

(The following is taken from the Flood insurance Study for Kent, County Delaware and Incorporated areas, dated July 7,2014)

Community Description

Kent County is the middle county of three counties in the State of Delaware. The county is ordered on the north by New Castle County, on the south by Sussex County, on the east by Delaware Bay, and on the west by the State of Maryland. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Kent County was estimated to be 164,834 in 2011 (US. Census Bureau, 2011).

The temperature range is moderate, varying from an average low of 27 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in February to an average high of 89°F in July. Due to the relatively small size of the county, 594 square miles, and the flat topography, the weather conditions are uniform throughout the county. The average annual rainfall is 46 inches. Because this is a coastal state, the largest storms will be hurricanes and, therefore, much of the flooding that would occur will result from the accompanying high tides.

Kent County is part of the geological subdivision known as the Atlantic Coastal Plain Province. This is a formation of layered rock beds sloping gradually toward the Atlantic Ocean, arranged like a shingled roof. The entire formation is completely covered by a layer of ice-age sand and gravel residue. This covering provides a good to very good soil condition for vegetal growth. Consequently, much of the county is cultivated, productive farmland. Most of the remainder of the county is natural forest or wetland.

The topography of Kent County is basically flat, with elevations ranging from 0 foot mean sea level to a high of about 80 feet mean sea level. This low profile, coupled with poorly drained soils, produces a great deal of wetland, especially on the Bay Coast.

Principal Flood Problems

There are two primary areas of flooding in Kent County. The first is the Bay Shore Area and the second is the western half of the county. The Bay Shore Area is frequently subject to flooding due to high tides. However, monetary damage is usually minimal because most flooding occurs on the beaches and wetland, where there is little or no urban development. Some damage does occur due to the backwater effect of these high tides on the bay estuaries. Smyrna and Dover are subject to tidal effects.

The western half of the county is a very flat, poorly drained area and, consequently, is frequently subjected to temporary ponding of storm water. The damage resulting from this ponding is usually limited to crop damage, because the area is primarily rural with very little urban development.

The two most severe types of storms experienced in the tidal areas of Kent County include hurricanes and nor'easters. While sketchy accounts exist for storms that occurred before 1923, records for the 1923-1977 era are more complete.