

Discovery Report

Salmon Watershed

HUC 04150307

Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties, New York*

**These counties span multiple watersheds. Please see the following page for a complete list of communities fully or partially located in the Salmon Watershed.*

*Report Number 01
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FEMA

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

Project Area Community List

This list includes communities that are located fully or partially within the Salmon Watershed. While all communities may be under consideration for a revised Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), not all communities will receive new/updated FIS or FIRMs as a result of this Discovery project.

Franklin County

- Bangor, Town of*
- Bellmont, Town of*
- Bombay, Town of
- Brandon, Town of*
- Brushton, Village of*
- Constable, Town of*
- Dickinson, Town of*
- Fort Covington, Town of*
- Malone, Town of*
- Malone, Village of*
- Moir, Town of*
- Westville, Town of*

St. Lawrence County

- Brasher, Town of*

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe*

* Partially within the Salmon Watershed

Study Date

The information and data presented in this report are static and are current as of January 2020. Previously, in-person Discovery Meetings were held on September 18th and 19th, 2019. Outreach to communities to complete the Risk MAP Discovery Project Stakeholder Survey was continued through December 2019. Additional details on meetings and stakeholder involvement can be found in Sections IV and V of this report. As applicable, dates of data creation are noted throughout the report.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAL	Average Annualized Loss
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
BLE	Base Level Engineering
CAC	Community Assistance Contact
CAV	Community Assistance Visit
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CID	Community Identification Number
CIS	Community Information System
CNMS	Coordinated Needs Management Strategy
CRS	Community Rating System
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FIS	Flood Insurance Study
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard
FMA	Flood Mitigation Assistance
GIS	Geographic Information System
Hazus-MH	Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment and Loss Estimation Software Program
HAZNY	Hazards- New York
HIRA-NY	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment New York
HMA	Hazard Mitigation Assistance
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
HMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan
HWM	High Water Mark
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging

LOMA	Letter of Map Amendment
LOMC	Letter of Map Change
LOMR	Letter of Map Revision
LOMR-F	Letter of Map Revision based on Fill
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NIBS	National Institute of Building Sciences
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWS	National Weather Service
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDHSES	New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation
Risk MAP	Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning
RL	Repetitive Loss
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
SRL	Severe Repetitive Loss
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geological Survey

Glossary of Terms

1-Percent-Annual-Chance Flood: The flood having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This is the regulatory standard also referred to as the “100-year flood” or “base flood”. The base flood is the national standard used by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and all Federal agencies for the purposes of requiring the purchase of flood insurance and regulating new development. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) are typically shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). (Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)))

0.2-Percent-Annual-Chance Flood: A flood that has a 0.2-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This is also referred to as the “500-year flood”. ([FEMA](#))

Approximate Study: Areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event generally determined using approximate methodologies. Because detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed, no BFEs or flood depths are shown. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply. An approximate study is represented on a FIRM as [Zone A](#). ([FEMA](#))

Average Annualized Loss (AAL): AAL is the estimated long-term value of losses to the general building stock averaged on an annual basis for a specific hazard type. Annualized loss considers all future losses for a specific hazard type resulting from possible hazard events with different magnitudes and return periods averaged on a “per year” basis. Like other loss estimates, AAL is an estimate based on available data and models. Therefore, the actual loss in any given year can be substantially higher or lower than the estimated annualized loss. ([FEMA](#))

Base Flood Elevation (BFE): The computed elevation to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during the base flood. BFEs are shown on FIRMs and on the Flood Profiles in the FIS report. The BFE is a regulatory requirement for the elevation or flood proofing of structures. The relationship between the BFE and a structure’s elevation determines the flood insurance premium. ([FEMA](#))

Base Level Engineering (BLE): A watershed-wide engineering modeling method that uses high-resolution ground topography, automated model building techniques, and manual model review. BLE allows an engineer to perform large-scale modeling at a fraction of the effort. BLE provides modeling needed to assess unknown and unverified flood hazard areas. ([FEMA](#))

Coordinated Needs Management Strategy (CNMS): A FEMA Geographic Information System (GIS) tool that identifies and tracks the lifecycle of mapping requests and needs for the flood hazard mapping program. ([FEMA](#))

Dam: An artificial barrier that can impound water, wastewater, or any liquid-borne material, for the purpose of storage or control of water. ([FERC](#))

Declared Disaster: Local and State governments share the responsibility for protecting their citizens and for helping them recover after a disaster strikes. In some cases, disasters are beyond the capabilities of local, State, and tribal government. In 1988, the Stafford Act was enacted to

support local, State, and tribal governments and their citizens when disasters overwhelm and exhaust their resources. This law, as amended, established the process for requesting and obtaining a Presidential Emergency or Disaster Declaration, defined the type and scope of assistance available from the Federal Government, and set the conditions for obtaining assistance. Steps for a Disaster Declaration include: (1) Local government responds, supplemented by neighboring communities and volunteer agencies. (2) If the local government is overwhelmed, the State responds, (3) Damage assessments are completed to determine total losses and recovery needs, (4) Disaster Declaration is requested by the governor of the state or by a tribal Chief Executive Officer (CEO), (5) Based on damage assessments, FEMA evaluates the request, and then (6) the President approves or denies the request. ([FEMA](#))

Detailed Study: A flood hazard mapping study done using hydrologic and hydraulic methods that produce BFEs, floodways, and other pertinent flood data. Detailed study areas are shown on the FIRM as [Zones AE, AH, AO, AR, A99, A1-A30, and in coastal areas Zones V, VE, and V1-30](#). ([FEMA](#))

Digital Elevation Model (DEM): regularly spaced elevation values referenced horizontally either to a Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) projection or to a geographic coordinate system. ([USGS](#))

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM): The official map of a community on which FEMA has delineated both the special hazard areas and the risk premium zones applicable to the community. ([FEMA](#))

Flood Insurance Study (FIS): A compilation and presentation of flood risk data for specific watercourses, lakes, and coastal flood hazard areas within a community. When a flood study is completed for the NFIP, the information and maps are assembled into an FIS. The FIS report contains detailed flood elevation data depicted in flood profiles and tables. ([FEMA](#))

Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA): The FMA program provides funds for projects to reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to buildings that are insured under the NFIP on an annual basis. There are three types of FMA grants available and include (1) planning grants, (2) project grants, and (3) management cost grants. ([FEMA](#))

Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment and Loss Estimation Program (Hazus-MH): Hazus-MH is a nationally applicable standardized methodology that estimates potential losses from earthquakes, hurricane winds, floods, and tsunamis. FEMA developed Hazus-MH under contract with the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS). Hazus-MH uses state-of-the-art GIS software to map and display hazard data and the results of damage and economic loss estimates for buildings and infrastructure. It also allows users to estimate the impacts of earthquakes, hurricane winds and floods on populations. ([FEMA](#))

Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA): FEMA's HMA grant programs provide funding for eligible mitigation activities that reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future

disaster damages including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). ([FEMA](#))

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): The HMGP provides grants to States or Tribes and local governments (as sub-grantees) to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. Each State or Tribe (if applicable) administers the HMGP in its jurisdiction. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster. The HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. Individual homeowners and businesses may not apply directly to the program; however, an eligible applicant or sub-applicant may apply on their behalf. ([FEMA](#))

HUC (Hydrologic Unit Code): The United States Geological Survey (USGS) divides and subdivides the area of the United States into successively smaller hydrologic units which are classified into four levels: regions, sub-regions, accounting units, and cataloging units. The hydrologic units are arranged or nested within each other, from the largest geographic area (regions) to the smallest geographic area (cataloging units). Each hydrologic unit is identified by a unique hydrologic unit code (HUC) consisting of two to eight digits based on the four levels of classification in the hydrologic unit system. ([USGS](#))

Hydraulics: The science that deals with fluids in motion, is used to determine how a quantity of water will flow through a channel or floodplain. For purposes of floodplain analysis, hydraulics is the study of floodwaters moving through the stream and the floodplain. ([FEMA](#))

Hydrology: The science that encompasses the occurrence, distribution, movement, and properties of the waters of the earth and their relationship to the environment within each phase of the hydrologic cycle. The [water cycle](#) or hydrologic cycle, is a continuous process by which water is purified by evaporation and transported from the earth's surface (including the oceans) to the atmosphere and back to the land and oceans. ([USGS](#))

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR): is a [remote sensing](#) method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth. These light pulses—combined with other data recorded by the airborne system— generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics. LIDAR systems allow scientists and mapping professionals to examine both natural and manmade environments with accuracy, precision, and flexibility. ([NOAA](#))

Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA): A LOMA is an official amendment, by letter, to an effective NFIP map. A LOMA establishes a structure and/or property's location in relation to the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). LOMAs are usually issued because a structure and/or property has been inadvertently identified as being in the floodplain, but is on natural high ground above the BFE or outside of the mapped floodplain as shown on the FIRM. Because a LOMA officially amends the effective NFIP map, it is a public record that the community must maintain.

Any LOMA should be noted on the community's master flood map and filed by FIRM panel number in an accessible location. ([FEMA](#))

Letter of Map Change (LOMC): A general term used to refer to the several types of revisions and amendments to FEMA maps that can be accomplished by letter. They include LOMAs, Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs), and Letters of Map Revision based on Fill (LOMR-Fs). ([FEMA](#))

Letter of Map Revision (LOMR): FEMA's modification to an effective FIRM. LOMRs are generally based on the implementation of physical measures that affect the hydrologic or hydraulic characteristics of a flooding source and thus result in the modification of the existing regulatory floodway, the effective BFEs, and/or the SFHA. The LOMR officially revises the FIRM and associated tables/Flood Profiles as applicable in the FIS report. ([FEMA](#))

Letter of Map Revision Based on Fill (LOMR-F): A LOMR-F is FEMA's modification of the SFHA shown on the FIRM based on the placement of fill outside the existing regulatory floodway. ([FEMA](#))

Levee/Floodwall: A man-made structure designed to contain or control the flow of water. Levees and floodwalls are constructed from earth, compacted soil, or artificial materials, such as concrete or steel. To protect against erosion and scouring, earthen levees can be covered with grass and gravel or hard surfaces like stone, asphalt, or concrete. ([FEMA](#))

Map Modernization: A multi-year Presidential initiative funded by Congress from fiscal year (FY) 2003 to FY 2008 that improved and updated the nation's flood maps and provided 92 percent of the nation's population with digital FIRMs. ([FEMA](#))

Mitigation: Any cost-effective action taken to eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to life and property from natural and technological hazards, including, but not limited to, flooding. Flood mitigation measures include: elevation, flood proofing, relocation, demolition, or any combination thereof. ([FEMA](#))

Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM): The PDM grant program provides funds for hazard mitigation planning and projects on an annual basis. The PDM program was put in place to reduce overall risk to people and structures, while at the same time reducing reliance on Federal funding if an actual disaster were to occur. ([FEMA](#))

Repetitive Loss (RL) property: A RL property is any insurable building for which two or more claims of more than \$1,000 were paid by the NFIP within any rolling ten-year period since 1978. A RL property may or may not be currently insured by the NFIP. ([FEMA](#))

Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program: The FEMA program that provides communities with flood risk information and tools to support mitigation planning and risk reduction actions. ([FEMA](#))

Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) property: A SRL property is a single family property (consisting of one to four residences) covered by flood insurance underwritten by the NFIP that has incurred flood-related damage for which four or more separate claim payments have been paid with the amount of each claim payment exceeding \$5,000 and with the cumulative amount of such claim payments exceeding \$20,000; or for which at least two separate claim payments have been made with the cumulative amount of such claims exceeding the market value of the property. ([FEMA](#))

Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA): SFHAs are high-risk areas subject to inundation by the base (1-percent-annual-chance) flood; they are also referred to as 1-percent-annual-chance floodplains, base floodplains, or 100-year floodplains. ([FEMA](#))

Stakeholder: An individual or group that has an interest in a decision or proposed action. A stakeholder may have none, one, or more of the following roles: has authority or decision-making power over some aspect of the project, is affected by the outcome of the project, will be a part of implementing the project, and/or can stop or delay the project (through litigation or other means). A project may have multiple stakeholders, and these stakeholders often have conflicting interests and want competing outcomes. ([FEMA](#))

Watershed: A watershed is a basin-like landform defined by highpoints and ridgelines that descend into lower elevations and stream valleys. A watershed carries water from the land after rain falls and snow melts. Drop by drop, water is channeled into soils, aquifers, creeks, and streams, making its way to larger rivers and eventually the sea. ([Watershed Atlas](#))

Water Year: The 12-month period beginning on October 1st for any given year and ending on September 30th of the following year. The water year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends, and which includes 9 of the 12 months. Thus, the year ending September 30, 2019, is called the “2019” water year. ([USGS](#))

Executive Summary

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Discovery Report provides users with a comprehensive understanding of historical flood risk, existing flood-related data, and local needs concerning FEMA Flood Insurance Studies (FISs) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and current flood mitigation activities within the North Country Watersheds in upstate New York.

FEMA, in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), completed the Discovery process for eight sub-basins within the larger North Country Watersheds. These eight watershed sub-basins are: Chateaugay-English, Grass, Indian, Oswegatchie, Raquette, Salmon, St. Regis, and Upper St. Lawrence. The Discovery process involves significant watershed-wide data collection and outreach efforts with local stakeholders using several methods, including individual telephone calls, flyers, e-mails, webinars, and in-person meetings. During the outreach process, emphasis is placed on opportunities for stakeholders to provide their comments and concerns and provide input for future mapping projects. Conversations during the meetings focused on the types of existing data sources that could be used as part of a Risk MAP project, community mapping needs, locations of development pressure, and mitigation assistance requirements.

In addition to collecting information about mapping needs and existing data sources, the Discovery project also identified mitigation activities within the watershed. County-based Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs) were reviewed to better understand existing flood risks within communities in the watershed. These HMPs are developed as part of the local planning process and are prepared at the county level. Stakeholders provided additional information about ongoing mitigation activities in the watersheds, and several communities requested specific training focused on hazard mitigation planning and future projects. Data collected from the stakeholders, information on flood hazard mitigation projects, and actions identified during the Discovery process can be found in [*Section IV: Summary of Watershed-Wide Data*](#) in this report.

A recommended scope of work for the North Country Watersheds Discovery project was developed using community mapping needs and information about existing data collected during the stakeholder engagement process. The Salmon Watershed consists of two counties, 13 communities, and one Tribal nation.

Communities in the Salmon Watershed have older community-based, paper FIRMs issued between 1978 and 1986. Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties would benefit from a modernized FIRM in a digital format. Many community officials find the existing maps difficult to work with and the floodplains shown are inaccurate or absent. These communities would also benefit from the development of Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) and updated flood hazard mapping. The new / revised detailed studies along key streams and lake segments, combined with updated approximate studies supported by Base Level Engineering (BLE) in a new digital format, should be sufficient to assist with enforcement and support safe development. Beyond upgrading existing

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detailed and approximate mapping for Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties to a digital format, the resulting scope of work also included 5 high priority stream / lake study requests with a total detailed stream study mileage of 54.56 miles. More specific information on stream study requests and other community needs collected through the Discovery process can be found in Section VII of this report. A copy of the recommended scope of work can be found in *Appendix R: Recommended Scope of Work Memorandum*.

II. Discovery Overview

The FEMA Risk MAP program helps communities identify, assess, and reduce their flood risk. Through Risk MAP, FEMA provides information to enhance county HMPs, improve community outreach, and increase local resilience to floods.

The North Country Watersheds Discovery project is an interactive process that gathers existing data useful in updating FIS reports, and results in a watershed-wide assessment of existing flood hazard mapping needs, and ultimately, recommendations for the development of updated Risk MAP products, such as revised FIRMs.

Discovery occurs after FEMA's planning and budgeting cycle, when watersheds of interest have been selected for further examination in coordination with Federal and State-level stakeholders. Watersheds are selected based on risk, need, available topographic data, and other factors. The data that FEMA has readily available is gathered and prepared at the national and regional level and augmented by community-supplied flood risk information and data collected during the Discovery process. Community participation is necessary to ensure that FEMA has the most up-to-date understanding of a community's flood risk.

The Discovery process does not necessarily mean that a new Risk MAP project will take place – instead, it is the process through which FEMA and NYSDEC learn about local flooding issues and prioritize the need for new studies or other support that may be provided under the Risk MAP program. Additional support may include the development of new training and outreach programs or aiding selected communities to advance mitigation actions or join the Community Rating System (CRS).

During Discovery, FEMA, NYSDEC, and partners:

- Gather information about local flood risk and flood hazards
- Review county HMPs to understand local mitigation capabilities, hazard risk assessments, and current or future mitigation activities
- Support communities within the watersheds to develop a vision for the watershed's future
- Collect information from communities about their flooding history, effective FIRM usability, development plans, daily operations, and stormwater and floodplain management activities
- Use all information gathered to identify and prioritize areas of the watersheds that require updated flood hazard mapping, risk assessment, or mitigation planning assistance through a Risk MAP project, and
- Develop a Discovery Report and Maps that summarize and display the Discovery findings

III. Salmon Watershed Overview

Watershed Characteristics and Geography

As described by the [U.S. Geological Survey](https://www.usgs.gov/) (USGS), watersheds in the United States are “divided and sub-divided into successively smaller hydrologic units classified into six levels. The hydrologic units are arranged within each other, from the smallest (sub-watersheds) to the largest

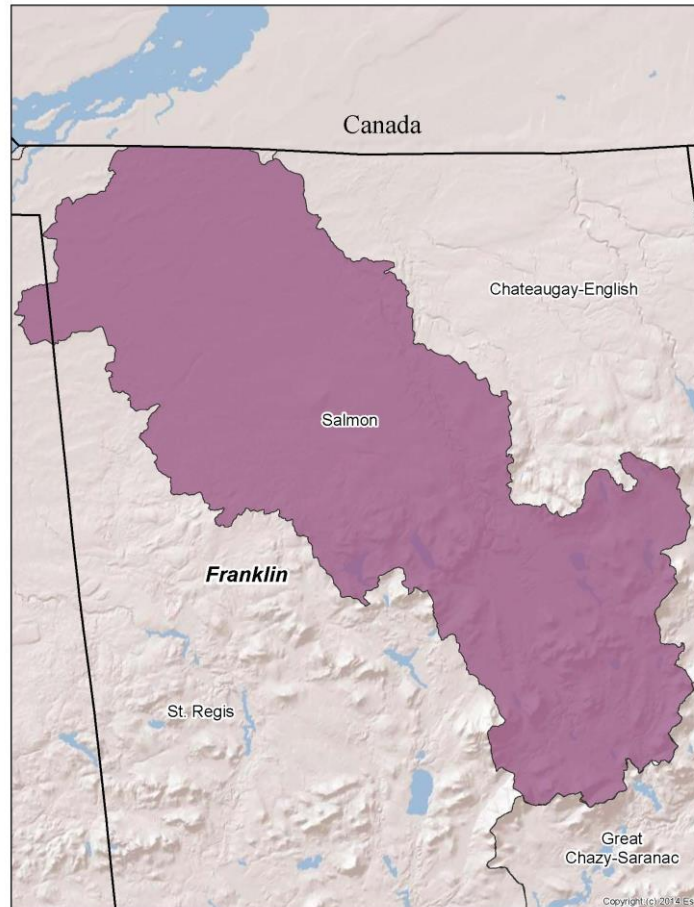


Figure 1: Salmon Watershed

(regions). Each hydrologic unit is identified by a unique hydrologic unit code (HUC) consisting of two to twelve digits based on the six levels of classification in the hydrologic unit system.”¹

The Salmon Watershed lies within much of Franklin County and a small portion of St. Lawrence County. The watershed covers approximately 405 square miles of land area in upstate New York. Forests dominate the landscape of the watersheds, as characterized by deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forests, which have the highest land cover percent in the region.²

¹ *Hydrologic Unit Maps*, U.S. Geological Survey. [usgs.gov. https://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html](https://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html)

² [Rapid Watershed Assessment Profiles](#)

Demographics

Population

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, the Salmon Watershed includes an approximate population of over 12,500. Communities in the watershed are generally small, with many towns having a centrally located village. The largest community in the watershed is the Town of Malone³. The distribution of population in the watershed is shown in [Table 1: Approximate 2010 Population in the Salmon Watershed](#)

Table 1: Approximate 2010 Population in the Salmon Watershed

County	Total County Population (2010 data)	Percent of County in the Salmon Watershed	2010 Estimated Population in the Salmon Watershed	Square Miles in the Salmon Watershed
Franklin	51,599	24%	12,384	402
St. Lawrence	111,940	0.012%	134	3
Total	163,539	-----	12,518	405

Source: U.S. Census 2010, New York Rapid Watershed Assessment Profiles

Government/Representatives

The NYS Municipal Home Rule law grants significant authority to local government, including lawmaking and administrative powers. [Table 2: County Government Organization](#) outlines each county's administrative and legislative officials. Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties have adopted specific County Charters, which divide executive and legislative duties between the County Executive/Manager/Administrator and the County Legislature.

Table 2: County Government Organizations

County	Chief Administrative Official	Legislative Body
Franklin	Chairman, Board of Legislators	Board of Legislators (6 members) ⁴
St. Lawrence	County Administrator	Board of Legislators (15 members) ⁵

³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/malonetownfranklincountynewyork>

⁴ <https://countyfranklin.digitaltowpath.org:10078/content/Departments/View/36?#officials>

⁵ <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/BoardofLegislators/FindMyLegislator/LegislatorList>

Project Area Description

Land Area coverage in the St. Regis Watershed is diverse. Franklin County accounts for 99% of the watershed, while St. Lawrence county accounts for just 1% of the watershed. There are approximately 150 farms within the watershed. Farm operations in the region are dominated by milk cows, grains, oilseeds, beans, peas, apples, and maple syrup production. The predominant crops of the area are grass seed, hops, and grass silage⁶.

As noted earlier, an area of the watershed is located within the Adirondack Park, the largest contiguous park in the United States. More than half of the park is private land comprised of hamlets, forestry, agriculture, and open space recreation, and conservation easements administered by New York State. The remaining areas of the park are publicly owned Forest Preserve. More information on land use in the Adirondack Park is discussed in the Land Use section. More information on property ownership can be found on each county's Real Property webpage as noted in *Table 3*. Land characteristics in the watershed are dominated by mixed forest, grassland, and wetland. Aside from mixed forests and grassland, open water and farmland are common

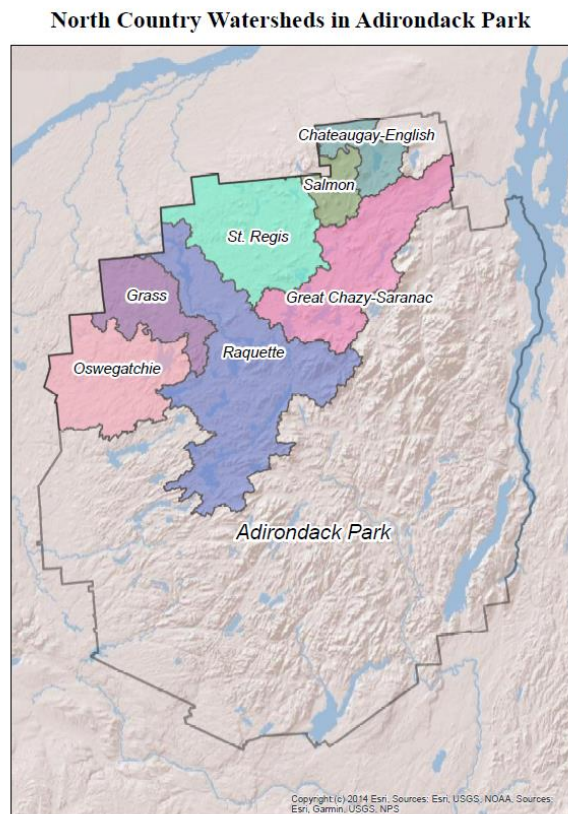


Table 3: Links to Real Property Webpages

County	Hyperlink to Real Property Webpage
Franklin	https://countyfranklin.digitaltowpath.org:10078/content/Departments/View/14
St. Lawrence	https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/RealProperty/

⁶ A Profile of Agriculture in New York State, 2019

Franklin County

Franklin County is located in the northern part of New York. The county is bordered to the east by Clinton and Essex Counties, the north by Canada, the west by St. Lawrence County, and the south by Hamilton and Essex Counties. Franklin County covers 1,697 square miles (land and water) and has a population of 51,599 with an average population density of 31.7 people per square mile.⁷ The Village of Malone is the county seat for Franklin County and approximately two-thirds of the southern part of the county is located within the Adirondack Park. The northern portion of the county is mostly forest, grass, and farmland, and the southern portion is dominated by mountainous forestland.⁸

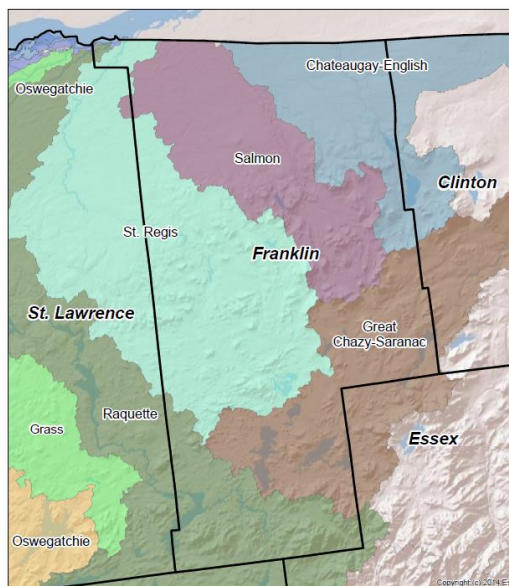


Figure 2: Franklin County

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County is located in the northern part of New York and is the largest county by area in New York State. The county is bordered to the east by Franklin County, the north by Canada (the St. Lawrence River runs along the northern border), the west by Canada and Jefferson County, and the south by Jefferson, Lewis, Herkimer, and Hamilton Counties. St. Lawrence County covers 2,680 square miles (land and water) in upstate New York. The county seat is the Village of Canton. St. Lawrence County has a population of 111,944 with an average density of 41.8 people per square mile.⁹ Evergreen and deciduous forests dominate the southern half of the County, with agricultural land much more prominent in the northern and western portions of the County.¹⁰

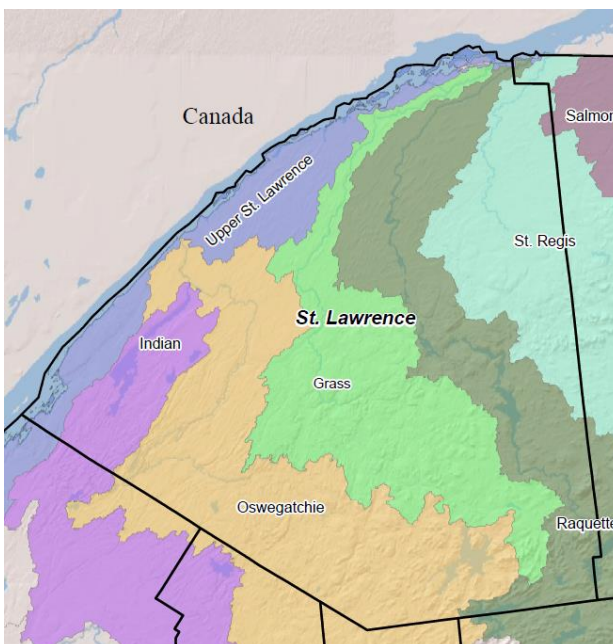


Figure 3: St. Lawrence County

Land Use

A comprehensive plan is a land use document that provides framework and policy direction for land use decisions. Comprehensive plans usually include chapters detailing policy direction

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/franklincountyny/PST040218>

⁸ [Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 13

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/stlawrencecountyny>

¹⁰ [St. Lawrence County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 16

affecting land use, transportation, housing capital facilities, utilities, and rural areas. Comprehensive plans identify where and how growth needs will be met. For floodplain management and hazard mitigation, a land-use management plan can be a powerful tool to guide the community on how to achieve increased resilience. If a community has a comprehensive plan, it needs to comply with both the local flood damage prevention ordinance and local HMP.

The 2001 National Land Cover Database divides land cover in the United States into 16 classes. New York contains 15 of these classes. In the Salmon Watershed, forest accounts for 59.1% of the land cover, followed by grassland (13.8%), wetland (13.4%), cultivated crops (4.6%), developed land/low intensity (2.9%), shrub/scrub (2.4%), open water (1.6%), developed land/medium-high intensity (0.2%), and barren land (0.03%).¹¹

[*Table 4: U.S. Census 2010 and USDA Census of Agriculture 2017*](#) summarizes the total population and land area from the 2010 U.S. Census and the number of farms and acres of farmland from the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture.

Table 4: U.S. Census 2010 and USDA Census of Agriculture 2017

County	Land Area (Square Miles)	Farm Land (Acres)	Farm Land (Acres) Within Watershed	Total Farms Within Watershed
Franklin	1,629	140,717	33,772	152
St. Lawrence	2,680	342,595	N/A	N/A

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and USDA Census of Agriculture 2017

As noted earlier, all or portions of the watershed are within the Adirondack Park. Land management planning for municipalities located within the Adirondack Park falls under the jurisdiction of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Upon its creation in 1971, the APA's first task was to develop, in consultation with NYSDEC, a management plan for the administration of all State land in the Adirondack Park. The resulting plan, the [Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan](#)¹², is a refinement of the previous studies and by law, still governs the management of State land. The APA provides land-use and density maps and comprehensive technical assistance and oversight for commercial and residential development proposals within their jurisdiction; local zoning regulations still apply both inside and outside of the Adirondack Park. The permitting process is administered according to project classification and land use classification. The APA State land use classifications are:

- Wilderness
- Primitive
- Canoe

¹¹ [NRCS Rapid Watershed Assessment Profiles](#)

¹² [Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan](#)

- Wild forest
- Intensive use
- Historic
- State Administrative
- Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers
- Travel Corridors

The Adirondack Park Agency Act allows any local government within the Park to develop an APA Approved Local Land Use Program (ALLUP), which, if approved by the Agency, may transfer some permitting authority from the agency to the local government's jurisdiction.

Franklin County

In Franklin County, the Town of Waverly is within the Adirondack Park and is subject to land use regulations of the APA. In addition, the town incorporates their mitigation activities into land use plans in accordance with Adirondack Park Agency regulations.¹³

St. Lawrence County

In St. Lawrence County, the Towns of Clare, Clifton, Fine, and Piercefield, and portions of the Towns of Colton, Hopkinton, Lawrence, Parishville, and Pitcairn are within the Adirondack Park and are subject to land use regulations of the APA. A fair number of structures, within the county and within Adirondack Park represent second residences and seasonal properties.¹⁴

Media

There are two media markets that serve the Salmon Watershed project area. These are the Watertown market and the Burlington, Vermont/Plattsburgh, New York market. The largest newspapers in circulation are the *Watertown Daily Times* and the *Press-Republican*.

Franklin County newspapers and media include¹⁵

- *Malone Telegram*
- *Tupper Lake Free Press*

Jefferson County newspapers and media include:¹⁶

- *Carthage Tribune*
- *Jefferson County Journal*
- *Thousand Island Sun*
- *Watertown Daily Times*

¹³ [Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page JA105

¹⁴ [St. Lawrence County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 78

¹⁵ http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/titles/places/new_york/franklin/?page=1

¹⁶ <https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/CountyAdministratorsOffice/media>

St. Lawrence County newspapers and media include: ¹⁷

- *North Country This Week*
- *Northern New York Newspapers*
- *Fourth Coast Entertainment*
- *Watertown Daily Times*

Historic Flooding Problems

Overview

Flooding has been a constant threat in the North Country. Floods in the early summer months and extending through the fall months are often associated with tropical systems moving north along the Atlantic coast. During the winter, flooding is a threat when [ice jams](#) impede the free flow of rivers in the watershed. Flooding usually occurs in the late winter and early spring when the ground is still frozen, and snowmelt adds to heavy rainfall to produce increased runoff. Historic flooding problems associated with each county in the watershed are summarized below.

County HMPs include vulnerability assessments for hazards, based on models including Hazards New York (HAZNY) and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment New York (HIRA-NY). HAZNY is an automated interactive risk assessment tool that enables the quantitative assessment of risks. HIRA-NY evaluates five factors related to the hazard analysis process to rank hazards. Both models assign rankings of 44-160 (low), 161-240 (moderately low), 241-320 (moderately high) and 321-400 (high). Specific scores are noted for each county when available. ¹⁸

Franklin County

Flooding is the highest risk natural hazard in Franklin County. Flood hazards for the county may result from flash flooding and ice jams. Flooding in the county primarily affects roadways, and flood waters may also damage bridges and erode ditches that may warrant immediate repair and/or road closure. According to the NOAA Storm Events Database, there were 31 flood events in the county between 2000 and 2019, resulting in property damage in excess of \$15.5 million.¹⁹ Between 2010 and 2014 there were four flooding events that resulted in property damage exceeding \$1 million each.²⁰ The Village of Saranac Lake experienced damages of approximately \$6 million in April 2011 as a result of runoff from heavy rain and snowmelt, complicated by ice jams.²¹ As of January 2020, the average paid NFIP loss per claim in the county was approximately \$10,707, with an average coverage of approximately \$160,045 per policy.

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County experiences multiple types of flooding associated with rivers, lakes, and streams. Most flood hazards are the result of excess water from snowmelt, rainfall, or where storm

¹⁷ <https://business.visitstlc.com/list/category/newspapers-50>

¹⁸ <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/recovery/mitigation/documents/2014-shmp/Section-3-9-Flood.pdf>

¹⁹ [Storm Events Database, Franklin County](#)

²⁰ [Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 27

²¹ *Ibid*, page 27

surges overflow stream embankments. The severity of floods are the result of intensity of rainfall, duration of rain events, and the topography of the county. In the county's 2015 HMP, floods have a ranking of 278 on the HIRA-NY model, a ranking considered as moderately high. According to the NOAA Storm Events Database, there have been 19 flood events in the county from 2000 to 2019.²² Comparatively speaking, St. Lawrence County has fewer documented floods than many other counties in the State.²³ There has been one Presidential Disaster Declaration (DR-1095) for a January 1996 severe storm that resulted in road closures, property damage of \$160 million, and 10 fatalities. This event was the result of precipitation from an intense storm in combination with unseasonably warm temperatures, that also resulted in rapid snowmelt. A major flood event in St. Lawrence County was in May 2011 when the Raquette River over-topped its banks resulting in flooding for the Towns of Colton and Norfolk.²⁴ As of January 2020, the average paid NFIP loss per claim in the county was approximately \$10,702, with an average coverage of more than \$166,921 per policy.

Significant flood events from the HMPs are summarized in [Table 5: Hazard Mitigation Plan Significant Flood Events](#). See Hazard Mitigation Planning and Activities for additional information on HMPs.

Table 5: Hazard Mitigation Plan Significant Flood Events in the Salmon Watershed

County	Community	Flood Events of Significance
Franklin	Villages of Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake; Towns of Tupper Lake and Duane	April 2011: Flooding and flash flooding from heavy rain and snowmelt caused damages exceeding \$9 million.
St. Lawrence	Town of Lisbon and Waddington (North Corners)	April 2014: Snowmelt from late season snowpack along with heavy rains produced widespread flooding amounting to \$4.1 million dollars in property damage ²⁵
	Towns of Norfolk and Norwood (Plumbrook)	April - May 2011: Runoff from heavy rain and snowmelt caused \$1 million in damages along the Raquette River.
	Countywide	January 1996: Snowmelt, ice jams, and heavy rainfall excessive produced flooding on area creeks. The county received Public Assistance because of the flooding declaration.

Sources: State Hazard Mitigation Plans, Storm Events Database

Disaster Declarations

Like much of the eastern United States, one of the most frequent, widespread, and damaging natural disasters affecting the watershed is flooding from rainfall events, especially tropical systems tracking inland from the Atlantic Seaboard. With full records beginning in the 1950s, the watershed has repeatedly been subject to flooding from tropical storms, hurricanes, and other non-

²² [Storm Events Database, St. Lawrence County](#)

²³ [St. Lawrence Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 10

²⁴ Ibid, page 53

²⁵ <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/eventdetails.jsp?id=507378>

cyclonic events, most recently Hurricane Irene (2011). Heavy snowmelt is also a major contributor to flooding in the North Country region.

Often in the aftermath of a major flooding event, the Federal Government will make funding available for homeowners, businesses, and local communities to aid in disaster relief and recovery. The major flood-related disaster declarations for the study area are listed below in [Table 6: Disaster Declarations](#). Since 1972, there have been 8 flood-related declared disasters within the study area. FEMA’s disaster and emergency declarations history can be viewed at FEMA’s website.²⁶

Table 6: Disaster Declarations

Incident Period	Title of Event	Counties Declared Within Study Area
January 1996	DR 1095: Severe Storms and Flooding	Clinton, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
November 1996	DR 1148: Severe Storms, High Winds, Rain, and Flooding	Clinton, Franklin, Lewis
January 1998	DR 1196: Severe Storms and Flooding	Clinton, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
June 1998	DR 1233: Severe Storms and Flooding	Clinton, Franklin
April 2011	DR 1993: Severe Storms, Flooding, Tornadoes, and Straight-Line Winds	Clinton, Franklin, Hamilton, Lewis
August 2011	DR 4020: Hurricane Irene	Franklin, Hamilton
June 2013	DR 4129: Severe Storms and Flooding	Clinton, Franklin

Source: FEMA²⁷

Ice Jams

As explained by the National Weather Service (NWS), “ice jams cause localized flooding and can quickly cause serious problems. Rapid rises behind the jams can lead to temporary lakes and flooding of homes and roads along rivers. A sudden release of a jam can lead to flash flooding below with the addition of large pieces of ice in the wall of water which will damage or destroy most things in its path”.²⁸

There are two types of ice jams: freeze up and break up. Freeze up jams usually occur in early to mid-winter during extremely cold weather. Break up jams usually occur in mid to late winter with thaws. The NWS notes the conditions of both jams below:²⁹

Freeze Up Jam Criteria:

Three consecutive days with daily average temperatures of less than 0°F. Early to mid-winter formation, steady discharge, frazil and broken border ice, unlikely to release suddenly, smooth to moderate surface roughness.

Break Up Jam Criteria:

²⁶ <https://www.fema.gov/disasters>

²⁷ <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/state-tribal-government/0/NY>

²⁸ <http://www.weather.gov/media/aly/Hydrology/IceJamInfo.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.weather.gov/media/aly/Hydrology/IceJamInfo.pdf>

Ice around one foot thick or more (presumed) and daily average temperature forecast to be greater than 42°F or higher. Direct sunlight plays a large role as open water areas absorb sunlight. A breakup jam can occur at any time after ice cover formation, but generally takes place in mid to late winter. Break up jams are highly unstable with sudden failures.

The daily average temperature is determined by the following equation:

$$(T_{\text{max}} (\text{maximum temperature}) + T_{\text{min}} (\text{minimum temperature}))/2.$$

Rainfall or snowmelt combined with a thaw will enhance the potential for break up jams as rising water helps to lift and break up the ice. A very short thaw with little or no rain or snowmelt may not be enough to break up thick ice.

Flooding caused by ice jams is not calculated nor shown on FEMA's FIRMs. Furthermore, the NWS's statement on ice jams explains that river forecasts presented on its website do not consider the effects of ice jams on river levels. According to the NYSDEC, from March 1948 through September 2018, New York has had 1,712 ice jam events statewide. An ice jam event is defined as an accumulation of ice at a given location in a river which restricts the flow of water.³⁰ For a complete list with fuller descriptions of the circumstances of ice jamming at different locations, refer to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) website: <https://icejam.sec.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=101:7::NO::>.

Franklin County

Ice jams are mentioned as contributing to flooding in Franklin County. For example, in January 2004, numerous residences were evacuated along the Salmon River due to floodwaters caused by ice jams. Nine residence experienced severe flooding during this event. Ice jam flooding was repeated along the Salmon River in January 2005 and January 2013. The latter flood event resulted in 12 residence being evacuated. Multiple ice jams have caused floodwaters to swell outside the banks of the Salmon River and flood the Town of Malone.³¹ A masonry dam built in 1913 on the Salmon River in the Town of Fort Covington was removed (from 2006 to 2011). The large quantity of sediment that remained has subsequently contributed to ice jams as the sediment has moved down the river channel to the St. Lawrence River, approximately five miles downstream.³²

St. Lawrence County

Ice jams in the county's 2015 HMP have a ranking of 272 on the HIRA-NY model, a ranking considered as moderately high, and the frequency of ice jams is considered a common occurrence in the county where any waterway is susceptible to ice jam events. The USACE has maintained records of ice jams in the county going back to 1910, where records document 100 such events. The St. Regis River at Brasher Falls and the Grass River in Pyrites each have experienced 22 recorded ice jam events, over the period 1911 to 1997. In addition, the Deer, Little Salmon, Oswegatchie, and Raquette Rivers are prone to ice jams in the county.³³

³⁰ [Ice Jam Flooding](#)

³¹ [Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 27

³² [Salmon River Watershed Management Plan](#), page 6

³³ [St. Lawrence County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), page 10, B-13

Dams

According to the [NYSDEC Dam Safety Section](#)'s dam inventory, the Salmon Watershed has 26 dam structures. The NYSDEC uses a dam downstream hazard classification scale of Class A, B, or C to assign hazard potential to each of the dam structures listed in the inventory. These dam class levels build on each other, with higher levels adding to the consequences of the lower levels. Two other dam classifications, Class D and Class 0, are noted below as well.

NYSDEC classifies dams in the State using the following criteria:

Class A - Low Hazard dam: Resulting damages from a dam failure would likely be minimal and not interfere with any critical infrastructure; personal injury and substantial economic loss are unlikely to occur.

Class B - Intermediate Hazard dam: Dam failure may result in damage to isolated homes, roads, and railways; critical facilities may experience disruption; personal injury or substantial economic loss is likely; loss of human life is not expected.

Class C - High Hazard dam: Dam failure may result in widespread or serious damage to homes; damage to roads, railroads, commercial buildings, and critical infrastructure is expected; loss of human life and substantial economic loss are expected.

Class D - Negligible or No Hazard dam: Dam has been breached, removed, or otherwise has failed or no longer materially impounds waters, or the dam was planned, but never constructed at this location. Class D dams are considered to be defunct dams posing negligible or no hazard.

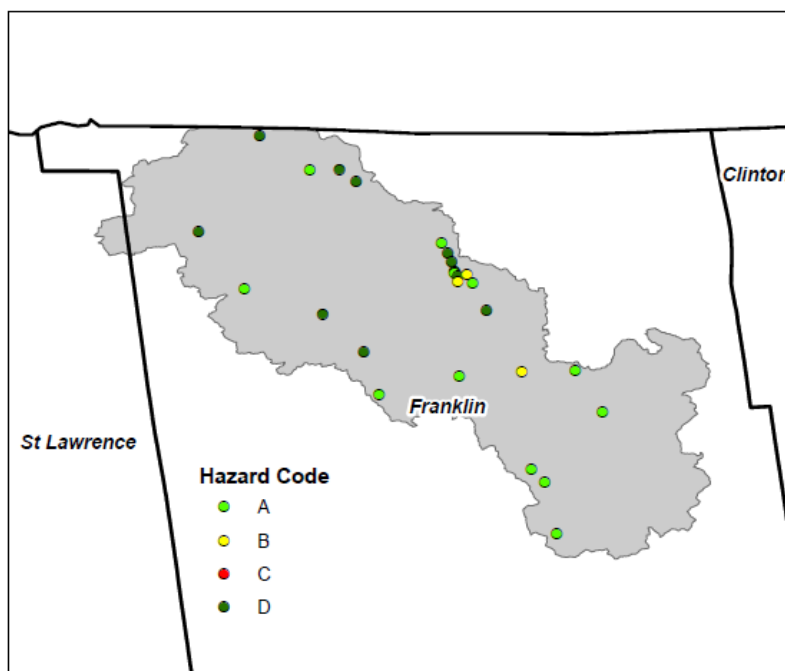


Figure 4: Salmon Watershed Dams

Class 0 - Unclassified Hazard dam: Hazard code has not yet been assigned.

The 26 dam structures classified by the NYSDEC Dam Safety Section are noted below in [Table 7: Dams in the Salmon Watershed](#).

Table 7: Dams in the Salmon Watershed

County	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class 0	Total
Franklin	12	3	0	11	0	26
St. Lawrence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	3	0	11	0	26

Source: NYSDEC

Recent Media Coverage of Natural Hazards

In late August 2011, Hurricane Irene made its way to the North Country having reached hurricane status after striking Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. The storm itself was one of the costliest storms in the state's history. A summary of more recent media coverage of natural hazards in the Salmon Watershed counties is provided below.

Franklin County

In January and February 2018, flooding and ice jams impacted Franklin County, along the Salmon River.^{34, 35}

St. Lawrence County

Lake Ontario flooding in May 2019 prompted a State of Emergency declaration by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.³⁶ The severe winter storm of November 2014, with significant snowfall and resultant power outages, prompted a State of Emergency declaration by Governor Cuomo.³⁷

³⁴ *North Country Public Radio*, January 25, 2018

³⁵ [Press-Republican](#) Newspaper, February 21, 2018

³⁶ [New York State, Governor News, May 20, 2019](#)

³⁷ [New York State, Governor News, November 18, 2014](#)

IV. Summary of Watershed-Wide Data

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Data

Effective Regulatory Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)

As noted in earlier sections of this report, the Salmon Watershed project area includes parts of two counties and thirteen communities in New York State. The FEMA flood hazard map inventory consists of FIRMS of varying ages. Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties currently have community-based FIRMs, with effective publication dates ranging from 1978 to 1986. Additionally, three communities currently have no published FIRMs.

The effective FIRM dates for each community are shown in [Table 8: FIRM Effective Dates](#).

Table 8: FIRM Effective Dates

County	Community	FIRM Effective Date
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	No SFHA Mapped
	Bellmont, Town of	08/05/1985
	Bombay, Town of	02/15/1985
	Brandon, Town of	No SFHA Mapped
	Brushton, Village of	02/19/1986
	Constable, Town of	No SFHA Mapped
	Dickinson, Town of	03/18/1986
	Fort Covington, Town of	12/23/1983
	Malone, Town of	09/04/1985
	Malone, Village of	04/03/1978
	Moir, Town of	04/15/1986
	Westville, Town of	02/15/1985
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	01/03/1986

Letters of Map Change (LOMCs)

Due to limitations in the scale or topographic detail of the source maps used to prepare a FIRM, on occasion, small areas of elevated land may be inadvertently included in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). When a property owner believes the FIRM does not accurately represent flood risk for their structure and/or property, they may request a Letter of Map Change (LOMC) for their property or structure.

A LOMC is the general term for a suite of methods FEMA uses to make an official flood hazard determination for a structure or property. The Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) process, for properties on natural high ground, and the Letter of Map Revision based on Fill (LOMR-F) process, for properties elevated by the placement of fill, are the most common methods used to amend the FIRM. These methods do not physically change the FIRM for a community; rather they amend, by letter action, the FIRM without incurring the cost of publishing a revised FIRM panel. By comparison, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) is commonly used by community officials to request FIRM changes stemming from completed development (e.g. the construction of a bridge in a flood hazard area), flood-control projects (e.g., the construction of a levee), or other larger-scale changes in the floodplain (e.g., the paving of a stream channel). Please note, no LOMRs have been issued in the Salmon Watershed project area.

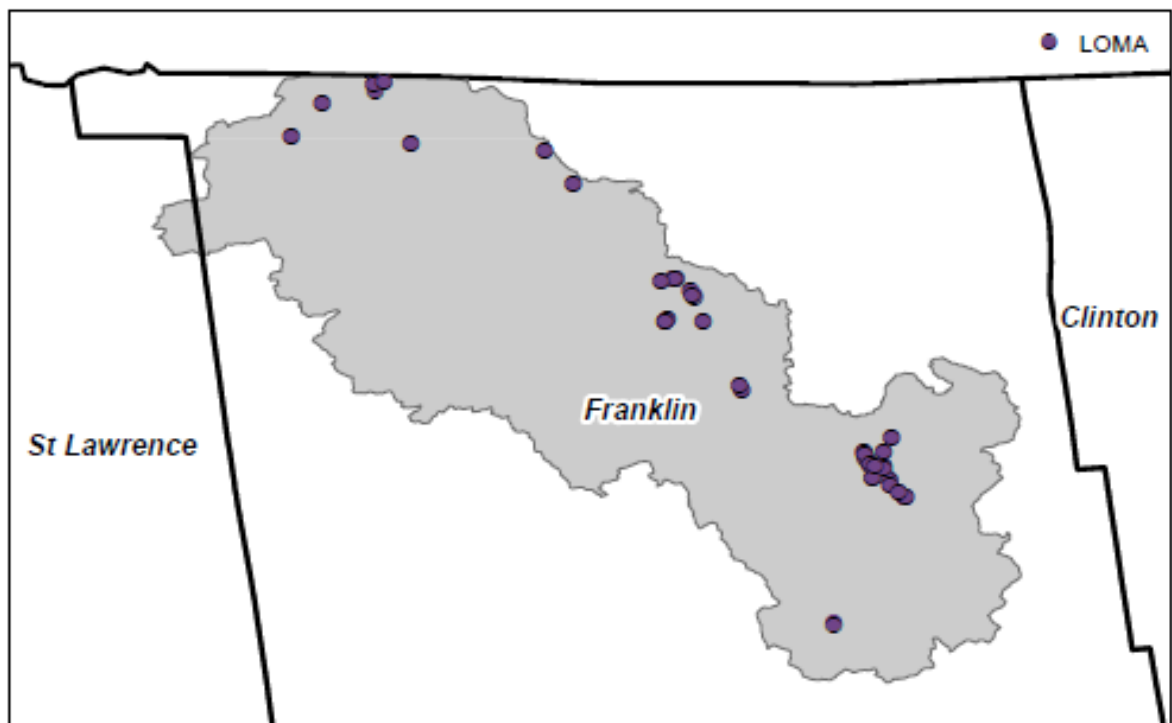


Figure 5: LOMCs in the Salmon Watershed

[*Table 9: LOMCs in the Salmon Watershed*](#) displays the number of LOMCs issued, as of August 2019, for communities in the Salmon Watershed.

More information on the LOMA and LOMR-F processes can be found on FEMA’s [LOMC website](#).

Table 9: LOMCs in the Salmon Watershed

County	Community	Number of LOMA/ LOMR-Fs
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	0
	Bellmont, Town of	77
	Bombay, Town of	0
	Brandon, Town of	0
	Brushton, Village of	0
	Constable, Town of	0
	Dickinson, Town of	1
	Fort Covington, Town of	6
	Malone, Town of	6
	Malone, Village of	4
	Moir, Town of	0
	Westville, Town of	1
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	8

Source: FEMA

Base Level Engineering (BLE)

Base Level Engineering (BLE) is a FEMA initiative to create flood hazard data that may be used to assess stream inventories and prioritize watersheds or stream segments for further study. It can also be used to initiate discussions with communities that revolve around flood risk information, identification, abatement, and mitigation strategies. BLE does not produce effective FIRMs, but it can be used as best available information for communities to develop Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) in areas where a BFE has not been established.

BLE is a watershed-wide engineering modeling method that uses high-resolution ground topography, automated model building techniques, and manual model review. A significant portion of FEMA's national flood hazard inventory is currently considered non-model backed or based on outdated techniques with no supporting data. BLE provides the modeling needed to assess these unknown and unverified flood hazard areas.

BLE is a time efficient and cost-effective method of assessing flood hazard information. Engineers can gather data and create a model that can be shared with the public at a much faster rate than the previous FEMA studies. The high-quality elevation data provides the foundation for more technically credible flood risk identification and can be further refined for more detailed analysis. Leveraging this high-quality topo data and using improved technologies has significantly improved the accuracy and quality of these flood studies. For the Salmon Watershed project area, Digital Elevation Model (DEM) datasets from [New York State's GIS Clearinghouse](#) website provided the topographical data required for the hydraulic analyses and floodplain mapping. 1-foot seamless DEMs were created using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data developed in 2014, 2016, and 2017.

The hydrologic analyses was performed for approximately 2,027 stream miles within Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties. Peak discharges were computed for the required seven frequencies, the 10%- , 4%- , 2%- , 1%- , 1%-plus, 1%-minus and 0.2%- annual chance floods. Regression analyses was the primary method for the development of peak discharges. StreamStats³⁸ was used to obtain regression points for all flow locations. This application provides access to spatial analytical tools that are useful for water-resources planning and management, and for engineering and design purposes. StreamStats also provides an easy, user-friendly interface and utilizes Regional Regression Equations, published by USGS.³⁹

There are 31 USGS gages located within the project area. To determine whether these gages are appropriate for use, the following parameters were defined:

- ✓ Currently active gages:
 - 15 years or more
 - Use regulated period only when the gage is impacted by a reservoir built during the period of record; Q estimate is not weighted with regression; transfer is according to a power
- ✓ Currently inactive gages:
 - 20 years or more
 - Record terminates less than 15 years from now
 - Watershed is similar to the condition when record was collected
 - For regulated gages, only use after regulation (homogeneous record); Q estimate is not weighted
- ✓ PeakFQ Analysis

For the 2 gages, the peak years were reviewed at and compared against the data above; both gages met the listed criteria.

[USGS Bulletin 17C](#) was used to determine the 10%- , 4%- , 2%- , 1%- , 1%-plus, 1%-minus and 0.2%- annual chance flood recurrence intervals using PeakFQ Version 7.2. A comparison was also made against values developed using [USGS Bulletin 17B](#).

Similarly, the hydraulic analyses were performed for approximately 2,027 stream miles within Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties. Flood elevation profiles were developed for the required seven frequencies, the 10%- , 4%- , 2%- , 1%- , 1%-plus, 1%-minus and 0.2%- annual chance floods. Note, no floodway analyses or levee analyses were developed for this project. The hydraulic analyses were developed using the USACE's HEC-RAS model. A one-dimensional (1D) steady-state hydraulic simulation was selected for the flooding sources. Letters distributed to Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties communities explaining this process are in *Appendix E: Base Level Engineering Letters* of this report

³⁸ https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/streamstats-streamflow-statistics-and-spatial-analysis-tools?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects

³⁹ <https://water.usgs.gov/osw/programs/nss/pubs.html#ny>

The in-person Discovery meetings, held in September 2019, provided an opportunity to present the BLE data to communities within the project area and collect their feedback on both the usefulness as well as the accuracy of the associated mapping. More information about BLE can be found on FEMA’s BLE webpage at: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/160060>. *Table 10: Current Status of BLE* shows the status of the stream mileage classifications within the Salmon Watershed.

Table 10: BLE Mileage in the Salmon Watershed

HUC8 Watershed Name	HUC8 Number	Stream Mileage Classifications Within the Salmon Watershed	
		Scoped Stream Miles	Studied Stream Miles ¹
Salmon	04150307	246.0	215.6

¹ Mileage excludes stream lines that are within a lake with an identified stillwater/normal pool elevation or stream lines that are part of braided channels (the main channel is maintained in the model, but not the secondary channels)

Coordinated Needs Management Strategy (CNMS) and NFIP Mapping Needs

Coordinated Needs Management Strategy (CNMS) is a FEMA initiative to update the way FEMA organizes, stores, and analyzes flood hazard mapping needs information for communities. CNMS defines an approach and structure for the identification and management of flood hazard mapping needs that supports data-driven planning and the flood map update investment process in a geospatial (or GIS) environment. The goal is to identify areas where existing flood maps do not accurately represent FEMA’s mapping standards.

There are three classifications within the CNMS: “Valid,” “Unverified,” and “Unknown.” New and updated studies (i.e., those with new hydrologic and hydraulic models) developed during FEMA’s Map Modernization program were automatically determined to be “Valid” and the remaining studies went through a 17-element validation process with seven critical and ten secondary elements. Validation elements apply physical, climatological, and environmental factors to stream studies to determine validity. A stream study must pass all the critical elements and at least seven secondary elements in order to be classified as “Valid.” The remainder of the streams are classified as “Unverified.”

The following seven Critical Elements or “checks” must be addressed satisfactorily in order for a stream reach to be determined “Valid”:

- Change in the Gage Record: Has a major flood event caused a major change in the gage record since the effective analysis?
- Change in Discharge: Do the updated and effective peak discharges differ significantly based on the confidence limit criteria in [FEMA’s Guidelines and Specifications \(G&S\)](#)
- Model Methodology: Is the model methodology no longer appropriate based on FEMA’s G&S?
- Hydraulic Change: Has a major flood-control structure (dam/ levee/ floodwall/ other change) been added or removed from the reach?
- Channel Reconfiguration: Is the channel reconfiguration outside the effective SFHA? (i.e. has the stream moved or been relocated?)

- Other Hydraulic Changes: Have more than five hydraulic structures (bridges/culverts) been added or removed that impact BFEs on the reach?
- Channel Area Change: Has there been significant channel fill or scour?

If one or more of the above noted elements are true, then the flood hazard information for the reach is “Invalid.” Not all elements may be applicable for all flooding sources. In addition to the above seven Critical Elements, if four or more of the following Secondary Elements are true then the flood hazard information must be recorded as “Invalid.”

- Regression Equation: Has a rural regression equation been used in a now urbanized area?
- Repetitive Loss: Are there repetitive losses outside the mapped SFHA?
- Impervious Area: Has there been an increase in impervious area in the sub-basin of equal to or greater than 50 percent?
- Hydraulic Structure: Have more than one, but less than five, hydraulic structures (bridges/culverts) been added or removed that impact BFEs on the reach?
- Channel Improvements: Have there been channel improvements or shoreline changes?
- Topography Data: Is better topography and/or bathymetry data available?
- Vegetation or Land Use: Have significant changes to vegetation or land use occurred in the area?
- Coastal Dune: Is there a failure to identify primary frontal dune in coastal areas?
- High Water Mark (HWM): Have significant storms occurred with recorded HWMs?
- Regression Equation: Are new regression equations available?

CNMS is a living database that is continuously updated whenever new or revised studies become available. As part of that update, valid stream reaches will be reassessed every five years and invalid streams will be prioritized for potential funding. The in-person Discovery meetings provide an opportunity for the gathering and prioritization of CNMS community requests. [Table 11: Current Status of CNMS](#) shows the status of the portions of each county in this project area within the Salmon Watershed prior to the in-person Discovery meetings held in September 2019.

Table 11: CNMS Mileage in the Salmon Watershed

County	FIPS	Stream Mileage Classifications Within Salmon Watershed			
		“Valid”	“Unverified”	“Unknown”	Total
Franklin	36033	2	210	0	212
St. Lawrence	36089	0	2	0	2
Total	--	2	212	0	214

Source: FEMA

The CNMS Map Viewer tool provides a single location to view riverine stream line segments, coastal line segments, unmapped line segments, and mapping request information. This tool is updated on a quarterly basis (the current display is September 2019), and can be accessed at: <http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=34a65cf7044441c081b557e2877585a1>. More information about CNMS can be found on FEMA’s CNMS webpage at: <https://www.fema.gov/coordinated-needs-management-strategy>.

Flood Insurance Policies and Claims

A community's agreement to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances as a participant in the NFIP, particularly with respect to new or substantially improved construction, is an important risk reduction element in making federally backed flood insurance available to home and business owners.

As part of this Discovery project, NFIP flood insurance policy data for the communities was collected. As of January 2020, 73 policies were in force for communities affected by the Salmon Watershed accounting for \$11,313,600 in insurance coverage. The number of policies and total coverage cost are listed in [*Table 12: Flood Insurance Policies and Claims Data*](#).

St. Lawrence represents the county with the second largest number of flood insurance policies and coverage in place across the Salmon Watershed, with 12.3% of the policies (9) and 10% of the total amount of insurance coverage (\$1,125,300).

Franklin County represents the county with the largest number of flood insurance policies and coverage in place across the Salmon Watershed, with 87.7% of the policies (64) and 90% of the total amount of insurance coverage (\$10,188,300).

Table 12: Flood Insurance Policies and Claims Data (as of January 2020)

County	Community	Number of Policies	Total Amount of Coverage	Number of Claims	Total Claims Paid
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	0	0	0	0
	Bellmont, Town of	19	\$3,016,500	1	\$2,944
	Bombay, Town of	4	\$122,600	4	\$24,186
	Brandon, Town of	0	0	0	0
	Brushton, Village of	1	\$5,000	0	0
	Constable, Town of	2	\$450,000	0	0
	Dickinson, Town of	5	\$988,000	1	\$10,924
	Fort Covington, Town of	6	\$1,084,300	1	\$3,893
	Malone, Town of	11	\$1,706,000	6	\$80,819
	Malone, Village of	14	\$2,698,900	3	\$13,399
	Moir, Town of	1	\$75,000	0	0
	Westville, Town of	1	\$42,000	1	\$2,992
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	9	\$1,125,300	3	\$51,241
Total	--	73	\$11,313,600.00	20	\$190,398.00

Source: FEMA

Repetitive Loss/Severe Repetitive Loss Properties

A Repetitive Loss (RL) is a property that has received two or more claim payments of more than \$1,000 from the NFIP within any rolling ten-year period. In the Salmon Watershed, there were no repetitive loss properties.

A Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) property is defined as a residential property that is covered under an NFIP flood insurance policy and (a) has at least four NFIP claim payments (including building and contents) over \$5,000 each, and the cumulative amount of such claims payments exceeds \$20,000; and (b) for which at least two separate claims payments (building payments only) have been made with the cumulative amount of the building portion of such claims exceeding the market value of the building. For both (a) and (b), at least two of the referenced claims must have occurred within any ten-year period and must be greater than ten days apart. Within the St. Regis project area there are currently zero repetitive loss properties.

Structures that flood frequently strain the National Flood Insurance Fund (NFIF). In fact, RL properties are the biggest draw on the fund. From 1978 to 2015, FEMA has paid approximately \$9 billion in claims for RL properties. RL properties not only increase the NFIP's annual losses and the need for borrowing funds from Congress, but also drain funds needed to prepare for future catastrophic events.

Clusters of RL properties and previous NFIP assistance are used to identify "hot spot" areas within communities. This information can be used to identify areas of mitigation interest and updated mapping needs and products for individual communities.

Community Assistance Visits (CAVs)

Statewide Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) are part of the evaluation and review process used by FEMA, NYSDEC Floodplain Management staff, and local officials to ensure that each community adequately enforces local floodplain management regulations to remain in compliance with NFIP requirements. Generally, a CAV consists of a tour of the floodplain, an inspection of community permit files, and meetings with local appointed and elected officials. During a CAV, observations and investigations focus on identifying issues in various areas, such as community floodplain management regulations/ordinances, community administration and enforcement procedures, engineering or other issues related to FIRMs, and other problems related to community floodplain management.

Any administrative problems or potential violations identified during a CAV will be documented in the CAV findings report. The community will be notified and given the opportunity to correct administrative procedures and remedy any violations to the maximum extent possible within established deadlines.

CAVs are also a way to provide technical assistance to communities. If administrative problems or potential violations are identified, the community will be notified and given the opportunity to correct those administrative procedures and remedy the violations to the maximum extent possible within established deadlines. FEMA or the State will work with the community to help bring the program into compliance with NFIP requirements. In extreme cases where the community does not act to bring itself into compliance, FEMA may initiate an enforcement action against the community. A program deficiency is a defect in a community's floodplain management regulations or administrative procedures that impacts effective implementation of floodplain management regulations of the standards in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 44, Sections 60.3, 60.4, or 60.6. "Open" CAVs can be indicative of unresolved violations.

Community Assistance Contacts (CACs)

Community Assistance Contacts (CACs) are a tool employed by New York State and FEMA to periodically contact a community to determine whether they are having any difficulties in administering the local floodplain management ordinance or program. A CAC is an additional way of determining if a CAV should be scheduled. CACs are also a means of encouraging Code Enforcement Officers to attend annual floodplain management workshops. CACs can serve to support local officials when they need help to effectively administer the NFIP in their community.

[Table 13: CAVs and CACs Performed within the Project Area](#) lists the most recent CAVs and CACs performed for communities located within the Salmon Watershed.

Table 13: CAVs and CACs Performed within the Project Area

County	Community	Most Recent CAV Date	Most Recent CAC Date
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	N/A	N/A
	Bellmont, Town of	N/A	N/A
	Bombay, Town of	N/A	N/A
	Brandon, Town of	N/A	N/A
	Brushton, Village of	09/22/1993	N/A
	Constable, Town of	N/A	N/A
	Dickinson, Town of	09/14/1993	05/19/2017
	Fort Covington, Town of	07/02/2012	N/A
	Malone, Town of	06/25/2012	02/06/2007
	Malone, Village of	06/20/2012	05/04/2004
	Moir, Town of	09/22/1993	07/08/1992
	Westville, Town of	09/15/1993	04/17/2018
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	02/22/2012	N/A

Source: FEMA

N/A - Date not available

Ordinances

The project area's local jurisdictions have a patchwork of regulations regarding development within known SFHAs. The regulations range from ordinances with minimum NFIP requirements to strong, pro-active ordinances that not only regulate and protect new and improved development in existing SFHAs but seek to mitigate the growth of SFHAs caused by increased runoff from developed areas and the degradation of natural flood control areas, such as wetlands and forests.

While the NFIP uses six different ordinance levels (60.3 land-use classification levels), New York State uses their own system that includes three ordinance levels, as described below.

1. "A" type: used when 1-percent-annual-chance floodplains have not yet been identified. Communities participating in the NFIP without any FIRMs would adopt an "A" type ordinance.

2. **“D” type:** used when 1-percent-annual-chance floodplains without BFEs have been identified; 1-percent-annual-chance floodplains with BFEs, but without floodways have been identified; and 1-percent-annual-chance floodplains with BFEs and a floodway have been identified. If the community also has coastal flooding but does not have coastal high-hazard areas (V Zones), the community would adopt is a “D” type ordinance.
3. **“E” type:** used when coastal high-hazard areas (V Zones) have been identified.

The NFIP-participating communities within the watershed have floodplain management regulations in place and have a mechanism for updating their ordinances. [Table 14: Program Status and Ordinance Level](#) lists the program status and ordinance level for each community in the Salmon Watershed Discovery project area.

Table 14: Program Status and Ordinance Level (as of January 2020)

County	Community	Program Status	Ordinance Level	Ordinance Effective Date
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	Regular	A	N/A
	Bellmont, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Bombay, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Brandon, Town of	Regular	A	N/A
	Brushton, Village of	Regular	D	N/A
	Constable, Town of	Regular	A	N/A
	Dickinson, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Fort Covington, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Malone, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Malone, Village of	Regular	D	N/A
	Moir, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
	Westville, Town of	Regular	D	N/A
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	Regular	D	N/A

Source: FEMA, NYS

Community Rating System (CRS)

CRS is a voluntary incentive program that provides flood insurance premium discounts to NFIP-participating communities that take extra measures to manage floodplains beyond the minimum NFIP requirements. A point system is used to determine a community’s CRS rating class; the more measures a community takes to minimize or eliminate exposure to floods, the more CRS points are awarded and the higher the discount on flood insurance premiums. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted from 5 to 45 percent for properties located within the SFHA. The reduced flood risk resulting from a community’s actions are reflected in these three CRS goals:

1. Reduce flood damage to insurable property;
2. Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP; and
3. Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

Currently there are no communities within the Salmon Watershed that participate in CRS. For more information on CRS, please visit FEMA's [CRS website](#).

Learning more about the CRS program would be of benefit to all watershed communities to ensure they are fully aware of what CRS is, if a community is eligible to apply, and what level of effort is required to make CRS participation beneficial for a community. Local communities may wish to consider pooling resources and efforts or work on a countywide basis to offset the level of effort to comply with the requirements of joining the CRS program.

Other Data Useful for Flood Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Topographic Data

Topographic data is commonly captured using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), a state-of-the-art method for collecting accurate topographic elevation information. LiDAR uses an instrument that measure distance to a reflecting object by emitting timed pulses of laser light and measuring the time between emission and reception of reflected pulses. More information on LiDAR is available on [NOAA's website](#). LiDAR elevation data was flown across the North Country in 2014, 2016, and 2017. Information about the coverage of LiDAR data in NYS is available at the [NYSGIS Clearinghouse](#).

Dams

Please refer to the [Historic Flooding Problems](#) subsection of this report for information about dams in the Salmon Watershed project area.

Levees

A levee or floodwall is defined in 44 CFR, Section 59.1 as “a man-made structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed in accordance with sound engineering practices to contain, control, or divert the flow of water so as to provide protection from temporary flooding”.

A review of current effective FIRMs and the USACE's National Levee Database (<https://levees.sec.usace.army.mil/#/>) indicates there are no identified levees in the study area.

Stream Gages and Flows

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), most USGS stream gages operate by measuring the elevation of the water in the river or stream and then converting the water elevation (called “stage”) to a stream flow (“discharge”) by using a curve that relates the elevation to a set of actual discharge measurements.

The USGS standard is to measure river stage to 0.01 inches. This is accomplished with the use of floats inside a stilling well, and pressure transducers that measure how much pressure is required to push a gas bubble through a tube (related to the depth of water), or with radar. Figure 6: Typical Modern USGS Stream Gage illustrates the design of a river gaging station.

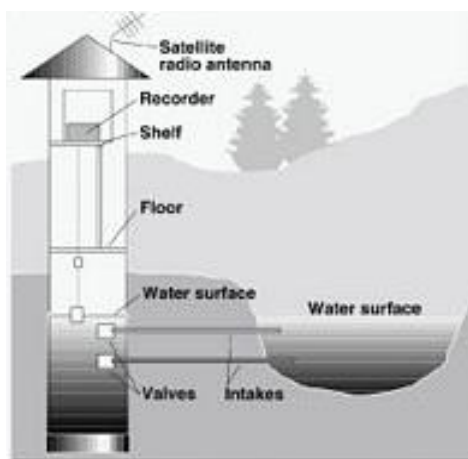


Figure 6: Typical Modern USGS Stream Gage

At most USGS stream gages, the stage is measured every 15 minutes and the data is stored in an electronic data recorder. At set intervals, usually between every one to four hours, the data is transmitted to the USGS using satellite, telephone, or radio. At the USGS offices, the curves relating stage to stream flow are applied to determine stream flow estimates and both the stage and stream flow data are then displayed on the USGS website. For more information on how stream gages work, please see the [USGS's factsheet](#) on stream gaging.

There are two known current and past gages in the watershed. [Table 15: USGS Gages in the Salmon Watershed](#) shows the gage identification number, location, drainage area, status, and county for all known USGS gages in the watershed. Additional information on gages in the watershed may be found by visiting the [USGS's website](#).

Table 15: USGS Gages in the Salmon Watershed

County	Gage ID	Gage Location	Gage Status	Drainage Area (sq. miles)
Franklin	04270000	Salmon River at Chasm Falls, NY	Active	132.0
	04270200	Little Salmon River at Bombay, NY	Active	92.2

Source: USGS

Rain Gages

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) [Cooperative Observer Program](#) is a weather and climate observing network of more than 11,000 volunteers who take observations nationwide on farms, in urban and suburban areas, National Parks, seashores, and mountaintops. When appropriate, FEMA utilizes the NOAA information from these gages in developing meteorological models for the watersheds that employ rainfall runoff models and calibration.

Additional information on rainfall in New York can be found in NOAA's [Technical Paper No. 49](#) and in the Technical Memorandum [NWS HYDRO-35](#); both can be found on NOAA's website. It should be noted that data has been updated through a joint collaboration between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Northeast Regional Climate Center (NRCC) and is available on the [Extreme Precipitation in New York and New England](#) webpage.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s)

As noted on the [NYSDEC's website](#), Federal Stormwater Phase II regulations require permits for stormwater discharges from MS4s in urban areas and for construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land. To implement the law, NYSDEC has developed two general permits, one for MS4s in urbanized areas and one for construction activities. The permits are part of the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES). Operators of regulated MS4s and operators of construction activities must obtain permit coverage under either an individual SPDES permit or one of the general permits prior to commencement of construction.

Guidance for local officials on complying with State and Federal stormwater management requirements, Minimum Measures 4 and 5, can be found on the [NYSDEC's website](#). Detailed maps that depict where the regulated MS4 boundaries lie can be also found on the [NYSDEC's website](#).

Transportation

Transportation is the movement of people and goods from location to location. These features include roads, rail, and air. Planning for these features allows for utilization and function within communities and interaction with other communities. These features are critical for community planning related to risk assessments for evacuation routes and potential flooding issues that could occur. Transportation features used for this Discovery project were obtained from the [New York State GIS Clearinghouse](#).

Jurisdictional Boundaries

Jurisdictional boundaries used for this Discovery project, including boundaries for cities, towns, villages, and counties, were also obtained from the [New York State GIS Clearinghouse](#).

Hazard Mitigation Planning and Activities

Summary of Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)

A local HMP is a long-term strategic/guidance document used by an entity to reduce future risk to life, property, and the economy in a community. The purpose of the HMP is to:

- Identify vulnerabilities to natural hazards and provide for potential projects to reduce those vulnerabilities in the future;
- Protect life, safety, and property by reducing the potential for future damages and economic losses that result from natural hazards;
- Qualify for additional grant funding, in both the pre-disaster and post-disaster environment;
- Speed recovery and redevelopment following future disaster events;
- Demonstrate a firm local commitment to hazard mitigation principles; and
- Comply with both State and Federal legislative requirements for local HMPs.

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYSDHES) reviews the local HMPs prior to FEMA review and approval. These plans identify potential hazards and threats that face each community. Subsequent to approval and adoption of the HMPs, communities are eligible to receive grants for future mitigation projects through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. There are numerous advantages to mitigation. For example, the creation

of a mitigation plan helps local officials identify potential future hazards. Once the threats are identified, the communities can identify mitigation activities, projects, and strategies to eliminate or minimize the impact a potential hazard would cause. Preventative measures are also cost effective; preventing the impact of a hazard will cost less than cleaning up after a disaster occurs. Mitigation can prevent the loss of lives as well as property damage. These plans focus on the exposure of critical facilities and community-owned assets to potential hazards and address ways to reduce the vulnerability to these threats. Some of these actions, projects, and strategies may take little time to employ while others may take years to implement.

HMPs are often completed at the county or regional level. At the local level, each municipal government also adopts the HMP as an individual plan or regional plan. Each municipality that adopts the HMP must develop specific mitigation actions to address vulnerabilities. Each municipal HMP was reviewed for initiatives, critical facilities, and mitigation actions. The status of each countywide HMP is shown in [Table 16: Status of Hazard Mitigation Plans](#).

Table 16: Status of Hazard Mitigation Plans (as of August 2019)

County	Community	Approval Date	Plan Expiration
Franklin	Countywide	1/19/2016	1/19/2021
St. Lawrence	Countywide	10/9/2015	10/9/2020

Source: FEMA

Critical Facilities and Other Important Properties in the SFHA

Critical facilities are those entities essential to the community's health and welfare. Critical facilities included in the HMPs vary based on how the locality defines a critical facility/infrastructure and the types of data available. Typically, critical facilities are defined as community assets whose presence is vital to that jurisdiction's continued ability to operate. Critical facilities often include 911 and emergency services facilities, airports, colleges and universities, schools, fire departments, police departments, sewage treatment plants, hospitals, and nursing homes.

None of the HMPs referenced above identified facilities located within the SFHA.

Hazard Mitigation Grants

FEMA provides funding for various types of mitigation projects. These funds are granted through several mechanisms including the [Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program](#) (PDM), [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#) (HMGP), and [Flood Mitigation Assistance](#) (FMA).

The PDM program provides funds for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event to states, territories, and Tribal governments (and through them, local communities). Funding these plans and projects reduces overall risks to residents and structures, while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. PDM grants are awarded on a competitive basis and without reference to state allocations, quotas, or other formula-based allocation of funds.

Like PDM, the HMGP provides grants to states (who may then award funding to local governments), to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented statewide during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

Lastly, the FMA provides funds for projects to reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to buildings that are insured under the NFIP on an annual basis through three types of grants:

- Planning Grants to prepare flood mitigation plans;
- Project Grants to implement measures to reduce flood losses, such as elevation, acquisition or relocation of NFIP-insured structures; and
- Management Cost Grants so that the grantee may administer the FMA program and activities.

FMA grants are only available to state (and state-equivalent) and Tribal governments; however, local governments may be named as sub-applicants.

Mitigation Projects Completed or Underway

The county HMPs identified mitigation projects, actions, and strategies to reduce long-term vulnerability to hazards. Each county listed several mitigation projects related to reducing flood risk. The general mitigation planning approach used is based on the FEMA Publication [*“Developing the Mitigation Plan: Identifying Mitigation Actions and Implementing Strategies.”*](#)

The FEMA document contains four steps used to support mitigation planning:

- Develop mitigation goals and objectives
- Identify and prioritize mitigation actions
- Prepare an implementation strategy
- Document the mitigation planning process

Franklin County

Franklin County’s HMP mitigation strategies include:⁴⁰

- Improve public awareness
- Participate in the Community Rating System
- Stabilize banks
- Install stream monitoring capabilities
- Eliminate obstructions to surface water drainage
- Identify and examine culverts in affected areas

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County’s mitigation strategies include:⁴¹

- Create digital FIRMs
- Stabilize stream banks to reduce erosion along St. Regis River
- Develop dam failure analyses

⁴⁰ [Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), pages 56-59

⁴¹ [St. Lawrence County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), pages 105-113

- Develop specific mitigation solutions for flood-prone roadways and intersections
- Improve storm water management
- Develop localized flood risk reduction projects
- Replace and rehabilitate local bridges and culverts

V. Discovery Outreach and Engagement Strategy

The following Discovery outreach information is based on the comprehensive North Country Watersheds project, which includes eight watershed sub-basins in Northern New York: Chateaugay-English, Grass, Indian, Oswegatchie, Raquette, Salmon, St. Regis, and Upper St. Lawrence.

Prior Engagement Efforts

Prior outreach and engagement efforts related to flood risk (separate from this Discovery project) have been performed by NYSDEC and FEMA for certain communities within the North Country Watersheds. These projects and activities are summarized in [*Table 18: Prior Engagement Efforts in the North Country Project Area*](#).

Table 17: Prior Engagement Efforts in the North Country Project Area

County	Date	Project Outreach and Engagement Efforts
Franklin	11/06/1975	Initial CCO* Meeting, Village of Malone
	12/21/1976	Final CCO Meeting, Village of Malone
Jefferson	10/26/2010	Initial CCO Meeting, Jefferson County (countywide)
	12/13/2012	Final CCO Meeting, Jefferson County (countywide)
	02/22/1991	Final CCO Meeting, Town of Wilna
	05/13/1992	Final CCO Meeting, Village of Philadelphia
St. Lawrence	04/04/1978	Initial CCO Meetings - Village of Massena, Town of Morristown, City of Ogdensburg
	11/29/1979	Final CCO Meetings - Village of Massena and City of Ogdensburg
	11/20/1980	Final CCO Meeting, Village of Potsdam
	04/21/1993	Final CCO Meeting, Village of Canton

*CCO - Consultation Coordination Officer Meeting is held by FEMA to present preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Flood Insurance Study reports to community officials

Stakeholder Identification

As part of this Discovery process for the North Country Watersheds, the NYSDEC Floodplain Management Section compiled an extensive list of contact information for community officials, tribal, state, and local governments, and other stakeholders within the watersheds. In an effort to gather as much local feedback as possible, over 250 watershed stakeholders including local officials from individual communities and counties, representatives from Federal and State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other local groups were invited to participate in the Discovery process.

Key Stakeholder Groups and Influencers

In addition to municipal officials, planning and emergency agencies, and residents, there are other stakeholders with an interest in floodplain mapping and management. Other Federal and State agencies, major landowners, large employers, academic institutions, and environmental organizations all have a role to play, and sometimes valuable information to provide, when

developing both pre-mapping data and final mapping products. Examples of such organizations in the North Country Watersheds include:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Buffalo District
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Water Institute
- New York State GIS Program Office
- Cornell Cooperative Extensions: Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence
- St. Lawrence University

Pre-Discovery Meeting Engagement and Information Exchange

Exchanging information with key stakeholders is a critical part of the North Country Watersheds Discovery project. There were two primary goals of the initial outreach and engagement activities associated with this project: 1) to communicate the purpose of the Discovery project and the role of local stakeholder input in the process and 2) to obtain key information upfront related to existing flood risk in the watersheds, flood hazard mapping needs, mitigation activities, and other existing information useful in updating the FIRMs. The list of key stakeholders is provided in *Appendix A: Pre-Discovery Meeting Mailing List and Correspondence* of this report.

Pre-Discovery Meeting Webinars

The project team hosted three Pre-Discovery Meeting webinars on July 30 and 31, and August 1, 2019, via WebEx/conference call for the North Country Watersheds project. The purpose of the sessions was to introduce the planning team, explain the Discovery process and how it can benefit the communities in the watersheds, and how stakeholders can participate in the process. The sessions were also used to obtain input on best locations for in-person Discovery meetings, who should be included in the process, and ideas for encouraging participation in the meetings. The webinar presentation is provided in *Appendix B: Pre-Discovery Meeting (Webinar) Presentation* of this report. A summary of the Pre-Discovery Meeting webinars is provided in *Appendix C: Pre-Discovery Meeting (Webinar) Summary* of this report.

Correspondence/Survey Form

Upon completion of the Pre-Discovery Meeting webinars, a Risk MAP Discovery Project Stakeholder Survey form in PDF format was sent via e-mail to all stakeholders invited to the webinars or in hard copy form if no e-mail address was available. The survey was also made available online via *Survey Monkey*. Stakeholders were asked to submit the completed survey prior to upcoming in-person Discovery meetings for the Discovery team to evaluate, gather, and develop preliminary materials ahead of the meetings.

The Stakeholder Survey form requested information from stakeholders on:

- Flood mapping needs, FIRM inaccuracies, and historical flood problems
- High water marks within the community
- Community planning, ongoing projects, and recent residential, commercial, or industrial development
- Flood mitigation activities
- Training needs
- NFIP and floodplain management information

- GIS data: base map, engineering, and risk assessment data
- Other community officials or groups to include in the Discovery project

The Stakeholder Survey form is provided in *Appendix D: Stakeholder Survey* of this report.

VI. Discovery Meetings

The following information on Discovery meetings is based on the comprehensive North Country Watersheds project, which includes eight watershed sub-basins in Northern New York: Chateaugay-English, Grass, Indian, Oswegatchie, Raquette, Salmon, St. Regis, and Upper St. Lawrence.

The purpose of the in-person Discovery meetings is to review any information previously provided by communities, State and regional agencies, and local stakeholders; discuss each community's floodplain mapping needs and floodplain management activities, mitigation plans and projects, and flood risk concerns; and gather additional feedback for FEMA to consider when developing Risk MAP products, including the development of new FIRMs where needed.

Appendices to this report include the in-person Discovery meeting presentation and meeting materials:

- Discovery Meeting Mailing List and Correspondence (see *Appendix G*)
- Discovery Meeting Sign-In Sheets (see *Appendix H*)
- Discovery Meeting Agenda (see *Appendix I*)
- Discovery Meeting Presentation (see *Appendix J*)
- Discovery Meeting Summary Memorandum (see *Appendix K*)

Invitees to the in-person Discovery meetings included not only those stakeholders initially identified to participate in the Pre-Discovery Meeting webinars, but also other stakeholders identified by participants during the Pre-Discovery Meeting webinars and in the completed Stakeholder Survey forms received prior to the meetings. Invitations were sent by e-mail and hard copy. In addition, telephone calls to communities who had not RSVP'd for the in-person Discovery meetings were made in the weeks prior to the meetings to encourage attendance.

A series of four in-person Discovery meetings for the North Country Watersheds were held on the dates and times listed below in [Table 19: North Country Watersheds Discovery Meetings](#).

Table 18: North Country Watersheds Discovery Meetings

Date	Time	Location
09/18/2019	9:00 AM to 11:45 AM	Gouverneur Community Center 4673 State Highway 58 Gouverneur, NY 13642
09/18/2019	2:15 PM to 5:00 PM	Town of Potsdam Town Hall Conference Room 16 Elm Street Potsdam, NY 13676
09/19/2019	9:00 AM to 11:45 AM	Town of Massena Town Hall Board Room 60 Main Street Massena, NY 13662
09/19/2019	2:15 PM to 5:00 PM	Franklin County Emergency Services Building Meeting Room 55 Bare Hill Road Malone, NY 12953

Community officials and other stakeholders who attended the in-person Discovery meetings were interviewed by project team members on a variety of flood and mitigation-related topics. The identification of mapping, training and mitigation needs in the watersheds was of particular importance to this project. This information was captured by the project team on copies of the Stakeholder Survey form and on scoping/flood hazard maps or effective FIRMs for each community. The forms allowed stakeholders to provide detailed descriptions for points or areas of concern, while the maps allowed stakeholders to highlight areas of flood hazard concern, locations of past, ongoing, or desired mitigation projects, and areas with mapping needs.

Post-Meeting Follow Up Activities

Additional outreach to communities in the North Country Watershed was performed after the in-person meetings. Follow up letters were sent to communities that had not participated in the Discovery process to date (i.e., did not submit a Stakeholder Survey form or attend one of the in-person Discovery meetings) that again requested their input in the process (see *Appendix M: Community Acknowledgment Letters*). For communities, counties, and Tribal nations that did participate in the Discovery process, letters summarizing identified mapping needs were sent to the relevant community official(s) to ensure their needs were correctly recorded and summarized. These letters requested community officials review the identified needs and either return a signed copy of the letter to NYSDEC if the needs were summarized correctly or contact NYSDEC if changes were needed. Copies of the follow-up letters are provided in *Appendix M: Community Acknowledgment Letters*.

VII. Discovery Findings

Summary of Stakeholder Comments and Needs

Following the in-person Discovery meetings, the information gathered during the face-to-face consultations with community officials and other watershed stakeholders was combined with information provided by stakeholders through the Stakeholder Survey forms completed in hard copy or online outside of the meetings. A summary of identified needs (flood mapping, mitigation, and training) provided by stakeholders during the Discovery process are provided in the sections below. Detailed summaries of the data provided by stakeholders during the project are available in *Appendix K: Discovery Meeting Summary Memorandum* and *Appendix R: Recommended Scope of Work Memorandum* of this report.

Flood Mapping Needs

Communities in the Salmon Watershed have dated paper FIRMs that were developed between 1978 and 1997. Further, there are a small number of communities with no published FIRMs or FEMA-identified flood hazards. All communities in the Discovery project area would benefit from new or revised digital FIRMs. Many community officials find the existing maps to be outdated, have floodplain inaccuracies, and difficult to use.

[*Table 19: Summary of Identified Mapping Needs*](#) summarizes the mapping needs identified by communities and other stakeholders during the Discovery project. The Discovery maps display each community and the identified mapping needs where applicable.

Table 19: Summary of Identified Mapping Needs

County / Tribe / Organization	Community	Identified Mapping Needs
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	No input received from community.
	Bellmont, Town of	1. LOMAs concentrated at Indian Lake, Mountain View Lake, and Lower Chateaugay Lake. All lakes need a detailed study.
	Bombay, Town of	No input received from community.
	Brandon, Town of	No input received from community.
	Brushton, Village of	1. Little Salmon River needs a detailed study. It has flood issues, in particular for the dam just upstream of Washington Street (Main Street). This dam is accumulating sediment behind it due to lack of maintenance / operation, and this is creating ground water and flood risk issues. 2. Numerous springs are in the north part of the village; this is attributed to the higher water tables in the village.
	Constable, Town of	1. Flood issues for unnamed tributary, south of Trout River State Forest, at Poplar Street; needs a detailed study. 2. Beaver Pond Brook would benefit from a detailed study; minor flooding occurs south of Stebbins Road, due to beaver dams. 3. Little Trout River needs a detailed study; Coveytown Road bridge was replaced and a condemned railroad bridge is located a short distance upstream.
	Dickinson, Town of	No input received from community.
	Fort Covington, Town of	See 'Franklin County' below.

Table 19: Summary of Identified Mapping Needs

County / Tribe / Organization	Community	Identified Mapping Needs
Franklin	Franklin County	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed study/restudy of Salmon River for its entire length within the county (including Chasm Falls to the southeast of Malone). 2. Lower Park Street flooding resulted in buyouts of 5-6 homes along the Salmon River. 3. Ice jam sedimentation buildup is causing issues throughout county under review by USACE and NRCS. 4. Fort Covington dam removal in 2010; FIRM inaccuracies. 5. Westville has major erosion along the Little Salmon River.
	Malone, Town of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salmon River needs a detailed study; Lower Park Street (north of Main Street) and Kimpton Road (south of Whippleville), experience ice jam flooding. 2. Lower Park Street flooding resulted in buyouts of 5-6 homes along the Salmon River. 3. Section 205 request will allow USACE to develop / construct small flood control projects without congressional authorization.
	Malone, Village of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salmon River needs a detailed study; Patnode and Lafayette Streets experience flooding. 2. Village wastewater treatment plant (Malone Village Sewage Disposal) on Salmon River is area of concern due to ice jam flooding. 3. Willow Street bridge has not overtopped during ice jam flooding on Salmon River, but extension of floodplain is reasonable. 4. Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) grant was funded for Ballard Mill Park
	Moir, Town of	No input received from community.
	Westville, Town of	See 'Franklin County' above.
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated/revised FIRMs, especially due to St. Regis River dam removal in 2015. 2. Earls Creek, Squeak Brook, and St. Regis River all need detailed studies and experience frequent flooding. 3. RV park (Riverside Campground) and downtown Brasher experienced flooding along the St. Regis River during Irene in 2011. 4. St. Regis River has common ice jams at State Route 11C bridge. 5. LOMAs concentrated at Brasher Falls community along the St. Regis River.
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	----	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need FIRMs. 2. St. Regis River needs a detailed study, Major flood events occurred in 1981 and 2017 due to ice jams. 3. St. Regis River dam removal in 2015 resulted in ice jamming in 2015 and 2017; bottleneck in area downstream of removed dam. 4. April 2015 flooding on St. Regis River.

Mitigation and Risk Reduction Project Needs

Communities and other stakeholders provided their input on mitigation and risk reduction project needs as part of the Discovery project. The most common needs identified included the replacement/resizing of culverts and bridges, dam maintenance/remediation, and stream maintenance, sedimentation, and erosion issues along flooding sources that exacerbate flooding and ice jam problems. [Table 20: Summary of Mitigation and Risk Reduction Project Needs](#) provides a summary of such needs identified by communities and stakeholders during this Discovery project as applicable.

Table 20: Summary of Mitigation and Risk Reduction Project Needs

County / Tribe / Organization	Community	Mitigation/Risk Reduction Project Need
Franklin	Bangor, Town of	No input received from community.
	Bellmont, Town of	1. County Route 27 (going to Hamlet of Owls Head) has three new culverts. 2. Dam replacements for Indian Lake and Mountain View Lake near completion. 3. CRS information requested.
	Bombay, Town of	No input received from community.
	Brandon, Town of	No input received from community.
	Brushton, Village of	1. Need to have maintenance for the dam as it is accumulating sediment; grant funds would be beneficial. 2. Digital FIRMs with updated SFHAs.
	Constable, Town of	None identified.
	Dickinson, Town of	No input received from community.
	Fort Covington, Town of	No input received from community.
	Franklin County	1. Digital FIRMs with updated SFHAs. 2. Buyout of flood prone structures, such as happened along Lower Park Street in Malone where buyouts of 5-6 homes occurred along the Salmon River. 3. Ice jams and sedimentation buildup need to be addressed.
	Malone, Town of	1. Section 205 request with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 2. Training would be beneficial. 3. CRS information requested.
	Malone, Village of	1. LWRP for Mill Park and Salmon River area. 2. CRS information requested.
	Moir, Town of	No input received from community.
	Westville, Town of	No input received from community.
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town of	1. Digital FIRMs with updated SFHAs. 2. Proposed bridge replacement in Helena. 3. Dam removal on St. Regis River around 2015 alleviated flooding. 4. CRS information requested.
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	----	None identified.

Training, Outreach, and Planning Support Needs

As illustrated in the following table, Floodplain Management Administration was the most commonly requested training topic by community officials, with Building Code Requirements and Hazard Mitigation and Grant Programs following closely behind. Effective Public Outreach was the least requested topic of the four listed in the table. Several communities also requested Code Enforcement Officer training and assistance with reading maps. [Table 21: Summary of Training Needs](#) captures the training, outreach, and planning support needs identified by communities and stakeholders during this Discovery project.

Table 21: Summary of Training Needs

County / Tribe / Organization	Community	Floodplain Management Admn.	Building Code Reqs.	Hazard Mitigation and Grant Programs	Effective Public Outreach	Other
Franklin	Bangor, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Bellmont, Town	x	x	x	x	-
	Bombay, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Brandon, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Brushton, Village	-	-	-	-	-
	Constable, Town	x	x	-	-	-
	Dickinson, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Fort Covington, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Franklin County	-	-	-	-	-
	Malone, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Malone, Village	x	x	x	x	-
	Moir, Town	-	-	-	-	-
	Westville, Town	-	-	-	-	-
St. Lawrence	Brasher, Town	x	x	x	x	1. Map reading
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	----	-	-	-	-	-
Development Authority of North Country	----	x	x	x	-	1. Code Enforcement Officer and Highway Superintendent training

Recommendations for Future Risk MAP Project Scope

Based on the stakeholder input and other data collected during this Discovery project, a recommended scope of work was developed for consideration for a future Risk MAP project that may be implemented by FEMA if available funding permits. The Salmon Watershed included portions of 2 counties, 13 communities, and one tribal nation. Stakeholder participation in the Discovery process included attending the pre-Discovery webinars, completing the questionnaire, attending in-person Discovery meetings, or responding to correspondences. In the Salmon Watershed, both counties have not been modernized to digital countywide FIS/FIRM products. New detailed and approximate studies, along with digital countywide maps, would assist communities in enforcing floodplain management regulations and managing development. The following table displays priority rankings based on community interest expressed during the Discovery process, the presence of existing flood hazards or mitigation needs, the proximity of structures to flooding sources, areas of recent development, and the status of the water course in the CNMS database.

Detailed studies were recommended for all or portions of the following flooding sources:

Table 22: Detailed Study Requests

Ranking	Community	Flooding Source	HUC8 Number	Mileage of Study Request	Description of Request and Risk to Address
1	Franklin County (numerous communities)	Salmon River	04150307	49.21	Detailed study/restudy for its entire length within the county
2	Franklin County (Fort Covington, Town of)	Little Salmon River	04150307	1.60	Fort Covington dam removal in 2010; detailed study for FIRM inaccuracies
3	Brushton, Village of	Little Salmon River	04150307	0.65	Detailed study for FIRM inaccuracies related to dam impoundment area that needs attention and is accumulating sediment
4	Bellmont, Town of	Indian Lake	04150307	1.10	Detailed study for lake with LOMA concentration
5	Bellmont, Town of	Mountain View Lake	04150307	2.00	Detailed study for lake with LOMA concentration

Total Detailed Study Request Mileage: 54.56 miles

Approximate studies were recommended for all or portions of the following flooding sources:

Table 23: Approximate Study Requests

Ranking	Community	Flooding Source	HUC8 Number	Mileage of Study Request	Description of Request and Risk to Address
4	Malone, Town of	Salmon River	04150307	0.12	Flood issues at Patnode and Lafayette Streets area (downstream of Willow Street crossing)

Total Approximate Study Request Mileage: 0.12 miles

The highest priority in the scope of work is the development of digital FIRMs for Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties. These counties currently use older maps, dating from 1978 to 1986, and would benefit greatly from digital countywide FIRMs. The current map inventory is out of date and lacks the details necessary for communities to effectively administer and enforce the NFIP requirements. In addition, several communities currently have no published FIRMs. Revised studies for key stream segments and new approximate A-zone studies in a digital format would assist both the communities and the counties in enforcing the floodplain regulations and manage development. Along with updated maps, communities would also benefit from Base Level Engineering (BLE) products that can be used to assist communities in understanding local flood risk and develop mitigation strategies.

Dam mismanagement and general dam issues were noted concerns for local officials in the project area. There are a total of 26 dams in the Salmon watershed. The effects of dam removal should be considered when creating or updating FIRMs as multiple defective dams have been removed. A dam in the Town of Fort Covington was removed from the Little Salmon River in 2011, and this dam removal resulted in sediment buildup and ice jams.

Ice jams are a major source of flooding source noted by local officials in the Salmon Watershed. New York State has the second highest count of recorded ice jams in the country. The Town and Village of Malone each mentioned ice jams as being an area of concern along the Salmon River. Franklin County also requested an analysis of sedimentation issues resulting from ice jam buildup in the county.

The complete recommended scope of work for all watersheds within the North Country Watershed Discovery project area is provided in *Appendix R: Recommended Scope of Work Memorandum*.