

## What is the difference between floodplain and floodway?

**Floodplain:** Land area that is expected to flood. In this case, floodplain specifically refers to the Special Flood Hazard Area, which is the land area covered by floodwaters during the base flood (also known as the 100-year or 1% flood).

*Layman terms: The floodplain shows how far out of the banks a watercourse would get during the 1% flood.*

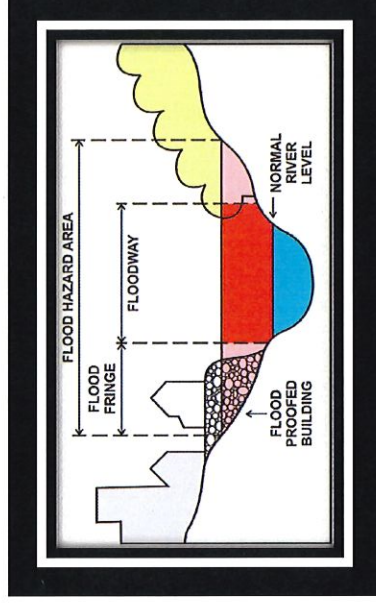
**Floodway:** The channel of a river or watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be maintained in order to discharge floodwaters.

*Layman's Terms: The floodway is the land that must be protected to carry floodwaters if the flood fringe is fully developed.*

**Flood Fringe:** All floodplain areas that are NOT the floodway.

## Why is the floodway so important?

When we build in the flood fringe, the depth of the floodwater increases. The floodwater still needs somewhere to go, which is the purpose of the floodway. The floodway is also where the flood current is strongest, causing swift and dangerous conditions.



Building in the floodway impacts the flow and depth of floodwaters, causing increased risk to everyone in the floodplain. Keeping the floodway free of obstructions helps reduce flood damages.

**Building in the floodway should be restricted and closely monitored.**

## Am I at risk of flooding if I live in the flood fringe?

**Yes!** Elevating, flood vents and other protection measures (enforced through your local floodplain ordinance) are great ways to reduce flood damage, but floods may be worse than the 1% flood, or debris and obstructions may cause floodwater in a particular area to rise higher than expected.

## Is building in the floodway more dangerous than the flood fringe?

**Yes!** The floodway is where the current runs deepest, fastest and strongest, which increases the chance of debris and floodwater damage to a home, even if elevated.

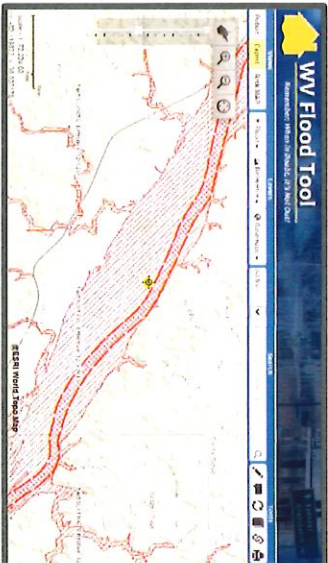
## Can I still be flooded if I live outside the floodplain?

**Yes!** Anyone, anywhere can be flooded. Some floods are worse than the 1% flood. Some floods happen outside the floodplain because of runoff or flash flooding. Never assume that you are completely safe from flooding.

**Want to know if you're in a floodplain?**

**Use the WV Flood Tool!**

[www.mapwv.gov/flood/map](http://www.mapwv.gov/flood/map)





**Select Expert View**



**Search for your address**

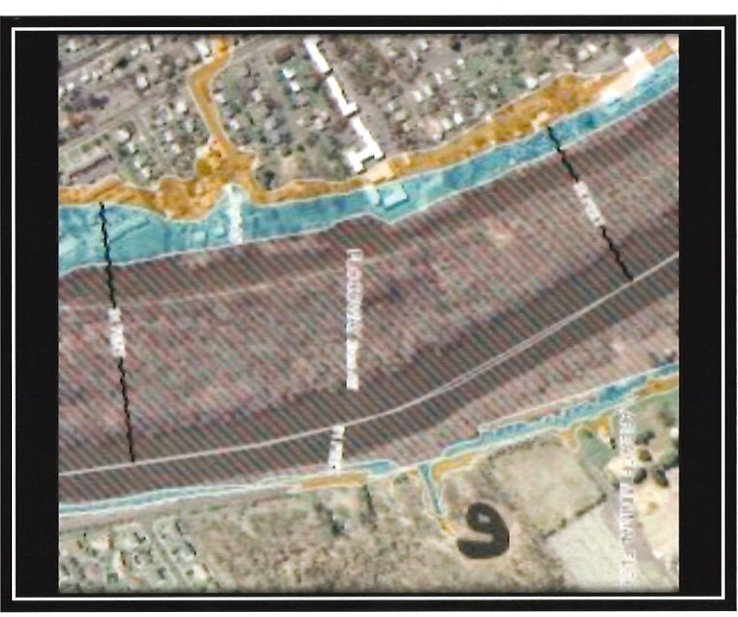


**Legend**

-  Floodplain Boundary: vertical or slanted lines with thin border.
-  Floodway Boundary: slanted lines/boxes with thick border

**Floodplain  
and**

**Floodway**



**For more information, contact your local floodplain office.**

**Or contact the WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, National Flood Insurance Program Section**

**304-957-2571**

**What's the difference and why does it matter?**