

Supervisors accept latest flood zone maps from FEMA

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A lengthy process to correct inaccuracies and misinformation in flood maps for Calaveras County came to an apparent end Tuesday.

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on two separate items to pave the way to accept the latest information on potential flooding zones in the county and significantly reduce the number of properties required to obtain flood insurance.

County residents and officials have been at odds with flood insurance rate maps developed back in 2010 through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The 2010 study determined approximately 7,271 properties were in FEMA flood zones, a substantial increase over 2,207 properties in the 1990 FEMA flood zone map.

The 2010 study forced many Calaveras County property owners to purchase unnecessary flood insurance if they had mortgages from federally regulated lenders or undertake costly engineering studies to prove structures on their property were out of the flood zone.

“It took us awhile to figure out how problematic these maps actually were,” County Planner Debra Lewis told the board on Tuesday.

FEMA officials eventually admitted some of the data was faulty and back in 2015 entered into an agreement with the county to take another look at the flood zones.

The new FEMA Flood Zones Map presented on Tuesday reduced the number of flood-prone properties to approximately 4,000.

One of the areas of particular concern was Cosgrove Creek in Valley Springs, the site of major flooding back in 2006.

It underwent some “very detailed mapping,” Lewis said, “with boots on the ground” and a significant number of properties were withdrawn from the flood zone.