



# The Torrent

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State of Connecticut  
Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Water Management  
Inland Water Resources Division  
Flood Management Program  
79 Elm Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127  
(860) 424-3706  
<http://dep.state.ct.us>

Editor: Diane S. Ifkovic  
State NFIP Coordinator  
[diane.ifkovic@po.state.ct.us](mailto:diane.ifkovic@po.state.ct.us)

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## New Floodplain Legislation Passed

On May 21, 2004, Governor Rowland signed House Bill 5045, "An Act Concerning Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation". This legislation was authored by State Representative Steve Fontana (D), serving North Haven's 87<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

This new legislation covers many different aspects of floodplain management. It will require municipalities to revise their current floodplain zoning regulations or ordinances to include new standards for compensatory storage and equal conveyance of floodwater. Towns will not have to make such revisions until they revise their regulations for another purpose. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) will develop model regulation language.

The legislation will require the State to incorporate natural hazards into the next revision of its plan of conservation and development. It will also enable municipalities to use local capital improvement (LoCIP) funds from the State to conduct floodplain management and hazard mitigation activities.

The legislation will require the Commissioner of Consumer Protection to revise the real estate property disclosure form to make minor changes regarding the disclosure of flood hazard information to prospective buyers of residential real estate.

The legislation will impose an additional \$10 increase to a current land use fee in order to fund a new state hazard mitigation and floodplain management grant program. These funds can be accessed by municipalities to: 1) Prepare hazard mitigation plans; 2) Prepare applications to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS); or 3) Complete hazard mitigation projects in accordance with approved hazard mitigation plans. The grant will reimburse for 90% of the costs to be incurred with these activities. Grant requirements will be developed by the CTDEP over the next 2 years.

The idea for the legislation was born from Representative Fontana's attendance at a National Conference of Insurance Legislators meeting in Chicago at which he heard about the [Association of State Floodplain Managers](#) (ASFPM) No Adverse Impact (NAI) Initiative. When Representative Fontana returned from Chicago, he formed an advisory committee and drafted proposed legislation, with the input of real estate and builder groups. The legislation was introduced in both the 2002 and 2003 legislative sessions but was not passed in large part to its perceived fiscal impact in sessions where budget woes dominated.

For more information on HB 5045, go to the Connecticut General Assembly website:

[http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/CGABillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill\\_num=HB5045](http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/CGABillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB5045)

# 2004 NOAA Hurricane Outlook

On May 17, 2004, forecasters from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued their 2004 Hurricane Outlook. They are predicting an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season this year. The Atlantic hurricane outlook reflects a likely continuation of above-normal activity that began in 1995. Since then all but two Atlantic hurricane seasons (the El Nino years of 1997 and 2002) have been above normal.



*Hurricane Isabel, September 17, 2003.*  
Source: NOAA

NOAA scientists are predicting neutral conditions (neither El Nino nor La Nina) through July. There is a likelihood these conditions will continue through the peak August to October months of the hurricane season. The main factors in the above-normal outlook are warmer-than-normal ocean temperatures across the tropical Atlantic and circulation patterns that favor an above-normal hurricane season.

NOAA officials have stated that the season outlook is for 12 to 15 tropical storms, with six to eight systems becoming hurricanes, and two to four of those major hurricanes.

According to the director of the NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), retired Air Force Brig. General David L. Johnson, the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season

outlook indicates a 50 percent probability of an above-normal season, a 40 percent probability of a near-normal season and only a 10 percent chance of a below-normal season. Similar seasons averaged two to three hurricanes making landfall in the continental United States, and one to two hurricanes in the region around the Caribbean Sea. NOAA will issue an update to this year's hurricane outlook on August 10, 2004.

Last year three tropical storms and three hurricanes affected the United States. Hurricane Isabel caused 17 deaths and more than \$3 billion in damages.

Awareness and preparedness for tropical storms and hurricanes is the best defense in mitigating their potential damages and devastating effects.

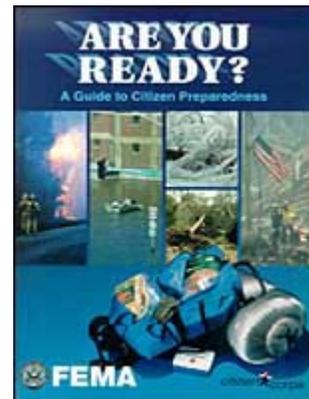


*Hurricane Isabel, September 18, 2003.*  
Source: NOAA

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials joined NOAA in urging Gulf and Atlantic Coast states to be prepared for an active season, which runs from June 1 through November 30.

NOAA and FEMA encourage families to take three basic steps in order to be better prepared in the event of a disaster, including assembling a disaster supply kit,

creating a family emergency plan and understanding their risks. FEMA's [\*Are You Ready? A Guide for Citizen Preparedness\*](#), offers tips and information that can help families accomplish these tasks.



The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has a website, [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), which provides information on preparedness for natural disasters and family disaster plans.



To read the detailed NOAA 2004 Hurricane Outlook go to: [www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/outlooks/hurricane.html](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/outlooks/hurricane.html)

NOAA hurricane preparedness information can be found at: [www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml)

FEMA hurricane information: [www.fema.gov/hazards/hurricanes](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/hurricanes)

FEMA hurricane preparedness information and publications: [www.fema.gov/library/prepandprev.shtm#hurricanes](http://www.fema.gov/library/prepandprev.shtm#hurricanes)

## GAO Report on Flood Map Modernization

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) recently completed a review of FEMA's Flood Map Modernization effort. See the one-page "highlights" document and the 54-page full report entitled "Flood Map Modernization: Program Shows Promise, but Challenges Remain", by visiting the New England Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (NEFSMA) website at [www.nefsma.org](http://www.nefsma.org). Click on the "Flood Happens" button on the left side of the page. This will lead you to links to the two documents available in PDF format.

## FloodSmart.Gov

In April 2004, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) launched a new consumer-focused website, [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov), to help consumers learn their flood risk and find an insurance agent close to home.



This site will serve as a key piece of the NFIP's national marketing, advertising and public education efforts. The vision for the website is to become the preferred website for relevant, useful information about flood risks and flood insurance, and to connect consumers with agents who can help them become flood insured.

One of the most valuable features of the website is the agent directory, to quickly get consumers

in touch with agents who sell flood insurance. The site also has a Flood Risk Assessment tool where visitors can input their address to receive a property profile containing flood zone designations, a list of local agents, a digital flood insurance rate map (DFIRM) and information about what is happening in their community. Other features include comprehensive information about the hazards of floods, frequently asked flood insurance questions, local and regional news, and floodplain management efforts. Website visitors will also be able to sign-up for an e-newsletter and request NFIP publications.

## New CRS Resource Center

Is your community thinking of joining the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS)? Is your community currently participating in the CRS and wants to improve its rating? The NFIP has developed the CRS Resource Center – a website developed exclusively for the CRS following a needs assessment by local officials. The site includes every updated CRS document available. Tools, samples, and examples are all available to use as communities go through the CRS application, modification, cycle or re-certification process. The website: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CRS/index.htm>

If you would like more information on the CRS program, contact Carla Feroni at the CTDEP at (860) 424-3390 or via e-mail at [carla.feroni@po.state.ct.us](mailto:carla.feroni@po.state.ct.us).

## FEMA Region I Moves Office & E-mail Change

FEMA Region I recently moved their Boston office to a new location. The new address is: U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security FEMA Region I 99 High Street, 6<sup>th</sup> floor Boston, MA 02110-2320

The main phone number is (877) 336-2734. FEMA Region I has also developed an automated NFIP information line for the New England states at (617) 832-4761.

Due to FEMA's inclusion in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), effective June 1, 2004, FEMA employees will not be able to receive e-mail messages into their FEMA e-mail boxes using the [firstname.lastname@fema.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@fema.gov) e-mail address from external sources. After June 1, "dhs" must be used in the email address rather than "fema".

## Commission on Ocean Policy Releases Report

In April 2004, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy released its Preliminary Report including the first comprehensive set of recommendations on national coastal and ocean policy in over 30 years ago.

The report recommended many actions, including implementation of a national ocean observing system, increase attention to ocean education, strengthen NOAA, and create measurable water pollution reduction goals. The full report can be found at the website: <http://oceancommission.gov>

# Floodplain Focus: Connecticut SCEL Program

In addition to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the **Connecticut Stream Channel Encroachment Line (SCEL)** program, administered by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP), Inland Water Resources Division, also regulates certain floodplain areas within the state. In 1955, Connecticut received tremendous flooding that wreaked havoc on the State's floodplains. The SCEL program emerged from this disaster as a non-structural element in the State's ongoing efforts to reduce the loss of life and property from flooding events. Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Sections 22a-342 through 22a-349a authorized the SCEL program.

SCELS have been established for over 270 linear miles of riverine floodplain throughout the State. Figure 1 below illustrates the SCEL regulated areas. The SCEL program regulates the placement of encroachments and obstructions riverward of SCELS to lessen the hazards to life and property due to flooding and to assure that floodplain development is compatible both structurally and hydraulically with the flood flows expected in these rivers. Any person proposing to place an encroachment or obstruction riverward of SCELS must obtain a permit from the CTDEP. Activities which require a permit when conducted riverward of SCELS include the removal or deposition of material, any alteration of the land or watercourse, construction of structures, filling, dredging, clearing, grubbing, grading, piping, culverting, channelizing, diverting, damming, dewatering, and any other activity that temporarily or permanently alters the character of the floodplain or watercourse. Additionally, major repair of structures that existed before the SCELS were established may require a permit. Permit fees range from \$375 to \$3,750 depending on the proposed activity.

The SCEL permit can be either an individual or general permit. Individual permits are issued directly to an applicant, whereas general permits are permits issued to authorize similar minor activities by one or more applicants. In making a decision on a SCEL permit application, the CTDEP must consider the impact of the proposed activities in the floodplain environment, including wildlife and fisheries habitats and on the hazards posed to people and property. Permits to develop within these areas are granted only if it can be clearly demonstrated that no increase in flood hazard or other adverse consequences will result upon completion of the development. More information on permits can be found at: [http://www.dep.state.ct.us/pao/general\\_fact/listgen.htm](http://www.dep.state.ct.us/pao/general_fact/listgen.htm)

The SCEL is a regulatory boundary and may not delineate the entire width of the actual physical floodplain at a particular location. In general, the SCELS roughly outline the NFIP 100-year floodplain. If a flood of record exists which exceeds the 100-year base flood elevation, this higher flood elevation is used as the regulatory standard for the SCEL program. For critical activities, including but not limited to hospitals, elderly housing, schools, residences, and the treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste, the CTDEP will use the 500-year flood elevation. Figure 2 below illustrates how a SCEL is depicted on a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). SCEL are not always shown on the FIRM. The official SCEL maps should be used to determine if a project is within the SCEL boundary.

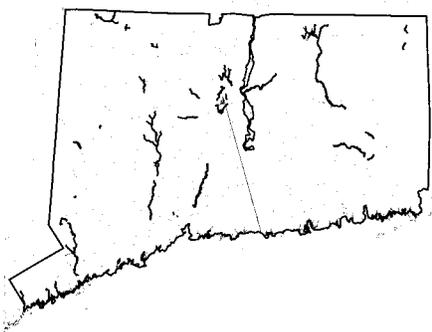


Figure 1 – SCEL areas in Connecticut

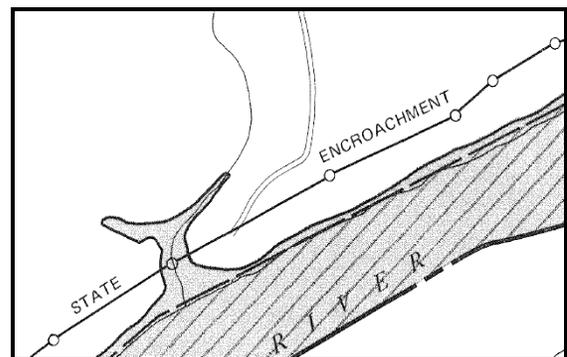


Figure 2 – SCEL as shown on a Flood Insurance Rate Map

SCEL maps are on file in the Town Clerk's office in the affected municipality and at the CTDEP. An index to the SCEL maps, listing all of the SCEL regulated areas, is available from the CTDEP at (860) 424-3019. A CTDEP Fact Sheet on the SCEL Program, permit application forms, fees, review procedures, processing time and other info can be found at: <http://www.dep.state.ct.us/pao/iwrdfact/strmchan.htm>

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

**June 20-23, 2004: 14<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Disaster Management**, Toronto, Canada. Sponsor: Canadian Center for Emergency Preparedness (CCEP). Contact: CCEP, (905) 331-2552. Internet: [www.wcdm.org](http://www.wcdm.org).

**June 28-30, 2004: Riparian Ecosystems and Buffers: Multi-Scale Structure, Function and Management**, Olympic Valley, California. Sponsor: American Water Resources Association (AWRA). Internet: [www.awra.org/meetings/Olympic2004/summer2004.doc](http://www.awra.org/meetings/Olympic2004/summer2004.doc).

**July 11-14, 2004: Watershed 2004**, Dearborn, Michigan. Sponsor: Water Environment Federation. Internet: [www.wef.org/Conferences/](http://www.wef.org/Conferences/).

**September 26-29, 2004: Dam Safety 2004**, Phoenix, AZ. Sponsor: Association of Dam Safety Officials (ADSO). Contact: ADSO, P.O. Box 18102, Phoenix, AZ 85005. Phone: (859) 257-5140, email: [info@damsafety.org](mailto:info@damsafety.org).

**November 6-9, 2004: Annual Conference and Exhibit of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)**, Dallas, Texas. Contact: IAEM, 111 Park Place, Falls Church, VA 22046. Phone: (703) 538-1795, Fax: (703) 241-5603, email: [info@iaem.com](mailto:info@iaem.com), internet: [www.iaem.com](http://www.iaem.com).

## UPCOMING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE COURSES

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is located at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. EMI serves as the national center for emergency management training of federal, state, and local government officials. Tuition, housing, and all books and materials are provided at no cost. Participants are responsible for the cost of a meal pass (\$93). The following is a list of upcoming EMI courses through September 2004. To apply, call Diane Ifkovic, CT DEP, (860) 424-3537. For more information on the courses listed, visit the EMI website: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/>

- E125 **Organizing and Sustaining CERT and Citizen Corps Activities** – August 30-September 2.
- E172 **Advanced HAZUS MH for Flood** – July 12-15.
- E179 **HAZUS MH for Post-Disaster Mitigation Planning** – August 9-12.
- E202 **Debris Management** – September 6-9.
- E204 **Mitigation Emergency Response Team** – September 8-9.
- E210 **Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role** – August 30-September 2.
- E234 **Digital Hazards Data** – September 27-30.
- E238 **Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP)** – August 16-19.
- E273 **Managing Floodplain Development Through the NFIP** – August 16-19.
- E276 **Benefit-Cost Analysis: Entry Level Training** – July 28-30.
- E278 **NFIP/Community Rating System (CRS)** – July 26-29, September 20-23.
- E288 **State Donations Management Course** – August 30 – September 3.
- E296 **HAZUS MH/DMA 2000 Risk Assessment** – August 23-24.
- E313 **Basic HAZUS Multi-Hazards (MH)** – September 13-16.
- E329 **Multi-Hazard Building Design (MBDSI): Flood Protective Design** – July 19-22.
- E331 **Multi-Hazard Building Design (MBDSI): Wind Protective Design** – July 19-22.
- E362 **Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools** – July 26-29.
- E407 **Homeland Security Planning for Local Governments** – August 2-5.
- E415 **CERT Seminar** – September 8-9.
- E417 **Community Emergency Response Training (CERT)** – September 27-29.