

Mapping Where Rivers Meet People: Usability and Accuracy of Flood Maps in Rural Vermont

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July 16, 8:30-9:30am



COLORADO SCHOOL OF
MINES



50th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop
July 13-16, 2025 | Broomfield, CO

Introduction

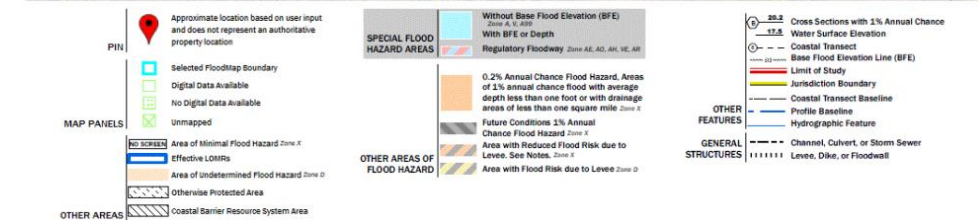
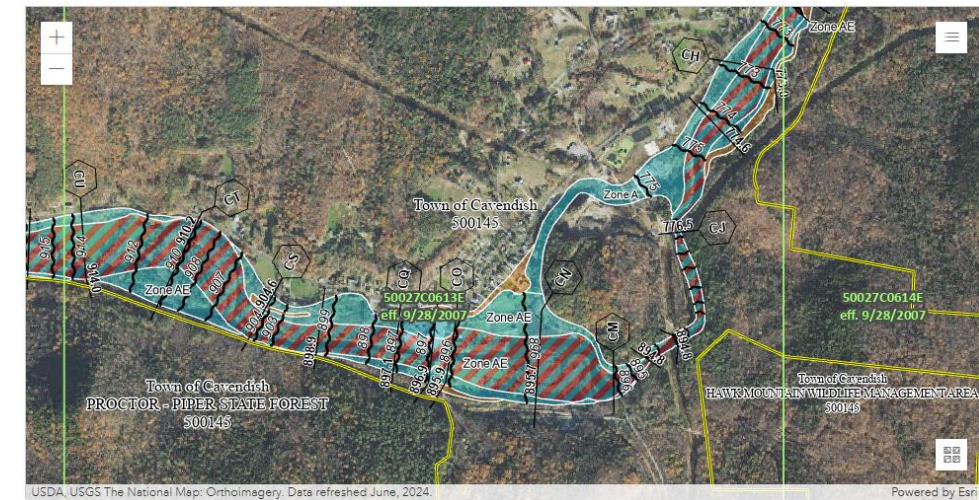
Ludlow, VT and Cavendish, VT

- Severe flooding in July 2023

Research Question: are current flood maps usable and accurate?

Methods

- Semi-structured interviews
- Community mapping with team
- Site visits



<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=05142>

<https://www.foxweather.com/extreme-weather/drone-video-flood-ludlow-vermont>

Flood Map Usability

Identification: maps difficult to find

- Many maps, all linked

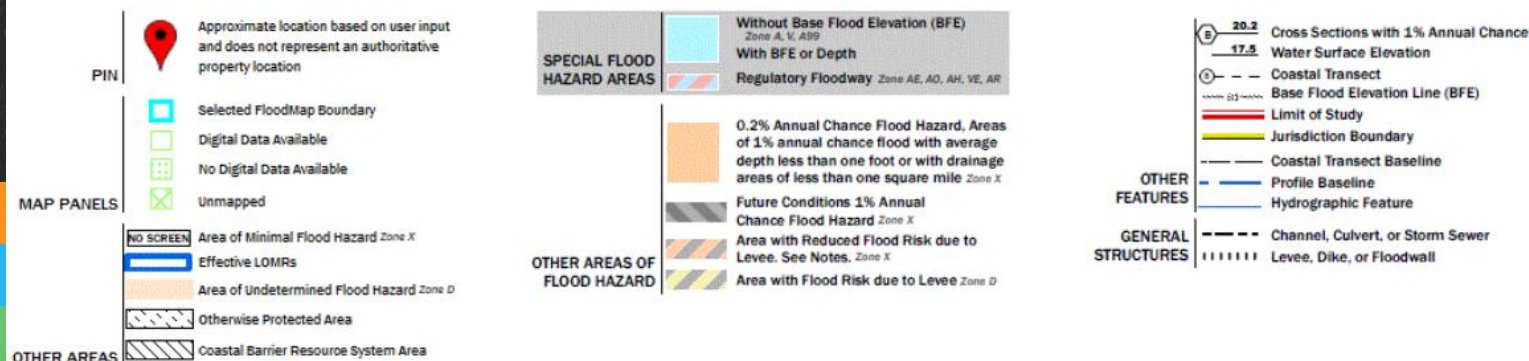
Interpretation: confusing to understand

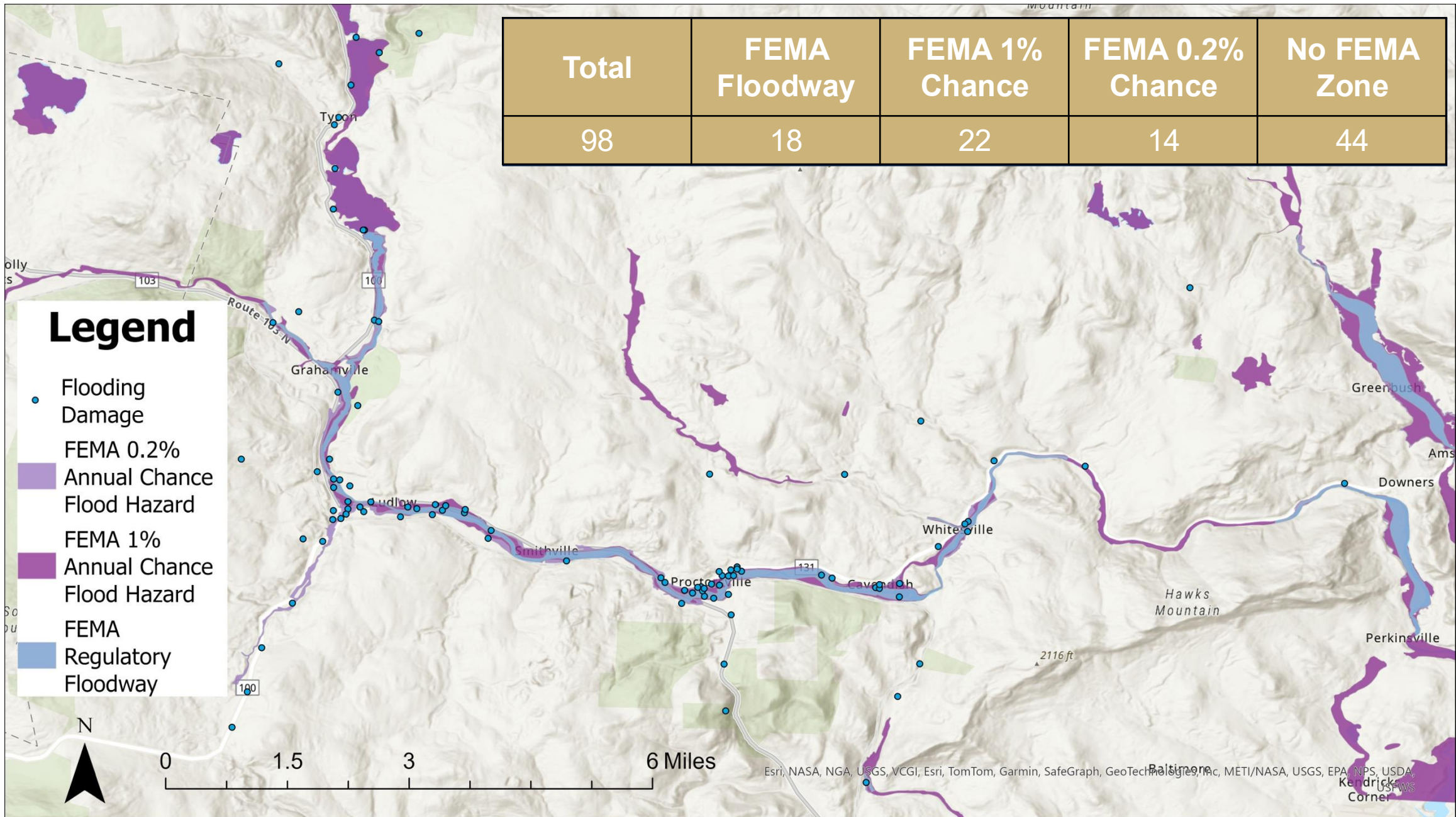
- Definitions and UI confusing, no help

Implementation: next steps unclear

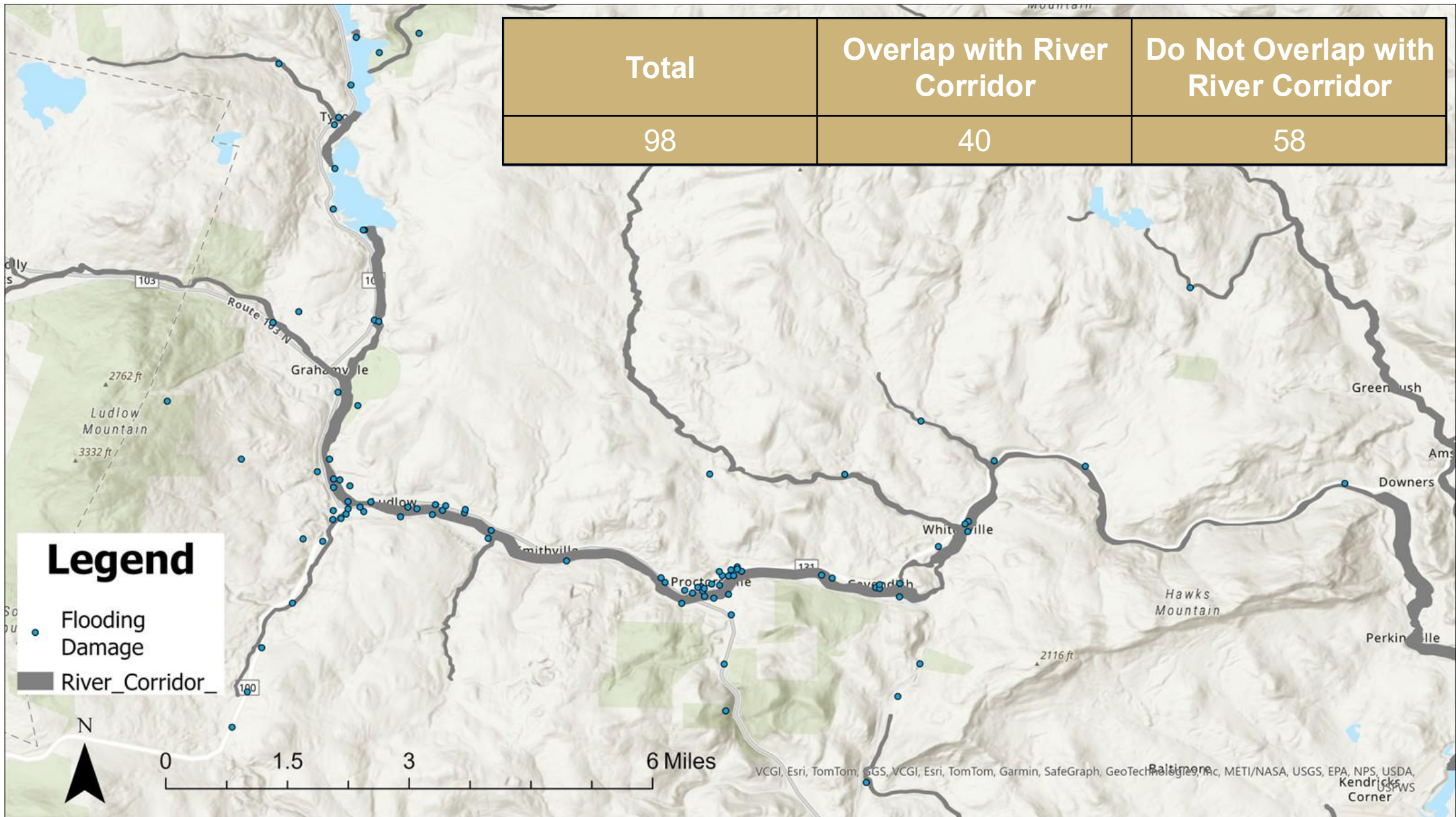
- Many uses, difficult to move

“I see where the river is, and I see what the floodway / riverway / flood hazard way are. But the terms are not particularly helpful, and I'm not always sure what the criteria are, or what the distinction between them [is].”





Flood Map Accuracy



Flood Map Accuracy

Wrap-Up

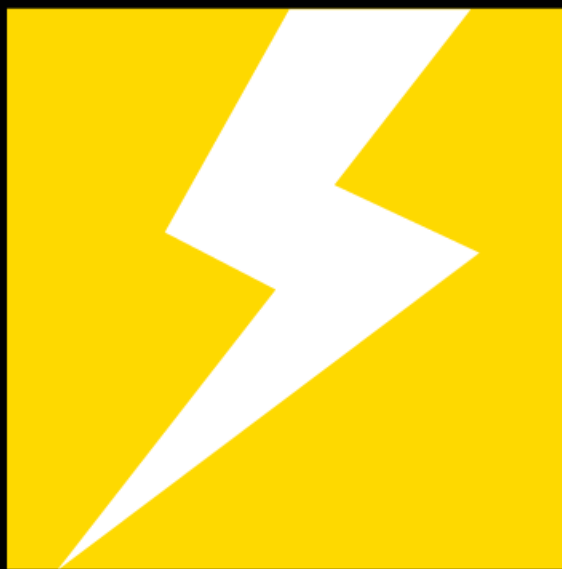
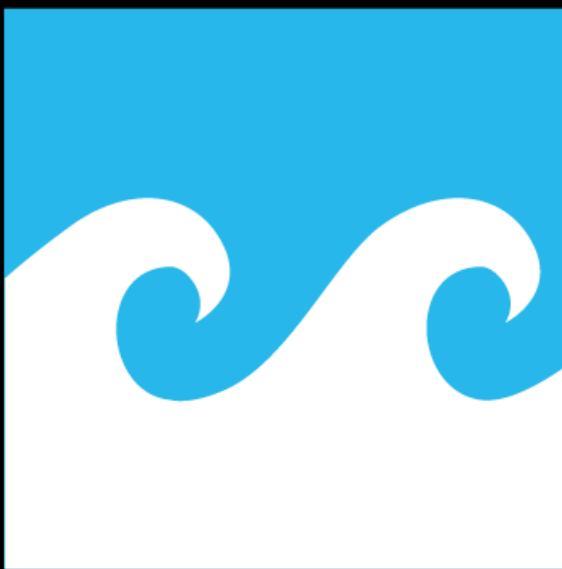
Major Theme

- Trust vs Distrust

Advancing Mitigation

- Understand how people use flood maps
- Understand pros and cons of various mapping strategies
- Prioritize usability as well as accuracy
- Consciously rebuilding trust





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