

## History of Passaic Flooding

Flooding has long been a problem in the Passaic River Basin. Since colonial times, floods have claimed lives and damaged property. The growth of residential and industrial development in recent years has multiplied the threat of serious damages and loss of life from flooding. More than 2.5 million people live in the basin (2000 census), and about 20,000 homes and places of business lie in the Passaic River floodplain.

The most severe flood, the “flood of record,” occurred in 1903, and more recent floods in 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, two in 1975, 1984, 1992, 1999, 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2011 were sufficiently devastating to warrant Federal Disaster declarations.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed flood risk management projects in the basin several times over the years, including in 1939, 1948, 1962, 1969, 1972, 1973 and following the completion of the Corps’ most recent study in the 1980s. As with the previous studies and recommended solutions lack of public support prevented the completion of major flood risk management projects.

Currently, the Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the state of New Jersey has embarked on a reevaluation of that 1980s study in order to identify the best, most feasible plan to help manage flood risks for residents of the Passaic River Basin.

## Collaboration is Key

In the past, the Corps of Engineers has partnered with the state of New Jersey to study chronic flooding issues in the Passaic River Basin but those studies have not resulted in construction of a comprehensive flood risk management solution. There have been many reasons for this, from discord between various governing bodies to real estate issues to environmental issues to cost concerns, but the end result is always the same - a stalled project resulting in no solution.

We need a collaborative effort with complete support from local, state and federal stakeholders. That means towns within the basin that may have competing interests must work together as partners.

Public officials must understand the process, especially if a project is authorized for construction, is a long one and that as my colleague New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said, “there is no silver bullet” that will magically stop flooding in the basin, especially not overnight. It will take initiative and grit to work collaboratively toward a complex solution to provide viable flood risk management options for the residents of the Passaic River Basin.

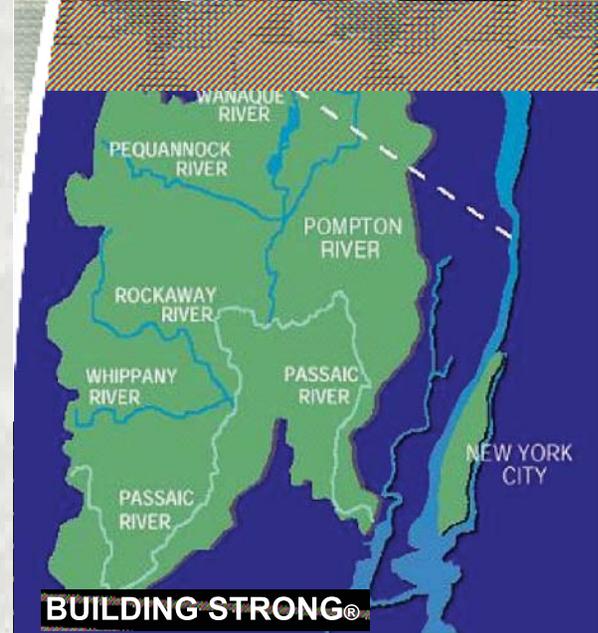


**Finding Us**

Alicia Gould, Project Manager  
Alicia.Gould@usace.army.mil  
917-790-8327  
<http://www.nan.usace.army.mil>



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District  
Passaic River Basin Flood Risk Management General Re-Evaluation Study**

## Another Study?

Many people have expressed frustration concerning another study with regard to the Passaic River Basin but this one is a re-evaluation of the most recent study conducted and completed by the Army Corps in the late 1980s. This re-evaluation study is necessary because a lot has changed in the Passaic River Basin since the 1980s.

The Army Corps plans to look at a number of factors, including development/paving of previously green areas leading to hydrology and hydraulic changes, land and property values leading to changed economics, locations of new homes and many other factors. All of this data must be re-evaluated and updated in order to accurately compare and analyze the various alternatives being looked at.

The purpose of the re-evaluation study is completed to provide the State and public an opportunity to determine which alternatives to evaluate in the detailed analysis phase. However it's important to note the Army Corps cannot move forward with large-scale projects like the kind necessary to help mitigate a complex large-scale flooding problem like the one facing the Passaic River Basin without strong public support.

## An explanation of the re-evaluation study

The Passaic River Basin Reevaluation Study will compare and analyze different approaches to flood risk management within the Passaic River Basin. It is a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the state of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Corps will be examining the economic benefits of each alternative, utilizing decades of existing data to update the engineering done in the 1980s to compare the economic benefits of each alternative. There will be four potential alternatives given preliminary examination as part of the first conceptual phase of the study. Four of the six potential alternatives include construction of large scale flood risk management measures, one non-structural plan and a no-action plan. This will determine what gets studied more in depth.

### Flood Risk Management Alternatives Being Evaluated

The original 1980s study analyzed more than 150 alternatives, but this re-evaluation study will focus on six:

Alternative 1 - Combination of:

- Levees
- Floodwalls
- Nonstructural Solutions
- Bridge & Dam Modifications

Alternative 2 - Combination of:

- Levees
- Floodwalls
- Nonstructural Solutions
- Channel Modifications

Alternative 3 - The Passaic/Pompton River Dual Inlet Diversion Tunnel:

- This was the recommended plan after the last study was completed in the 1980s, but lack of public support has prevented construction. As this study is a reevaluation and updating of that previous study this alternative must be analyzed and compared

Alternative 4 - Beatties Dam/Two Bridges Improvements

- Modifications to Beatties Dam, channel improvements both downstream and upstream (including the Two Bridges area) will be evaluated

Alternative 5 - 10 Year Non-Structural

- As part of a complete alternatives analysis, a non-structural only alternative will be analyzed. This measure will be examined throughout the Passaic Basin and may include (but not be limited to) flood proofing, elevating structures above the 10-year storm event, buyouts, preservation of open space, etc.

Alternative 6 - No Action Plan

- As required by the National Environmental Policy Act and other regulations, the No Action Plan will be identified and the impacts will be clearly discussed and analyzed and the information will be used as a baseline for examining alternatives

