

Alabama Coastal Mapping Update Summary

FEMA's map modernization program concluded with fiscal year 2008 funding, and a new map maintenance program has begun. One particular point of emphasis for map maintenance is the revision of coastal inundation mapping for Baldwin and Mobile Counties in Alabama. Following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, immediate efforts were enacted to remap the coastal flood hazard areas in Louisiana and Mississippi. With the completion of these updates, the focus has shifted to Alabama and Northwest Florida. The Alabama Department of Economic and Consumer Affairs (ADECA), Office of Water Resources (OWR), has joined with the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) in an effort to update the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps for six coastal counties in Florida and two coastal counties in Alabama. Data collected during Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 indicates widespread inconsistencies between high water data and what is displayed on the current mapping. The project effort will be completed in three phases: storm surge modeling, overland wave modeling and mapping, and DFIRM production. Preliminary to this modeling and mapping effort, field reconnaissance and research was performed for Mobile and Baldwin Counties in Alabama. The purpose of this effort was to familiarize the study team with the varying coastal conditions, identify the type and nature of the vegetation and building obstructions, and document unique coastal features that need to be considered in coastal modeling. This presentation will provide a brief overview of the coastal inundation mapping process, details on the technical approach to new studies, the partnership with NFWFMD, and anticipated schedules for the completion of the project. It will also provide a summary of extreme tropical flooding events in Alabama history, previous coastal flood studies performed, and the results of reconnaissance efforts, including site observations from various locations along the Alabama coast.

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