STATE OF MONTANA
DRAFT FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

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Purpose of Floodplain Management in Montana:

The Montana Floodplain Management Program is responsible for the overall development and administration of two major programs and various subprograms. Included, are the Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management program, Community Assistance Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance, Cooperative Technical Partnership Program, and the Map Modernization Management Support Program (MMMS). The floodplain program performs a variety of administrative, managerial, technical, and educational duties relative to the state and federal floodplain management programs to ensure that local governments monitor and regulate floodplain development in a manner that minimizes the loss of life and property damage in the event of a 100-year flood. The Floodplain Management Section is responsible for the oversight of 125 locally administered floodplain management programs throughout Montana. The primary goal of the program is to reduce the loss of life and structural property through wise floodplain development and thru the promotion of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Flood Insurance. The secondary goals are to reduce the loss of functional floodplains and reduce the amount of erosion of stream banks due to unwise floodplain development.

Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP)

The floodplain program manager coordinates the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program in Montana. This program is primarily to relocate structures out of the 100-year floodplain. The secondary purpose is to elevate structures to 2 feet above the base flood elevation. Structural projects will be greatly limited based upon the type of project, location, and a cost/benefit comparison with other alternatives. The overall goal is to reduce flood insurance expenditures in the long run.

Community Assistance Program (CAP)

The purpose of the Community Assistance Program – State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) is to provide, through a State grant mechanism, a means to ensure that communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. CAP-SSSE is intended to accomplish this by funding States to provide technical assistance to NFIP communities and to evaluate community performance in implementing NFIP floodplain management activities with the additional goal of building community floodplain management expertise and capability.

General technical and engineering assistance is given to local and state governments, private property owners, and engineering consulting firms.

Cooperative Technical Partnerships Program (CTP) and other Flood Studies

Floodplain management studies are ongoing in Yellowstone, Carbon, Park, Flathead, Lewis & Clark, and Lincoln Counties and the Cities of Whitehall, Miles City, three Forks, and Ennis.

Also, the DNRC is currently the CTP for three different studies in Gallatin County.

I. State authority:

Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act of 1973. Montana's forefathers had a vision of where floodplain management would go. In 1973, the Montana Legislature passed the Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act. This statute has been one of the best in the nation for years in terms of addressing floodplain development in Montana. This statute apply common sense, protects the lives and property of thousands of property owners on Montana's floodplains. Montana has incorporated is statute into Administrative Rules that the majority of communities have adopt. These rules are more stringent than the Federal minimum floodplain regulations.

The Montana DNRC is also the NFIP Coordinating Office, as assigned by the Governor on (???) date. The NFIP coordinator is also the CAP Manager.

Other Agencies Implementing Floodplain Management. Currently, no other agencies directly implement or enforce floodplain management. However, there is regular coordination with a number of agencies that refer to the DNRC floodplain regulations in conjunction with their own regulations and permitting requirements. These agency permits are the: COE Federal Clean Water Act (404 permit), DEQ Short-Term Exemption from Montana's Surface Water Quality Standards (3A Authorization), Conservation District Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (Conservation District 310 Permit), DNRC Montana Water Use Act (Water Right Permit and Change Authorization), DNRC Montana Land-Use License or Easement on Navigable Waters, Local Health department regulations (Septic Permit), and Local Subdivision Regulations.

II. Vision for the next 5 years:

Over the past 12 years, the Montana Floodplain Program has been stagnant due to inadequate state funding for staffing. Once the NFIP got underway in Montana in the early to mid 1980's, funding levels peaked, and has gradually decreased over the years due to attrition and budget cuts. However, the demand for general and technical assistance has increased annually due to the increase in floodplain development. Currently, there is a heavy demand for Montana's river front/floodplain properties, and Montana focuses on the protection of streams and rivers, and their functioning floodplains. Montana doesn't experience deep, 'to the roof peak' types of flooding. Our rivers have higher velocities, which result in channel migration, and forever changing floodplains. Thus, floodplain management can be very complicated and often times controversial.

Montana's strength is its vision and compassion for floodplain management in Montana. The DNRC envisions the floodplain management program would be as such: A program that is the central based, coordinates the NFIP, and provides consistent advice to local governments, property owners and developers. The Floodplain Management program has a good working relationship with other state and federal agencies, local governments and the consulting world. This relationship has developed the comradery that benefits everything about floodplain management, the NFIP, and the protection of Montana's natural resource and beauty.

Our weakness is the lack of adequate funding and staffing to provide the necessary support to this program.

III. Strategy to Improve Floodplain Management

Montana's strategy for improving floodplain management is to develop a statewide support system for floodplain management to all the communities in Montana. Currently, we have one and a half FTE's dedicated to the floodplain program. We currently have 5748 miles of delineated floodplains in only 56 counties, totaling 125 communities. This equates to 103 miles per county. There are no building permit requirements in these counties except to obtain a floodplain development permit. Therefore development can occur unknowingly due to the vast area under floodplain management jurisdiction.

However, the DNRC has recently developed a budget proposal for increased funding over the next five years. This proposal would provide for state cost share participation in the FEMA Map Modernization program. The state cost share program would consist of two positions to manage the state-mapping component to the federal program as well as funds to match federal funds for contracting detailed floodplain delineations.

One position would identify flood hazard mapping priorities with cities and counties, coordinate and administer ongoing floodplain mapping projects, and pursue state grants and other funds. Another position would review and coordinate the engineering and technical aspects of ongoing flood hazard mapping.

The state money would be used for salary, operation funds and money for contracting floodplain mapping. The state money would be used to leverage other funds such as from the Federal Emergency Management Agency Map Modernization program, the Corps of Engineers Assistance to States program and possibly local government as well as private money where a subdivision is being designed.

This proposal must be approved at the legislative level before funding will be available. The outlook for this proposal to be successful at this time is moderate.

The DNRC has recently identified two Engineers (PE's) to dedicate a portion of their time to working on floodplain management for technical review.

Program Milestones for:

FY 05: TBD after 3MS program is in place.
FY 06:
FY 07:
FY 08:
FY 09:

- There will be continued cooperation with the USGS on hydrology issues. The DNRC may entertain the idea of contracting with the USGS to provide the Hydrology for any new flood studies that takes place in the future. Also, the floodplain program will continue to cooperate with the COE, NRCS, Conservation Districts, Watershed groups, the AMFM, and the Montana Water Course.

The Floodplain Program is primarily the CAP and FMA programs now. However, the new 3MS program and State Engineering Support are being developed at the time of writing this plan. The estimated times for the entire program activities are below.

The Timeline for the Engineering Aspects of the Floodplain Program are being developed at this time, and will be included at a later date.

	% of Time Spent on Activity					
	FY04	**FY05**	**FY06**	**FY07**	**FY08**	**FY09**
CAP Program 1 1/2 FTE						
5-Year Plan	7%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Ordinance Assistance	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
CAV's	16%	16%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Entering data into CIS	0%	5%	5%	7%	7%	7%
Model Ord Research	1%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Workshops & Training	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
GTA	38%	35%	35%	40%	40%	40%
Mapping Assistance	3%	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Coord w/ Agencies	8%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Assist w/ Diasters	*	*	*	*	*	*
CAP TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
FMA Program 1/2 FTE						
Solicitation and advertising	14%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Applicant assistance	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Workshops & Training	15%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Application review	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Application processing	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%
Mitigation project oversight	0%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Coordination w/ other agencies	9%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
FMA Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
3MS Program						
Minimal Support Activities	8%	8%	To be finalized by Final Version			
Assessment of Community Mapping Needs	12%	12%				
Inventory of Digital Base Maps	10%	4%				
Coordination and Effort in Building Partnerships	12%	12%				
Training	5%	5%				
Compliance/Map Adoption	5%	5%				
Project Scoping Participation	8%	8%				
Outreach	15%	15%				
Managing Updates to NMIS	5%	5%				
Contract Preparation	10%	10%				
Performing Metrics and Goals	5%	5%				
H & H Review	5%	5%				
3MS Total	100%	94%				

IV. Map Modernization activities

SUPPORT JUSTIFICATION: The United State Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1968 to offer communities nonstructural approaches toward reducing flood damage. The program's purpose is to make flood insurance available to property owners in flood prone communities in exchange for a community's agreement to guide future floodplain development.

The NFIP requires that local government adopt and enforce floodplain regulations before they can obtain local insurance in their communities. Subsequently, the Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act was enacted in 1971. Approximately 121 local governments have since adopted floodplain management ordinances that meet or exceed state and federal minimum requirements.

The local ordinances are based on maps as well as river hydrology and hydraulics that are in excess of 25 years old. A 2002 survey showed that 53 percent of the flood hazard maps are between 15-20 years old and 21 percent are 20 to 25 years old. Many subdivisions, roads, natural and man-made channels and other changes are not reflected on the flood hazard maps. Increasing development is occurring in many areas of the state requiring flood hazard areas to be newly identified and mapped.

A white paper titled: Effective State Floodplain Management Programs prepared by the national Association of State Flood Plain Managers, Inc. states: "Flood hazard areas change over time, through deliberate modification or as a result of changes in the watershed or the body of water itself. An effective state floodplain management program ensures that the flood risks are known and that changing conditions are accounted for."

In federal fiscal year 2004, FEMA was appropriated $250 million to initiate a nationwide flood map modernization program. FEMA is seeking the same amount for map modernization in FY's 2005 thru 2007. The program involves updating existing floodplain data and maps as well as completing maps on high priority flood prone areas.

FEMA gives high priority to areas having large flood damages but also to states that actively participate monetarily in any mapping program. FEMA money available for mapping in Montana in the past has been $30-50,000 per year but could be up to several million over the next ten years. FEMA has just provided a $30,000 grant for the state to put together a business plan on how it expects to participate in the FEMA map modernization program. The FEMA program is proposing an 80/20 federal state match. However, other states including Montana are trying to convince FEMA to not require a mandatory match until the third or fourth year of the Map Modernization program.

A proactive participation by the state in the new mapping program with FEMA has the potential to substantially lower the direct cost of floodplain mapping to the state. The total cost is estimated to be $9.3 million to develop new and updated flood hazard maps of the top 11 prioritized counties where substantial development is occurring. New and updated maps with

newer subdivisions and streets together with potential flood hazard areas would greatly streamline land use decisions of developers and local government officials.

Numerous homes and structures are being built along streams and rivers in Montana**.** Information compiled by FEMA as of 12/31/2003, shows there were 3,133 flood insurance policies in force having a total insured value of $353.5 million. Loss payments to the insured from 1978 to 2003 total $5.3 million in Montana. Only, about 10 percent of the homes are insured in Montana's flood hazard areas. A 2000 voter's survey of Gallatin County indicated that 72 percent of the voters felt that development should not be permitted in floodplain areas. Encroachments continue into floodways because of inadequate knowledge of flooding elevations in floodplain areas. Maps of the floodways and floodplains are needed to illustrate the flood hazard information regarding home construction and other activities in flood-prone areas. Mitigation actions that include smart construction before a flood occurs have been proven to reduce overall flood damage when a large flood occurs.

Typically disaster repair costs for public infrastructure are paid by state, local or federal government agencies from local special tax assessments and federal disaster payments. While individual damages are to be offset by flood insurance, the repair of damages to roads, bridges, and other infrastructure is usually a cost to state and local governments. Consideration of flood damage potential information during engineering and construction of roads, bridges and other structures would likely avoid or minimize flood damage expenses later. The savings that would occur to both local, state and federal disaster expenses would be easily in excess of the proposed program mapping costs. Since 1974 and to 2003, infrastructure repairs total $4.9 million from state funds, $3.6 million local funds, and $25.1 from federal funds.

Floodplain maps would be available or updated and be used by individuals as well as cities and counties in their respective floodplain management programs. Homes and public infrastructure facilities built within floodplain areas, if built according to local flood proofing standards, would not sustain any flood damage in a 100-year flood event.

Insert language from Business Plan here once finalized.

V. Needs analysis and gap assessments

Current funding levels have been inadequate to accomplish tasks currently laid out for the CAP-SSSE program. However, FY04 funding for the CAP program allowed for the addition of a 1/2FTE, which came on board at the end of the third quarter. It is anticipated this will improve activity completion greatly, but will not afford the program to undertake any new activities to improve the world of floodplain management. It is anticipated that the total workload for the CAP-SSSE position will also increase due to the activities of the 3MS program.

Current funding levels are adequate at the moment, but are anticipated to be inadequate in the near future. Additional activities the floodplain program would consider are:

- Additional workshops for:
    - Local floodplain Administrators/Lenders/Agents

    - Realtors
    - Consultants
    - Surveyors
- More public outreach such as:
    - Improved website specific for Montana
    - Public Awareness/Education Booths at the County Fairs in Flathead county, Missoula County, Cascade County, Yellowstone County, and Gallatin County.
- Attendance at additional conferences for continued and new education
- Technical Guidance Bulletin development