

Posting from President Trent Turk's Facebook Page regarding The Cobb County Flood of 2009.

Just in case you have wondered about how in the world a school, Clarkdale Elementary, here in Cobb County could flood.. here is the explanation.

The school was built in 1962. Back then there were relatively few impervious areas (rooftops, driveways, roads, parking lots, etc.) AS we add more and more impervious areas, the flood plain continues to move UP, since the water runs off more quickly to the floodways instead of soaking into the ground. Just imagine how many roads and other impervious improvements have been built since 1962 in this area..

Well, the FEMA FIRM flood maps get revised periodically to reflect these changes. This is how improvements (such as schools) end up in flood plains when they weren't actually built in the floodplain in the first place. I checked the latest FEMA flood maps for the area around the school. It looks like the school is located in an area called "Zone X".. which means it had a 0.2 % annual chance of flooding. Translated in terms of years, that means a flood would likely occur once every 500 years... BUT they had water up to the ceilings. My take is this was actually an even rarer flood occurrence than 1 in 500 years, considering it reached as high as it did. I think we will find out in days to come that this flood will break all records available for Cobb County.

As it turns out, the school system did something right. They had flood insurance!



Clarkdale Elementary School – under water on Monday, September 21, 2009.



Clarkdale
Elementary

The FEMA FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) for Clarkdale Elementary School in Cobb County.

ZONE V Coastal flood zone with velocity hazard (wave action); no Base Flood Elevations determined.

ZONE VE Coastal flood zone with velocity hazard (wave action); Base Flood Elevations determined.



FLOODWAY AREAS IN ZONE AE

The floodway is the channel of a stream plus any adjacent floodplain areas that must be kept free of encroachment so that the 1% annual chance flood can be carried without substantial increases in flood heights.



OTHER FLOOD AREAS

ZONE X

Areas of 0.2% annual chance flood; areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood.



OTHER AREAS

ZONE X

Areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain.

ZONE D

Areas in which flood hazards are undetermined, but possible.



COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM (CBRS) AREAS



OTHERWISE PROTECTED AREAS (OPAs)

Explanation of "Zone X" designation