

Floodplain Permits

Purpose: Every county and flood prone municipality in West Virginia participates in the National Floodplain Insurance Program (NFIP), and has an ordinance to regulate development in the floodplain. The ordinance includes a flood map that designates floodplain areas, and establishes a permitting system to regulate new development in the floodplain. Some jurisdictions regulate activities in and around streams regardless of floodplain designation.

The NFIP sets minimum standards for regulating development in the floodplain, and some communities have more stringent requirements. Below are some minimal standards that may apply to stream restoration activities.

- In all floodplain ordinances, the definition of “development” includes dredging, filling, grading and excavation. Most stream restoration projects may therefore be considered “development”, for which a county or community permit is required.
- Floodplain ordinances also regulate the building or altering of new or replacement bridges, culverts or other stream crossings.

Review Process: Before altering or relocating a watercourse in the floodplain, consult with the local county, town or city floodplain permit officer about whether a permit is required, and the amount of fee. In reviewing permit applications, the county or community will determine if the proposed project is within the designated floodplain, as well as the specific regulatory standards that pertain to the particular floodplain area. The following are some of the minimum regulatory standards for projects within the different floodplain areas established on flood maps:

- In Approximate A zones, the permit officer must be given written assurance that the flood carrying capacity of the stream will be maintained. On all but extremely small projects this will generally be accomplished by providing a pre- and post-development engineering study demonstrating the project will not cause an unacceptable rise (1-ft. or greater).
- In AE zones with base flood elevations but without a designated floodway, all development may not create more than a 1-ft. cumulative rise in flood elevations. The permit officer may require an engineering study to demonstrate that a 1-ft. cumulative rise will not be exceeded.
- In AE zones with base flood elevations and floodways, hydrologic and hydraulic analysis is required to demonstrate that development will result in no increase to the base flood elevation (zero rise).

Before issuing a permit, the county or community permit officer will require copies of all other permits required by federal or state law.

Permit Cost: Varies

Contact Information:

West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Capitol Complex, Bldg. 1, Rm. EB-80
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-5380

To see a list of local floodplain permit officers go to:

<http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/MitigationRecovery/Pages/Floodplain-Manager-Contact-Information.aspx>

For information on floodplain management go to:

<http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/MitigationRecovery/Pages/Floodplain-Management.aspx>

For information on floodplain regulations go to:

<http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/MitigationRecovery/Pages/Floodplain-Management.aspx>

For an on-line West Virginia flood-mapping tool go to:

<http://www.mapwv.gov/flood/>

To see FEMA-issued flood maps go to:

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal>



[Bankfull flow over cross vane and step pool in Horseshoe Run, Tucker County](#)