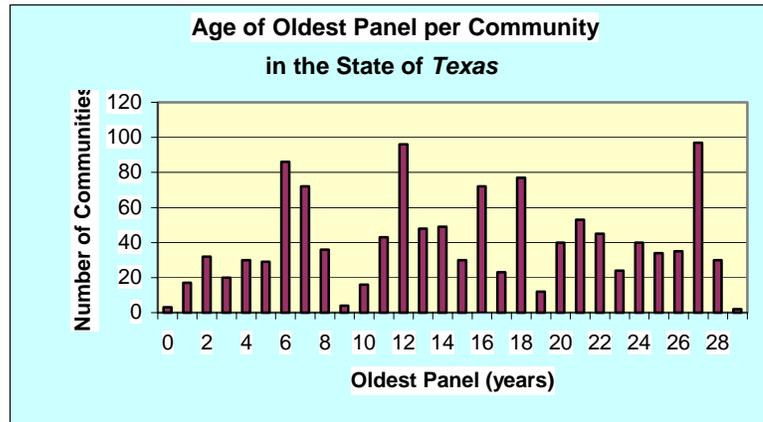


Texas State Profile

Spring 2003

Texas's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are aging. **Seventy-two percent (72%)** of the State's FIRMs are greater than 10 years old. The result of the aging is that the maps may not accurately reflect flood hazard conditions, potentially creating a false sense of security and placing buildings, infrastructure, and individuals at risk.

Flood hazards are dynamic and may change rapidly due to community development as well as natural processes in the watershed. Up-to-date flood maps are crucial to comprehensive floodplain management.

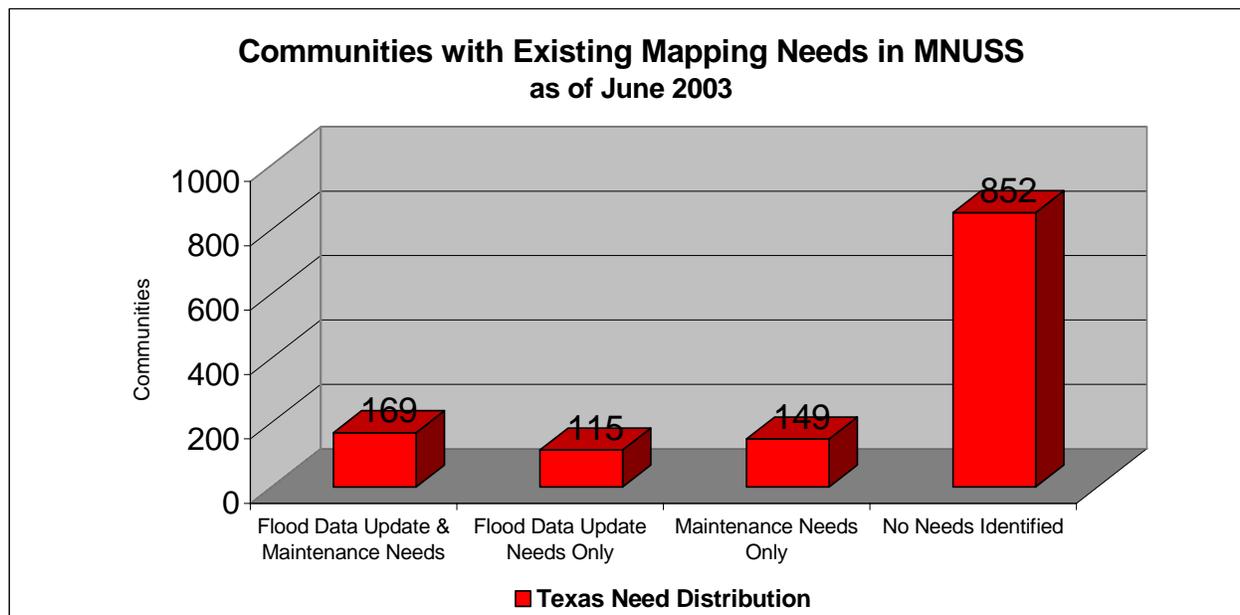


THE MAPPING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- In Section 575 of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994, the U.S. Congress mandated the Director of FEMA to “...once during each 5-year period...assess the need to revise and update all floodplain areas and flood risk zones identified, delineated, or established under this section, based on an analysis of all natural hazards affecting flood risks...”
- The Mapping Needs Assessment (MNA) process identifies, assesses, catalogues, and prioritizes flood hazard mapping needs nationwide, using the Mapping Needs Update Support System (MNUSS). The MNA process helps FEMA develop map update priorities and expend the flood mapping budget in the most cost-beneficial manner.
- Flood mapping needs are categorized as either flood data update needs (i.e., changes to the floodplain and/or watershed) or maintenance needs (i.e., non-engineering reference features, such as adding streets to maps or changing corporate limits).
- MNUSS stores mapping needs and prioritizes individual communities (e.g., cities, towns, villages, and unincorporated counties that have land use authority) based upon a quantitative comparison of the benefits of addressing a community’s cumulative mapping needs to the costs of revising the community’s maps against all other communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Since the creation of MNUSS in the mid 1990’s, approximately **449** mapped NFIP communities in the State of *Texas* have documented needs in MNUSS.

NFIP BIENNIAL REPORT: SECOND 5-YEAR MAPPING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (1999-2004)

The NFIP Biennial Report enables FEMA to assist communities in identifying mitigation opportunities in a community’s floodplains. The next NFIP Biennial Report will be distributed to NFIP communities later this year. Section I of the Biennial Report focuses on changes and activities in the community’s flood hazard areas and the accuracy of the community’s flood hazard maps, while Section II focuses on floodplain management data such as the number of building permits issued. Historically, the Biennial Report has had a very high response rate. This year, FEMA is using the Biennial Report in conjunction with the second 5-year nationwide Mapping Needs Assessment cycle. Communities responding affirmatively to questions in Section I of the Biennial Report will be contacted by telephone for specific information regarding the accuracy of their flood hazard maps. Mapping needs identified through this effort will be documented in MNUSS. This method combines existing FEMA data with essential local knowledge and input to ensure that all communities with mapping needs will have their needs documented in MNUSS.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

In the State of *Texas*, FEMA has been working closely with the Harris County Flood Control District to ensure accurate flood hazard information is presented on the FIRM for Harris County and Incorporated Areas. The District began participating in what is now the Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) Program and has undertaken five mapping-related projects, the most significant of which is the Tropical Storm Allison Recover Project. The project involves a rapid restudy of approximately 1,100 stream miles in 22 impacted watersheds.

UNMAPPED COMMUNITIES

An NFIP community is any political subdivision, authorized tribal organization, Alaska native village, or authorized native organization that has the authority to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances for the area under its jurisdiction. In most cases, a community is an incorporated city, town, township, borough, or village or an unincorporated area of a county or parish. Currently, for the State of *Texas*, 177 areas have been identified as potentially unmapped communities. Unmapped communities are also tracked in MNUSS.

“MNA FOR MNUSS” WORKSHOP

To aid in identifying and assessing mapping needs for input into MNUSS, a MNA workshop has been developed and is ready for use. NFIP State Coordinators, Cooperating Technical Partners, other mapping partners and interested coordinators in the floodplain and emergency management communities can use the workshop to teach others how to perform an MNA so as to document the needs for entry into MNUSS. A slide presentation is included that provides details about submitting mapping needs to FEMA. It touches on the basics of MNAs and the MNUSS database, reviews the data necessary for input into MNUSS, and reveals how to use local knowledge and a FIRM to complete the needs assessment without difficulty. A planning workbook also provides step-by-step guidance on how to customize a workshop for your intended audience. Additional information on the “MNA for MNUSS” Workshop can be obtained by contacting your FEMA regional engineer, or for those who have access to MNUSS, the presentation can be viewed and downloaded at the MNUSS website.

REPETITIVE LOSSES IN B, C, AND X ZONES AND DECLARED DISASTERS

In addition to the factors used in the MNUSS benefit cost analysis, there are other factors that may be useful in identifying FIRMs that need updating. MNUSS displays two of these key indicators: the number of Repetitive Losses in B, C, and X zones and the number of Presidentially Declared Disasters. For the State of *Texas*, there are approximately 283 communities with Repetitive Losses in B, C, and X zones and there have been 65 Presidentially Declared Disasters.

If you have questions or would like to become involved with identifying and assessing mapping needs, please contact Cindy Croxdale, the FEMA National Mapping Needs Assessment Manager at (202) 646-3458 or by e-mail at cindy.croxdale@dhs.gov or your FEMA Regional Engineer or Specialist.