

Discovery Report Appendix O

Watershed Recommended Scope of Work

Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence Watershed

HUC 04150309

July 2016



FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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November 23, 2015

Mr. Alan Springett
FEMA Region II
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278-0002

Re: Headwaters of the St. Lawrence Watershed Recommended Scope of Work

Dear Mr. Springett:

Please accept the State's priorities for new or revised floodplain mapping within the Headwaters of the St. Lawrence Watershed as developed through the Lake Ontario Discovery project. Pre-Discovery community engagement meetings were held for the Headwaters to the St Lawrence Watershed via webinar the week of September 16, 2013. The purpose of the Pre-Discovery webinars was to discuss the Discovery process and collect information on community mapping needs, as well as determine if any data that might exist could be incorporated into a possible Risk MAP project. There were nine webinar meetings held for the counties, communities, and other interested stakeholders throughout the Lake Ontario Contributing watershed area. Stakeholders within the Headwaters to the St Lawrence watershed were specifically invited to attend the Pre-Discovery webinar on September 16, 2013; however they were welcome to attend any of the nine webinars held that week. Participation on the webinars was mixed with some counties and communities very interested in providing feedback and other communities more reticent to provide information.

Following the Pre-Discovery Engagement meetings the project team held ten Discovery meetings for stakeholders within the Lake Ontario Contributing watersheds during the weeks of November 11th and November 18th, 2013. There were two in-person meetings held on November 14th for stakeholders within the Headwaters of the St Lawrence watershed. During these meetings the project team followed up on the information collected during the Pre-Discovery meetings and provided an additional opportunity for the communities and other stakeholders to give further information on mapping needs. NYSDEC used the information collected throughout the Discovery Process to develop this proposed scope. Certainly more stream requests were provided than can be studied as part of this project and all additional study requests will be entered into CNMS to be considered for future floodplain mapping projects.

The Headwaters to the St Lawrence Watershed is the one of the eight watersheds that make up the larger Lake Ontario Watershed. This watershed consists of two counties and eleven communities. Only a handful of the communities within the Headwaters to the St Lawrence Watershed attended the Pre-Discovery meeting and/or the Discovery meeting to provide requests for updated stream studies.

Many communities in both St Lawrence County and Jefferson County have older Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) which were developed in the 1970s and 1980s. These communities would benefit from a modernized Countywide DFIRM. The community officials find the existing maps very difficult to work with, and it can be close to impossible to locate structures on these maps accurately. Both Jefferson and St Lawrence County are experiencing growth along the major water bodies and are seeing the conversion of summer cottages to year round residences. A

wholesale restudy of each county may not be warranted, but there are several key stream segments which require new detailed studies. The new detailed studies combined with updated approximate A studies in a new digital format would assist both the communities and the counties in enforcing floodplain regulations and managing development.

Beyond upgrading the existing detailed and approximate mapping to a digital format, the Headwaters to the St Lawrence watershed stream restudy priorities are as follows.

1. The Lake Ontario Shoreline should be restudied using detailed methods. This was requested by several communities, including the Town of Cape Vincent, Town of Alexandria, and Jefferson County on behalf of the Village of Clayton, due to development pressure along the lakefront and the lack of detailed mapping. A base flood elevation would be useful to aid community officials permitting building. Some of the lower elevation areas along the lake shore flood, which impact roads and access to properties. This includes bays, such as Goose Bay in the Town of Clayton.
2. The St. Lawrence River, including Alexandria Bay, should be upgraded to a detailed study for a distance of 68.3 miles. This request was made by St. Lawrence County, Town of Alexandria on behalf of the Village of Alexandria Bay, the Town of Hammond, and the City of Ogdensburg due to the lack of detailed, and in some cases inaccurate information along the St. Lawrence River. The Village of Alexandria Bay experiences flooding along the St. Lawrence, while the City of Ogdensburg believes the approximate floodplain extents are overstated. There is significant waterfront development in the Village of Alexandria Bay, Town of Hammond, Town of Morristown, and the City of Ogdensburg. This is the 1000 islands resort area which sees a great deal of waterfront development. The Town of Waddington, which is outside the project area, also requested an updated study of the St. Lawrence River.
3. French Creek should be restudied through the Village of Clayton for a distance of 1.4 miles by detailed methods. This stream restudy request was made by Jefferson County on behalf of the Village due to the increased development pressure within the Village.
4. Mullet Creek should be a detailed restudy through the Towns of Alexandria and Orleans for a distance of 6.1 miles. Both the Town and Jefferson County requested updated hydraulics and advisory flood elevations to assist with development along the creek.
5. Otter Creek should be a new detailed study from its confluence of The Narrows to the upstream limit for a distance of 5.8 miles through the Town of Alexandria and the Village of Alexandria Bay. There is routine flooding near the State Route 12 Bridge crossing which is in a previously unstudied area.

Communities also provided a list of stream segments where they would like to see updated approximate studies. Any mapping project moving forward should include these new or updated approximate studies if the required topography is available.

6. Chippewa Creek should be restudied using approximate methods for a distance of 9.6 miles in the Town of Hammond and the Town of Morristown. There are several to bridge and culvert replacements along this creek through the Town.

It is NYSDEC's understanding that in counties receiving new detailed modeling all existing approximate A studies will be updated with new approximate A modeling where topography was collected. These existing approximate studies will not be listed separately at this time. NYSDEC would also like to request that any existing Lake BFE's that were determined as published as part of the LOMA process be included on the new maps if possible. This would enable communities to adopt the flood elevations and would allow residents currently residing along these lakes and ponds to have accurately rated flood insurance policies.

Thank you for providing NYSDEC with the opportunity to recommend a scope of work for areas within the Headwaters to the St Lawrence Watershed. We look forward to working with you to refine and finalize this scope as we move forward. Please feel free to contact NYSDEC if you have any questions or would like additional information provided.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelli A. Higgins-Roche". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kelli A. Higgins-Roche, CFM
Environmental Engineer
Floodplain Management Section