

Digital Coast How To

How to Map Open Space for Community Rating System Credit

Steps: 7

- 5 Determine whether preserved open space parcels qualify for "extra credit"
- 6 Gather supporting documentation for each parcel or area
- 7 Identify opportunities to earn more open space credit



Communities can take steps to lessen flood risk and lower flood insurance rates by participating and earning credit in FEMA's Community Rating System under the National Flood Insurance Program. Preserving open space is one way to get credit. This step-by-step process describes how to calculate open space credits for existing preserved lands and areas that may be considered for future protection.

This "how-to" links to a companion [GIS Workflow and Mapping Guide](#) that describes the data and information needed to perform each step. Links to other helpful resources are also provided. These resources do not address open space credit for areas protected through open space incentives, low-density zoning, or natural shoreline protection programs, which may also qualify for credit under Activity 420 (open space preservation).

Before you get started

[Checklist of Information Sources](#)

1 Calculate the Community's Special Flood Hazard Area

The area of the community's special flood hazard area is a key piece of information needed to calculate most open space credits. This area is also known as the "100-year floodplain," which FEMA maps on the community's flood insurance rate map, or FIRM. While the focus of this "how-to" is on the special flood hazard area, the community may adopt a floodplain outside this area, where it enforces development regulations similar to those for new development within the special flood hazard area. If seeking credit for open space in coastal erosion areas or special flood-related hazard areas, communities may need additional mapping to calculate credit for those areas.

- ▼ a. Calculate the acreage of the special flood hazard area (SFHA) shown on the community's flood insurance rate map, as mapped by FEMA.

Caption:

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