

Flood-mapping project aims to pinpoint danger areas

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DELHI — A pilot flood inundation project sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District will help pinpoint areas where rising waters during heavy storms may endanger people and property.

The cost of the pilot project is \$30,000, half of which will be funded by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Delhi Village Clerk Michele Griffin said the Delhi Village Board passed a resolution Dec. 20 to pursue moving forward with an application for a grant to fund the second half of the project.

Graydon Dutcher, Delaware County Soil and Water spokesman, said the village is a signatory of the West Branch Delaware Stream Corridor Management Plan, making it eligible for funding for the project.

Dutcher said several communities in Delaware County — including Margaretville, Hancock and Walton — could have been eligible for the pilot project, but Delhi was chosen because the river gauge at Bridge Street is a forecasted gauge.

Dutcher said readings from the river gauge can be used to correlate the water flow with predictions of how deep the water will get in certain areas. The results can then be posted to real-time maps on the Internet.

“A picture is worth a thousand words,” Dutcher said Tuesday. “If a map shows that a house will be under water, people will have time to get out of a dangerous area.” Dutcher said the flood inundation maps will be a great tool for Emergency Services during weather events and will also be useful to planning departments to determine where things should or shouldn’t be built.

A series of static maps will be produced in one-foot flooding in-

crements showing which areas will be under water depending on how deep the water gets.

“I am really excited about this,” Dutcher said. “It will trigger the general public to look at flood-plain management. They can use the maps to decide where to place propane tanks or if the area where they are storing their camping trailer is prone to flooding.”

There are only 10 pilot projects under way nationwide. Dutcher said the Delaware River Basin was targeted for one of the pilots.

Towns with stream management plans can use the mapping as one more piece of the larger puzzle, Dutcher said.

Dutcher said he envisions a time in the near future when the inundation project will be available countywide.

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