The Coastal Barrier Resources Act “simply adopts the sensible approach that risk associated with new private development in these sensitive areas should be borne by the private sector, not underwritten by the American taxpayer.”

President Reagan 1982 signing statement
The CBRA meets a national problem with less Federal involvement, not more.”
~ President Reagan, 1982

Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)

- Congress enacted CBRA and created the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) in 1982
- Designated relatively undeveloped coastal barriers as part of the CBRS
- Prohibits most Federal funding and financial assistance, including flood insurance within designated areas. Examples include (but are not limited to):
  - Beach renourishment
  - Construction of seawalls
  - Disaster assistance
  - New road construction
- Market-based approach to conservation
- Does not restrict private, local, or state funded development
In 2007, GAO found that about 97% of all units remained undeveloped or experienced minimal development. About 3% of units experienced significant development.

Goals of CBRA

1. Keep people out of harm’s way
2. Save taxpayer dollars
   - More than $9.5 billion estimated savings as of 2013
3. Protect valuable habitat for fish and wildlife
   - Habitat for threatened and endangered species and commercial and sportfish species

In 2007, GAO found that about 97% of all units remained undeveloped or experienced minimal development. About 3% of units experienced significant development.
870 CBRS Units (approx. 3.5 million acres) located in 23 states and territories

Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico coasts
Official CBRS Maps and Digital Boundary Data

- CBRS boundaries are depicted on a set of official maps referenced in the law.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) maintains the official maps.

- Maps were originally hand drawn on USGS quads.

- Completed a digital conversion for most of the CBRS maps in 2016.

- CBRS boundaries are now accessible in a variety of digital formats in addition to the hard copy maps.
Digital CBRS Data Availability

1. CBRS Mapper

2. Web Map Services (WMS, REST) which can be consumed by:
   * GIS professionals
   * Federal, state and local GIS applications
   * FEMA products such as NFHL Viewer and Map Service Center

3. Shapefile Download
   * Recommend subscribing to listserv for updates

Link to more information about CBRS digital data:
https://www.fws.gov/cbra/maps/Boundaries.html
CBRS Map Revisions

• With a few minor exceptions, only Congress can approve CBRS boundary revisions to add or remove land

• The 2000 and 2006 CBRA reauthorizations directed the Service to digitally remap the CBRS and recommend additions to Congress

• In December 2018, Congress adopted changes to about 7% of CBRS units resulting from mapping projects completed by the Service in 2016. These changes affected over 50 communities.

• The Service is currently remapping an additional 43% of the existing CBRS units, largely through a Hurricane Sandy related project affecting over 200 communities.

Proposed addition (shown in pink outline) to existing Otherwise Protected Area Unit NJ-05P in New Jersey

For more information about CBRS map modernization, visit: https://www.fws.gov/cbra/maps/Map-Modernization.html
CBRS Boundaries on FIRM Panels

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the authoritative data provider for CBRS Boundaries

- Historically, CBRS boundaries were shown on FEMA’s FIRM panels
- ~1,400 of 2,500 FIRM panels (>56%) would become outdated soon due to CBRS remapping efforts
- CBRS maps and FIRM panels have different lifecycles
  - Changes made effective through legislation enacted by Congress. FWS does not control the timing
  - FIRMs cannot be updated immediately after a CBRS map change
- FEMA and the Service have worked collaboratively to update the delivery of CBRS data to the public
Removal of CBRS boundaries from FIRM Panels

- In February 2019, FEMA officially removed the CBRS boundaries from FIRMs via Letter of Map Revision

- FEMA now displays the Service’s dynamic CBRS data service in:
  - National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer
  - NFHL based FIRM and FIRMette exports.

CBRS areas shown with black hatching in the NFHL Viewer
To access the CBRS Validation Tool, visit www.fws.gov/cbra. Click on the “CBRS Mapper” graphic on the right side of the page.
Select the “CBRS Mapper” to view the existing CBRS units.
Use the “Find Location” tool in the upper right corner of the CBRS Mapper to zoom to an area.
Type an address or location in the search window and select it when it appears in the drop down window. If the address does not appear, you may need to search for the city and state or zip code and use the zoom tools to locate the property.
If producing CBRS documentation for a structure, verify that you have identified the correct structure. Because the Service cannot guarantee the placement of a marker by an automated address locator, the CBRS Mapper does not automatically put a marker on the property.

It is the user’s responsibility to ensure that the pin location corresponds with the actual location of the subject property.

Click the “CBRS Validation Tool” button in the upper right corner of the mapper.
Follow the directions in the tool. First, click the pin icon to select your point of interest on the map (i.e., the structure or property for which you require CBRS information).
Click the point on the map where you would like to place your point. In this case, the structure that corresponds to the address that we searched for at 257 Minorca Beach Way, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169 is located here (see pin).

NOTE: A structure bisected by the CBRS boundary (i.e., both partially in and partially out) is within the CBRS. A pin placed on a bisected structure must be placed on the portion of the structure furthest within the unit (including any attached features such as a deck or stairs).
Once you have selected your point, enter the address or description of the point location in the window under “Step 2.”
Once you have entered the address, read the “Point Placement Certification Statement” and click “Certify and Create PDF.”
Once you have clicked the “Certify and Create PDF” button, a link will appear at the bottom of the window. Click this link to open your PDF.
The CBRS Mapper Documentation produced by the CBRS Validation Tool includes:

- A map depicting the pin location with respect to the CBRS unit(s) in the area
- The user supplied address
- A statement indicating whether the pin location is within or outside of the CBRS (or in the “CBRS Buffer Zone”)
- The flood insurance prohibition date (where applicable)
- The System Unit establishment date (where applicable)
- Information regarding the official CBRS map for the area
- Notes regarding any applicable restrictions on Federal funding and financial assistance
- Links for more information
What happens when your point is within the “CBRS Buffer Zone”?

The CBRS Validation Tool will not provide in/out CBRS documentation for locations that are within the “CBRS Buffer Zone” (i.e., areas within about 20 feet of a CBRS boundary). Such locations require a “CBRS Property Determination.”

A CBRS Property Determination is an official letter from the Service that indicates whether or not a specific property or project site is located within the CBRS.

See the Service’s website for additional information about determinations: https://www.fws.gov/cbra/documentation.html
FEMA Flood Insurance Manual Changes

- FEMA’s Flood Insurance Manual was updated in April 2019. For communities containing CBRS units, the manual now requires the following documentation:

1) the output from the CBRS Validation Tool

or

2) a letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for structures within the CBRS Buffer Zone)

See Appendix D of the manual for additional information:

https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/178743

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See Appendix D of the manual for additional information:

https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/178743
Subscribe to the CBRA Listserv

The CBRA listserv electronic mailing list will provide subscribers with updates when there are changes to the CBRS boundaries or other news items related to CBRA.

To subscribe via email, send a blank message to: CBRA-join@lists.fws.gov.

You will receive an email indicating that your request has been received. To confirm you want to be added to the mailing list, simply reply to that message, keeping the Subject: header intact. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please check your spam filter.

For more information, visit: https://www.fws.gov/cbra/Listserv.html
Questions?

Email cbra@fws.gov
What is the difference between an Otherwise Protected Area (OPA) and a System Unit?

The CBRS includes two types of units, **System Units** and **Otherwise Protected Areas (OPAs)**.

**System Units** are predominately comprised of privately owned areas, though they may also contain areas that are held for conservation and/or recreation. System Units are depicted in pink in the CBRS Mapper. Most new Federal expenditures and financial assistance, including Federal flood insurance, are prohibited within System Units.

**OPAs** are predominantly comprised of conservation and/or recreation areas, though they may also contain private areas that are not held for conservation and/or recreation. OPAs are denoted with a “P” at the end of the unit number and are depicted in green in the CBRS Mapper. The only Federal spending prohibition within OPAs is the prohibition related to Federal flood insurance.
What is the “Flood Insurance Prohibition Date”? 

The date on which the prohibition on Federal flood insurance first took effect for a given area. The NFIP uses this date to determine whether a structure located within the CBRS is eligible for Federal flood insurance.

Federal flood insurance is available within the CBRS for structures that were constructed (or permitted and under construction) before the area’s flood insurance prohibition date (which is generally tied to the date that the area was first established as either a System Unit or OPA, but may differ in some cases).

If an existing insured structure within the CBRS is substantially improved or damaged (i.e., over 50 percent of the structure’s market value), its Federal flood insurance policy cannot be renewed.

What is the “System Unit Establishment Date”? 

The date on which prohibitions on Federal expenditures besides flood insurance (e.g., dredging and disaster assistance) went into effect.

This is the date that FEMA uses to determine whether a road, structure, or facility is an “existing facility” as defined by its regulations implementing CBRA and the Stafford Act (44 CFR Part 206.342(c)).

Additionally, this is the date used to determine whether Federal navigation channels and related structures were authorized prior to the date on which the area was included in a System Unit (16 U.S.C. 3505(b)).

In most cases, the System Unit establishment date is the same as the flood insurance prohibition date. However, these dates differ in areas that were first designated in 1982 and also in areas that have been reclassified from OPA to System Unit.