Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Making FIMs Work for Multiple Users: Understanding the Value and Function of Flood Inundation Mapping to Support Decision Support
Principal and Co-Investigators: Rachel Hogan Carr, Dr. Kathryn Semmens, Keri Maxfield
Institution/Department or Division: The Nurture Nature Center
Address: 518 Northampton St, Easton, PA 18042
Telephone #: 610-253-4432

Researchers at the Nurture Nature Center (NNC) study the communication, utility, and design of National Weather Service forecast products. Our goal is to understand and improve the information you need to protect yourself when severe weather is possible. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why is this research being done?
The purpose of this research is to help the National Weather Service develop processes and products that meet the needs of those who need to take protective action for an impending severe event. By doing this research, we hope to learn what products you use, how useful you find the various products, what helps you make your decisions, and how the information affects your understanding and decisions.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?
You are being invited to take part in this research because of the weather risks that exist in your community or field of work. Your responses will help us develop products to better meet your needs. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research? We don't know of any reasons why you should not participate, but you can choose not to be included. There are no risks associated with taking part in this study.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last? This research is taking place in many regions across the United States and will continue for 24 months. The amount of time required to participate in focus groups is approximately 2 hours.

What will I be asked to do?
You are being asked to be part of this focus group to discuss your experiences with severe weather, specifically flooding, where and when you get information on forecasts and warnings, and what kinds of information you would like. We will use the results of these groups to help the NWS develop products and services that will better meet your needs. Focus groups will be audio recorded, with access to the recordings restricted to the collaborators on the project, with names or other identifying indicators removed. The recordings will be kept for the duration of the project. As part of the focus group process, we ask that you complete a survey prior to the start of the focus group and one at the end. We may also ask you to complete an on-line survey that will be sent via e-mail later in the project.

What are the possible benefits I may experience from taking part in this research?
This research will help us learn more about how you translate current weather services and products into decision-making. Through that, we will help the National Weather Service develop products that are more useful to you. As a result, there may be no personal benefit from your participation but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

What will it cost me to take part in this research?
It will not cost you any money to be part of the research. The only cost is the time you devote to the project.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?
We will not request any information that could identify you personally. No one will be able to match your consent form to the survey results or to the focus group or interview tapes. Once the research is completed, we will keep the results for three (3) years and then will dispose of everything in a secure manner. Anonymized data will be used to inform research findings which will be shared through white paper report share with the National Weather Service and on our social science website and in a peer-reviewed academic journal article.

What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?
If you decide you no longer want to be in this research after it has already started, you may stop at any time. You will not be penalized or criticized for stopping.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
The people conducting this study will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigators at 610-253-4432 or email ksemmens@nurturenature.org.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?
The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:
I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

_____	_____	_____
Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date