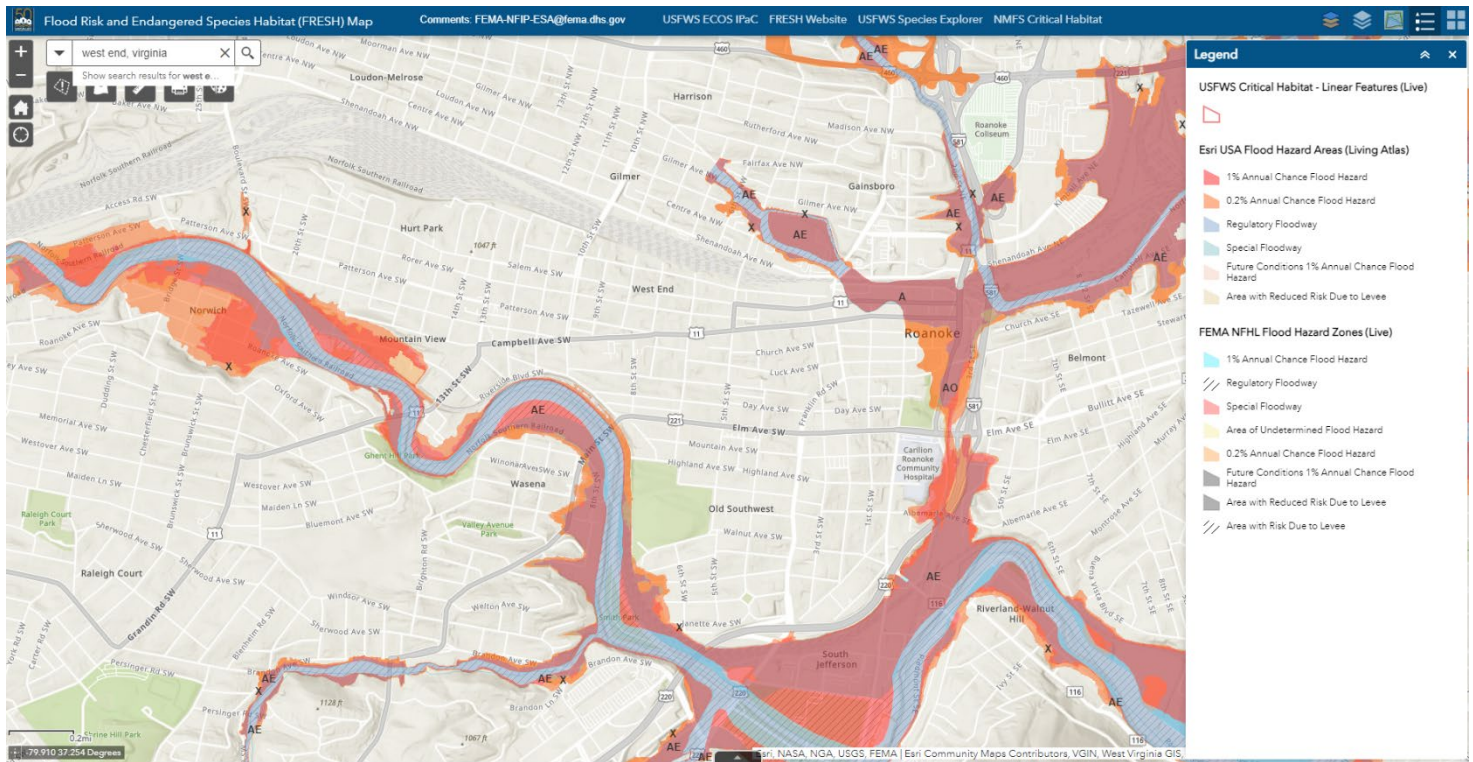
Figure 1: Helping Communities Identify Where Threatened and Endangered Species Reside



This FRESH web-based mapping tool is interactive and empowers communities to make informed decisions by allowing users to overlay their NFIP regulatory floodplain (100-year floodplain/SFHA) with critical habitat and federally listed species range maps. Users can query data for their community or select a specific area to obtain an output of threatened and endangered species and habitats.

Using the FRESH mapping tool, communities can visualize the relationship between their regulatory SFHA overlaid with threatened and endangered species, designated critical habitats, and species ranges to help inform local decisions that may affect the floodplain, as shown in [Figure 2](#). Communities that engage in species and habitat conservation activities through the NFIP's [Community Rating System \(CRS\) Program](#) may benefit from NFIP premium discounts.

Figure 2: FRESH Mapping Tool Screenshot



Continuous Improvement

FEMA continually reviews the FRESH mapping tool to ensure accuracy. Information provided on the data layers reflects the best available science. As FEMA has no control over the data obtained from authoritative federal sources, data is periodically reviewed and expanded, when possible, to ensure they contain the intended information.

FEMA plans to increase functionality with additional analyses, such as displaying what points a CRS community currently receives for certain CRS activities or identifying opportunities for undertaking additional activities that promote habitat and species conservation. Users may also add their own mapping data to the FRESH mapping tool, allowing them to customize their visualizations for their community needs. For more information, visit [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov).



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