

Flood Glossary

100-Year (or Base) Flood:

A flood event that statistically has a 1 out of 100 (or one percent) chance of being equaled or exceeded on a specific watercourse in any given year.

Channel:

An open conveyance of surface stormwater having a bottom and sides in a linear configuration. Channels can be natural or man-made. Constructed channels can be plain earth, landscaped, or lined with concrete, stone, or any other hard surface to resist erosion and scour.

Culvert:

A hydraulically short conduit that conveys surface water runoff through a roadway embankment or through some other type of flow obstruction.

Detention Basin:

A basin or reservoir where water is stored for regulating a flood. It has outlets for releasing the flows during the floods. (Note: a *retention basin* is a basin or reservoir where water is stored for regulating a flood but does **not** have outlets for releasing the flows. Instead, the water must be disposed by draining into the soil, evaporation or pumping systems.)

Embankment:

A man-made earth structure constructed for the purpose of impounding water.

Federally-Mapped Floodplain:

A flood prone area that has been mapped and accepted by FEMA as the result of a flood insurance study (FIS) for a watercourse and surrounding areas. Mapped floodplains are used for flood insurance needs and for other regulatory purposes.

Floodplain:

The area adjoining a watercourse that may be covered by floodwater during a flood.

Floodplain Management:

A program that uses corrective and preventative measures to reduce flood and erosion damage and preserve natural habitat and wildlife resources in floodprone areas. Some of these measures include: adopting and administering Floodplain Regulations, resolving drainage complaints, protecting riparian habitat communities, and assuring effective maintenance and operation of flood control works.

Floodway:

The channel of a watercourse and portion of the adjacent floodplain that is needed to convey the base or 100-year flood event without increasing flood levels by more than one foot of floodwater.

Gabion:

A wire cage or box filled with rocks for use in the construction of dams, retaining walls and other structures.

Sediment:

Soil particles, sand, and minerals washed from the land into aquatic systems as a result of natural and human activities.

Spill:

A predicted flow of water that escapes the stream channel and flows in a different direction.

Spillway:

An outlet pipe or channel serving to discharge water from a dam, ditch, gutter, or basin.

Storm Drainage System:

A drainage system for collecting runoff of stormwater on highways and removing it to appropriate outlets. The system includes inlets, catch basins, storm sewers, drains, reservoirs, pump stations, and detention basins.

Stormwater:

Precipitation from rain or snow that accumulates in a natural or man-made watercourse or conveyance system.