



News Release
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NRD Board to Update Floodplain Data

The Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Directors has approved contracting for an update of Papillion Creek Watershed hydrology to provide new flood hazard information which could potentially factor into floodplain mapping due for release by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2019. Much of the Omaha metro area is within this watershed.

The contract with FYRA engineering will total \$167,000 and will cover FYRA's study of the watershed that will incorporate new rainfall data and the flood protection benefits being realized by the recently completed Prairie Queen Reservoir, Dam Site 15A now under construction and two additional reservoirs being designed for construction in the watershed.

"We hope that the new FEMA floodplain maps, due to be published in 2019, take into account all the latest flood protection efforts by the NRD in the watershed," said John Winkler, NRD General Manager. "We also have new rainfall intensity and distribution data, recently published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which could show a significant reduction in peak flows within the watershed," he said. Rainfall frequency and distribution was last published for this area by NOAA during the 1960s.

"This process has the potential to remove thousands of homes and businesses from currently designated floodplains and to keep countless others from being placed in floodplains," said Winkler.

"This effort represents one of the main benefits of Nebraska's Natural Resources District system in that we stay abreast of the most current information and technology available and we deploy these resources when appropriate to protect lives, property and the economic well-being of our constituents," said Winkler.

The NRD, along with the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership, recently completed Dam site WP-5 west of Papillion, now known as Prairie Queen Recreation Area. Dam Site 15A is now under construction near 168th and Fort Streets in Omaha. Two additional sites in Sarpy County are being designed.

“If preliminary results hold true, this will demonstrate without a doubt, that these new reservoirs will have a dramatic impact in protecting our floodplains and reducing flood potential,” said Winkler. “Without question, the new data and new floodplain conditions present today should be considered” he added.

A preliminary study by FYRA Engineering of the West Branch Papillion Creek Watershed showed much-improved protection for the Papillion and Millard areas produced by the new reservoirs, floodplain mapping techniques, and other updated data.