



# What are the Floodway and the Flood Fringe?

For regulatory purposes, the floodplain is divided into **Floodway** and **Flood Fringe**:

- **Floodway** is the channel of the river or stream and the adjacent land that must remain free from obstruction so that the 100-year flood can be conveyed downstream.
- **Flood Fringe** is the remaining portion of the floodplain. FEMA and state regulations permit communities to allow the flood fringe to be obstructed and developed if standards (i.e., elevating and floodproofing structures) are met.

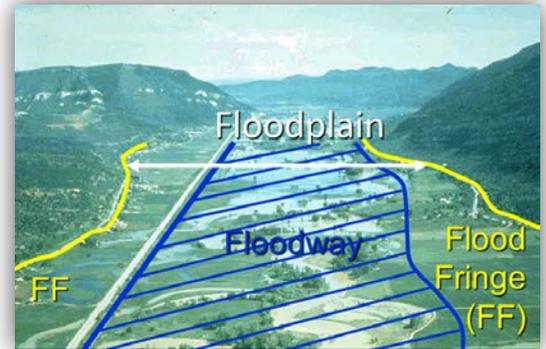


Figure 1. View of floodway and flood fringe on a river.

When the FEMA floodplain maps are initially developed, the community works with state and FEMA representatives to determine which portion of the floodplain will be floodway versus flood fringe. Detailed engineering models are run to determine the effect of filling in (or developing) all the flood fringe areas. The filling that would be allowed in the flood fringe generally cannot:

- Increase the 100-year flood elevation more than ½ foot above the natural unobstructed condition, or
- Increase the 100-year flood elevation if the filling would negatively impact existing floodplain development (even the increase would be less than ½ foot).

Development in the floodplain is regulated by local (i.e., city, county or township) ordinances. Development within the floodway is very restricted. The type of development allowed in the flood fringe (i.e., residential, industrial, etc.) depends on the local zoning, but must meet minimum elevation or flood proofing standards.

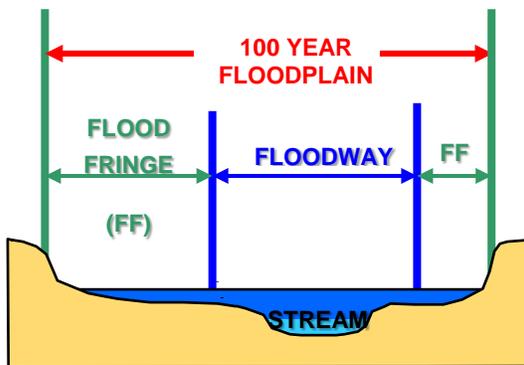


Figure 2. Cross-section of river showing floodplain before obstructions or filling.

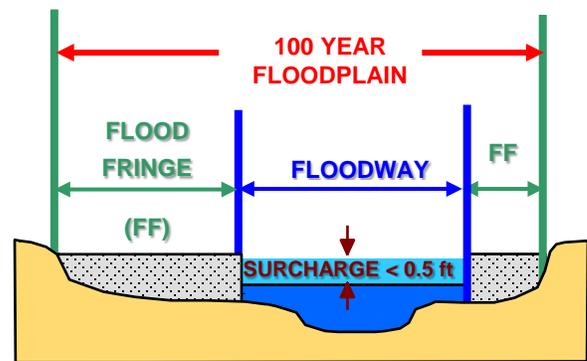


Figure 3. Cross-section of river showing floodplain with filling in flood fringe.

## What is the General Floodplain?

If no detailed hydraulic model has been developed to delineate the floodplain and approximate methods are used, the floodplain is designated as **General Floodplain**. When development is proposed in a general floodplain area, the permit applicant is responsible to pay for the hydraulic studies that identify floodway versus flood fringe areas.

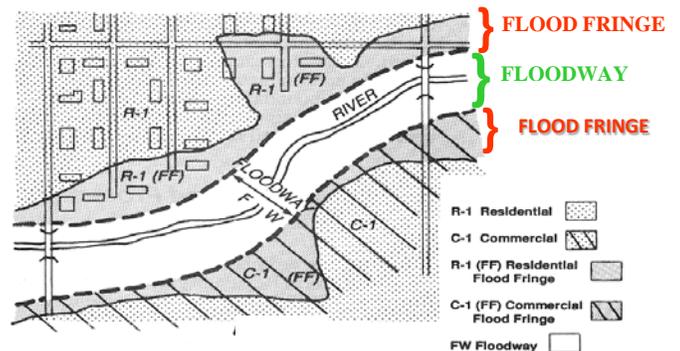


Figure 4. Local zoning map showing flood fringe and floodway overlay districts.