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Special Flood Hazard  
Evaluation Report.

# Pleasant Creek

Village of Evans Mills,  
Jefferson County, New York

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Prepared  
for the New York State  
Department of Environmental Conservation



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Buffalo District

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The area was thought to have low development potential at the time the maps were prepared. The area now, however, is experiencing residential development pressure resulting from the expansion of the nearby Fort Drum military complex and more detailed flood plain information is required by local officials to manage this development.

*Keywords:*

(12/1/77)

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION REPORT  
PLEASANT CREEK  
VILLAGE OF EVANS MILLS  
JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
PRINCIPAL FLOOD PROBLEMS	2
Flood Magnitudes and Their Frequencies	2
Hazards and Damages of Large Floods	2
HYDROLOGIC ANALYSES	3
HYDRAULIC ANALYSES	3
UNIFIED FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT	4
Modify Susceptibility to Flood Damage and Disruption	7
a. Flood Plain Regulations	7
b. Development Zones	8
c. Formulation of Flood Plain Regulations	8
Modify Flooding	10
Modify the Impact of Flooding on Individuals and the Community	10
CONCLUSION	10
GLOSSARY	11
REFERENCES	13



TABLES

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Summary of Discharges	3
2	Floodway Data	5
3	Elevation Reference Marks	6

<p>ACQUISITION NED. CR.</p>	✓	
A-1		

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd)

FIGURES

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Floodway Schematic	9

PLATES

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	100-Year Flood Profile, Pleasant Creek
2	Flooded Area Map, Pleasant Creek

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION REPORT  
PLEASANT CREEK  
VILLAGE OF EVANS MILLS  
JEFFERSON COUNTY, NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION

This Special Flood Hazard Evaluation Report documents the results of an investigation to determine the potential flood situation along Pleasant Creek within the village of Evans Mills, New York. The study was conducted at the request of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation under the authority of Section 206 of the 1960 Flood Control Act, as amended. The study reach extends along Pleasant Creek from North Main Street upstream to the village limit, a distance of about 2,300 feet.

The village of Evans Mills is located in northern New York State, about 10 miles north of Watertown and 85 miles north of Syracuse. It is within the town of LeRay, in Jefferson County. The climate is characterized by long, cold winters and short, cool summers. Average annual snowfall measures 92.7 inches, and average precipitation is 38 inches (Reference 1). Most of Jefferson County is rural, undeveloped, and agriculturally oriented.

Pleasant Creek is a small, ungaged stream with a total drainage area of 20.1 square miles. The topography of the stream basin is generally hilly, with Evans Mills situated in a valley. Surface elevations range from about 600 feet to 405 feet at the mouth of the creek. Within the study area, the creek drops about 22 feet; most of the drop occurs at the North Main Street bridge. The mouth of the creek is located in Evans Mills, where it flows into West Creek. West Creek then flows in a northerly direction to the Indian River.

Knowledge of potential floods and flood hazards is important in land use planning. This report identifies the 100-year flood plain and floodway for Pleasant Creek. In addition, the impact of a proposed 80-acre residential development has also been analyzed.

Information developed by the Pleasant Creek study will be used by local officials to manage future flood plain development. While the report does not provide solutions to flood problems, it does furnish a suitable basis for the adoption of land use controls to guide flood plain development, thereby preventing intensification of the flood loss problem. It will also aid in the development of other flood damage reduction techniques to modify flooding and reduce flood damages which might be embodied in an overall Flood Plain Management (FPM) program. Other types of studies, such as those of environmental attributes and the current and future land use roles of the flood plain as part of its surroundings, would also profit from this information.

Although Flood Insurance Rate Maps have been developed for the community, approximate analyses were used to delineate an approximate flood plain along Pleasant Creek. The area was thought to have low development potential at the time the maps were prepared. The area now, however, is experiencing residential development pressure resulting from the expansion of the nearby Fort Drum

military complex and more detailed flood plain information is required by local officials to manage this development.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation until its supply is exhausted, and the National Technical Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Virginia 22161, at the cost of reproducing the report. The Buffalo District Corps of Engineers will provide technical assistance and guidance to planning agencies in the interpretation and use of the data.

#### PRINCIPAL FLOOD PROBLEMS

The greatest potential and frequency for floods within the study area occurs in the early spring when rain combines with snowmelt. Although cool, early spring temperatures are conducive to a slower rate of snow melt, spring floods do occur most years. However, as the stream is ungaged, there are no stream flow records and no accurate record of floods in Evans Mills.

Because of the large accumulation of snow that falls annually, spring flooding can be expected to occur in the future. Development in the upstream portion of the watershed may also contribute to the potential for flooding.

#### Flood Magnitudes and Their Frequencies

Floods are classified on the basis of their frequency or recurrence interval. A 100-year flood is an event with a magnitude that can be expected to be equaled or exceeded once on the average during any 100-year period. It has a 1.0 percent chance of occurring in any given year. It is important to note that, while on a long-term basis the exceedence averages out to once per 100 years, floods of this magnitude can occur in any given year or even in consecutive years and within any given time interval. For example, there is a greater than 50 percent probability that a 100-year event will occur during a 70-year lifetime. Additionally, a house which is built within the 100-year flood level has about a one-in-four chance of being flooded in a 30-year mortgage life.

#### Hazards and Damages of Large Floods

The extent of damage caused by any flood depends on the topography of the flooded area, the depth and duration of flooding, the velocity of flow, the rate of rise in water surface elevation, and development of the flood plain. Deep water flowing at a high velocity and carrying floating debris would create conditions hazardous to persons and vehicles which attempt to cross the flood plain. Generally, water 3 or more feet deep which flows at a velocity of 3 or more feet per second could easily sweep an adult off his feet and create definite danger of injury or drowning. As indicated in Table 2, flow velocities of Pleasant Creek for the 100-year flood exceed 3 feet per second within the village of Evans Mills. Rapidly rising and swiftly flowing floodwater may trap persons in homes that are ultimately destroyed or in vehicles that are ultimately submerged or floated. Since water lines can be ruptured by deposits of debris and by the force of flood waters, there is the possibility of contaminated domestic water supplies. Damaged sanitary sewer lines and sewage treatment plants could result in the pollution of floodwaters and could

create health hazards. Isolation of areas by floodwater could create hazards in terms of medical, fire, or law enforcement emergencies.

#### HYDROLOGIC ANALYSES

Hydrologic analyses were carried out to establish the 100-year peak discharge for Pleasant Creek in the village of Evans Mills at two locations - at its confluence with West Creek and at the upstream village limit. The discharge-frequency relationship was calculated using the most recent Statewide U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) regional regression equation contained in USGS publication WRI 79-83 (Reference 2). The regional regression equation for the 100-year peak discharge is:

$$864 A^{.759} (S_t + 10)^{-1.27} (P-20)^{.670}$$

where:

- A = drainage area of the basin
- S<sub>t</sub> = Storage in percent (0.3)
- P = Mean annual precipitation in inches (38)

Drainage areas were determined by field inspection of the watershed in conjunction with USGS 7.5 and 15-minute topographic maps (Reference 3). The values for the drainage area and the 100-year peak discharge for each location are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Summary of Discharges

Location	Drainage Area (sq. mi.)	100-Year Peak Discharge (cfs)
Pleasant Creek at confluence with West Creek	20.1	3,020
Pleasant Creek at Evans Mills corporate boundary	19.8	2,990

An analysis was also conducted to determine the effect of a proposed upstream 80-acre residential development (Pleasant Creek Meadows - Phase I) on the 100-year peak discharge at each location. The analysis determined that the increased runoff from this proposed development would reach Evans Mills prior to the peak discharge from the remainder of the watershed. Thus, the proposed development would not increase the 100-year peak discharge of Pleasant Creek within the village of Evans Mills.

#### HYDRAULIC ANALYSES

Analyses of the hydraulic characteristics of flooding from the source studied were carried out to provide estimates of the elevations of floods of the 100-year recurrence interval.



Cross section data for the backwater analysis was obtained from field surveys and USGS topographic maps. All bridges were surveyed to obtain elevation data and structural geometry.

Locations of selected cross sections used in the hydraulic analyses are shown on the Flood Profile and the Flooded Area Map where applicable.

Water surface elevations of the 100-year recurrence interval flood were computed using the COE HEC-2 step-backwater computer program (Reference 4). The channel at the North Main Street crossing consists of a series of three significant vertical drops of 12.5 feet, 4.8 feet, and 2.4 feet creating a waterfall at the old Evans Mills site. At each of these drops, critical depth computations were used to compute the water surface profile.

Channel and overbank roughness factors (Manning's "n") used in the hydraulic computations were chosen by engineering judgement and were based on field observations of the streams and flood plain areas. The "n" values for the channel ranged from .025 to .045 and for the overbank, from .04 to .10.

The computed 100-year water surface profile for Pleasant Creek is shown on Plate 1. The flood plain boundaries are shown on Plate 2. These boundaries were delineated using the flood elevations determined at each cross section. Between cross sections, the boundaries were interpolated using USGS topographic maps and spot elevations obtained during the field surveys. Small areas within the flood plain boundaries may be above the flood elevations, but cannot be shown due to limitations of the map scale and/or lack of detailed topographic data.

An encroachment floodway was also determined for Pleasant Creek based on equal conveyance reduction from each side of the flood plain. As per the New York State standard, the maximum increase in stage was limited to 1 foot, provided that hazardous velocities were not produced. Floodway widths were computed at cross sections and varied from 45 to 195 feet. Between cross sections, the floodway boundaries were interpolated. The results of the floodway computations are tabulated for selected cross sections and are shown in Table 2 - Floodway Data. The computed floodway is also shown on the Flooded Area Map, Plate 2. In cases where the floodway and the 100-year flood plain boundaries are either close together or collinear, only the floodway boundary is shown.

The hydraulic analyses for this study were based on unobstructed flow. The flood elevations shown on the profile are thus considered valid only if hydraulic structures remain unobstructed, operate properly, and do not fail.

All elevations are referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) of 1929. Elevation reference marks used in this study are shown on Plate 2; the description of the marks are presented in Table 3 - Elevation Reference Marks.

#### UNIFIED FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT

Historically, the alleviation of flood damage has been accomplished almost exclusively by the construction of protective works such as reservoirs, channel improvements, and floodwalls and levees. However, in spite of the billions of dollars that have already been spent for construction of well-designed and

FLOODING SOURCE		FLOODWAY			BASE FLOOD WATER SURFACE ELEVATION			
CROSS SECTION	DISTANCE <sup>1</sup>	WIDTH (FEET)	SECTION AREA (SQUARE FEET)	MEAN VELOCITY (FEET PER SECOND)	REGULATORY	WITHOUT FLOODWAY (FEET NGVD)	WITH FLOODWAY	INCREASE
A	1,205	45	233	12.9	425.1	425.1	425.1	0.0
B	1,480	116	817	3.7	428.3	428.3	428.3	0.0
C	1,985	195	776	3.9	428.6	428.6	429.0	0.4
D	2,890	150	874	3.5	429.6	429.6	430.5	0.9
E	3,360	78	354	8.5	430.3	430.3	431.3	1.0

**FLOODWAY DATA**

EVANS MILLS, NEW YORK  
JEFFERSON COUNTY

PLEASANT CREEK - EVANS MILLS, NEW YORK

**TABLE 2**

Table 3 - Elevation Reference Marks

Reference Mark	Elevation (feet NGVD)	Description of Location
RM-1	433.86	Existing PK in base of telephone pole #NM5 NYT 7 at end of Henry Street, east face of pole, approximately .5 feet above ground.
RM-2	409.84	Existing USC&GS Disc stamped K-14, 1919; located on the upstream, right headwall of the Conrail RR bridge (#89) over Pleasant Creek in the village of Evans Mills, Jefferson County, New York.

efficient flood control works, annual flood damages continue to increase because the number of persons and structures occupying floodprone lands is increasing faster than protective works can be provided.

Recognition of this trend has forced a reassessment of the flood control concept and resulted in the broadened concept of unified flood plain management programs. Legislative and administrative policies frequently cite two approaches: structural and nonstructural, for adjusting to the flood hazard. In this context, "structural" is usually intended to mean adjustments that modify the behavior of floodwaters through the use of measures such as dams and channel work. "Nonstructural" is usually intended to include all other adjustments in the way society acts when occupying or modifying a flood plain (e.g., regulations, floodproofing, insurance, etc.). Both structural and nonstructural tools are used for achieving desired future flood plain conditions. There are three basic strategies which may be applied individually or in combination: (1) modifying the susceptibility to flood damage and disruption, (2) modifying the floods themselves, and (3) modifying (reducing) the adverse impacts of floods on the individual and the community.

#### Modify Susceptibility to Flood Damage and Disruption

The strategy to modify susceptibility to flood damage and disruption consists of actions to avoid dangerous, economically undesirable, or unwise use of the flood plain. Responsibility for implementing such actions rests largely with the non-Federal sector and primarily at the local level of Government.

These actions include restrictions in the mode and the time of occupancy; in the ways and means of access; in the pattern, density, and elevation of structures and in the character of their materials (structural strength, absorptiveness, solubility, corrodibility); in the shape and type of buildings and in their contents; and in the appurtenant facilities and landscaping of the grounds. The strategy may also necessitate changes in the interdependencies between flood plains and surrounding areas not subject to flooding, especially interdependencies regarding utilities and commerce. Implementing mechanisms for these actions include land use regulations, development and redevelopment policies, floodproofing, disaster preparedness and response plans, and flood forecasting and warning systems. Different tools may be more suitable for developed or underdeveloped flood plains or to urban or rural areas. The information contained in this report is particularly useful for the preparation of flood plain regulations.

##### a. Flood Plain Regulations.

Flood plain regulations apply to the full range of ordinances and other means designed to control land use and construction within floodprone areas. The term encompasses zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, building and housing codes, encroachment line statutes, open area regulations, and other similar methods of management which affect the use and development of floodprone areas.

Flood plain land use management does not prohibit use of floodprone areas; to the contrary, flood plain land use management seeks the best use of flood plain

lands. The flooded area map and the water surface profile contained in this report can be used to guide development in the flood plain. The elevations shown on the profile should be used to determine flood heights because they are more accurate than the outlines of flooded areas. It is recommended that development in areas susceptible to frequent flooding adhere to the principles expressed in Executive Order 11988 - Flood Plain Management whose objective is to ". . . avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of flood plains . . . whenever there is a practicable alternative." Accordingly, development in areas susceptible to frequent flooding should consist of construction which has a low damage potential such as parking areas and golf courses. High value construction such as buildings, should be located outside the flood plain to the fullest extent possible. In instances where no practicable alternative exists, the land should be elevated to minimize damages. If it is uneconomical to elevate the land in these areas, means of floodproofing the structures should be given careful consideration.

b. Development Zones.

A flood plain consists of two useful zones. The first zone is the designated "floodway" or that cross sectional area required for carrying or discharging the anticipated flood waters with a maximum 1-foot increase in flood level (New York State standard). Velocities are the greatest and most damaging in the floodway. Regulations essentially maintain the flow-conveying capability of the floodway to minimize inundation of additional adjacent areas. Uses which are acceptable for floodways include parks, parking areas, open spaces, etc.

The second zone of the flood plain is termed the "floodway fringe" or restrictive zone, in which inundation might occur but where depths and velocities are generally low. Although not recommended if practicable alternatives exist, such areas can be developed provided structures are placed high enough or floodproofed to be reasonably free from flood damage during the 100-year flood. Typical relationships between the floodway and floodway fringe are shown in Figure 1. The floodway for Pleasant Creek has been plotted on the Flooded Area Map, Plate 3.

c. Formulation of Flood Plain Regulations

Formulation of flood plain regulations in a simplified sense involves selecting the type and degree of control to be exercised for each specific flood plain. In principle, the form of the regulations is not as important as a maintained adequacy of control. The degree of control normally varies with the flood hazard as measured by depth of inundation, velocity of flow, frequency of flooding, and the need for available land. Considerable planning and research is required for the proper formulation of flood plain regulations. Where formulation of flood plain regulations is envisioned to require a lengthy period of time during which development is likely to occur, temporary regulations should be adopted to be amended later as necessary.

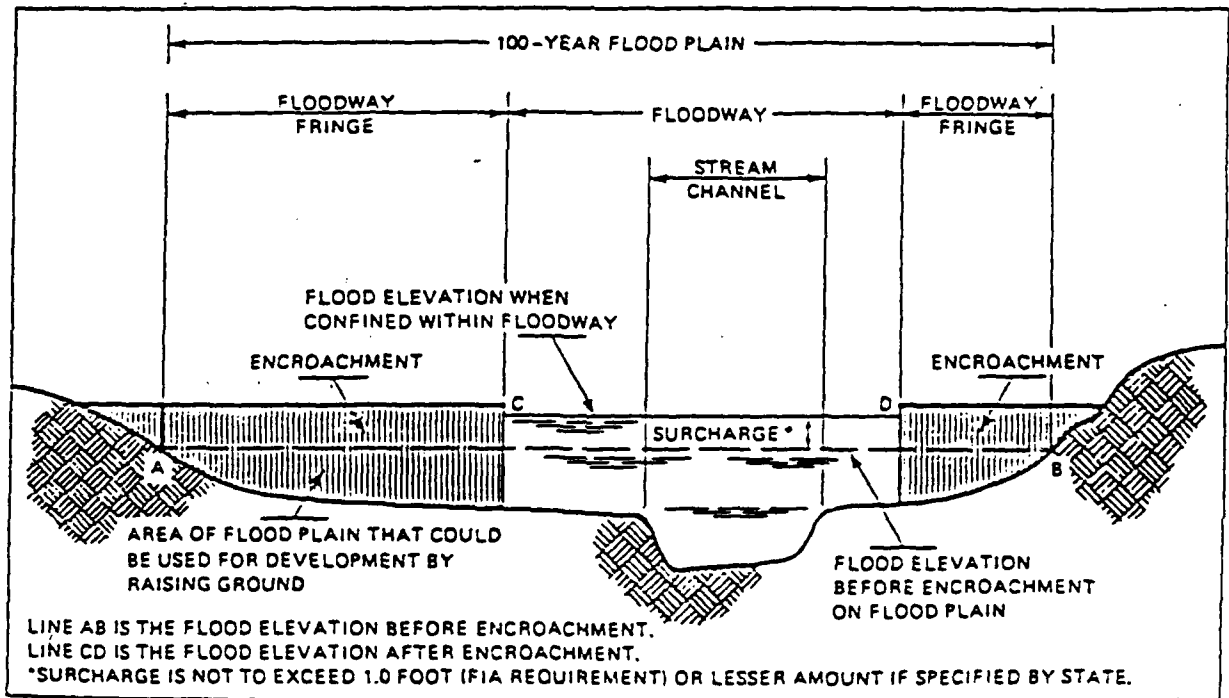


FIGURE 1 - FLOODWAY SCHEMATIC

### Modify Flooding

The traditional strategy of modifying floods through the construction of dams, dikes, levees and floodwalls, channel alterations, high flow diversions and spillways, and land treatment measures has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness for protecting property and saving lives, and it will continue to be a strategy of flood plain management. However, in the future, reliance solely upon a flood modification strategy is neither possible nor desirable. Although the large capital investment required by flood modifying tools has been provided largely by the Federal Government, sufficient funds from Federal sources have not been and are not likely to be available to meet all situations for which flood modifying measures would be both effective and economically feasible. Another consideration is that the cost of maintaining and operating flood control structures falls upon local governments.

Flood modifications acting alone leave a residual flood loss potential and can encourage an unwarranted sense of security leading to inappropriate use of lands in the areas that are directly protected or in adjacent areas. For this reason, measures to modify possible floods should usually be accompanied by measures to modify the susceptibility to flood damage, particularly by land use regulations.

### Modify the Impact of Flooding on Individuals and the Community

A third strategy for mitigating flood losses consists of actions designed to assist individuals and communities in their preparatory, survival, and recovery responses to floods. Tools include information dissemination and education, arrangements for spreading the costs of the loss over time, purposeful transfer of some of the individual's loss to the community by reducing taxes in flood prone areas, and the purchase of Federally subsidized flood insurance.

The distinction between a reasonable and unreasonable transfer of costs from the individual to the community can also be regulated and is a key to effective flood plain management.

### CONCLUSION

This report presents local flood hazard information for Pleasant Creek in the village of Evans Mills, New York. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, will provide interpretation in the application of the data contained in this report, particularly as to its use in developing effective flood plain regulations. Requests should be coordinated with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

## GLOSSARY

- BACKWATER** The resulting high water surface in a given stream due to a downstream obstruction or high stages in an intersecting stream.
- BASE FLOOD** A flood which has an average return interval in the order of once in 100 years, although the flood may occur in any year. It is based on statistical analysis of streamflow records available for the watershed and analysis of rainfall and runoff characteristics in the general region of the watershed. It is commonly referred to as the "100-year flood."
- DISCHARGE** The quantity of flow in a stream at any given time, usually measured in cubic feet per second (cfs).
- FLOOD** An overflow of lands not normally covered by water. Floods have two essential characteristics: The inundation of land is temporary and the lands are adjacent to and inundated by overflow from a river, stream, ocean, lake, or other body of standing water.
- Normally a "flood" is considered as any temporary rise in streamflow or stage, but not the ponding of surface water, that results in significant adverse effects in the vicinity. Adverse effects may include damages from overflow of land areas, temporary backwater effects in sewers and local drainage channels, creation of unsanitary conditions or other unfavorable situations by deposition of materials in stream channels during flood recessions, and rise of groundwater coincident with increased streamflow.
- FLOOD CREST** The maximum stage or elevation reached by floodwaters at a given location.
- FLOOD FREQUENCY** A statistical expression of the percent chance of exceeding a discharge of a given magnitude in any given year. For example, a 100-year flood has a magnitude expected to be exceeded on the average of once every hundred years. Such a flood has a 1 percent chance of being exceeded in any given year. Often used interchangeably with RECURRENCE INTERVAL.
- FLOOD PLAIN** The areas adjoining a river, stream, watercourse, ocean, lake, or other body of standing water that have been or may be covered by floodwater.

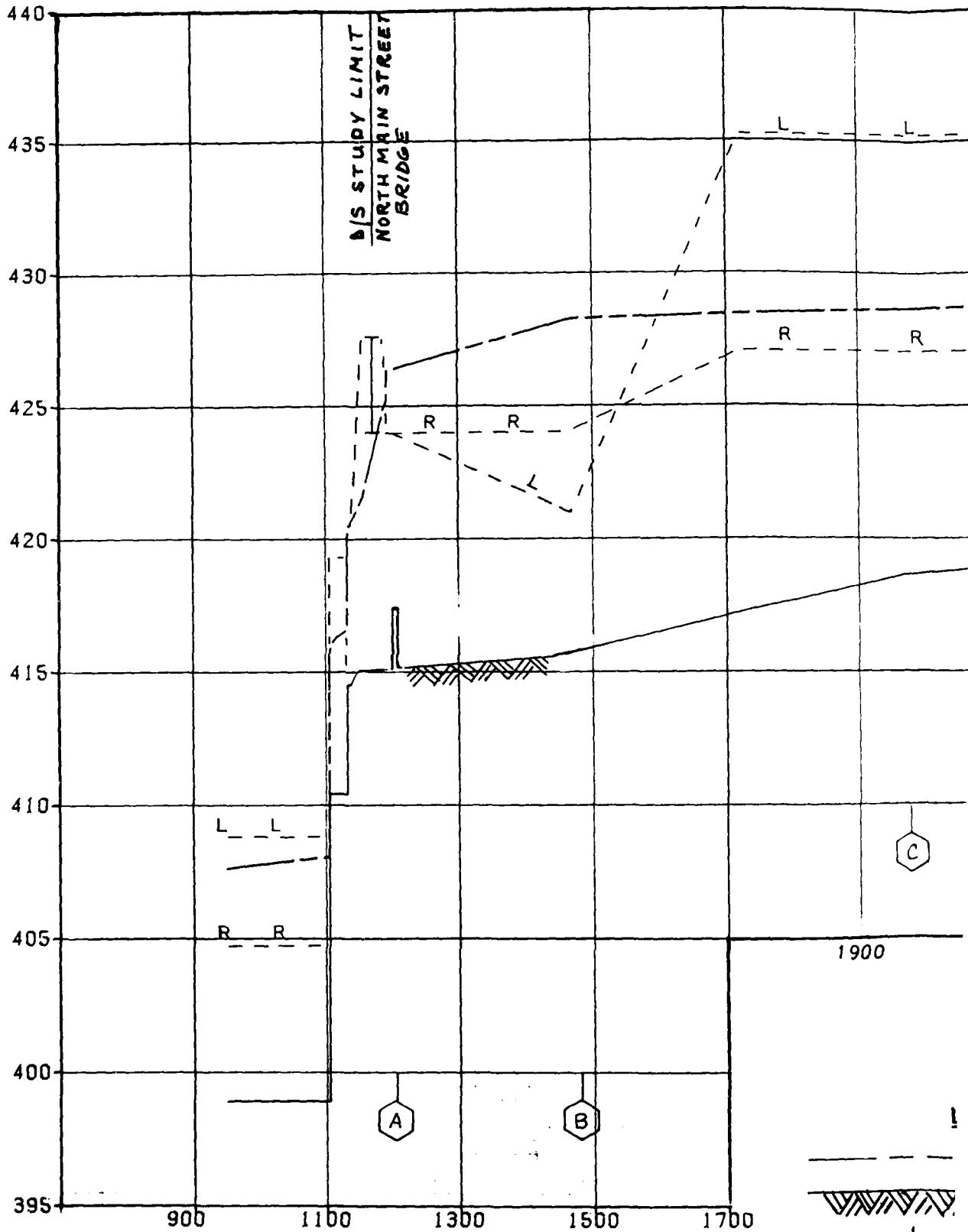


FLOOD PROFILE	A graph showing the relationship of water surface elevation to location; the latter generally expressed as distance upstream from a known point along the approximate centerline of a stream of water that flows in an open channel. It is generally drawn to show surface elevation for the crest of a specific flood, but may be prepared for conditions at a given time or stage.
FLOOD STAGE	The stage or elevation at which overflow of the natural banks of a stream or body of water begins in the reach or area in which the elevation is measured.
FLOODWAY	The channel of a watercourse and those portions of the adjoining flood plain required to provide for the passage of the selected flood (normally the 100-year flood) with an insignificant increase in the flood levels above that of natural conditions. As used in the National Flood Insurance Program, floodways must be large enough to pass the 100-year flood without causing an increase in elevation of more than a specified amount (1 foot in most areas).
RECURRENCE INTERVAL	A statistical expression of the average time between floods exceeding a given magnitude (see FLOOD FREQUENCY).

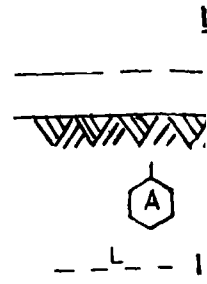
#### REFERENCES

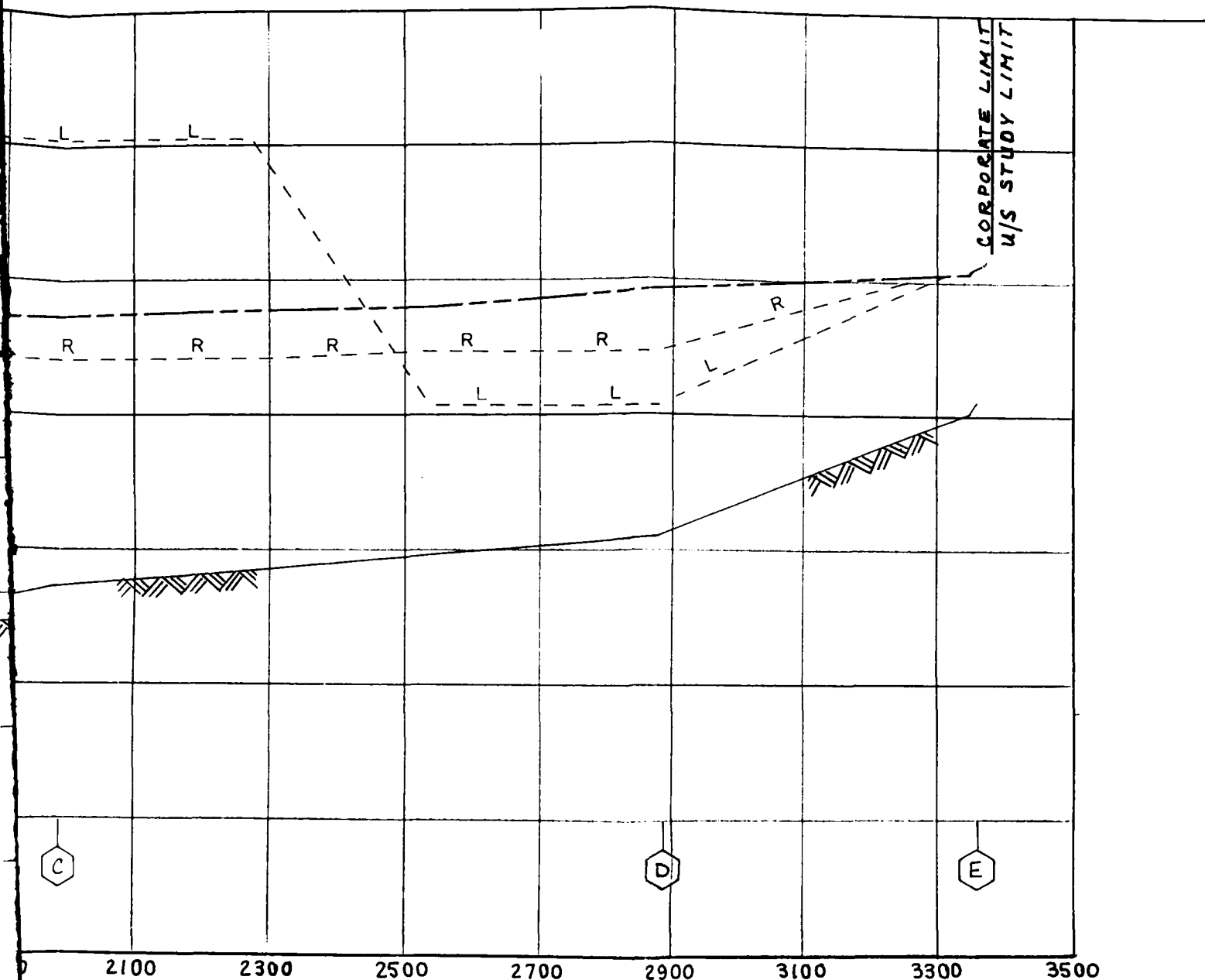
1. U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climates of the States, 1974.
2. U.S. Geological Survey, Techniques for Estimating Magnitude and Frequency of Floods on Rural Unregulated Streams in New York State Excluding Long Island, Water Resource Investigation 79-83 (WRI 79-83), Albany, New York, 1979.
3. U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 7.5 Minute and 15 Minute Topographic Map, Scale 1:24000, Defiance East, Defiance West, Antwerp, Woodburn North, Paulding, Sherwood, Florida, and Indiana.
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hydrologic Engineering Center, HEC-2 Water Surface Profiles Generalized Computer Program, Davis, California 1974.

ELEVATION IN FEET - NGVD

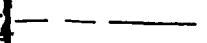






NOTE: Distance is measured in feet from the confluence with West Creek.





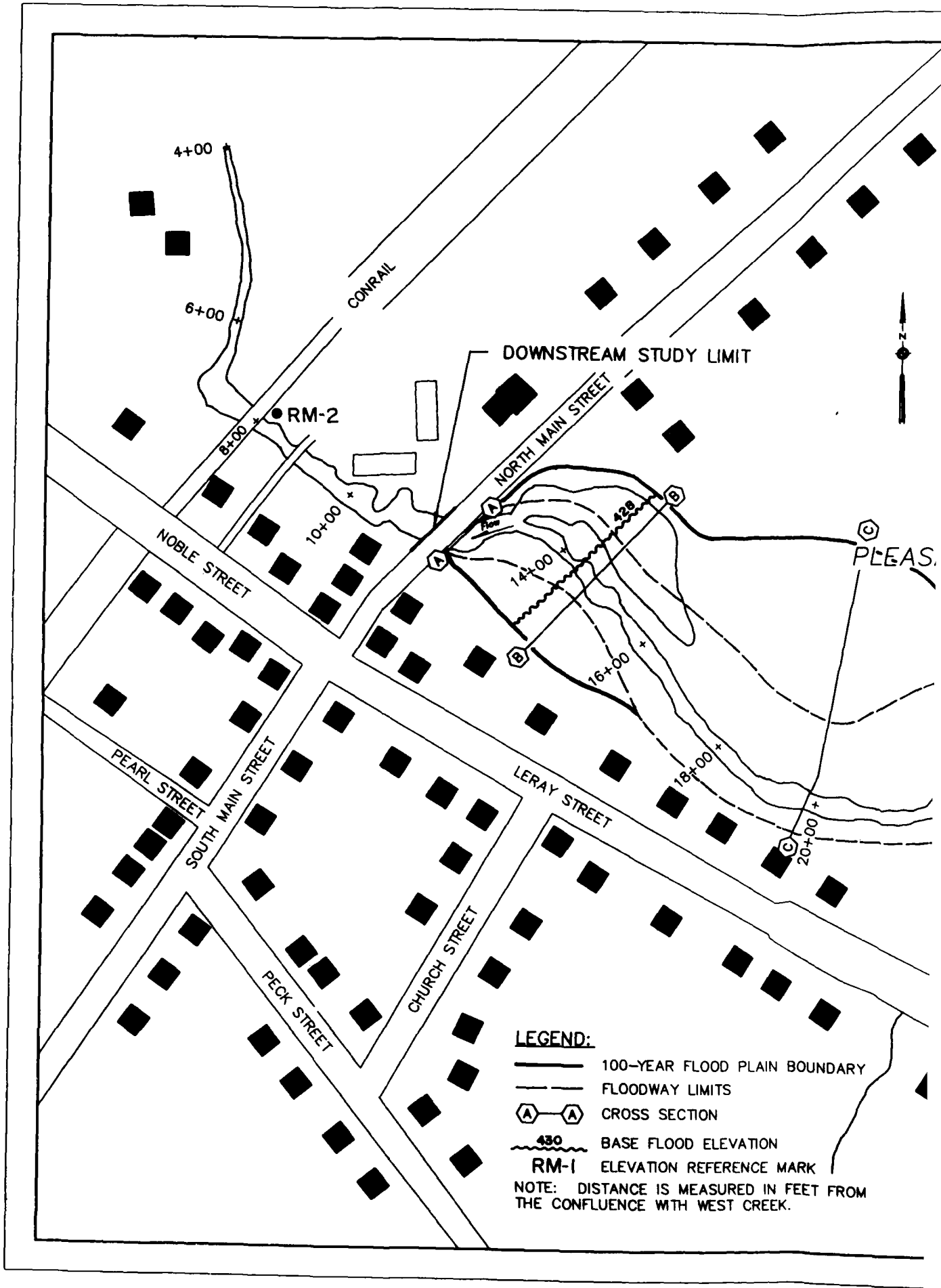
**LEGEND**

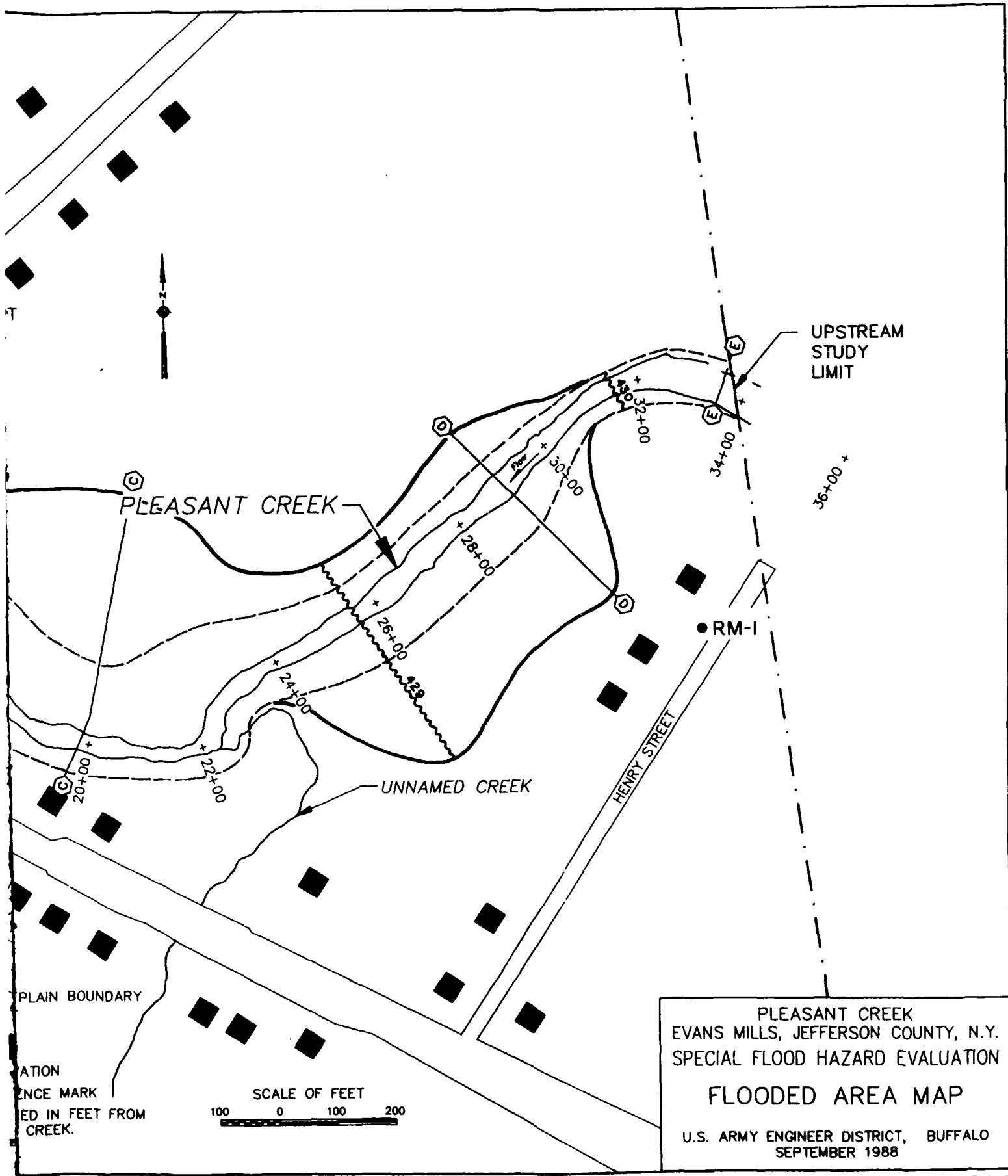
-  100-YEAR FLOOD
-  CHANNEL BOTTOM
-  CROSS SECTION LOCATION
-  LEFT TOP OF BANK
-  RIGHT TOP OF BANK

U.S. Army Engineer District, Buffalo  
 SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION

**FLOOD PROFILE**  
**PLEASANT CREEK**  
 EVANS MILLS, JEFFERSON COUNTY, N.Y.

PLATE I September 1988





PLEASANT CREEK  
 EVANS MILLS, JEFFERSON COUNTY, N.Y.  
 SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION  
**FLOODED AREA MAP**  
 U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, BUFFALO  
 SEPTEMBER 1988