

New Flood Maps Now Effective for Oak Creek Canyon in Yavapai County

Updated Maps Show Flood Risks Have Changed

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — On February 8, 2024, digital flood hazard maps for the portion of Oak Creek Canyon in Yavapai County became effective. This includes the portion of the City of Sedona that is in Yavapai County. The flood maps for the portion of Oak Creek Canyon and tributaries in Coconino County went effective March 21, 2023.

The flood maps are known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). They identify areas that are at risk for flooding. These flood maps are used to help determine flood insurance and building requirements. These updated maps replace maps that were based on studies more than 30 years old.

Residents and business owners can use the maps to obtain reliable information about their current flood risk on a property-by-property basis. The maps also provide flood zone and elevation data. These help community planners, engineers, builders, and others decide where and how new structures, developments, and remodeling projects should be built. Information about the mapping project and how to view the new maps can be found at www.yavapaiaz.gov/Resident-Services/Flood-Control/Projects/Oak-Creek-Floodplain-Re-mapping-Project.

“Flooding is an increasingly frequent and costly problem throughout this part of Arizona. It is not just in high-risk areas,” said Lynn Whitman. “Having more accurate and easily accessible maps is an important step in understanding the risk. This helps guide residents and business owners in taking steps to reduce their flood risk and insure against it.”

The Yavapai County Flood Control District (YCFCD) led this project in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Coconino County Flood Control District, and the City of Sedona. The process included an extensive, multi-year review of the changes brought about by environmental, land use, and other forces. It used state-of-the-art aerial mapping and risk modeling techniques, new scientific data and a comprehensive pre-release review.

In reviewing the maps, some property owners will find that their flood risk is higher or lower than they thought. If the risk level for a property changes, then requirements for flood insurance and building standards can change as well. FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program has a cost-saving rating option to help reduce the cost of flood insurance. This applies to property owners whose properties’ flood risk has gone from moderate-low risk to high-risk (e.g., flood Zone X to Zone A or AE).

Individuals with general questions about the new flood maps can contact the YCFCD at 928-771-3197 during business hours or email Lynn Whitman, Director at Lynn.Whitman@yavapaiaz.gov. For information about flood insurance, contact your local insurance agent or visit www.FloodSmart.gov.

###