

flooding

What You Need to Know

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... plus more
important information!



Austell Public Works
STORMWATER
Management

An official publication of Austell Public Works
Stormwater Management division,
an agency of the City of Austell.

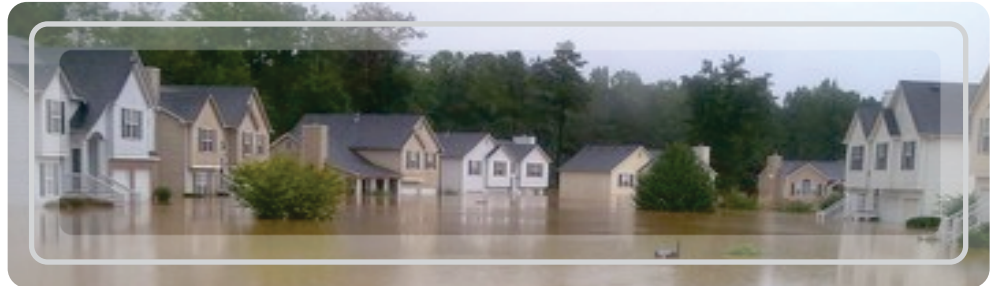
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

apwsm.org

Flood Hazard Prevention Guide

2017



You are receiving this **Flood Hazard Prevention Guide** because your property is in or near an area subject to flooding and we believe the information provided within this guide may be of interest to you. This information is offered to help protect your property and reduce potential losses due to flooding. The City of Austell is dedicated to assisting our residents and businesses to reduce the hazardous effects of flooding in our community.

National Flood Insurance Program Overview

In 1968, the United States Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program to provide affordable flood insurance who live in areas with the greatest risk of flooding called the Special Flood Hazard Area. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage. This is important because property owners who hold a federally backed mortgage must purchase flood insurance if the property is located within the Special Flood Hazard Area.

There are approximately 165 flood insurance policies in the City of Austell.

Citizens Benefit from Lower Flood Insurance Premiums City of Austell Earns Class 8 Rating

Flood insurance policyholders in the City of Austell have seen reductions in premiums effective October 1, 2012. Staff worked diligently to become a participant in the Community Rating System and has earned a class rating from the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System. This program was created to recognize communities where floodplain management standards exceed the minimum federal standards and, in exchange, policyholders receive discounts on their flood insurance premiums. Currently, policyholders that live within the Special Flood Hazard Area currently enjoy an eight percent discount.

Helpful Information about Flooding

FLOOD HAZARD

Over 50 percent of the residents in the City of Austell live within the Special Flood Hazard Area. The entire City can be prone to flooding. There are many types of flooding that occur, and there are many factors that affect the type and severity of a flood. Following are some of the more common types of flooding experienced in Cobb County, including the City of Austell:

Urban Flood: As land is converted from fields or woods to roads and parking lots, it loses its ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization increases runoff two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain.

Stream Flood: Some floods occur seasonally when rain fill stream and river basins with too much water, too quickly. Torrential rains can also produce flooding.

Flash Flood: A flash flood is any sudden, sever event, usually triggered by large sudden downpours. The effects of downpour are worsened when terrain will not absorb water. Reasons vary: soil type, lack of vegetation, steepness, extensive pavement (urban areas), or the saturation of soil by previous rain events. The history of flooding in the City of Austell demonstrates that flash floods are frequent and can be destructive.

The most severe and destructive recorded rainfall occurred on September 21, 2009, during which approximately 21 inches of rain fell within a 24-hour period.

Since 2009, the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management Division has been very poactive in identifying those areas in which flooding that has been most common and identifying potential projects within our Capital Improvement Program to reduce or mitigate flooding.

FLOOD HAZARD INFORMATION

Through the use of this brochure and a number of other means, the City is working to inform our community of the flood hazard and how to protect against its detrimental effects. For additional information, you may contact the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management division at (770) 944-4325 or by e-mail to info@apwsm.org.

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

The City of Austell depends on the National Weather Service for flood notification. The National Weather Service will issue flood advisories prior to expected heavy rainfall that could cause flooding. The City has a citywide flood warning plan to provide early notification warning to neighborhoods that might experience flooding. Broadcast methods of emergency notification include the City of Austell website (www.austellga.gov), the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management website (www.apwsm.org), local television stations, and local radio stations. Additionally, the Austell Police Department may ride around using their car microphones to warn residents.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Flood insurance covers losses to your property caused by flooding. From structural and mechanical damage to flood debris cleanup and floor surfaces (like tile and carpeting), your investment is protected by a flood insurance policy, something that your homeowners' or renters' policy does not offer. In addition, you can purchase separate coverage that insures most of your personal belongings. With rare exceptions, you are eligible to purchase flood insurance, regardless of your property's flooding history. Most mortgage lenders require flood insurance for properties in Special Flood Hazard Areas. All properties secured by a federally backed mortgage (Federal Housing Administration, Veterans Affairs, Fannie Mae, etc.) must carry flood insurance. It takes 30 days after purchase for a policy to take effect, so it is important to buy flood insurance as soon as possible. In high risk areas, one in four homes will experience a flood over the course of a 30-year mortgage.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Proper drainage helps reduce the risk of flooding. It is a violation of the City of Austell Code of Ordinances to dump debris of any sort, including grass clippings, into storm drains. The Austell Public Works Stormwater Management division inspects the drainage system and removes blockages that are found or reported. Even in the midst of flood events, during normal business hours, staff is investigating problem areas and

addressing them as required. If you live near areas where waters flow, you can help by keeping storm grates, storm drains, and ditches clear of brush, grass clippings, and other debris. Commercial stormwater management facilities are required to maintain their own system, per the City of Austell Code of Ordinances.

FLOOD MAP DETERMINATION

The City of Austell provides Flood Insurance Rate Map determinations to let you know if you are in a flood hazard area. A map for the City of Austell is included in this guide. The map can also be accessed through the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management divisions website at www.apwsm.org. For additional information, you may contact the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management division at (770) 944-4325 or by e-mail to info@apwsm.org.

PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

To reduce property damage caused by flooding, you can consider the following: if your lot is large enough, consider regrading it or building a small flood wall. You can also place watertight closures over the doorways. However, these measures only protect if flooding is not particularly deep. You may also consider elevating your home. Flood-proofing, installing floodgates, and making walls waterproof are among the common ways to structurally protect commercial property. Residential structures are typically required to be elevated higher than the anticipated flood waters. To reduce damage from flooding, consider emergency measures such as moving furniture and other valuable possessions.

PROPERTY PROTECTION ADVICE

Information on how to perform residential retrofitting or commercial flood proofing is available at the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management division office. Additionally, staff is available to provide information on how to protect your property from flooding. These services are available at no charge to residents of the City of Austell. Upon request, a representative will visit your property to review flooding problems and to explain options to prevent flood damage. To request a representative or to find out

sources of financial assistance for property protection measures, please contact Austell Public Works Stormwater Management at (770) 944-4325 or by e-mail to info@apwsm.org.

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS

Floodplains should be considered in their natural context. They are more than just hazardous locations. Open and natural areas absorb much more rain and flood waters than urbanized areas, reducing flood flows on downstream properties. Floodplains can also be beneficial in the ability to recharge the aquifer and to help to reduce the negative impacts of drought. Wetland plants filter stormwater runoff, making it cleaner for those downstream.

Flood Safety

Do not walk through flooded water, nor drive through a flooded area.

Drowning is the number one cause of deaths during a flood. The water current can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can cause you to lose balance. If you must walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is stable and level before walking on it. Do not disregard road barriers. The road pathways may be washed out or severely affected. Austell Public Works, with the assistance of the Austell Police Department, typically divert traffic from flooded streets to protect vehicles in a flood event. Driving through flooded areas could not only damage your vehicle, but it could also damage adjacent homes, as a result of flooding from the wake created.

Have your electricity turned off by GreyStone Power or Georgia Power.

Some appliances, such as television sets, hold electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Avoid using appliances or motors which have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried. If you are advised to evacuate, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves, but do not touch any electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water. Electrocutation is the number two flood killer. Electrical currents can travel through water. Report downed power lines to GreyStone Power at (770) 942-6576 or Georgia Power (toll-free, dial 1 before dialing the number), (888) 891-0938.

Be ready for the unexpected.

Place important documents inside plastic bags or other waterproof containers. Review your insurance policy to ensure it provides adequate coverage. Know what type coverage you have. Most homeowners' and renters' policies cover wind storm damage, but not flooding. Any policy change generally takes thirty days before it takes effect.

Look out for animals, especially snakes.

Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals. If wading through flood waters, watch out for ant farms floating in the water.

Look before you step.

After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks.

If you use natural gas, use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated. Gas leaks can be reported to Austell Natural Gas at (770) 948-1841.

Pet safety.

During a flood, most evacuation centers will not accept pets. Make plans in advance to board your pets in an animal kennel or with friends. Bullard Animal Hospital, located at 5700 Austell-Powder Springs Road, will be available to accept animals during a flood event. They may be reached at (770) 941-3668.

Evacuating.

If you must evacuate, most importantly, evacuate immediately if told to do so. Move to higher ground or to the house of a friend or family member that is not affected by the impending flood waters. If you live in a mobile home, evacuate at the first notice of the emergency. Rehearse your evacuation plan with all household members. Plan to leave early to avoid any traffic delays. Try to have pre-arranged plan designating how you can contact your neighbors and family if you have to leave your home. If possible, before you evacuate, inform each other of places where you will be staying, contact telephone numbers, and addresses. For shelter information, contact the American Red Cross (Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter) at (404) 876-3302. Residents with special

needs can register with Cobb County Emergency Management Agency by calling (770) 499-4567.

ELEVATION CERTIFICATES

Recent completed elevation certificates or other related information is available in the Austell Public Works Stormwater Management division office. Please call (770) 944-4325 to request an archive search. Additionally, you may view available information on our website at www.apwsm.org.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The City of Austell requires that, if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, additions, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50 percent of the building's market value, the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. This includes minimum or base flood floor elevations as determined by the Flood Insurance Rate Map. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards.

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

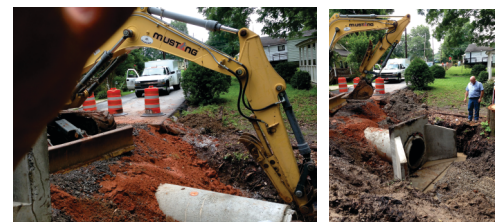
All building developments require permits and must be obtained prior to construction at the Community Development Department located at 5000 Austell-Powder Springs Road, Suite 101.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Our office provides technical assistance to City residents to mitigate flood hazards on their property. For more information, please contact Austell Public Works Stormwater Management at (770) 944-4325.

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Using revenues from the Stormwater Utility fee, we continue to improve the stormwater drainage infrastructure throughout the City.



Joe Street Drainage Improvements

Why Protect Floodplains?

Floodplains, in their natural state, have an important impact on flooding. Flood water can spread over a large area in natural floodplains. This provides many benefits:

- ◆ Reduces the speed at which the flood waters move (higher speeds cause more damage).
- ◆ Provides storage of flood water, which protects downstream areas by reducing the water levels that reach them.
- ◆ Reduces the frequency of flooding.
- ◆ Reduces the length of time that flood water covers the ground outside of the stream channel.
- ◆ Allows water to soak into the ground and recharge the groundwater aquifer; less water ultimately flows downstream.
- ◆ Moderates flood water temperatures; this reduces the possibility of a harmful effect on aquatic plants, fish, and animals.
- ◆ Provides habitat for a variety of plants and animals, as well as breeding and feeding areas.

In addition, the vegetation in a natural floodplain:

- ◆ Stabilizes soil during flooding and reduces erosion.
- ◆ Filters and improves water quality and minimizes sediment in the stream.
- ◆ Can reduce the damage caused by waves created as wind blows across flood waters.

WHAT IS Stormwater Management? And, Why Is It So Important?

Given that we all live, work, and play in a watershed, managing the health of streams, rivers and lakes in the metropolitan north Georgia area is everyone's responsibility. Watersheds and rivers do not necessarily follow jurisdictional boundaries, therefore protecting our water resources requires a regional coordinated approach.

What is stormwater runoff?

When it rains, some of the rainwater soaks into the soil, and part of it flows over the ground and directly into creeks, streams or rivers. This water that runs off land surfaces is called runoff, or stormwater runoff.

Why be concerned about stormwater?

Stormwater runoff occurs naturally, but as development and imperviousness increase in a watershed, the natural capacity of the soil and vegetation to infiltrate and take up rainfall decreases, and more rainfall becomes stormwater runoff. This can produce negative impacts such as streambank erosion and flooding. In addition, stormwater runoff picks up pollutants such as oil and grease, chemicals,

nutrients, metals, and bacteria as it runs off the land and carries them to the nearest river or stream. This can result in water quality impairments leading to water quality violations. Because metro north Georgia region uses its rivers and lakes for recreation and as its primary source of drinking water, stormwater and watershed protection is something that everyone needs to be aware of.

How do we address the negative impacts of stormwater runoff?

There are a number of ways to address the impacts of stormwater runoff. These include requiring post-construction structural stormwater controls for both runoff quantity and quality on all new development and redevelopment projects; encouraging better site design to reduce imperviousness and leave more land as greenspace; promoting pollution prevention practices to help keep contaminants out of stormwater; addressing illicit discharge and illegal connections to storm sewer systems; and providing for stream buffer protection and effective floodplain management.

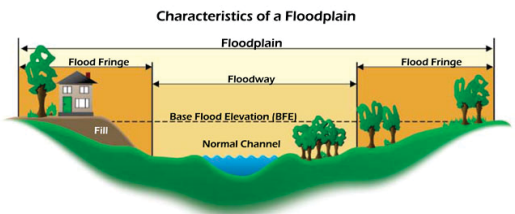
What is a floodplain?

During those rare but certain events when heavy rains or other conditions cause the water levels to rise, then the floodplain and floodway become crucial. Buildings, structures, and other development activities – such as fill – placed within the floodway are more likely to obstruct flood flows, causing the water to slow down and back up, resulting in higher flood levels.

Normal channel is what you see most days when you look at a creek or river.

Floodway is the normal channel plus the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to carry the deeper, faster moving water.

Floodplain is the land area that will flood under conditions of a storm event that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.



Helpful Resources

Floodplain Libraries. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at Austell Public Works Stormwater Management.

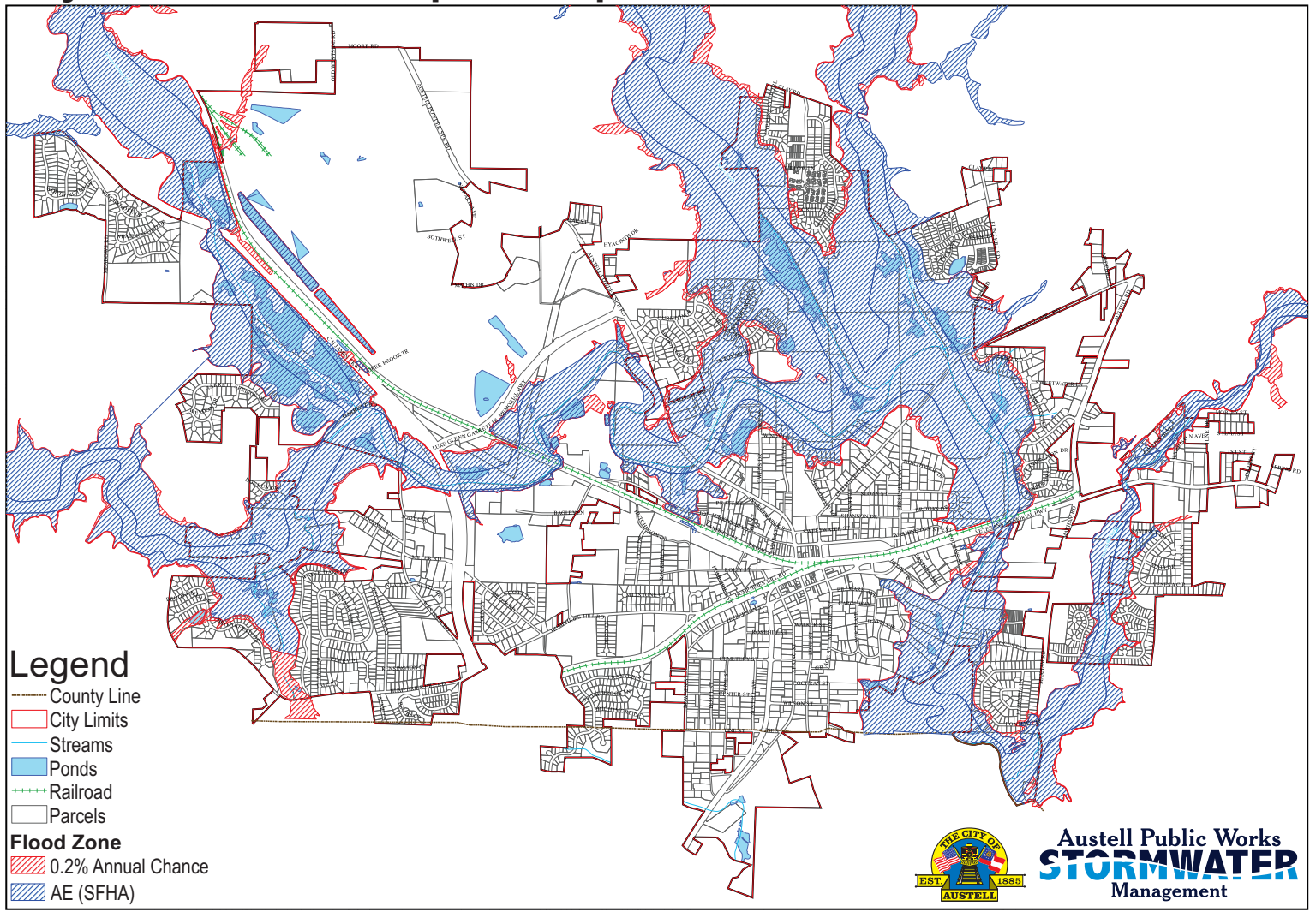
Flood Determination Letter and Elevation Certificates. Austell Public Works Stormwater Management can give you information, such as depth of flooding on your lot and copies of elevation certificates for buildings built in the Special Flood Hazard Area, if available. You can request a flood determination letter containing this information for any property within the City of Austell, at no charge. Please visit our website at www.apwsm.org to complete the online form.

Floodplain Specialists. Austell Public Works Stormwater Management have floodplain specialists available to answer any questions regarding floodplain regulations and flood protection measures. You may contact our office at (770) 944-4325.



Legion Park - September 2009

City of Austell - Floodplain Map



To locate your property, please visit: apwsm.org or GeorgiaDFIRM.com.

Helpful Websites

Local Floodplain Information

- apwsm.org (Austell Public Works Stormwater Management - general information)
- GeorgiaDFIRM.com (Georgia Department of Natural Resources - includes floodplain maps)

Property Protection Measures, Flood Safety, and Flood Insurance

- fema.gov (Federal Emergency Management Agency - general disaster information)
- fema.gov/business/nfip (National Flood Insurance Program)
- floodsmart.gov (National Flood Insurance Program)
- ga.water.usgs.gov/rivercam/webcam-sweetwater.html (Live webcam on Austell-Powder Springs Road at Sweetwater Creek)
- gema.state.ga.us (Georgia Emergency Management Agency - general disaster information)
- stopdisastersgame.org (disaster scenario game for kids and adults, teaches safety, and mitigation concepts. Fun and free!)
- weather.gov/os/water/tadd (Turn Around Don't Drown - safety information)
- wim.usgs.gov/FIMI/FloodInundationMapper.html?siteno=02337000 (Flood Inundation Mapping for the City of Austell)

Environmental and Planning Information

- cwp.org (Center for Watershed Protection)
- epa.gov/wetlands (United States Environmental Protection Agency - wetlands)



Flood Protection Information

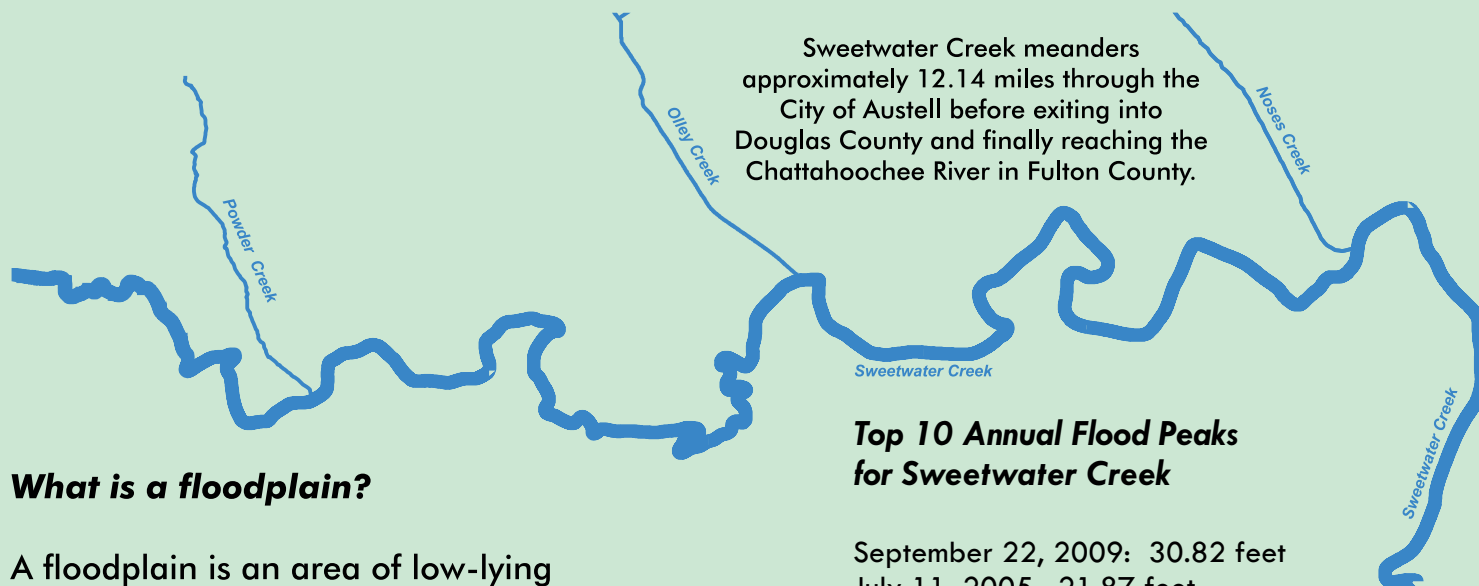
When the City is experiencing heavy rains and localized flooding, we recommend that you take the following precautions:

- Do not drive through standing water; it may be deeper than it looks.
- Drive slowly through ponding water so waves do not cause damage to other vehicles or nearby structures.
- Do not remove manhole covers to release flood waters; this will back up the sewer system.
- If flooding occurs, the City will barricade affected streets and will monitor and strictly enforce all street closures.
- Please remember, when traffic lights are out in an intersection, it becomes a 4-way stop and you must yield to the person on your right before proceeding.

Citizens are advised to report and structural and/or road flooding to Austell Public Works at (770) 944-4325. After hours, flooding may be reported to Austell Police Department at (770) 944-4318.



Sweetwater Creek Floodplain



Sweetwater Creek meanders approximately 12.14 miles through the City of Austell before exiting into Douglas County and finally reaching the Chattahoochee River in Fulton County.

What is a floodplain?

A floodplain is an area of low-lying ground adjacent to a river, stream, or other bodies of water subject to flooding.

There are approximately 1,067 acres of floodplain within the City of Austell.

Top 10 Annual Flood Peaks for Sweetwater Creek

- September 22, 2009: 30.82 feet
- July 11, 2005: 21.87 feet
- March 13, 1990: 19.30 feet
- February 4, 1982: 19.90 feet
- April 14, 1979: 17.48 feet
- March 3, 1977: 17.65 feet
- March 15, 1975: 18.73 feet
- February 26, 1961: 18.20 feet
- November 29, 1948: 18.40 feet
- July 8, 1916: 20.00 feet



Randy L. Bovens, Director
Tommy R. (Bo) Garrison, Assistant Director
Duane R. Demerit, CFM, Floodplain Administrator

Staff

Joe Jerkins, Mayor
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Mayor and City Council

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IMPORTANT FLOODPLAIN INFORMATION INSIDE