



## Risk MAP Success Story: New York Catskills Watersheds – Partnerships and Products for More Resilient Communities

### Background and Issue

Since early 2011, FEMA has been working closely with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), county and local government agencies, and local non-profit organizations to identify, assess, and reduce flood risk in six watersheds west of the Hudson River in New York State. These organizations are led by a steering committee made up of representatives who meet with local stakeholders on a quarterly basis to:

- Provide technical and program training;
- Answer questions from communities and property owners; and
- Provide flood risk reduction and Risk MAP project updates.

This steering committee serves a vital role in enlisting local stakeholder support and building trust with individuals in all watershed communities. Shortly after the steering committee was formed in 2011, many communities within the six watersheds were devastated by Tropical Storm Irene later that summer. This event fueled a number of mitigation actions across the watersheds and the development of Risk MAP products to support those efforts.

### Approach

Through FEMA’s Risk MAP program, the Agency is producing new detailed flood modeling and mapping, flood depth grids, and other flood risk datasets for communities in the area to further support flood risk reduction efforts. With FEMA partners’ help, these products are being used for flood mitigation planning, and are serving as drivers for mitigation action for communities in Ulster, Sullivan, Delaware, and Greene Counties, New York. The Risk MAP team, including Federal, State and local partners, meets frequently with communities to provide data and instruction on how to use these flood risk products to assess individual and comprehensive mitigation projects for greatest risk reduction.

### Impact

To facilitate flood mitigation action, the NYCDEP is funding County Soil and Water Conservation Districts to perform detailed community-based flood risk assessments and planning efforts. These are in turn being used to prioritize funding for local flood mitigation projects, such as bridge and culvert redesign and replacement, building relocation, and structure elevation. These watershed efforts exemplify the Risk MAP program mission: collaborative process, quality data, mitigation planning and action, leading to risk reduction.



### Risk MAP Project Phases

This success story is relevant to the Risk MAP project phases listed below. Find more Risk MAP Success Stories organized by project phase.

- Flood Risk Products
- Planning for Mitigation Action
- Partnerships

### Relevant Risk MAP Products

Flood Depth Grids, Changes Since Last FIRM

### Key Words

Mitigation, Collaboration, Resilience, Risk Reduction, FEMA Region II