

Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA)

Background Information

March 2013

Mission: The Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA) is an affiliation of nonprofit and private organizations, government agencies and individuals dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural functions of river and coastal floodplains.

Alliance Participants: Representatives from nearly 100 agencies and organizations have participated in NFFA calls, webinars, and meetings since 2010. Specific participating agencies and organizations are listed Appendix A.

Website: <http://aswm.org/watersheds/-natural-floodplain-function-alliance>

NFFA and Subcommittee Activities:

Since founding of NFFA in 2010, the Alliance has focused on supporting education and information exchange related to the natural beneficial functions of floodplains and related tools, techniques, data, and place-based lessons learned. NFFA has an established Steering Committee, tasked with advancing the group's overall mission. Two subcommittees – a Mapping Subcommittee and an Ecosystem Services Subcommittee – have also been established and are focused on advancing specific tasks related to those areas of the Alliance's mission. Activities to date of the NFFA and its subcommittees are briefly described below.

Overall NFFA Activities

- 1) Create and maintain a Web Site for the NFFA. Association of State Wetland Managers has volunteered to place the site on their site and to maintain it. All NFFA members are encouraged to provide information to populate the site with information to share that is relevant to the mission of the group. (completed) Website url: <http://aswm.org/watersheds/-natural-floodplain-function-alliance>
- 2) The NFFA will work on a consensus definition of activities that have detrimental impacts on natural floodplain function. The term to define these activities will be "UNWISE USE". The definition will set some clear delineations and specificity on what is meant by "UNWISE USE". Such a definition could be useful to our member groups and to others, such as the Federal Interagency Flood Management Task Force (FIFMT).
- 3) Coordinate the NFFA meeting at the annual Association of State Floodplain Managers annual conference (June 2013). The goal is to further catalyze progress on key NFFA efforts and to continue coordinating efforts with and engaging others such as broadened participation of as many representatives of the FIFMT as possible. Agenda and logistics are being finalized. Final agenda will be sent out with an invitation to NFFA members and other interested parties.
- 4) Organize a floodplain natural functions mapping workshop for 1-2 days. Main topic would be methods for mapping water resources, floodplain resources and natural hazards. The purpose

would be to see if existing and developing GIS data layers could be used to map natural floodplains (possibly a combined meeting of NFFA and the Wetland Mapping Consortium). This workshop would be far more technical than the session at the Ecosystem Services Conference in 2012. NFFA has established an organizing committee for the mapping workshop, which is tentatively scheduled for Washington D.C. in the fall 2013, depending on the ability to secure funding.

- 5) Organize an economic assessment of floodplains and floodplain natural functions workshop for 1-2 days. Main topic would be tools for assessment (measurement) of the economic value of Natural Floodplain. This workshop would be far more technical than the session held at the Ecosystem Services Conference in 2012. With support from the broader NFFA, this workshop will be organized by the Ecosystem Services Subcommittee, which will determine location, agenda, and invitees, as well as funding needs and possible sources of funding. This workshop is to be held sometime after the mapping workshop. Possible location would be Washington D.C.
- 6) Information exchange on Congressional actions and related agency efforts, such as consideration of the Water Resources Development Act, National Flood Insurance Program reform, Sandy supplemental funding, and the recently released Principles and Requirements. These exchanges are informational only. Any formal comments and engagement are left to individual members to determine as they see fit.
- 7) Coordinate with the FIFMT on coordination of current federal policies to have consistent protection of NBF of floodplains.
- 8) Develop a No Adverse Impact to floodplains tool kit that emphasizes NBF over structural flood management techniques. The first focus of the tool kit would be to develop tools for post disaster response.

Ecosystem Services Program Subcommittee Activities

- 1) **Develop the outline of a white paper on Ecosystem Services** – The paper is to be used in a number of different ways to help develop consensus on changes that are needed in federal, state, and local policies and programs.
- 2) **Identify others who should be involved in development of the white paper.** The outline of the white paper will help the group identify agencies and interest groups who should be invited to participate in development of the white paper.
- 3) **Developing a matrix of local floodplain projects** going on that involve federal players that would help us understand and describe what is going on around the country. It would help us identify other individuals and organizations with common interests to work with. The matrix will also identify opportunities that do or could incorporate valuation and application of ecosystem services. There needs to be further refinement on what information we would collect on each project.
- 4) **Determine the status and adequacy of models to quantify ecosystem services in floodplains.** Ecosystem service evaluation is dependent on how well scientific models quantify those services. The group is assessing and synthesizing information on the strengths and weaknesses of existing models and identifying gaps in modeling capabilities to help guide future innovations.

- 5) **Hold future workshops/webinars.** There are conferences held around the country that provide an opportunity to have a working group session as part of the conference. Much of the group's initial focus was guided by discussions at the International Ecosystem Services Conference in July-August, 2012, in Portland, Oregon, with work continuing through monthly conference calls/webinars and work by individual members between calls. The next physical meeting of the group is to be at the ASFPM annual meeting in Connecticut in June 2013.

Mapping Subcommittee Activities

- 1) **Assess existing mapping techniques and tools** – Important innovations continue in mapping tools, techniques, and data for supporting more effective and accurate evaluations of flood risk, ecosystem service identification and valuation, and related planning and communications efforts. In coordination with the Ecosystem Services group, this group is working to synthesize and exchange information on mapping tools, techniques, and data as a way of contributing to ongoing innovations and assisting with place-based demonstrations of their application.
- 2) **Organize a mapping webinars and workshops** – Through the regular NFFA , mapping webinars are conducted periodically to exchange information on mapping tools, techniques and data, along with place-based lessons learned in their application. The group has also framed an agenda for an in-person mapping workshop, tentatively scheduled for fall 2013, depending on funding.

Appendix A
Natural Floodplain Function Alliance (NFFA) Participants List

AECOM	American Rivers
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
Association of State Floodplain Managers	Association of State Wetland Managers
Atkins Global	Augusta GA
Beaver County PA Conservation District	Bureau of Land Management
Center for REALTOR® Technology	CH2M Hill
Chehalis Tribe	City of Farmington, New Mexico
City of Folly Beach	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
Cornell University	Delaware DNREC Watershed Assessment
Department of Homeland Security	Earth Economics
Environmental Law Institute	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Flanagan & Associates	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Gannett Fleming	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Greene PA	Greenville County
Hawaii Dept. of Business, Economic Development and Tourism	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Illinois State Water Survey	Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
Kansas Applied Remote Sensing	Kentucky Division of Water
Lansing MI	LYCO
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Maryland Department of the Environment
Michael Baker	Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri Department of Natural Resources	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	National Association of Home Builders
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	National Wildlife Federation
Natural Hazards Center	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Natural Resources Defense Council	New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission
New Mexico Environment Department	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services	New Hampshire Geological Survey
NOAA Coastal Svcs Center	Northeast-Midwest Institute
Ohio Department of Natural Resources	Oklahoma State University
Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development	Pennsylvania National Association of Conservation Districts
Portland Oregon	Public Health Ontario
Riverswork	San Francisco Bay Region Water Quality Control Board
San Juan County, New Mexico	Sanita-Clarita, California
St. Mary's University of Minnesota	Stantec
Straughan Env.	Tennessee Department of Environment
TetraTech	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
The Nature Conservancy	The Union of Concerned Scientists
The University of Kansas	The Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
Three Parameters Plus, Inc.	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Udvardy Consulting
University of Colorado	University of Illinois

University of Iowa	University of Maryland
University of Rhode Island	University of Washington
URS Corporation	USDA Rural Development
USDA's Risk Management Agency	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Washington State Department of Ecology	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources