

**Joint Subcommittee to Formulate Recommendations to Address Recurrent Flooding  
July 21, 2015 – House Room C – GAB  
Presented by the Department of Conservation and Recreation**

**Overview on Preliminary Actions Being Taken to Update and Provide in an Online  
Format, Flood Protection and Management Information Resources**

**Flood Damage Reduction Act (§10.1-600 et seq.) Sets Out Flood Management Authorities**

- Administered by the Department's Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management.
- Public safety is achieved by the Department assisting 290 Virginia communities that participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Flood Insurance Program to comply with floodplain management requirements for local ordinances, inspections, permitting, and enforcement.

**§ 10.1-602. Powers and duties of Department.**

The Department shall:

1. Develop a flood protection plan for the Commonwealth. This plan shall include:
  - a. An inventory of flood-prone areas;
  - b. An inventory of flood protection studies;
  - c. A record of flood damages;
  - d. Strategies to prevent or mitigate flood damage; and
  - e. The collection and distribution of information relating to flooding and flood plain management. ...

**Last Update**

In 2005, in response to our Code authority, the Department updated *The Floodplain Management Plan for the Commonwealth of Virginia*. This was a static, printed document.

**Legislative Direction [Chapter 172 (HB1817 – Delegate Stolle); Chapter 251 (SB1079 – Senator Locke) of the 2015 Virginia Acts of Assembly]**

- The flood protection plan shall be reviewed and updated by the Department on a regular basis, but at least once every five years, and for each of the items listed in provisions a through e, the plan shall state when that provision was last updated and when the next update is planned.
- The plan shall be maintained in an online format so as to be easily accessed by other government entities and by the public.
- The online plan shall contain links to the most current information available from other federal, state, and local sources.
- That the Department, in carrying out its responsibilities under this act, shall work in cooperation with the Joint Subcommittee to Formulate Recommendations to Address Recurrent Flooding [HJ 16 (2014); SJ 3 (2014)].
- The Department and the Joint Subcommittee shall receive input from interested parties in preparation of the Department's plan update.

## **First Steps**

- Department assembled its Floodplain Management program staff to review the legislation and the current Plan, and to brainstorm on how to migrate to an online approach.
- Recognized that a large volume and variety of new studies, plans, and online tools have been developed since the last Plan that will need to be recognized.
- Made a determination to substantially reform our Department's floodplain management pages to become the Plan components.
- However, we recognized from a recent study of the Department's website that our constituents are having difficulty readily finding the materials they are looking for in today's information age and become bogged down with excessive text.
- Recognized need for the page layout and design to be customer service oriented.
- Met with our in-house web designers to advise them of the project and to discuss accessibility standards and design strategies.
- Actively working to identify content that the Department can develop and components that we may need outside sources to assist with.

## **Next Steps**

- Generate a clear understanding of the user-groups (customers) for this web product and what information/ services each group may be seeking/ asking.
- Work with potential users/ stakeholders/partners to ensure that we have identified key information areas that will best support their needs and that the desired information is easy to locate. Technical details can be located deeper in the web page content.
- Develop draft outlines/pages and seek input from stakeholders.
- Work with outside resources to research, develop, and organize specified content.
- Continue coordination with the Joint Subcommittee.
- Recognize that this is not a static product and that it needs to evolve as new information and strategies become available.