Floodplains: Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is a floodplain?*

A floodplain is any land or area susceptible to flooding from creeks or any other water body. Floodplains are mapped by FEMA to show areas potentially flooded by a 100-year storm (or a 1 percent chance of occurring every year) as well as areas flooded by a 500-year storm (or a 0.2 percent chance of occurring every year).

2. *Why are the floodplain maps changing?*

Floodplain maps need to be updated on a regular basis as more land is developed, as additional flood protection facilities are built, and as more scientific information becomes available. Since technology has improved and methodologies have changed, it is possible to more accurately map the floodplain areas. Consequently, the floodplain maps are changing—and will continue to change in the future—as new improvements are made.

3. *If I am now in the floodplain, will I be required to buy flood insurance?*

We have been advised that mortgage lenders will require you to purchase flood insurance if your property is in a 100-year floodplain. If it is in a 500-year floodplain, you also may be required by your lender to purchase flood insurance. Flood insurance is available through your insurance agent. If you do not have federally-related financing (i.e., if you do not have a mortgage), you are not required by federal regulations to have flood insurance—although it is available for you to purchase.

4. *Where do I purchase flood insurance?*

Flood insurance is available through your insurance agent. The premiums are relatively consistent because they are set through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

5. *How much flood insurance can I purchase and what are the yearly premiums?*

The maximum flood insurance you can purchase for your property is $250,000. Insurance costs vary between $300 and $1,800 annually and are dependent upon a variety of factors; i.e., deductible, location, occupancy, type and age of structure(s). You may find it advantageous to purchase flood insurance 30 days prior to the date the new DFIRM takes effect. The DFIRM may become final as early as mid-summer, 2008. Flood insurance for some properties may triple after the proposed maps are adopted. In some cases, purchasing insurance before the new maps are adopted may lock in lower rates.

6. *What is the County doing to help?*

We will continue to construct drainage facilities and/or collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to construct flood protection facilities in and around unincorporated properties within the floodplain. Construction of these types of facilities will remove properties from the floodplain.

7. *What do I do now?*

If your property is in an unincorporated area in the Calleguas Watershed, you may want to visit the District website at http://www.vcwatershed.org to review proposed floodplain revision maps to determine if it is anticipated that your property will be in a floodplain. You may also want to contact your insurance agent to discuss flood insurance coverage.