

## How Will Fema's Decision to Proceed with Inaccurate Mapping of Cypress Creek Watershed Flood Plains Affect Your Home?

### An Important Update from the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition.

In an undertaking of cooperative teamwork, the Harris County Flood Control District's Planning Department working with the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition is doing what FEMA chose not to do – recalibrate the hydrologic and hydraulic computer models to correct significant deficiencies effecting determination of where major storm waters will flood neighborhoods outside the stream banks in the Cypress Creek watershed. The findings from an analysis of FEMA's preliminary flood maps by the Coalition were officially brought to FEMA's attention a year ago in the appeal process required by law. This appeal included in its justification, as an example, a location where the preliminary flood modeling shows floods will peak in a 100-year storm event at an elevation 4 feet lower than what actually occurred in October 1998 as measured by USGS stream gauges in the vicinity of Katy Hockley Road. And this was for a significantly lesser storm event. Nine months after the appeal was filed, FEMA advised Judge Eckels it was denied and "revision [of the maps] is not

warranted". When Harris County Flood Control District and the CCFCC – recognizing unacceptable risks to appropriate flood damage mitigation were inherent in this decision – decided to undertake doing the recalibration at their expense, matters turned from bad to worse when they were handicapped with another contrary FEMA decision to not wait for the recalibrated models but instead proceed with publication of the deficient map data.

On March 30, FEMA notified the CCFCC of their cognizance and acceptance of the HCFCDD / CCFCC recalibration action which we believe will be completed by September 2006. Although this will not be in time to avoid publication of the unacceptable maps which formed the basis of our appeal, arrangements are being made with

the appropriate local government officials to ensure permit applications for new development in the Upper Watershed (upstream from the US 290 bridge crossing Cypress Creek) will be based on the recalibration. The question at the time this article is written is how will this recalibration affect home owners with property in this watershed? The answer is that property located upstream from this point is expected to have wider floodplains while to the relief of the majority of neighborhoods the floodplains as presently shown on the preliminary flood maps in the highly urbanized downstream locations will most likely be smaller.

This Look Upstream article is one in a series published as a public service in the neighborhood news letters of communities served by the Municipal Utility District and Home Owner Associations in and near the Cypress Creek Watershed. For more information visit their web site, [www.ccfcc.org](http://www.ccfcc.org) or e-mail [floodalliance@ccfcc.org](mailto:floodalliance@ccfcc.org)

