

## Generation Next: Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers

Many Wild & Scenic Rivers are located on federally owned lands—for instance, rivers that flow through national parks. But there is a new model emerging for rivers that travel along privately-owned land: [Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers](#). This collaborative approach is vital, says NPS staffer [Joan Harn](#), because "We can't protect these rivers on our own—not even the ones that are exclusively in parks—because the watershed often extends well beyond our boundaries." It takes community effort and awareness to safeguard these resources.

The Lamprey River in coastal New Hampshire, is a good example of the Partnership Wild & Scenic model. Celebrating 12 years of stewardship since federal designation, the Lamprey River Advisory Committee has helped conserve more than 1800 acres in the 26-mile river corridor, which support wildlife, protect clean, and maintain scenic and rural character. In 2008, the Committee published a river tour brochure about the river's special places. With its sister organization, the Lamprey River Watershed Association, the Committee embarked on an invasive species project and became a leader in eradicating Japanese knotweed. "2008 was also a banner year for land conservation with conservation easements placed on 5 parcels totaling 420 acres and almost a mile of riverfront," says [Julie Isbill](#), NPS liaison to the Committee.

The first step in becoming a Partnership Wild & Scenic River is conducting a study, in partnership with the National Park Service, to determine what is special about your river. A bill must be passed authorizing the National Park Service to conduct a study. The process takes 2-3 years and is funded by the federal government (there is no local match required, except time). Initiating a study evolves through grassroots organizing in the river communities, and usually culminates in a written request for a study from local officials to your members of Congress. After the study is completed, the study committee and communities will make a determination about seeking Partnership Wild & Scenic River designation.

### Catalysts

To learn more about the history of Wild & Scenic Rivers, check out the [National Parks Conservation Association's](#) recent [article](#). For river-related funding or grants, search our [NPS grants database](#). For research on the economic benefits of river protection, see our [NPS annotated bibliography](#).

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Submit your own items or suggestions for future topics to column editor Rebecca Quinn, CFM, at [rcquinn@earthlink.net](mailto:rcquinn@earthlink.net). Comments welcomed!

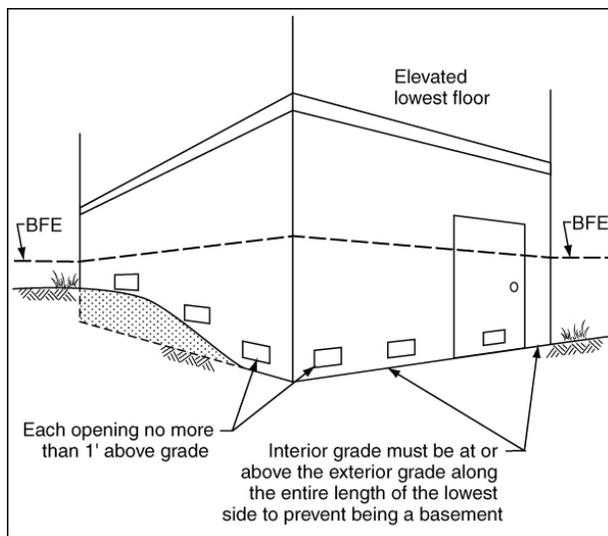
### Here's Something You Might Find Interesting . . .

Recently, I've fielded some questions about building on sloping sites – questions about how to satisfy the floodplain management requirements for enclosures below elevated buildings that are constructed on sloping sites. Let me say up front that some people think that complying with the requirement for flood openings in this situation is “impossible” or “not practical.” That makes me wonder – how have they been handling sloping sites for the past 40 years?

I'm not saying anyone actually said it, but those reactions suggest that there might be a sentiment that if it is difficult to comply, then the requirements should be waived, or at least bent to be more accommodating. Of course, that's not the right response. Haven't we all see situations where a site isn't compatible with the owner's desires?

Bending rules, waiving requirements – or granting variances – for sloping sites clearly are not good answers because there are other ways to elevate buildings. If a sloping site makes it difficult to use a crawlspace, then the right answer, the easy answer, is use a different type of foundation that doesn't involve enclosures (e.g., slab-on-grade on fill, pilings or columns).

The figure to the right is copied from the recently revised Technical Bulletin, TB-1, *Openings in Foundation Walls and Walls of Enclosures Below Elevated Buildings in Special Flood Hazard Areas* (see link below and the announcement in the September issue of News & Views). While it shows a full-height enclosure, the situation could easily be illustrated by showing a typical crawlspace built into the sloping site, in which case the interior grade may more or less follow the original slope of the land.



These three questions have come my way in recent weeks.

**Why does the interior grade have to be at or above the exterior grade along the entire length of the lowest side?**

Let's start with the basics. The NFIP regulations define a basement to be "any area of the building having its floor subgrade (below ground level) on all sides." In the sloping site scenario shown, if the exterior grade was at/above the interior grade along only part of the lower side – how much must be "at/above grade" to avoid being a basement? Suppose the final grading pushes some dirt against the foundation such that it wraps around on both sides and only half the length of the side was "at/above grade"? Would that be enough? Suppose only 12 inches of the lower side was "at/above grade"? How about 6 inches? To avoid those judgments, the only logical answer is that the interior grade of the crawlspace or the elevation of the interior slab must be at or above the exterior grade across the entire length of the lower side.

**Won't it be too difficult to get enough openings in the foundation wall (or enough net open area) to meet the prescriptive requirement (1 sq in per sq ft enclosed area)?**

What makes it difficult? As shown, openings can be all around the perimeter as long as they're with 12 inches of grade and also below the BFE (see TB-1 for the obvious explanation as to why flood openings must be below the BFE). I can see that it might be more difficult to fit in enough openings if the base flood depth isn't as deep as shown. In those cases, see the easy answer (elevate the building using a method that doesn't create a crawlspace or an enclosure).

**The flood openings will allow the enclosure to fill up as floodwaters rise and drain as floodwaters recede. If the soil becomes saturated, won't hydrostatic pressure against the wall cause them to buckle inward as floodwaters recede?**

Other than the easy answer, there's no generic way to reply to this question because the answer can vary with the nature of the surrounding soil and the way foundation drainage is provided. Architects, engineers, builders and local officials deal with whole buildings that have to be designed and built to satisfy a host of requirements, not just the flood requirements. Local officials have the authority to require foundations to be designed if there are special conditions that may

not be accounted for in prescriptive designs. I looked to the *International Residential Code* for more detail. Section R401.2 states that "[f]ill soils that support footings and foundations shall be designed, installed and tested in accordance with accepted engineering practice." In addition, foundation walls are required to be designed per Chapter 4, which has content related to surface drainage, soil tests, etc. Specifically, R404.1.3 requires design of concrete or masonry foundation walls in accordance with accepted engineered practice when either "Walls are subject to hydrostatic pressure from groundwater" or "(2) Walls supporting more than 48 inches of unbalanced backfill that do not have permanent lateral support at the top or bottom." Thus, the local official can require applicants to demonstrate that the fill soils are adequately compacted and the foundation walls are designed for anticipated site conditions, in this case the anticipated flooding and saturation.

Download the revised TB-1 from <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1579>.

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## Washington Legislative Report

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### Some Knowns; Lots of Unknowns

Now that the elections have finally happened, we know that our next President will be Barack Obama. We know that the Senate Democrats will have a stronger majority, although not the magic 60 members to control floor activity. We know the House Democratic majority has gained at least 20 seats, with a few elections yet to be called. We can surmise that these results will produce new directions in activity on climate change, environmental issues, energy issues and others.

We don't know, however, who will lead the executive branch departments and agencies and who will be appointed to the several thousand jobs to be filled by political appointment. We also don't know who will be the Chairs and Ranking Minority Members of several key Congressional committees. The players in all of these roles can have a significant influence over the nature and direction of policy and programs. Over the next several weeks, some of this will become clearer, but Congressional assignments will not be finalized until January. Political appointments will continue to be made well into the spring and summer. We know that President-Elect Obama and the Democratic leadership of the House and Senate favor passage of a second economic stimulus package which would include significant emphasis on investment in infrastructure. We don't know whether that will take place during a Lame Duck Session beginning the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>. Ongoing negotiations between the Congress and the current Administration will determine the feasibility of securing President Bush's signature on another economic stimulus package.

### Transition

Both of the Presidential campaigns quietly had transition activities in place for some time, although more is now becoming known about the Obama transition work. Obama's transition team has analyzed the structure and operation of the federal departments and agencies as well as their current policies. They have compiled lists of positions that will need to be filled as well as some possible candidates for positions. All this was going on very much behind the scenes.

The President-Elect formally announced his Transition Team and its leadership the day after the election. It is now called the Obama-Biden Transition Project and is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization headed by John Podesta, Valerie Jarrett and Pete Rouse. The team will be making recommendations for policy and