E-mail: amitebsn@communique.net

National Weather Service
Paul Trotter
E-mail: Paul.Trotter@noaa.gov

The Louisiana District of the USGS displays available current river stage data on the World Wide Web at

http://wwwdlabrg.er.usgs.gov

A voice message, which is updated by the USGS, gives the latest river stages during floods; it can be accessed by calling **383-0000** and specifying extension **4444** for the East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Prepared by

Lawrence E. Callender, Volunteer, Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District and U.S. Geological Survey; and Brian E. McCallum, Sebastian R. Brazelton, Mary L. Anderson, and Paul A. Ensminger, U.S. Geological Survey.

U.S. Geological Survey
Open-File Report 96-649
(Revised 1998)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information about one of the following agencies, please call or e-mail the individuals named:

U.S. Geological Survey
Edward H. Martin, District Chief — 389-0281
E-mail: dc_la@usgs.gov

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Water Resources Section
Zahir "Bo" Bolourchi, Section Chief — 379-1434
E-mail: bbolourc@dotdmail.dotd.state.la.us

Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness
Mike Brown, Assistant Director — 342-5470
E-mail: xbrown@hotmail.com

Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District
Dietmar Rietschier, Executive Director — 336-9887
E-mail: amitebsn@communique.net

EMERGENCY FLOOD PHONE NUMBERS

Requests for assistance during a flood should be made to the local or parish emergency officials.

Ascension Parish

- Office of Emergency Preparedness — 621-8360
- Sheriff's Office — 621-8300
- City of Gonzales (Dispatcher) — 647-7511
- Town of Sorrento (Dispatcher) — 675-5355

East Baton Rouge Parish

- Office of Emergency Preparedness — 389-3035
- City of Baker (Fire Department) — 775-3711
- City of Zachary (Public Works) — 654-0201

Livingston Parish

- Sheriff's Office — 686-2241
- City of Denham Springs Police Department — 665-5106
- Walker 8:00-4:30 (Police) — 664-3125

St. James Parish

- Emergency Operations Center — 562-2364
- Sheriff's Office — 562-2200

East Feliciana Parish

- Sheriff's Office — 683-5459
- 654-0081

St. Helena Parish

- Sheriff's Office — 222-4413
- Fire Department — 222-4343

American Red Cross* — 291-4533

*1-800-256-4733 if outside the Baton Rouge calling area

USGS
science for a changing world

Prepared in cooperation with:

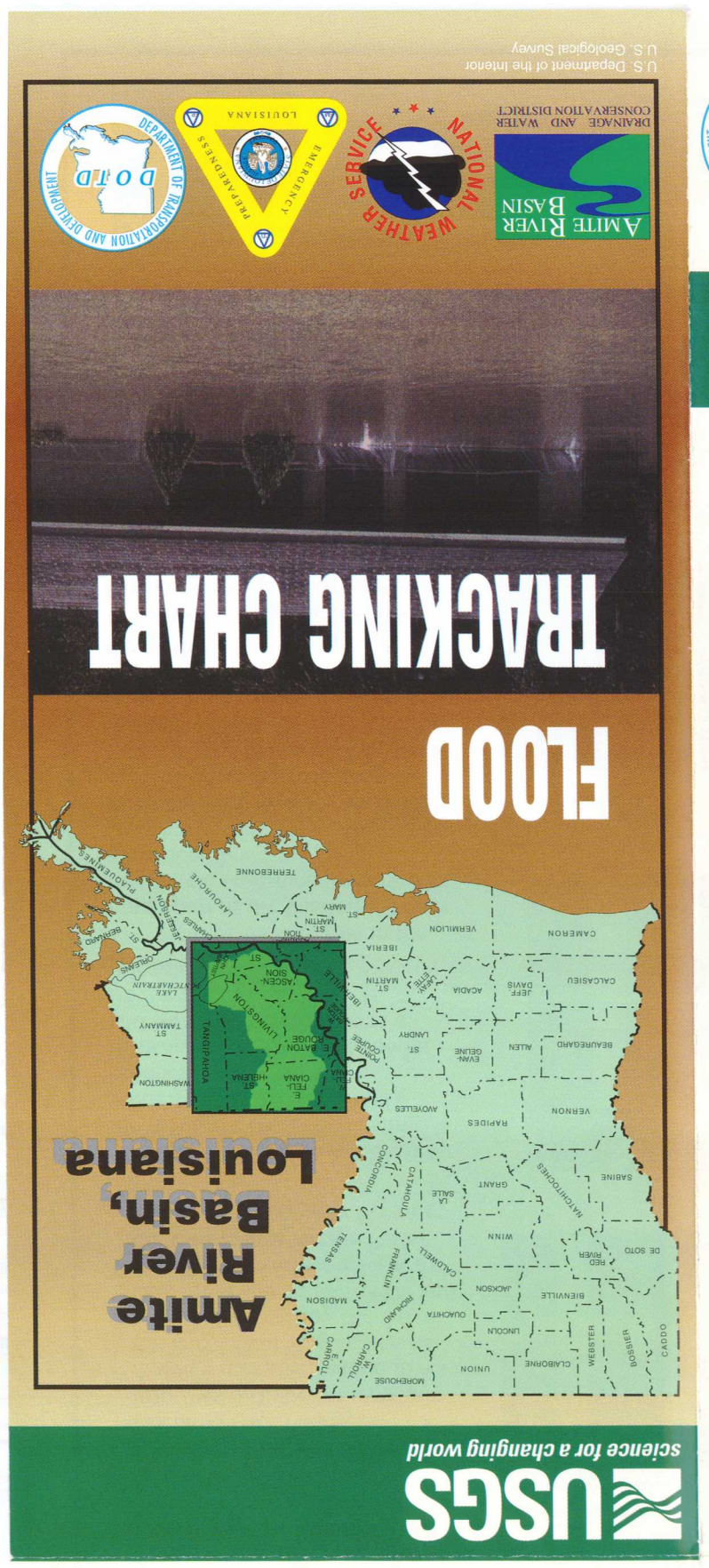
AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCY LOUISIANA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DOTD



USGS
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U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM OF THE AMITE RIVER

The USGS, in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness, East Baton Rouge Parish, Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District, National Weather Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, operates a Flood Warning System in the Amite River Basin. This system is a network of nine automated river stage stations (shown on the reverse side of this publication) that transmit information through radio telemetry to the USGS HydroWatch Operations Center in Baton Rouge. During floods, the public and emergency response agencies use this information to make decisions about road closures, evacuations, and other public safety issues. Emergency phone numbers for your area are listed under "Emergency Flood Phone Numbers."

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

About 42 percent of the land area in East Baton Rouge Parish has a potential of being flooded by a 100-year flood; 70 percent in Ascension Parish, and 75 percent in Livingston Parish. The principal cause of flooding is backwater flooding along the Amite and Comite Rivers and their tributaries.

Flood maps and publications from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) are available for review at the local Department of Public Works, Building Permit office, local public libraries, and the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District Office.

Flood zone determinations are provided by the local Department of Public Works and Building Permit office. Check with your local Department of Public Works or Permit office before you build on, alter, regrade, or place fill on your property.

HOW DO I ELEVATE OR FLOODPROOF MY HOME?

When elevating or floodproofing new or existing structures, consult a design professional, architect, structural engineer, or licensed contractor for advice. These professionals generally are knowledgeable and experienced in floodproofing methods.

Many houses, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that back up during heavy rains. One possible solution is to have a plumber install a plug, stand-pipe, or backup valve.

FEMA has published manuals on floodproofing that are available at your local library or can be obtained by calling the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Regular homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods; however, because communities within the Amite River Basin participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a separate flood insurance is available. This insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded. Information about flood insurance is available through your local insurance agent. Flood insurance must be purchased 30 days prior to any claims.

Some homeowners have purchased flood insurance because it was required when they obtained a mortgage or home improvement loan. These policies may cover only the building's structure, and not the contents. During floods in the Amite River Basin, there usually is as much damage to the furnishings and contents as to the structure. Check your flood insurance policy to see if your furnishings and contents are covered; if not, you might want to add this coverage.

FLOOD SAFETY AND PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

If your property is known to flood or is located in a flood hazard area, and flood warnings are issued, take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect your family and property. These steps include sandbagging; turning off all electrical circuits and gas lines; and elevating furniture, carpets, and appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, clothes dryers, water heaters, and air conditioning compressor units.

IF LOCAL AUTHORITIES RECOMMEND EVACUATION, YOU SHOULD LEAVE! Their advice is based on knowledge of the predicted magnitude of the flood and its potential for death and destruction.

SURVIVING DURING A FLOOD — DO'S AND DON'TS

DO NOT WALK THROUGH FLOWING WATER. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Water currents can be deceptive; shallow but fast-moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that you don't step into deep water.

DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH A FLOODED AREA. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; they are put up for your protection. The road or bridge beyond the barrier may be washed out.

STAY AWAY FROM POWER LINES AND ELECTRICAL WIRES. The number two cause of flood deaths is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the power company or city/parish emergency management office. Have your electricity turned off by the power company.

BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS USING RECENTLY FLOODED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

BE ALERT FOR GAS LEAKS. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

LOOK OUT FOR ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY SNAKES. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

LOOK BEFORE YOU STEP. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken glass and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

The information on this page is provided in the interest of public safety and is taken from various sources including:

Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1994, National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System coordinator's manual: Indianapolis, Ind., Federal Emergency Management Agency [variously paged].

Baker, R.H., 1997, Don't build that ark! — Use the chart!: Washington, D.C., Congressman Richard H. Baker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congress Watch, March 1997 [variously paged].