

Discovery Report Appendix O

Black River Watershed Recommended Scope of Work

Lake Ontario – Black River Watershed

HUC 04150101

July 2016



Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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January 4, 2016

Mr. Alan Springett
FEMA Region II
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278-0002

Re: Black River Watershed Recommended Scope of Work

Dear Mr. Springett:

Please accept the State's priorities for new or revised floodplain mapping within the Black River Watershed as developed through the Lake Ontario Discovery project. Pre-Discovery community engagement meetings were held for the Black River Watershed via webinar the week of September 16, 2013. The purpose of the pre-Discovery webinars was to discuss the Discovery process and collect information on community mapping needs, as well as determine if any data exists could be incorporated into a possible Risk MAP project. There were nine webinar meetings held for the counties, communities, and other interested stakeholders throughout the Lake Ontario Contributing watershed area. Stakeholders within the Black River Watershed were specifically invited to attend the pre-Discovery webinars on September 16 and September 17, 2013; however they were welcome to attend any of the nine webinars held that week. Participation on the webinars was mixed with some counties and communities very interested in providing feedback and other communities providing less information.

Following the pre-Discovery Engagement meetings the project team held ten Discovery meetings for stakeholders within the Lake Ontario Contributing watersheds during the weeks of November 11th and November 18th, 2013. There were two in-person meetings held on November 13th and 14th for stakeholders within the Black River Watershed. During these meetings the project team followed up on the information collected during the pre-Discovery meetings and provided an additional opportunity for the communities and other stakeholders to give further information on mapping needs. NYSDEC used the information collected throughout the Discovery process to develop this proposed scope. Certainly more stream requests were provided than can be studied as part of this project and all additional study requests will be entered into CNMS to be considered for future floodplain mapping projects.

The Black River Watershed is the one of the eight watersheds that make up the larger Lake Ontario watershed. This watershed consists of five counties and 44 communities. Participation in the Discovery process was limited. Only 14 of the 44 communities attended the pre-Discovery webinars and/or the Discovery meetings and provided detailed request for updated stream studies and floodplain mapping.

Many communities in Black River Watershed have older Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) which were developed in the 1970s and 1980s. While communities in Oneida County have updated countywide FIRMs and communities in Herkimer County have updated preliminary maps, communities in the remaining three counties would benefit from a modernized Countywide DFIRMs. The many community officials find the existing maps very difficult to work with and find it challenging to locate structures on these maps accurately. Communities are experiencing growth along the major water bodies, such as the Black River, but are also seeing both growth

and the conversion of summer cottages to year round residences along many of the lakes in the watershed. A wholesale restudy of each county may not be warranted, but there are several key stream segments in each county which require new detailed studies. The new detailed studies combined with updated approximate studies in a new digital format would assist both the communities and the counties in enforcing floodplain regulations and managing development.

Beyond upgrading the existing detailed and approximate mapping to a digital format, the highest Black River Watershed stream restudy priorities are as follows.

1. The Black River should be studied using detailed methods from its confluence with Lake Ontario to the upstream limits in Lewis County for a distance of 93.72 miles. A detailed restudy of the Black River was the most frequent community request in the Black River Watershed and was requested by the Village of Carthage, Village of Dexter, Town of Pamela, City of Watertown, Town of Lowville, Town of Lyonsdale, Village of Lyons Falls, Town of Martinsburg, Town of Greig, Jefferson County and Lewis County. Community officials cite changes to infrastructure, such as dam removals and bridge replacements, as well as flood history and potential development as reasons for an upgraded study.

Note: Updated hydraulics and hydrology were developed for the Black River in portions of Jefferson County as part of the 2013 Jefferson County partial countywide map update. Much of the updated study was not published and should be incorporated in to the any mapping project moving forward. The revised Black River study was published in Village of Black River and the Town of LeRay, however updated hydrology and hydraulics exists from the confluence with Lake Ontario to the Town of Wilna downstream corporate limits for a distance of 23.9 miles. The existing unmapped hydraulics cover portions the following communities; Village of Dexter, Town and Village of Brownville, Village of Glen Park, Town of Hounsfield, Town of Pamela, City and Town of Watertown, Town of Rutland, and Town of Champion. Updated hydrology and hydraulics would be needed from the Town of Wilma downstream corporate limits to upstream Lewis County boundary for a distance of 69.82 miles

2. The Beaver River should be a new detailed study from its confluence with Swiss Creek to High Falls Pond in the Town and Village of Croghan for a distance of 13.85 miles. Both the Town and the Village noted there is development along this stream reach.
3. Roaring Brook should be studied as a detailed study from its confluence with the Black River upstream to Route 29 for a distance of 8.5 miles in the Town of Martinsburg. The current maps are inaccurate and depict homes that are at a much higher elevation in the floodplain. There is also significant erosion near where the brook crosses Route 29.
4. Kelsey Creek should be a detailed restudy in the Town of Pamela. Both the Town of Pamela and Jefferson County requested this 4.62 stream reach be studied due to new commercial development in the area. The stream reach experiences flooding due to ice dams.
5. Philomel Creek should be a detailed study from south of Route 12 and Lake Road intersection to Hinds Road for a distance of 2.28 miles in the Town of Pamela. There has been a culvert replacement across Route 12 and there new development along Route 342 and Route 37 which would benefit from an updated study.

In addition to these high priority detailed stream segments, many communities requested base flood elevations be developed for lakes with a significant number of residences surrounding them. These detailed lakes studies are as follows.

1. Base Flood Elevations should be developed for the Chain Lakes (Fourth, Seventh and Eighth Lake) within the Towns of Inlet and Webb. There are no detailed base flood elevations for the lakes in either community. Additionally, there are no FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Town of Inlet, and most of the population of the town is located along Route 28 along the Chain Lakes.
2. North Lake and South Lake should have base flood elevations developed within the Town of Ohio. There are many seasonal residences along the lakes.
3. Big Moose Lake should be a lake study with a base flood elevation developed. There are no base flood elevations on the current Town of Webb maps.
4. Copper Lake in southeast Town of Greig should be a new lake study with a base flood elevation developed. There are properties along the lake shore that are affected by flooding.
5. Brantingham Lake in the Town of Greig should be a lake study with a base flood elevation developed. There are many Letters of Map Amendment (LOMA) for structures along the lake.

Communities also provided a list of stream segments where they would like to see new approximate studies. Any mapping project moving forward should include these new approximate studies if the required topography is available.

1. Pine Creek, which runs approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the western corporate limit and south of North Lake Road, should be a new approximate study for a distance of 8.87 miles from Kayuta Lake in the Town of Forestport to the upstream limits in the Town of Ohio. There is a satellite Town garage at the corporate boundary.
2. An unnamed stream in the Town of Lowville should be a new approximate study from the intersection of Boshart Road and Patten Road to where the stream crosses Boshart Road for a distance of 4.54 miles. Currently this stream segment shown as two separate approximate studies on Panel 361558 0005C. There is significant Amish development in this area.

It is NYSDEC's understanding that in counties receiving new detailed modeling all existing approximate studies will be updated where topography is available. These existing approximate studies will not be listed separately at this time. NYSDEC would also like to request that any existing Lake BFE's that were determined and published as part of the LOMA process be included on the new maps. This would enable communities to adopt the flood elevations and would allow residents currently residing along these lakes and ponds to have accurately rated flood insurance policies.

Thank you for providing NYSDEC with the opportunity to recommend a scope of work for areas within the Black River Watershed. We look forward to working with you to refine and finalize this scope as we move forward. Please feel free to contact NYSDEC if you have any questions or would like additional information provided.

Sincerely,



Kelli Higgins-Roche
Environmental Engineer
Floodplain Management Section