

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is the Maumee Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) involved now and not the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)?

The MWCD is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio that oversees water management, including flood-risk reduction, as established under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6101. MWCD represents 15 counties in northwest Ohio, including Hancock County and the upper reaches of the Blanchard River. The MWCD can provide better focus on local and regional concerns within the watershed than the USACE with its national perspective. The MWCD is also less encumbered by certain processes and requirements that prevent the Corps from taking on some types of work and responding quickly and efficiently.

### What is a 100-year flood event?

The term “100-year flood” is a misnomer and can be confusing. The correct terminology is a “1% annual chance exceedance event,” or 1% ACE event. This refers to the statistical probability of an event happening in a single year. A 1% (or greater) ACE event has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. A 1% ACE flood event actually could occur multiple times in one year.

### How big was the 2007 flood when compared to other events?

Major flood stage on the Blanchard River is reached when the USGS gage, just west of the city, records a depth of approximately 13.5 feet. The Blanchard River crested at approximately 18.5 feet during the 2007 event and is considered equivalent to the largest flood of record that occurred in 1913. The 2007 flood is estimated to have exceeded the statistical 1% ACE (100-year) event within the Blanchard River.

### How often do these events occur?

Major flood stage for the Blanchard River in Findlay is 13.5 feet. Ten events exceeded major flood stage from 1900 to 2000, and more six flooding events have exceeded major flood stage since 2000.

### Why are these flood events occurring with greater regularity?

There are several factors that may be contributing to the increased frequency of flood events including runoff from impermeable surfaces (rooftops, parking lots, streets, etc.), modified agricultural practices, climate change and encroachment of development and/or new structures along the rivers.

### How big is the Blanchard River Watershed in Findlay?

The Blanchard River Watershed covers approximately 350 square miles. Eagle Creek represents roughly 15% of this area, and Lye Creek is about 6%.

### How much will the recommended improvements cost?

This is a summary of planning level opinions on probable cost for technical services and construction:

Phase of Work	Base Cost (No Contingency)	Cost (w/ 30% Contingency)
Hydraulic Improvements	\$15.4 million	\$20.0 million
Eagle Creek Dry Storage Basin	\$53.4 million	\$69.5 million
Blanchard River Dry Storage Basin	\$34.4 million	\$44.6 million
Potato Run Dry Storage Basin	\$19.7 million	\$25.6 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$122.9 million</b>	<b>\$159.7 million</b>

*This document intends to answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding Stantec's findings and recommendations. The Maumee Watershed Conservancy District will further evaluate these options before making a decision to proceed.*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What will be the estimated reduction in water levels after the program is complete?**

Assuming each project within the program is completed, the water surface elevation reduction at Main Street in Findlay is estimated to be approximately 3.6 feet if an event similar to the 2007 flood event occurs. Additional benefits in flood stage reduction will also occur for smaller events as well.

### **How will this program be paid for?**

A portion of the project may be paid for by the existing flood mitigation funds, generated by the 2009 local sales tax. Several alternative options for funding exist for the recommended program; however, the overall funding strategy cannot be developed until several administrative steps, as outlined within Section 6101 of the Ohio Revised Code related to Conservancy Districts, have been completed. Additional information related to project funding will be provided in the future.

### **How much will I be compensated for my property that is impacted by the recommended program?**

Significant opportunities and protections will be afforded for impacted property owners, as outlined within Section 6101 of the Ohio Revised Code related to Conservancy Districts. Purchase of lands required to implement the final recommended program will be negotiated with individual property owners as further development of the detailed designs progress.

### **What will happen to the land impacted by the recommended program? Can we continue to farm?**

There are several options under consideration, including continued agricultural use. These decisions would be made during detailed design, with community feedback playing an integral role in the decision-making process.

### **When would the recommended program be implemented?**

The parcels along the Blanchard River within the city are primarily owned by the City of Findlay and Hancock County. As such, the hydraulic improvements project on the Blanchard River could be advanced over the next couple of years. Recommended modifications to the railroad bridge will require interaction with the owners and could take a few years to finalize. The other alternatives would likely be implemented over a significantly longer timeframe, following additional refinement, review and local community input.

### **Why are some property owners losing land for the benefit of others? Why are some properties impacted now by the recommended program that weren't impacted by the USACE Plan?**

The recommended program was developed to increase community-wide benefit through regional flood-risk reduction projects, while attempting to reduce the impact on land, structures and infrastructure. The projects are spread throughout the watershed to reduce the overall flood risk relative to various storm shapes, sizes and distributions. Net benefits are expected to occur across Hancock County for thousands of acres of agricultural land, while at the same time removing thousands of parcels from the 1% ACE event floodplain.

### **Why can't the Blanchard River just be widened/cleaned/deepened?**

Analyses were performed for several options involving the hydraulics of the Blanchard River. The recommended program incorporates some of these improvements in the form of floodplain bench widening, inline structure removals and modifications to a bridge identified as a flow constriction. The recommended program includes cost-effective and environmentally "permissible" measures that would provide meaningful benefit in flood-risk reduction.

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### **Why is this recommended program better than the USACE plan?**

The recommended plan from the USACE did not address a significant portion of the watershed tributary to downtown Findlay. The USACE plan would reduce the risk of flooding for storms that would occur over the Eagle Creek watershed, but not those that occur farther to the east over Lye Creek or the upstream portions of Blanchard River watersheds. The USACE plan was sized to convey the 4% ACE (25-year) event from Eagle Creek. Larger events would continue down Eagle Creek and cause flooding downstream. Several new bridges and roadway modifications would have been required to accommodate the 9.2-mile diversion channel. The USACE plan had an estimated cost of nearly \$81.0 million and may have resulted in a reduction in water surface elevation of roughly one foot. To expand the USACE option to meet the same level of flood risk reduction as the proposed program, the USACE project would need to be enlarged and modified, resulting in total costs exceeding \$190 million. The recommended program is expected to yield increased regional benefits at a reduced cost.

### **Will there be opportunity for community input?**

Yes. The local community will be engaged through additional local presentations and workshops, as well as continued discussion at various public meetings throughout the process. The Program Team, consisting of the City, County, MWCD and Stantec, will meet periodically with individuals and the public to share program progress and get stakeholder feedback.

### **What are the next steps in this process?**

Stantec will continue to finalize the Proof of Concept Report and update the benefit to cost ratio (BCR) calculations. The local community will review, discuss and consider the program recommendations. The MWCD will then take the Proof of Concept report into consideration to determine which, if any, of the recommendations should move forward for additional plan refinement.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Program information can be found online at [www.HancockCountyFlooding.com](http://www.HancockCountyFlooding.com).