



## Floodplain Management

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### FLOODWAY STUDY FOR THE CAW CAW CANAL & LITTLE CAW CAW CANAL NON-ENCROACHMENT AREAS (NEA)

*Last Updated/Reviewed: June 2025*

Below are answers to frequently asked questions related to the new floodway mapping for floodplain areas surrounding and within the Brunswick Plantation and Crow Creek developments. This mapping is based on results from a hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) study, which was conducted to accurately establish a Floodway for the Caw Caw Canal and Little Caw Caw Canal floodplains that will replace the Non-Encroachment Area (NEA) for the two waterways.

This new mapping was reviewed and accepted by both the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Floodplain Mapping Program and FEMA. Once the effective date of **September 19, 2025**, occurs, the Non-Encroachment Area within the Study area will no longer be in effect, and a Floodway Area will be placed in effect for the study area.

#### Most properties within the study area will experience one of three outcomes:

- a. A property (with or without a house) was previously located **within the NEA**, and will now be located **within the newly established floodway**
- b. A property (with or without a house) was previously located **within the NEA**, and will now be located **outside of the newly established floodway**
- c. A property (with or without a house) was located **in the AE Flood Zone outside of the NEA**, and will now be located **within the newly established floodway**

#### RESOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

Find more information, maps, and the most up-to-date FAQs related to the new Caw Caw and Little Caw Caw floodway mapping process on our website at [brunswickcountync.gov/floodplain](https://brunswickcountync.gov/floodplain).

You are welcome to reach out to Floodplain Management with any questions using our staff's contact information below or via email at [floodplain.management@brunswickcountync.gov](mailto:floodplain.management@brunswickcountync.gov).

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## What does I mean if my home/property is located within the Floodway?

Any homes and structures that have been permitted and/or built and are in existence prior to the effective date of **September 19, 2025**, would be considered **Existing Non-Conforming Structures**. This is the same as all homes that were in existence prior to any change of a FEMA Flood Zone or regulation that impacted the home (such as a change in Flood Zone, Base Flood Elevation, or a regulation that goes into effect after a structure has been constructed). **No changes to the existing homes are required to be made.**

## My home/property was located with the previous Non-Encroachment Area (NEA), but now my home/property is NOT located in the Floodway. What does this mean for my home/property?

Within the study area, any of the lots/homes removed from the NEA remained within the AE Flood Zone. Any development that would occur with the AE Flood Zone would still be subject to the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances, however the need to obtain No-Rise Studies for new development work (new homes or additions, etc.) is not required.

## Should damage occur to a home within the Floodway, can I rebuild it?

**Yes, however, there are different requirements depending on how much damage was sustained relevant to the value of the structure.**

- If the home has sustained damage that is **less than 50% of the value of the structure**, then the damaged area can be repaired as it is, to no greater than the existing footprint of the building as it exists on the effective date of **September 19, 2025**.
- If the home has sustained damage that is **greater than 50% of the value of the home**, then the home may be rebuilt in the existing footprint but will be required to meet the current Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requirements (*i.e., is it at the current required height, does it have sufficient flood venting, are all utilities at the proper height, etc.*). This is the same as all homes within any Special Flood Hazard Area (Flood Zones A, AE, VE) throughout the county. Since the structure existed prior to or at the time the Floodway was established, you can rebuild to the limits of the footprint of the existing building without having to obtain a No-Rise Study being conducted for the repair.

## Can I build an addition onto my home if my home is within the Floodway?

**Yes, however, the new addition must demonstrate that it will not cause a rise in the base flood elevation.**

This is generally referred to as a **No-Rise Study** and is prepared by a professional engineer then submitted for review. There are some additions that, depending on the location and size of the addition, are simple to prepare for the No-Rise Study, while there are other additions that will require the preparation of full HEC-RAS engineering calculations. Each location and additions is site specific, and owners and engineers can reference the guidance documents that NC Flood/FEMA has prepared.

## Can I Build an In-Ground Pool within a Floodway?

**Yes, with the condition that the existing grade of the land is unaltered.** Fill to raise the pool up would not be permitted since this would cause a rise in the base flood elevation in the area.

## I own a vacant lot that is within the new Floodway, Can I build a home there after the effective date?

**Yes, but you must comply with Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requirements.** The specific regulation regarding work on a property with a Floodway is as follows:

**No encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements and other developments shall be permitted unless:**

*It is demonstrated that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in the flood levels during the occurrence of the base flood discharge, based on hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice and presented to the Floodplain Administrator prior to issuance of floodplain development permit*

This means that the proposed house that is to be built would meet the No-Rise criteria. This is generally accomplished by minimizing the area that a proposed home's foundation system would impact the floodplain's correctional area.

The County's freeboard for height above the Base Flood Elevation is 2 feet. This means that a home's *First Living Floor Level* would have to be at elevation 31.0 feet in an area with a base flood elevation of 29.0 feet. If the existing ground is at 28.0 feet elevation, the area that would have to be minimized is the one foot between the ground and the Base Flood Elevation.

The foundation and home design is analyzed by engineering calculations of the base flood elevation cross-section in the area of the home, first as vacant and then as with the home constructed with any proposed lot grading included. This is done by the use of HEC-RAS software by a professional engineer. The proposed home and grading must demonstrate that the base flood elevation will not rise due to the construction of the home. The H&H Study has significantly increased the number of existing base flood cross-sections so that there is an effective cross-section approximately every 100 feet.

Each lot and home design will differ, so each analysis is unique, but it is reasonable to expect that the heights of any newly constructed homes will be very similar to the first floor heights of the existing homes.

**Some examples of homes that would likely meet the requirements of a no-rise study are pictured here.** Each design incorporates different facades for the area below the first floor level (*e.g., one with breakaway panels, one with brick veneer-engineered breakaway panels, one with coverings that FEMA and the NFIP consider unobstructed*). The choice on each was made between architect, engineer, owner and builder. There are multiple options and depending on the individual lot, parallel "T" foundation walls may be an option. These and other options must be determined between you and your building professionals.

**EXAMPLE 1**



**EXAMPLE 2**



**EXAMPLE 3**

