

By Eric Simmons

Finalizing the 2010 FIRM for Douglas County, NV, involved some challenges. Region IX experienced many disputes during Flood Map Modernization but only one lawsuit. A million-dollar, two-dimensional flood study was contracted after an earlier one-dimensional restudy proved unreliable. Douglas County was unsatisfied with the hydrologic results and wider SFHAs, but the data provided in their appeal wasn't credible. Douglas County filed suit after FEMA issued the letter of final determination and eventually dropped their lawsuit with the agreement that a scientific panel discuss the technical issues.

Enter Risk MAP: FEMA partnered with Douglas County and other local stakeholders including a multistate, watershed-based CTP—the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD). CWSD has studied hundreds of miles of flood hazards. Douglas County used their resources to re-restudy the areas central to the Map Modernization dispute. The updated hazard data produced under Risk MAP has led to greater awareness of flood problems and risk reduction activities.

Through this process, led by CWSD, a Risk MAP Charter was signed by 13 agencies. Douglas County is currently working among these agencies to identify, fund, and complete mitigation projects that reduce flood risk. While several PDM and HMGP grants have been awarded to reduce future flood losses, continued hard work is the essential ingredient due to funding limits and project complexities.

Additionally, this past August, after years of discussion, the Douglas County Commissioners approved a Stormwater Maintenance Program to fund inspections and improvements that reduce flood risk and improve water quality. "This will enable us to provide improved services" said Courtney Walker, Douglas County Program Manager. Partnerships and perseverance do pay rewards!