Be prepared and protect yourself from Flood Damage

Flooding does occur in Chatham County. Are you protected with a Flood Insurance Policy?

We have all heard on news programs or read in the newspapers about devastating flooding along the coast of New York and New Jersey, the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi River, in nearby Atlanta and Albany, Georgia, and several other cities and communities. There were skeptics living within those areas that at some point stated, “That kind of flooding can never happen here!” For those areas it did happen and it can happen in Chatham County.

An important fact to remember is that flooding is an act of God, but flood damages are caused by the acts of man. For generations, mankind has known about areas in and around where he lives that were subject to flooding. For various reasons over the years, established flooding patterns were ignored and development continued within hazardous flood prone areas. Establishing communities and subdivisions within these areas put countless lives and properties at risk. Chatham County institutes several programs aimed at reducing flood damages and the loss of life and property. Some of these programs include the Flood Mitigation Plan, Chatham County’s participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) program, and the County’s Drainage Maintenance Program. Each of these programs institute guidelines, guidance and operating standards to reduce flooding within the County.

Chatham County makes it possible for each homeowner and renter to obtain flood insurance by participating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Flood insurance policies issued within the unincorporated areas of Chatham County that are located within the High Flood Risk Zone or Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) can receive up to a 25 percent discount off their flood policy. Unincorporated Chatham County property owners residing outside the SFHA will receive a 10 percent discount off their flood policy. Content coverage is available for those who rent as well. Having a flood insurance policy is an excellent way of protecting your investment during a flood event whether you live in the SFHA or not. Knowing your flood risk and the flood history in your area makes you an informed and responsible homeowner. It is an excellent way to protect your life and the lives of your loved ones.

The High Flood Risk Zone, SFHA, is sometimes referred to as the 100-year floodplain and includes 3 types of flood zones, A, AE and VE zones. If your home is located within the SFHA, you have a Federally-backed mortgage (FHA or VA) or a Federally-backed home equity loan, a flood insurance policy is mandatory for you. Flood insurance is made available to homeowners and renters living outside the SFHA (areas typically referred to as Low Flood Risk Areas, X-zones and Moderate Flood Risk Areas, X-500 or X-rated flood zones). A flood insurance policy is highly encouraged for Chatham County area homeowners and renters because Chatham County is a coastal community which makes it highly susceptible to hurricanes and tidal storms. Another reason to consider having flood insurance is that although FEMA requires a flood insurance policy for property owners living within the High Flood Risk Zone or SFHA, the majority of flooding that occurs within Unincorporated Chatham County is mostly located outside the SFHA. Flood insurance is not required by FEMA for homes located within the Low Flood Risk Areas (Zone-X) and Moderate Flood Risk Areas (Zone-X,500 or X-rated), but it is highly recommended within both areas. Finally, FEMA offers assistance to all homeowners following Presidential Nationally declared disasters in the form of a Small Business Loan. These are low percentage loans offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) that must be repaid with interest for terms up to 30 years.

Residents of Unincorporated Chatham County should contact the Floodplain Administrator, Michael Blackey, CFP, with the Chatham County Department of Engineering. He is prepared to assist you with learning more about the above topics and to determine the best flood insurance for your property.
Chatham County Mosquito Control
Air Unit's Differing Services

Story/photos by Lyn Banks

If I mention Chatham County, Georgia, you might well ask, “Where’s that?” If I say Savannah, you most likely know the location. The coastal city is well known for its Southern charm and rich American history that draw tourists from all over the world—those who often go searching for Forrest Gump’s famous bench.

Savannah and surrounding Chatham County is a community on the water. Not only does the Savannah River run through the county, but the Atlantic Ocean abuts its eastern shore, while swamps and tidal estuaries abound. All this H2O creates a unique problem for the county, its visitors, and residents. It’s the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes—lots and lots of them.

As you will see, the team at Chatham County Mosquito Control (CCMC) takes its job of controlling that pesky population very seriously. I was surprised at how the science of insect control intersects with helicopter operations. Furthermore, CCMC’s diverse aviation operations go well beyond mosquitoes, as they serve county residents and tourists in many valuable and cost-effective ways.

Why Use Public Resources to Control Mosquitoes?

The answer to that question can be summed up in two words: Commerce and Disease. On the commerce side, over a million visitors per year vacation and do business in Savannah and its surrounding areas. Tourism generates big revenue. If the mosquito population is allowed to thrive, being a tourist in the area will probably not be much fun. Not only would all those flying insects make life annoyingly miserable, they could also endanger health. This brings to us that D-word—disease. Mosquitoes can transmit many viruses. Eastern Equine Encephalitis, West Nile virus, malaria, and the recent disease dengue chikungunya, are just a few of the illnesses they can carry. So protecting the public, livestock, and other animals is an important facet of CCMC’s mission.

How Do They Carry Out That Mission?

There are three broad tasks that CCMC engages in battling mosquitoes: Surveillance, Prevention, and Eradication. Believe it or not, helicopters are used for all these tasks, as three MD-500 helicopters, one Air Tractor airplane, three pilots, three mechanics, and a variety of specialized equipment all combine to do battle.

Surveillance

During the surveillance phase, first the geographic area is broken into approximately 300 target sites where mosquitoes are known to hatch. The sizes of these breeding sites range from relatively small to as large as 5,000 acres. All sites combined are well over a million acres. Still, they all have one thing in common—water. The water may come from various sources, including rainfall, dredging and tidal fluctuations, but where ever it comes from, the insects lay their eggs near it. Even mud makes for inviting mosquito moats. As the Savannah River is dredged to maintain shipping lanes, millions of yards of river-bottom muck is removed to large containment areas. As that mud dries and cracks, the water remaining in those cracks become a red-light breeding district for the fertile flies.

As the surveillance stage continues, the three MD helicopters fly personnel on reconnaissance missions to determine the size of the larvae populations. These agents scoop up water samples and manually count individual larvae. When a certain threshold is exceeded, a larvicide attack is ordered.

How many larvae are in a sample? Mosquito control also needs to know if the mature mosquitoes the larvae become are carrying disease. That’s when fixed-wing assets are called upon—helicopters. Yes, even helicopters valiantly serve in the mosquito wars. They don’t volunteer; they’re drafted, and then put in cages and transported to mosquito sites. There they are bitten. Next, blood samples are taken to determine if any disease is present.

Prevention

Mosquito prevention, or larviciding, occurs before the enemy can mature into flying adults and disperse. As with surveillance, helicopters play a vital role. Once a larvicide mission is ordered, a granular weapon is created using a Larviciding mixing plant to mix sand with a very specific quantity of liquid growth-inhibiting hormone that only impacts mosquitoes. Then the Sand Hog rig, a truck mobile larvicide mixing plant to mix sand with liquid growth-inhibiting hormone is allowed to thrive, being a tourist in the area will probably not be much fun. Not only would all those flying insects make life annoyingly miserable, they could also endanger health. This brings to us that D-word—disease. Mosquitoes can transmit many viruses. Eastern Equine Encephalitis, West Nile virus, malaria, and the recent disease dengue chikungunya, are just a few of the illnesses they can carry. So protecting the public, livestock, and other animals is an important facet of CCMC’s mission.

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As the surveillance stage continues, the three MD helicopters fly personnel on reconnaissance missions to determine the size of the larvae populations. These agents scoop up water samples and manually count individual larvae. When a certain threshold is exceeded, a larvicide attack is ordered. However, it’s not enough to merely know how many larvae are in a sample. Mosquito control also needs to know if the mature mosquitoes the larvae become are carrying disease. That’s when fixed-wing assets are called upon—helicopters. Yes, even helicopters valiantly serve in the mosquito wars. They don’t volunteer; they’re drafted, and then put in cages and transported to mosquito sites. There they are bitten. Next, blood samples are taken to determine if any disease is present.

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Mosquito prevention, or larviciding, occurs before the enemy can mature into flying adults and disperse. As with surveillance, helicopters play a vital role. Once a larvicide mission is ordered, a granular weapon is created using a Larviciding mixing plant to mix sand with a very specific quantity of liquid growth-inhibiting hormone that only impacts mosquitoes. Then the Sand Hog rig, a truck mobile larvicide unit staffed by mechanics in the aviation department, follows the helicopter to the battleground. There the larvicide is loaded close to the action, reducing ferry time, and saving flight time. The granular product is pumped into an Isolair 4500-50HE broadcaster mounted on the helicopter. Once airborne, the broadcaster rinses down a dose of death.

Eradication

The eradication side of mosquito control is known as adulticide, which is the good old-time method of killing flying mosquitoes with spray. Despite their best efforts, the CCMC knows they cannot prevent all larvae from maturing. So they proactively spray where there are complaints of high mosquito populations, including areas populated by humans. It’s somewhat shocking when we flew right over a Walmart shopping center while spraying adulticide, but if the goal is to keep people from being bitten, then you only need to spray where the people are. However, it’s not a surprise air raid—except for the mosquitoes. Prior to any scheduled adulticide spray mission, the CCMC provides a community notification 24 hours in advance. This gives those who may be impacted negatively by the spray application (for example, beekeepers) time to prepare.

Active adulticide spraying is preferred by helicopter to penetrate heavy tree canopy and be more precise (surgical), and is most always done at dusk when mosquitoes are most active. A spray system, which was custom designed by CCMC staff, is installed on the helicopter and the solution is loaded at the fungal base prior to flight. Once on location, an Ag-Nuav GPS precision guidance/ tracking system is used to provide the pilots with swath/ lane guidance, documentation to avoid flying overlapping lanes, and to use the minimum amount of adulticide needed (Minimum Label Rate).

The spray system operates at 1,000 pounds per square inch and pushes the adulticide out of the system through externally impinged PD2 mixing nozzles with .020-inch orifices. This unique design gives CCMC precisely sized drops for mosquito control, while at the same time reducing the impact to non-target organisms. The pilots typically fly at 100 to 110 knots air speed at 200 to 300 feet, using up to 1,000-foot lanes when spraying.

Mosquito control missions make up approximately 90 percent of the flying the unit does. It can be demanding and “at risk” work that often occurs in low altitude environments that put aircraft very near obstacles like towers, antennas, and even some structures. Doing it (or even after dusk) adds additional complexity to the job. Training and high levels of situational awareness are extremely important for safe operations.

More Than Mosquitoes

Savannah has many activities that put residents and tourists in or on water. For example, downtown Savannah has several water taxis, gambling boats, and dinner boats in action at all hours of the day and night. The river is tidal and there is almost always a steady 8-knot current moving in or out of the city.
A worst-case scenario for the community would be a large passenger boat sinking and putting many victims into the water at once. Fortunately for county residents and visitors, CCIC Chief Pilot Scott Yackel was not satisfied merely doing mosquito control. He believed the skill sets of the CCIC team, and its uniquely capable aircraft, could provide additional services. “Since mosquito control activities occur during specific windows of time, there are other times during the day and night when we could be available for other missions, such as search and rescue, law enforcement, and firefighting,” said Yackel.

We Rotorcraft Pro was on location for this story, CCIC underwent a joint training exercise with the Georgia Search and Rescue Swell Water Rescue (GSRAR) Team, made up of personnel from fire rescue departments from the surrounding region. So CCIC has become part of the emergency action plan designed to handle situations like a capsizing ship.

WATER RESCUE
During such a sinking ship scenario, the objective is to rapidly deploy rescuers, retrieve survivors, and get the victims into the water to assist victims until they can be pulled up by helicopter or rescue boats. With training and practice, dozens of rescuers can be deployed in a matter of minutes, and victims can be pulled from the water shortly thereafter. Rescuers first assemble on the beach in面具, fins, and with personal flotation devices. Four swimmers at a time are then picked up by helicopter. They position themselves on externally mounted SWAT seats while the helicopter flies to the victims. The swimmers then deploy from the helicopter that hovers 10 to 15 feet above water.

Once all rescue swimmers are in the water and assisting victims, the helicopter returns to the beach, where a tactical flight officer installs on the aircraft a bellyband, and then into the helicopter. Based on my 25 years of experience, I think the Chatham County Airborne Service Unit, with the key word being “Service,” although Yackel understands his unit’s primary mission is mosquito control, that’s not how he closes our interview. “The goal of our operation is to serve our citizens, whether it be mosquito control, search and rescue, firefighting, or law enforcement. Our citizens are the ones we want to protect.” It’s his hope that when a resident looks up and sees CCIC’s bright yellow helicopters overhead, he feels like they are getting their money’s worth in the form of service. The County will continue to fund the CCIC. I can attest that they are.

Chairman’s Message continued from p. 1

of cleanup. Through their expert management of the Federal grants process, the County will be able to recover nearly $19.7 million of the estimated $24.5 million used to clean up the public and private roads. We expect the Federal dollars to begin flowing to us in the next 30 days so that we can replenish critical funds our Commission has identified prior to and following Hurricane Matthew.

The Chatham County Re-Source Conservation Education Center provides environmental educational opportunities, community driven eco-conscious visual art, and a convenient place for drop-off recycling. We offer educational tours to schools, clubs, and organizations from around the county.

Customer satisfaction is a priority. This fall we offer a streamlined drop-off recycling process. Bring your recyclables to our experienced, knowledgeable and caring staff!

Hours of Operation: Tuesday-Saturday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

ITEMS WE RECYCLE:
• Cardboard
• Newspaper
• Magazines
• Office Paper
• Magazines
• Used Ink & Toner Cartridges
• Reach Better Batteries
• Old C’s
• Used & Toner Cartridges
• Electronic Waste (E-waste)
• Mobile phones
• Plastic shopping bags

Artists that work with reclaimed, recycled or up-cycled material are encouraged to display their art pieces in our gallery, Gallery F-A-R. We also have an education room that offers space for drop-off recycling. We offer educational opportunities, community gatherings, or workshops.
Donald Gates struggled to find a job because of his criminal background. As a husband and father, the weight of providing for his family grew heavier by the day. When he heard that the Chatham Apprenticeship Program (CAP) was offering a class coupled with a forklift safety-certification, he jumped at the chance to participate. Donald thought a certification would make him more appealing to employers, so he filled out an application and attended the class. At CAP, Donald learned new skills such as resume writing and interview techniques. He found the record restriction portion of the class, provided by Georgia Legal Services Program, especially beneficial. Now he better understands his criminal record and can confidently explain his past to potential employers.

“...and confidence,” says Donald, “is the best thing I gained from the program.” Honestly, before CAP I struggled to present myself as a responsible and respectable person. Now I feel proud of who I am.”

After graduation, Donald secured a job at a local warehouse at $10.00 an hour. However, he felt he could do more. So he started his own business, Gates Lawn Care. It wasn’t long before he could focus on his business full-time and claim a significant portion of the success to CAP.

“With the help of CAP I am now aware of how a potential employer sees me. I am better equipped to answer questions and approach people with confidence. Now I see those skills when I’m hanging out my business cards or flyers. I can knock on a door and sell myself. Today, Donald proudly says, “I feel like I’m setting a good example for my kids. Now they see that I am able to make my own way and that I will turn around and give others the opportunities that I didn’t have.”

An Innovative Program The Chatham Apprentice Program is constantly evolving. CAP continues to improve the important four week employability-skills training program called, “E3: Educate, Empower, Employ” by increasing the number of employers and social service partners which allows CAP to bring a holistic approach to workforce development. In an effort to raise the starting wage of CAP graduates, the program began coupling the E3 program with hard-skills training. Last year, CAP supported 39 participants in obtaining their forklift safety certification and 24 individuals received a Transportation Workers Workforce Credential Card. Build upon this success, CAP is implementing additional hard-skills trainings in 2017. Most notably is the new jockey truck operator safety certification in partnership with Savannah Technical College. This program was selected because of the high demand for operators in the ports as well as the average starting hourly wage of $14. Twenty individuals will graduate from this program in February positioned within family-supporting wages quickly.

The Chatham Apprentice Program, managed by Step Up Savannah, is funded by Chatham County with support from the United Way of the Coastal Empire. Services are open to all residents of Chatham County who are 18 and older. Please call (912) 401-0672 for more information.

CHATHAM APPRENTICE PROGRAM’S 2017 SCHEDULE

Location | Class Start Date | Class End Date
--- | --- | ---
Department of Labor | March 6 |
Moses Jackson Community Center | April 24 | May 18
Department of Labor | August 7 |
Moses Jackson Community Center | September 25 |
Moses Jackson Community Center | November 13 |

Donald Gates started his own business, Gates Lawn Care. It wasn’t long before he would focus on his business full-time and Donald credits the success to CAP.

MAKE YOUR 2017 RESOLUTION TO CREATE OPPORTUNITY IN SAVANNAH

Our vision: Savannah is a community where all people have hope and opportunity, where we challenge injustice, and where all community members Step Up to reduce poverty.

Will you step up today?

We ask each and every partner, every business, every faith community, and every individual to do their best in reducing poverty.

Visit stepupsavannah.org/createopportanity

Flooding continued from p. 1

term your flood risk and flood history. He and other staff mem-
bers can assist property owners by making site visits to address drainage and flooding issues they may be experiencing on their property. He also has a variety of pamphlets, brochures and booklets printed by the Chatham County Department of Engineering and FEMA covering various topics from Homeowner’s Guide to Retiming to “The Benefits of Flood Insurance Versus Disaster Assistance.” The site visits previously mentioned and the copies of the flood documents are available to the general public free of charge.

He can be reached at (912) 652-7814 or via email at mblakely@chathamcounty.org.

Flood determination

determination letters and elevation certificates are required by insurance companies in order to accept flood insurance policies. Flood zone determinations are generated either by a Georgia Registered Land Surveyors or a Georgia Professional Engineer during construction of the house/structure or on an existing house/structure. For new construction, the Surveyor or Engineer submits the elevation certificate to Chatham County Building Safety and Regulatory Services to have the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) released so that the house/structure can be occupied. The elevation certificate is then submitted to the Chatham County Department of Engineering for archiving. Unfortunately, we do not have elevation certificates for all structures located within Unincorporated Chatham County. The elevation certificates that we have on file and the flood deter-

inition letters are available to the general public at no cost. Requests for eli-

denmination certificates can also be mailed in writing to floodletters@chathamcounty.org, via the web or faxed to (912) 652-7818. Please include the property mailing address and the Property Identification Number (PIN), if possible. Requests can also be made via the United States Postal Service (USPS) to Flood Request.

P.O. Box 8161, 121 Bull Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401, or hand delivered to the Old Courthouse located at 124 Bull Street, Suite 340, Savannah, Georgia 31401. We request a turnaround maximum of around 2 weeks, how-

ever, in most cases we can supply you with the requested docu-
ments within a few days. Remember, only flood insurance can protect your property from flood waters (ris-

ing waters!!!)

Little League baseball begins registration

The New Year is upon us and Little League baseball hosted by Chatham County Parks and Recreation is beginning registration again for spring/summer season. The registration deadline is March 30; however, there are some divisions for children to participate in: Tee Ball is December 1 through April 7; T-ball ages 5-7, Minor League ages 9-11, and Majors is ages 9-12. In order for your child to participate, a copy of your child’s birth certificate and three United States Postal Service Provided by the Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department for supporting school enrollment. Registration can be paid online through the website of Little League International.

Practices start the first week of March and the season runs through the end of May. We also have three all-

ight games per year group, that will begin practice in June and play through July. Last year our 7-8 year old team played in the district tournament at Warner Robins while the 9-10 and 11-12 year olds competed against other All Star Teams at the State level! Chatham County Parks and Recreation strive to take the teams even further this year by being represented at the Little League World Series on August 16.

The great benefit of Little League is that it allows you to participate for just $5 and always promotes playing on a team. Registration deadline is March 2, 2017.

For more information contact Carmen Chastain at (912) 462-8782 or by email at mblakely@chathamcounty.org.

Building Confidence and Changing Lives

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The new forklift safety training class was delivered by Savannah Technical College, coupled with safety training and certification in addition to CAP’s employability training. Over 40 percent of hard-skill trainees were placed in jobs with an average pay rate of $10.00 an hour.

Flood Zone Determinations

The site visits previously mentioned and the copies of the flood documents are available to the general public free of charge.

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filtrations continue from p. 1