Questions and Answers from the October 25th CTP Webinar: Identifying and Preserving High-Water Mark Data

No data on the Gulf Coast?

When going to the Flood Event Viewer the user is asked to select an event. The slider bar on the right allows the user to scroll down to see the full list of events available for selection. There are a number of Gulf Coast events on the list including hurricane Wilma (2005), hurricanes Gustav and Ike (2008) in addition to the inland Louisiana March and August 2016 floods.

What was the link to the data?

USGS HWM field guide: https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/tm3A24
USGS Flood Event Viewer: http://water.usgs.gov/floods/FEV/
USGS Floods website: http://water.usgs.gov/floods/
USGS Indirect measurements website: http://water.usgs.gov/floods/resources/iqm/

What vertical datum do you usually use?

NAVD88 is pretty common. NGVD29 is occasionally used. The Flood Event Viewer will specify which datum was used to survey each point.

In coastal areas where waves are involved in a flooding event, are the heights of the still water and the waves documented?

It depends on the type of sensors that are deployed or the sampling time that they are configured to record. For Hurricane Matthew, we deployed wave height sensors collecting sub-second samples as well as storm tide sensors collecting at a lower frequency.

Do you read HWM in open coastal areas?

Yes. For example, we collect HWM to verify peaks on coastal storm surge sensors and then sometimes at spaces between the sensors along the coastline to check continuity along the coast between sensors.

Cost of the crest gages?

They range from $12k to $30k and average $16k annually. Crest-stage gages typically cost less than 25% of the real-time cost. Costs vary depending on needs, network size, and location, so you should check with your local USGS Water Science Center.

If you observe a HWM with a date on a farm barn, is an analyst required to certify?

We would certainly encourage verification of historic recorded marks whenever possible. It is important to us and to our users that we record as much information about those marks as we can find, including the source, uncertainty, and corroborating evidence (or notes about the lack of evidence) so that the user of the data can make educated decisions about how to use them. We have not yet specified the types and amount of data that we will *require* for data in the Flood Event Viewer that is furnished by non-USGS sources, but you can be sure that any requirements will include elements characterizing the uncertainty of the data.