

Understanding the Floodway

The **Floodway** or **Non-Encroachment Area** includes the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to pass the base flood discharge without increasing flood depths. Computer models of the floodplain are used to simulate “encroachment” or development in the flood fringe to predict where and how much the Base Flood Elevation would increase if the floodplain is allowed to be developed.

Any project in a floodway must be reviewed by the local community’s engineering or planning office to determine if the project will increase flood heights. An engineering analysis must be conducted before a permit can be issued. The community’s permit file must have a record of the results of this analysis which can be in the form of a **No-Impact Certification**.

The **No-Impact Certification** must be supported by technical data and signed by a registered professional engineer. The supporting technical data should be based on the standard step-backwater computer model used to develop the floodway shown on the **Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)** or **Flood Boundary and Floodway Map (FBFM)**.

A Floodway or Non-Encroachment Area can exist above overtopped bridges or culverts.

