

## ROSELLE FLOOD INFORMATION

### FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The Borough is located in the West Brook (Morses Creek) watershed and is traversed by a number of streams that can cause flooding within the Borough including the following:

- Jouet Brook
- Peach Orchard Brook
- West Brook (Morses Creek)

The **Jouet Brook** begins within Roselle Park and flows in a southerly direction to approximately the Borough's boundary with Linden. The Jouet Brook then changes direction where it proceeds to flow in an easterly direction where it joins the Peach Orchard Brook just south of the Borough of Roselle and the City of Linden boundary.

**Peach Orchard Brook** begins in the southeastern portion of the Borough. The Peach Orchard Brook flows in a southerly direction into the City of Linden, meets with the Jouet Brook, and continues in a southerly direction into the City of Linden.

**West Brook**, also known as **Morses Creek**, starts within Roselle Park as two separate water bodies, the Morses Creek Connector and Morses Creek tributary. The two streams flow southerly where they join into the Morses Creek Stream south of Sixth Avenue and the Morristown and Erie Railroad near Independence Drive.

The Borough's three (3) main streams are limited in capacity and tend to exceed their banks during heavy rainfall events similar to Tropical Storm Floyd on September 16, 1999 (which can be considered a 100 year flood event) and more recently during the Nor'easter on April 15, 2007 (which can be considered a 20 year storm event). The Borough also experienced a major Nor'Easter flood event on March 13, 2010 and again on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Similar occurrences happened on November 8, 1977 and August 28-29, 1971, previously averaging every ten years.

Information on whether your property is in the 100-year floodplain can be obtained by coming into the Borough Hall and having the Building Inspector help you. Maps are available to look at as well as other flood-related information. The Borough also has Elevation Certificates for new development available. Contact the Borough Engineering Department at (908) 259-3059 for further assistance.

### WEST BROOK PHASE IV

A project is currently in the construction stage for improvements to West Brook (Morses Creek). The portion of the West Brook that is part of the improvement project drains approximately 3 square miles to the southerly project limit at Raritan Road in the Borough. The Project includes flood control and erosion control improvements along the West Brook from the Raritan Road section of the Borough to upstream of Aldene Road.

### FLOOD SAFETY

The following common sense guidelines can help you from the dangers of flooding:

- Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in cars than anywhere else. Do not drive around barriers.
- Do not walk through flowing water. Currents can be deceptive. Six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. If your house is about to be flooded, turn off the power at the service box. Electrical current can travel through water. Electrocutation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death during floods.
- Be alert to gas leaks. Turn off the gas to your house before it floods. If you smell gas, report it to a Borough official or your gas company. Do not use candles, lanterns or open flames if your gas has been shut off.

- Keep children away from the flood waters, ditches, culverts and storm drains. Flood waters can carry unimaginable items that have dislodged themselves. Culverts may suck smaller people into them rendering them helpless.
- Clean everything that has been wet. Flood water will be contaminated with sewage and other chemicals which pose severe health threats.
- Look out for animals, especially snakes and rodents. Small animals that have been flooded out of their home may seek shelter in yours.
- Do not use gas engines, such as generators, or charcoal fires indoors during power outages. Carbon monoxide exhaust can pose serious health hazards.

### PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

If your property is susceptible to flooding, there are many flood damage reduction measures you can employ.

- Watertight seals can be applied to brick and block walls to protect against low-level flooding.
- Utilities such as heating and air conditioning systems, water heaters and other major appliances can be elevated to higher floors in the structure or on raised platforms.
- Temporary measures such as moving furniture and other valuables to higher floors or sandbagging exterior openings will also help.
- Elevating or relocating the entire structure may also be a feasible option.

The Borough's storm preparation addresses known "hot-spot" flooding areas and attempts to keep critical roads, buildings and services protected, not to protect every house in town that might flood.

## **FLOODPLAIN PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

All development within the 100-yr. floodplain (not just construction of buildings, but filling, excavation, fences, etc.) is required to obtain a Borough Development Permit. Applications must be made prior to doing any work in a floodplain area. Please contact the Borough Engineering Department to receive all the information you will need in order to properly develop in the floodplain at (908) 259-3059. You may report any illegal development activities to the above number as well.

## **SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT / DAMAGE**

The NFIP requires that if the cost of improvements to a building or the cost to repair damages (from any cause to a building exceeds 50% of the market value of the building (excluding land value), the entire building must be brought up to current floodplain management standards. Building improvement projects include exterior and interior remodeling, rehabilitation, additions and repair and reconstruction projects. Additionally, the cost of currently planned improvements will be added to the cost of previously made improvements and compared to the existing market value to determine if the improvements exceed 50% of the structure's value. Please contact the Borough Engineering Department at (908) 259-3059 for further information.

## **FLOOD INSURANCE**

If you do not have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. Flood insurance is only available to those participating communities in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Because of our floodplain management programs that attempt to protect us from the multiple flooding hazards, Roselle is part of the NFIP and thus, residents are able to obtain flood

insurance. Additionally, because the Borough participates in FEMA's CRS program, flood insurance premiums are discounted.

Be sure to check your policy to ensure you have adequate coverage. Usually these policies cover the building structure, but not the contents. Contents coverage can also be obtained by asking. There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance coverage becomes effective. Plan ahead; do not wait until a flood is predicted before purchasing flood insurance.

If you are building inside the floodplain, the purchase of flood insurance is mandatory if using a federally regulated/insured bank for a loan.

## **NATURAL & BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS**

Floodplains play a valuable role in providing natural and beneficial functions to the area around, and including, Roselle. Floodplains that are relatively undisturbed provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. These benefits provide aesthetic pleasure as well as function to provide active processes such as filtering nutrients. Parts of the Jouet Brook, Peach Orchard Brook and West Brook (Morses Creek) floodplain are used as a means to filter chemical run-off so that these areas can maintain bio-diversity and ecosystem sustainability. The floodplains enhance fish and other wildlife habitats and provide feeding/breeding grounds. And lastly, the floodplains provide natural erosion control and open space so further flooding damage does not occur.

## **DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

As simple as it may sound, simply keeping smaller ditches and stream free of debris can dramatically improve the run-off capacity of low-lying areas, as well as greatly reduce the occurrence blockage that significantly contributes to flooding. It is illegal to

dump materials into a waterway and violators may be fined. If you see someone in the act of dumping or see debris in one of our watercourses, please contact the Department of Public Works at (908) 245-2920.

## **FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM**

Many times, flooding along the Morses Creek within Roselle can be predicted days in advance, giving ample warning for preparation and evacuation. However, in the event of a flash flood due to large rain event, you may be the first to notice the oncoming situation and have only hours to execute your plan. Notify the Borough Police/Fire Department. The Borough's Emergency Alert System will be activated. Tune your radio for local and National Weather Service Updates. You will also see regular interruption on local radio and television stations advising you of the situation.

In addition, please feel free to sign up for emergency text messaging alert through the Borough of Roselle's website at [www.boroughofroselle.com](http://www.boroughofroselle.com). Standard text messaging rates may apply.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you should require further or more detailed information regarding flood-related issues in Roselle, here are some additional sources:

- FEMA.gov website
- Borough Hall – Engineering Department  
(908) 259-3059  
210 Chestnut Street  
Roselle, NJ 07203
- Floodplain FAQ page on the [www.boroughofroselle.com](http://www.boroughofroselle.com) website.
- Roselle Public Library