

Floodplain Management and Land Use

Description

The Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) will provide technical support to local and Tribal governments to adopt and implement protective floodplain management policies and practices. These policies and practices could include adopting updated flood maps, improvements to land use planning and zoning, adopting model floodplain ordinance language, and support for participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) program.

This work element supports actions taken and regulations applicable within the Basin by counties, cities, and towns, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, and the Quinault Indian Nation.

Potential Principles

Principle 1: Protective floodplain management programs and land use policies are an essential part of the long-term strategy for flood damage reduction in the Chehalis Basin.

Principle 2: Local and Tribal jurisdictions can undertake a number of actions to prevent the development of new structures in areas vulnerable to channel erosion or flooding from current and future predicted 100-year flood levels and to encourage a long-term shift in private real estate development patterns away from flood-prone areas.

Principle 3: Many basin jurisdictions have already adopted more protective floodplain management policies, but there are opportunities to improve the consistency and protectiveness of those policies across the basin.

Principle 4: OCB has no regulatory authority to mandate any actions of local or Tribal governments; its role will be consultative and assistance oriented. However, the Chehalis Basin Board may determine that local governments that have not adopted and/or implemented recommended floodplain management policies and practices may not be eligible to receive funding for local flood damage reduction projects.

Principle 5: Where appropriate, OCB will time efforts within this work element to support and take advantage of basin governments' regular comprehensive planning cycles.

Key Components

OCB will work with local and Tribal governments to support adoption and implementation of more protective floodplain management programs and land use policies. Recommended actions for each jurisdiction may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following actions.

Improved Floodplain Management Standards

- Adopt improved floodplain management standards in jurisdictions' floodplain management ordinances. These could include, but are not necessarily limited to, the 11 standards recommended by French & Associates in a 2017 report for the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority, as follows.¹
 - Using the flood of record if it is higher than the base flood elevation (BFE)
 - Using best available data when there is no BFE
 - Determining the BFE when there is no available flood data
 - No adverse impact from development
 - Filling restrictions to maintain the floodplain's storage capacity
 - Protection for critical facilities
 - Prohibiting storage of hazardous materials in the floodplain
 - Subdivision set asides to have buildable sites on higher ground outside the floodplain
 - 3 ft freeboard requirement for new buildings or substantial improvement of existing buildings
 - Non-conversion agreements to ensure areas below a flood protection elevation are not converted to incompatible uses
 - Tracking of substantial improvements
- Participate in the Community Rating System program and/or a more advanced level within the CRS program, where appropriate

¹ See French & Associates, "Status of Improved Regulatory Standards," February 7, 2017. https://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/FrenchAssociates2017_StatusofImprovedRegulatoryStandards.pdf

Map Updates

- Adopt updated flood maps (particularly within the upper basin) to reflect the best available data on 100-year flooding
- Conduct Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) mapping on rivers and streams with property at risk of erosion

Land Use Planning and Zoning

- Incorporate comprehensive flood hazard management planning into updates of comprehensive plans, zoning, shoreline management programs, critical areas ordinances, and land use policies, as needed. This could include:
 - Land use, housing, infrastructure, and critical areas updates
 - Update land use maps to restrict floodplain development
 - Plan for receiving areas and associated city services and infrastructure needed to accommodate new development and residents who relocate from flood-prone areas
 - Incorporate approved flood-damage reduction infrastructure projects and transportation/access improvements into land-use planning and zoning
 - Address equity and affordable housing to include projections of the impact of updated plans and policies on housing needs and future land use designations
 - Use the Open Space Taxation (aka the Current Use) program and/or the state's Transfer of Development Rights program to support floodplain management and other planning objectives

Cost

Total estimated 30-year cost range: \$2.4 M-\$4.8 M (This averages to an annual cost of \$80K-\$160K; however, support is anticipated to be concentrated in the 2-3 years preceding jurisdictions' updates of their comprehensive plans, which occurs every 10 years.)

This funding would cover the cost of contractor support that would provide outreach, coordination, and individualized support to local and Tribal governments to adopt some or all of the recommended actions above, such as providing recommendations to improve floodplain management programs, development of model ordinance language to support adoption of protective standards, support for CRS participation,

analysis and support for adopting updated flood maps, and technical assistance with updating comprehensive plans and zoning to minimize flooding impacts to valuable structures.

Estimates are based on past and current contractor support, including local government CRS implementation and mapping analyses to support letter of map revisions, and an assumption that major updates to floodplain programs and plans would occur three times over the 30-year period and that OCB would provide limited support outside those times. The level of CFAR contractor support for local and Tribal governments in the 2023-25 biennium is similar to the low end of the cost range.

More Information

Prepared by Kat Dickey, Flood Risk Reduction Program Coordinator, Office of Chehalis Basin

Refer to [Floodplain Management Programs webpage](#) of the Chehalis Basin Strategy website for more details.