FEMA Announces Discovery Meetings

What is a Discovery Meeting, and who should attend?
The Discovery Meeting is a focal point in FEMA's early coordination with communities. The meeting is high point in a process which reaches out to community and property stakeholders for disseminating information on study process and timelines, intake of local data and priorities, and exploration of data applications. For the Great Lakes Coastal Flood Study, this process encompasses a pre-meeting “Information Exchange” conference call, the field-based Discovery Meeting, and the posting of a Draft Discovery Report and Map for public review and comment. Participants in these conversations may include community leaders and officials involved in floodplain or coastal zone management, emergency management, GIS, public works, outreach and planning. Other participants will include property groups, local businesses, engineers, and regional planning and community service agencies.

In 2012, FEMA will conduct 24 Discovery Meetings in coastal communities along Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, and Lake St. Clair. The final schedule for all Discovery Meetings is listed in the inset and continues on the next page.

Partnership and exchange of information among FEMA, state and local communities and the technical community is vital to the success of defining coastal flood risk and building resiliency through community and hazard mitigation planning. The upcoming meetings follow a series of technical workshops held earlier this summer to share information on study methodology and seek feedback on technical issues.
Information Exchange Sessions
In order to make the Discovery Meetings effective, FEMA wants to provide an opportunity for pre-Discovery Meeting conference calls with local communities. The conference call information will be included in the Discovery Invitation letters mailed to local community officials. The sessions will begin the process of learning about local data availability and what the critical issues are for the Great Lakes communities.

Discovery and Initial Coordination Meetings
The Discovery Meetings are intended to inform community officials and the general public of the Great Lakes Coastal Flood Study goals and process, to talk about flood risk and mitigation opportunities, and to solicit input on issues critical for execution. During the meetings, FEMA will:

✓ Provide an overview of the Study and the Discovery process.
✓ Share ideas on how the data compiled for the Study can advance local, State, and Federal capability in public safety, hazard mitigation, and asset management.
✓ Utilize a Discovery Map to help identify existing local coastal data, coastal areas of concern, and mitigation action opportunities.
✓ Discuss how the study may affect your community as it relates to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
✓ Host interactive stations for draft coastal transect review and mitigation resources, strategies, and actions.

Discovery Report and Map
The final outputs of this Discovery process will include a Discovery Report and Discovery Map. The Discovery Report will summarize coastal flood risk data and mitigation information collected and analyzed through the Discovery process. The report will also discuss the next steps in the Great Lakes Coastal Flood Study and will outline how data collected may be used to develop future coastal flood risk products. The Discovery Map will depict the spatial data collected and will be used to help identify areas of coastal concern and mitigation opportunities. Draft and final versions of these products will be available for review prior to and after the meetings, respectively. The stakeholders will be provided a 45-day review period, during which they may submit comments or questions to FEMA. Communities are encouraged to utilize these final products to assist in planning efforts.