ASFPM’s 2018 Flood Risk Rock Stars

Sometimes our only reward as flood risk professionals is going home with the knowledge that we’ve improved our communities and/or made them safer. The public might not appreciate our efforts—until a flood hits, of course. Recognizing this, ASFPM in the early 1980s decided it was time to start honoring the hard work of professionals making a difference in the flood risk world. Following is a rundown of all our 2018 award winners honored June 21 at our annual national conference in Phoenix.

Our 2018 Goddard-White Award goes to Jim Schwab. This award is named in honor of the contributions made to floodplain management by Gilbert White and Jim Goddard, and is given to individuals who have had a national impact carrying forward the goals and objectives of floodplain management. It is an indication of the level of esteem we hold for the two namesakes, as well as the recipients, and is ASFPM's highest award.

L-R: ASFPM Director Emeritus Larry Larson, ASFPM Chair Maria Cox Lamm, Jim Schwab and ASFPM Deputy Director Ingrid Wadsworth.
Until Schwab came along, the nation’s planners did not embrace the concept of integrating natural hazard mitigation into community planning. Through his guidance, not only do they now understand the importance of addressing these hazards, but they know how to do it. Both are key in getting professionals to veer toward new approaches.

Schwab has been influential in helping 38,000 American Planning Association members understand why and how to implement activities in their day-to-day jobs that will help make their community and the nation at less risk from natural hazards. Not only that, he networked with many other national professional organizations to promote these policies and programs. For example, he led APA’s participation in the Digital Coast Partnership with NOAA, ASFP, NACo and other key partners to develop tools and processes for protecting coastal populations from hazards like coastal storms, sea level rise and erosion. And in his early retirement months, he is writing a book on the Great Flood of 1993.

His efforts have truly made a difference in the nation. Schwab is a leader in his profession and in helping the nation manage its flood risk and other natural hazards.

**Our Jerry Louthain Award for Distinguished Service to ASFP is Janet Thigpen.** This year’s winner exudes a quiet presence when you first meet. But don’t let that fool you. She’s a tough cookie when it comes to floodplain management and ASFP.

**Bill Nechamen**, a past ASFP chair who has known Thigpen for about 20 years, described her as a “pusher.” She is constantly pushing programs forward; helping a number of small communities enter the CRS; developing a series of 1-2 page floodplain development guides; and constantly pushing the state to update its model local laws. Thigpen, [ASFP’s District 1 Chapter Director], dives deeply into state and national policy issues and develops position papers and letters to send to elected representatives."

One of her greatest assets is that Thigpen has helped bring small town issues to ASFP and advises the board on a number of policy issues. She serves as a liaison between ASFP and state chapters in the Northeast, and keeps people on their toes for a good cause. She not only works with our members and chapters in her district, but is active in educating legislators about issues important to reducing losses and suffering from flooding. ASFP Director Emeritus **Larry Larson** described Thigpen as an example of an effective board member. “We treasure her focus and follow through…and her commitment to the bigger picture to reduce flood losses in the nation!”
Siavash Beik, ASFPM’s Technical Pod Facilitator, awarded the Meritorious Lifetime Achievement in Floodplain Management. This award recognizes individuals who have achieved success in a significant aspect of floodplain management. Beik has made so many contributions to the floodplain management profession, it would take forever to list them all. So we’ll just list a few of the most notable.

He has shown such strong leadership in the floodplain management field that numerous floodplain officials, contractors and consultants follow his example, leading to a more educated and devoted group of individuals who promote sound floodplain management.

Beik has authored and co-authored numerous white papers for the advancement of floodplain management. From the 1980s to early 1990s, he worked for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources-Division of Water and focused on preserving the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains. From 1993-1995 he served as lead author in developing the Flood Mitigation Master Plan for the Maumee River Basin Commission, which received our James Lee Witt Local Award in 1999. And Beik developed the Uniform Floodplain Ordinance Language for Floodplain Management and Stormwater/Erosion Control Management for the Maumee River Basin Commission. These two documents were accepted by the Indiana DNR-Division of Water as the Minimum Floodplain Ordinance for the state. The following year, he became the founding chair of the Indiana Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management, and in the in the early 2000s, he was elected as ASFPM District 2 Chapter Director.

Beik has devoted his entire career to floodplain management and has led by example. And he’s often referred to as the Indiana Father of Floodplain Management!

The California Department of Water Resources received the 2018 Tom Lee State Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management. The award is named for Tom Lee, a pioneer in state floodplain management programming who passed away too early at 41. It celebrates state projects, plans or programs that help elevate the profession at the state level.

To address the devastating effects from floods, the California Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, a comprehensive and long-range flood-risk management plan, was first adopted in 2012. But any great plan needs to be updated if it’s to be effective. So the California DNR prepared the 2017 CVFPP Update on behalf of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and for the benefit of the people of California. This 5-year effort built on the previous planning cycle with greater focus on developing partnerships through an unprecedented
stakeholder engagement process; integration of broader water resources objectives; and identifying policy issues that impede effective flood-risk management. In line with Gov. Jerry Brown’s Water Action Plan, the DWR emphasized a diverse portfolio of actions that would not only reduce flood risk, but revive severely depleted groundwater aquifers, restore wildlife habitat and improve the capabilities of existing water storage reservoirs. This is truly a holistic approach to statewide floodplain management!

The James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management went to the city of Dubuque, Iowa for its Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project. Dubuque, Iowa is a quaint river town situated on the Mississippi River, and has experienced many disastrous floods over the years.

The Bee Branch Watershed, where more than 50% of Dubuque’s residents either live or work, is the area hit hardest during rain events. Six Presidential Disaster Declarations were issued between 1999 and 2011 due to flash flooding, resulting in an estimated $69.8 million in damage. Based on a 2009 FEMA study, 1,373 homes and businesses, including 70 businesses that employ more than 1,400 people, are prone to flooding. The city knew something had to be done.

The project is innovative because most communities see urban flooding as strictly a stormwater management issue. That approach does not address the entire watershed, water quality, healthy homes, preservation of neighborhoods and community development. The BBWFMP involved replacing almost one-mile of storm sewer with a creek and floodplain. This “daylighting” of the buried creek allows stormwater from flash floods to safely move through the area without flooding adjacent properties. It also serves as a beautiful linear park. The restored creek includes a multi-use trail, scenic overlooks, a play area with slides, an outdoor amphitheater, benches, lighting, rest areas, bioswales, floating islands and over 4,000 plantings.

The John Ivey Award for Superior Efforts in Certification goes to Tom Palko with Nashville’s Metro Water Services. He also serves on ASFPM’s Certification Board of Regents CFM Exam Work Group. This story begins after a historic flood in Nashville in 2010. Somehow, Palko wasn’t aware of ASFPM, but since his department was in charge of managing and permitting the rehabilitation of 6,000 residential and commercial properties, he relied heavily on resources he found on ASFPM’s website. It was also discovered during that recovery year that ASFPM was holding an annual national conference in Louisville, Kentucky. He attended the conference, as well as took and passed the CFM exam.
Since that time, he’s become a regular fixture at our conferences, and played a leadership role in the Tennessee Association of Floodplain Management where he teaches a Floodplain Basics Class twice each year since his CFM certification. This has contributing to the number of CFMs in Tennessee growing from 51 to well over 100. Palko is constantly reinforcing the importance of the CFM program. Under his guidance, MWS has offered annual training and refresher courses to engineering staff, which has led to the certification of 11 more staff. That's more than 60% of the total stormwater engineering staff!

This year’s Larry R. Johnston Local Floodplain Manager of the Year is Michael Blakely, floodplain administrator for Chatham County, Georgia. Blakely is also the Community Rating System program manager, a liaison between Chatham County and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Floodplain Management Division and FEMA. Since 1998, he’s been responsible for improving the County’s CRS rating from a Class 9 to a Class 5. He submitted four successful federal grant applications resulting in the mitigation of 14 repetitive flood-prone homes and Chatham County’s Public Works/Fleet Maintenance facility. He drafted the county’s first Flood Mitigation Plan in 2001, and also participated in community outreach activities to increase public awareness regarding flood risk, flood protection and flood insurance.

He loves to speak to school children about flood risks, and was instrumental in bringing several coastal communities into the CRS system. He’s a co-founder of the Coastal Georgia CRS Users Group, looks for ways local communities can share CRS points such as inventorying library publications, county warning system, contact information flyer, and creating a partnership with NOAA and GEMA to add CRS language in Georgia’s Hurricane Guide. Blakely also co-founded the Flood Insurance Basics for Realtors Workshops, a local, four-hour class that trains Realtors about recent changes in flood insurance, floodplain issues and the CRS program (which received ASFPM’s “Outreach Award” back in 2015). He’s also a charter member of the Georgia Association of Floodplain Management and is currently serving at its chair.

The John R. Sheaffer Award for Excellence in Floodproofing goes to Chris Jones for his exemplary work in the field of floodproofing. Jones has worked more than 35 years as a practicing engineer throughout the United States and abroad on studies and projects related to coastal construction codes, flood-loss estimation modeling, flood-resistant design, post-storm damage investigations, flood hazard mapping, and coastal zone management. He uses his knowledge of construction and forensic studies to improve coastal hazard mapping and building design, and his flood hazard mapping knowledge to inform post-storm damage investigations. Most recently he served on a FEMA Mitigation Assessment Team
in Florida following Hurricane Irma that focused on the performance of coastal construction and buildings that were dry floodproofed. He is typically a lead instructor for the FEMA Coastal Construction Manual course at EMI each year. Jones’ work, research, instruction and development of guidance has helped establish accepted procedures, practices and constraints of floodproofing, as well as lead field investigations to enhance the awareness and use of new procedures, methods, designs and/or products towards improved flood resistant design and construction through nonstructural methods. For example, several of the ASCE 24 requirements that exceed minimum NFIP regulations are a result of his research and guidance development. In the past 35 years, few design professionals have contributed more towards the advancement of flood resistant design and construction.

The Outreach Award recipient is University of Iowa Associate Professor Ibrahim Demir.

How cool would it be to tap Google and say, “OK, Google, what are the flood conditions for Iowa City tomorrow at 5 p.m.?“

And how cool would it be if that calming Google voice answered, “The river height near your location is 9.68 feet. There are currently no flood warnings in your area.”

Well, that’s no longer a futuristic pipe dream, at least in Iowa, thanks to Demir’s new artificial-intelligence algorithm called the “Flood AI Alpha.” He and a team of researchers have made it possible to pass on real-time flood information. Of course getting vital flood sensor data into the hands of local elected officials, floodplain administrators and emergency managers is the primary goal, but the general public is also a target audience, which is why they minimized technical detail and jargon to make it usable for everyone.

The next-generation “Iowa Flood Information System Flood AI” will hopefully be engaged via platforms like Skype, Facebook Messenger, Siri, Google Assistant, Google Home, Amazon Echo and many others.

The 2018 Media Award recipient is the “Houston Chronicle” from Houston, Texas. Harvey was a devastating hurricane for the Houston area, causing $125 billion in damage, displacing more than 30,000 people, resulting in 17,000 rescues and 69 direct deaths. But even before that August 2017 event, a major flood hit the area in April 2016, and in May 2015. This paper knew their coverage had to go deeper after Hurricane Harvey. Reporters not only looked at why flooding kept happening in the Houston area, but at what policies, laws and development restrictions (or lack thereof) might be holding back the huge metropolitan area from becoming more resilient after floods. They tackled the big issues, such as “build, flood,
rebuild, and flood again,” insurance issues, building in “flood pools,” environmental damage from chemical spills during Harvey, and how stricter building codes could have lessened the damage. This newspaper not only educated the public, but it educated city and county leadership, both of which have enacted higher standards since Harvey blew in.

Have a person, organization, project or program you’d like to nominate for an ASFPM award? No problem. You can do it right now! Submit nominations here. If you’d like to learn more about the awards and previous recipients, click here.

**ASFPM wasn’t the only one handing out national awards!**

The **CRS Award for Excellence**, first available in 2010, recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in promoting flood insurance, and advancing floodplain management and resiliency in CRS communities. The CRS Award for Excellence went to Lisa Foster, floodplain administrator and CRS coordinator for Pinellas County, Florida. She was selected because of her tireless dedication to raising awareness about flood risk and emphasizing the importance of having flood insurance to be prepared. Foster created a webpage that emphasizes flood insurance. She offers regular training to Realtors on how to find the applicable flood zone for a property so buyers can insure for flood risk. Foster is also heavily involved with other floodplain management professionals. She is the director-at-large for the Florida Floodplain Managers Association and she co-leads the Tampa Bay Regional CS Working Group. Nomination applications for the 2018 CRS Award for Excellence can be found here and must be submitted before Aug. 31, 2018.

The Cooperating Technical Partners program launched the **CTP Recognition Award** in 2017 to award high-performing CTPs for their efforts in project management, communications best practices and the development of tools and resources. This year the Kentucky Division of Water won the award, with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources receiving honorable mention. KDOW won for its enhanced traditional communications and outreach activities that embrace the use of technology (virtual reality, iPads, web tools, etc.) to communicate flood risks. KDOW also developed the Kentucky Water Maps Portal as a singular source of water-based information for the state. Georgia DNR created a resourceful and powerful website focused on community outreach providing immediate access to community guidebooks, toolkits, tutorials, outreach templates and videos.
The Union of Concerned Scientists released a new report June 18, which examines the impact of worsening tidal flooding caused by sea level rise on coastal real estate in the lower 48 states. As many as 311,000 coastal homes with a collective market value of about $117.5 billion today are at risk of chronic flooding within the next 30 years—the lifespan of a typical mortgage. Roughly 14,000 coastal commercial properties assessed at a value of roughly $18.5 billion also are at risk during that timeframe. By the end of the century, homes and commercial properties currently worth more than $1 trillion could be at risk. As many as 2.4 million homes—roughly the equivalent of all the homes in Los Angeles and Houston combined—valued at approximately $912 billion and 107,000 commercial properties assessed at $152 billion, could be at risk.

Using property data from real estate company Zillow and peer-reviewed methodology for estimating chronic flooding risk, the analysis identifies the number of coastal properties at risk of chronic inundation, the present-day value of these properties at the zip code level, and their current contribution to the property tax base.

In the report, UCS underscores that there is hope. If the global community takes bold action to adhere to the goals of the Paris Agreement of capping warming below 2°C and land-based ice loss is limited, its analysis finds that by the year 2060 the number of homes at risk of chronic inundation would be reduced by nearly 80 percent.

Identifying and reorienting the principal policies and market drivers of risky coastal development is a necessary and powerful way to move the nation toward greater resilience. And the report identifies specific federal policies that can be improved, from reforming flood standards and mapping, to pre-disaster hazard mitigation, to making post-disaster investments that reduce risk. The U.S. must also work with other nations to cut carbon emissions aggressively to slow the pace and limit the magnitude of sea level rise.

**UCS Mapping tool**
Interactive map: [https://arcg.is/1aXHrb0](https://arcg.is/1aXHrb0)

**Additional Materials**

**DATA**
NOAA Science Seminar series: Climate Science Special Report

NOAA, in conjunction with the U.S. Global Change Research Program, is offering eight, free webinars that will focus on the Fourth National Climate Assessment. The series began in July, but there are five classes still available in August. Click here to see all the webinars available, along with registration information. All webinars will be held from noon to 1 p.m. ET.

USACE Launches Updated National Levee Database

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers launched an updated, more user-friendly version of the National Levee Database June 5. The NLD provides USACE personnel, local levee sponsors and owners, flood risk managers, emergency managers and community members with visualization and search capability of levee systems nationwide. It is a dynamic, living database that includes information such as levee location, condition and risk assessment findings.

Incredible graphic of 2017 disaster responses by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which appeared in this newsletter: https://operations.erdc.dren.mil/Flood/pdfs/FRM-1807.pdf ...
The rising costs of flood disasters make it clear that changes to our current tactics for managing flood risks and the costs of flood disasters are needed. The growing economic impacts and social costs of devastating floods are not acceptable. Coastal communities are on the front line of climate change, increased storms and hazardous flooding. Motivated by experiencing the disruptions and costs associated with these events, communities are getting more serious about hazard mitigation in all its forms.

We need to stimulate wiser risk-informed land use planning, building codes and resource protection to realize a more secure and vibrant future. Programs like CRS can reward such leadership and should encourage others to act similarly.

A research road map informed by floodplain management experts and community leaders would provide a vital link between government officials and the research community. The road map would guide researchers from multiple disciplines to provide more compelling evidence of the costs and benefits of investing in mitigating flood hazards. It would facilitate addressing other critical questions necessary to build broad sustained support for building community resilience.

Others wishing to participate in or be informed about the research road map as this effort continues should contact Shannon Cunniff at scunniff@edf.org. Read the full paper here.
Congressional Research Service Takes a Deep Look into Private Flood Insurance & the NFIP

The report describes the current role of private insurers in U.S. flood insurance, and discusses barriers to expanding private sector involvement. The report considers potential effects of increased private sector involvement in the U.S. flood market, both for the NFIP and for consumers. Finally, the report outlines the provisions relevant to private flood insurance in the House and Senate NFIP reauthorization bills. Read the full report here.

Great news! The PowerPoints of presentations from #ASFPM2018 are now ready for viewing. And as soon as the videos are ready, we will let you know via our social media sites. Please note this page can only be accessed by people who attended the conference. You should have received an email with the password. If you haven’t, please contact jenny@floods.org.

Job Corner

Check out these career opportunities on ASFPM’s job board. Visit our job postings here, and if you’re an employer and want to post an opening, it’s FREE!

- Atkins in Denver is looking for a water resources engineer. Actually, Atkins is hiring for lots of positions all over the country.
- An environmental protection specialist in floodplains is needed with the DC Department of Energy and Environment.
- Engineering Resource Associates in Warrenville, Illinois is hiring a water resources engineer.
New Faces at ASFPM, and One Familiar Face

With the departure of Kait Laufenberg and Diane Brown’s retirement, we’ve hired Gigi Trebatoski as our new chapter and ASFPM Foundation coordinator. She came to ASFPM with a diverse background in administrative support, which includes grants management and budget analysis in state government, as well as previous experience working with nonprofits and foundations. Trebatoski will serve as the EO liaison with ASFPM chapters and the foundation board. She has a BA in political science, is an artist and has had a lifelong interest in wetlands ecology, which led her to live for a while near the Everglades and work as an eco-tourist guide in the Pantanal in Brazil.

Haley Briel, a Toledo, Ohio native, works with ASFPM’s Flood Science Center as a research specialist. She has spent her professional life approaching water-related topics through a variety of lenses, from her time as the environmental outreach coordinator for Wofford College’s Thinking Like a River program, to more recently as a program and policy analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Briel is most interested in developing comprehensive flood strategies that incorporate not only engineered solutions, but also considers the social and health needs of a community. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in earth and environmental science from Vanderbilt University, and two Master’s degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in urban and regional planning and water resources management.

Kevin Currie, ASFPM’s training and e-learning coordinator since July 2018, works with staff, volunteer leadership, members and chapters to identify training needs. He is responsible for managing, developing and deploying ASFPM’s comprehensive training program. This is his second term of employment with ASFPM, having previously worked for the association from 2012-2015 as our membership coordinator. He received his BA in political science from the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire in 2010.

Say hello to ASFPM’s newest floodplain manager Isaiah Maxwell Berginnis, son of our Executive Director Chad Berginnis and his wife Kimberley. He was born June 16, which sadly meant his father had to cancel his trip to our national conference in Phoenix. But you can see by the look on little Isaiah’s face that he’s already considering revolutionary reforms to the NFIP reauthorization.

If you have a story you’d like to share with ASFPM newsletter readers, contact:
ASFPM Public Information Officer
Michele Mihalovich at michele@floods.org.
Upcoming ASFPM Conferences

Save the Date!
February 11 to 14, 2019
Kingston Plantation, Embassy Suites
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
costalgeotools.org

Building on the past to create a better future.

CONFERENCE HOST: ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS
Deputy Director Report – Ingrid D. Wadsworth

Our annual national conference in June is behind us, and a special thanks to the Arizona team who were everywhere to help and assist. It’s only 10 short months to our next one in Cleveland. Flood Fest and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame are waiting for you. Rock on! New at this year’s conference was the ASFPM Engage Pavilion. This was a large island where we had demos of products, staff to answer questions and goodies to give out, like CFM lapel pins. There were ottomans for sitting a spell and discussions too. It was such a hit, we will bring it to #ASFPM2019. And our staff always enjoys interacting and learning from attendees.

So much of our annual cycle begins and ends with conference. The conference is where our 70+ volunteers submit their “year in review” status reports, which are excellent sources on what’s important and what’s happening around the country (officer reports; regional and chapter director reports; committee reports can be found on each committee page). The board has new leaders too, as the spring elections yield new directors on rotating cycles—odd regions and chapter districts in odd years, and the same with evens. Committee co-chairs and Certification Board of Regents serve continuing 1-year terms. All of these dedicated folks can be found on our board sheet.

From the executive office, we also produce an annual status report, called the EO Report. And new this year, we were proud to print the long-version and infographic for the ASFPM Annual Report (2017). One of the biggest tasks of the board is to approve the annual “Goals & Objectives.” This document sets out the 1-year goals for the association. This, and many of the documents, are available on our website. So as we begin another fiscal year, and a new cycle, we thank you for the opportunity to serve. As always, feedback is always appreciated.

Best,
Recently, FEMA put out a “Profiles in Resilience” video about Leon Valley, Texas. What got me excited most was when Fire Chief Luis Valdez said, “We had to educate ourselves first,” before tackling the city’s flood issues. He decided to study and became a CFM. Through that training, preparation and the continuing education required to maintain his CFM, Valdez was able to use what he learned to work with others in the community to mitigate floods using a variety of techniques, obtain grants and get the whole community involved. We would love to feature your CFM story. If you have one, please contact our Public Information Officer Michele Mihalovich at michele@floods.org. You don’t have to write the story yourself if that’s not your strong suit. She’d be more than happy to interview you as an alternative.

While there are many reasons people become CFMs, one of the benefits is finally having all of the topic areas a floodplain manager needs to succeed gathered. While many of us call ourselves floodplain managers, we often come from many disciplines in engineering, urban planning, land use management and others. The CFM exam gathers the major topic areas and tests base knowledge of those, using a wide variety of public resources. It is generally updated annually. Just this past May, the CFM Exam Prep Guide was released. It consists of exam background, technical references used for each exam questions, and a supplemental study guide to brush up on particular topics. We hope you will use it and pass it on to others considering joining our ranks.

As the CFMs in the country top 10,700, the Certification Board of Regents is looking to continually improve the program to keep up with our changing world. This June it released the 5-year strategic plan (read the one-page summary here). This plan will move toward building partnerships and increasing recruitment efforts to build the CFM brand, while also maintaining a challenging and secure CFM exam to meet CFM needs for quality training.

As always, if you are part of the CFM family, thank you. And if you are interested in becoming certified, the challenge awaits, with new resources to help you get there.

Interested in professional development for flood-risk professionals? Do you have ideas that could help enhance and strengthen the floodplain management profession? Get involved by joining ASFPM's Professional Development & Continuing Education Committee. The mission of the PDCEC is to provide vision, leadership and direction to ASFPM members regarding issues affecting the floodplain management profession.
I expect many of your enforcement challenges can be described as “Property owner A did something and property owner B complained.” It’s true of any regulatory program that many people subject to the rules either don’t realize there are requirements, or know and choose to do something without getting a permit. Either way, once the regulatory entity knows about it, action must be taken. In communities that participate in the NFIP, it means enforcing adopted floodplain management regulations.

Most people know permits are needed before they start constructing buildings. Fewer people know they need permits before performing some types of work on existing buildings (haven’t we all heard “I thought the contractor got the permits”). Now, ask a dozen people with property in the SFHA if they have to get permits for other (non-building) activities on their land, and I’ll bet everyone will say no.

Consider this scenario: Property owner A and property owner B, both in flood Zone AE, share a backyard lot line. Property owner A removed trees and undergrowth in the backyard and brought in a large quantity of fill. No surprise, property owner B is concerned the dirt will push more water onto her property. After some online research, owner B discovers a FEMA publication she thinks indicates filling in the SFHA is illegal and calls City Hall.

Now, if you know your floodplain management regulations, the first thing you’ll think of is the definition for “development,” which specifically includes “any manmade change to improved or unimproved real estate…filling, grading, paving…or any other land disturbing activities.” So that clears that up – it’s not illegal to place fill, but filling does require permits and placing fill without a permit is a violation. Like all violations, that doesn’t mean a permit can’t be issued. It just means the community must examine the unauthorized work and evaluate it against the requirements.

The next step is figuring out which requirements apply. Those of you in riverine communities should immediately ask whether the properties are in a floodway. If that’s the case, the requirements for floodway encroachments must be satisfied to determine whether the fill can remain (floodway encroachment analyses evaluate the impact of encroachments on water surface elevations).

Let’s assume neither property A where the filling occurred, nor property B, is in the floodway. The next question is whether there’s anything in the floodplain management regulations that applies to the placement of fill not used to elevated buildings. Perhaps more important, what would you look at if there aren’t specific provisions in your regulations? Let’s break it down, with example language from Florida’s model floodplain management ordinance.

What’s supposed to be shown on plans submitted for permits? Even when surveyed topography or preparation by an engineer isn’t required, plans should have enough detail to illustrate the
work, show the area impacted, property lines and locations of existing buildings. Some communities allow owners to provide this detail on a sketch, with distances between measurable features noted. Florida’s model ordinance also requires the following:

- Location, extent, amount and proposed final grades of any filling, grading or excavation.
- Where the placement of fill is proposed, the amount, type and source of fill material; compaction specifications; a description of the intended purpose of the fill areas; and evidence that the proposed fill areas are the minimum necessary to achieve the intended purpose.

**What about adequate drainage?** Most communities have ordinances that specifically require adequate drainage to reduce exposure to flood hazards, although that phrasing may appear only in requirements for subdivisions or Zone AO/AH. If your ordinance doesn’t specifically address impacts of development on drainage, look to the overall intent. You probably have a purpose or intent section that includes some or all of the following phrases: “...minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flooding...appropriate construction practices in order to prevent or minimize future flood damage...manage filling, grading, dredging, mining, paving, excavation, drilling operations, storage of equipment or material, and other development which may increase flood damage or erosion potential...” These broad objectives give communities enough authority to look at adverse impacts on other properties, even if there are no explicit requirements.

**What about specific requirements for fill?** Some communities have specific requirements for fill used to elevate buildings, such as compaction specifications, but few have requirements for fill placed for other purposes. Very few are like Florida’s model, which requires “evidence that the proposed fill areas are the minimum necessary to achieve the intended purpose.” This should preclude dumping fill just for the purpose of getting rid of it. Importantly, it also helps deal with the property owner who allows contractors to dump a load now and then, until voila! there’s enough filled area to put buildings on top (perhaps ignoring the requirements for compaction, clean fill, etc.). For specific requirements for fill not used to support buildings, Florida’s model also includes:

303.5 Limitations on placement of fill. Subject to the limitations of this ordinance, fill shall be designed to be stable under conditions of flooding including rapid rise and rapid drawdown of floodwaters, prolonged inundation, and protection against flood-related erosion and scour. In addition to these requirements, if intended to support buildings and structures (Zone A only), fill shall comply with the requirements of the Florida Building Code.

Failure to enforce adopted regulations can cause communities any number of headaches. We’ve all heard stories of the local official not exactly paying attention to the details, perhaps with a little “political” influence. These days, that’s just as likely to end in legal hot water as not, especially in states where building officials and inspectors are licensed. Be aware communities that fail to enforce their floodplain management regulations can be sanctioned by FEMA, starting with probation (imposes a surcharge on NFIP flood insurance policyholders) and resulting in suspension if the communities refuse to resolve problems.
What’s a good way to minimize liability for failure to enforce? Knowledge, as they say, is power. A good first step for any floodplain administrator is to become a Certified Floodplain Manager. But what about other staff in your community, including permit intake technicians, plans reviewers and inspectors? What else do they say? A little knowledge goes a long way. By that I mean you don’t need to wait for a FEMA or state training course to teach other community staff all the ins and outs of floodplain management. Those other staff don’t need that level of detail (and usually can’t take that much time away from the job). But you can do it! You can prepare a few 45-minute-long sessions to go over key points they should know. For example, inspectors naturally focus on inspecting permitted development. They drive all over the community to get to sites with issued permits. When inspectors have a basic understanding of development subject to the rules, and when they know which areas are SFHAs (or have access to GIS layers showing SFHAs), they can report back when they see unpermitted activities.

Sample Ordinance Language

Inspections. The floodplain administrator shall inspect development that is not subject to the Building Code, including buildings and structures exempt from the Building Code. The floodplain administrator shall inspect special flood hazard areas to determine if development is undertaken without issuance of a permit.

Submit your own items or suggestions for future topics to column editor Rebecca Quinn, CFM, at rcquinn@earthlink.net. Comments welcomed! Explore back issues of the Floodplain Manager’s Notebook.

Grant Opps…

Just a reminder to bookmark the Florida Climate Institute’s website for a comprehensive list of funding opportunities. It’s a fabulous resource.
FEMA News You Can Use

FEMA Issues 2017 Hurricane Season After-action Report
The unprecedented scale, scope and impacts of the complex combination of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria tested capabilities FEMA has developed and improved since Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. Following the 2017 hurricane season, FEMA conducted an after-action review of the agency’s preparations for, immediate response to, and initial recovery operations for hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. The report captures transformative insights from a historic hurricane season that will help the agency, emergency management community and the nation chart the path into the future.

FEMA Launches Podcast Channel
If you haven’t had a chance to listen to a FEMA podcast yet, why not start with one from David Maurstad, FEMA’s assistant administrator for federal insurance? He discusses how although floods are the most common natural disaster in our nation, less than 50 percent of homes in the highest risk areas across the country are insured against them and how to close the insurance gap.

Podcast: Waverly, Indiana – Transforming a Community
How do you move a whole town out of harm’s way while preserving the town’s history and keeping it as a functional community space? FEMA visited Waverly, Indiana, a small riverside town that endured repeated flooding for more than 100 years. By 2005, state and local officials began to address the problem, and over the last decade it has transformed into a living history park with restored and reclaimed historical structures, walking paths, canoe/kayak portage sites and other amenities. Learn how the community transformed its landscape with FEMA hazard mitigation grants and additional state, local and private sector funding. Listen to the podcast or visit the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Communications webpage to read the feature story.

How 21 U.S. Communities Mitigated Flood Risk
Have you heard of Flood Economics? Powered by The Economist Intelligence Unit and FEMA, this socio-economic analysis focuses on 21 communities across the nation and how they benefited from flood mitigation action. Learn more here.

Wondering about everything ASFPM accomplished in 2017? Check out our annual report and infographic!
What’s the ASFPM Foundation been up to?

The ASFPM Foundation is working extremely hard to help the floodplain management community better understand the value we bring as a sister organization to ASFPM. We’ll accomplish this through stronger communications over the coming year by the ASFPM Foundation Board of Trustees about our vision and mission:

FOUNDATION VISION STATEMENT:

The ASFPM Foundation is dedicated to reducing the risk and impacts of floods on people and communities.

FOUNDATION MISSION STATEMENT:

The ASFPM Foundation serves as the catalyst for ASFPM, its chapters and members to advance projects, education and policy initiatives that promote reduced flood risk and resilient communities.

To accomplish our vision and mission, we have defined a number of goals and have set in motion specific actions defined in the ASFPM Foundation’s 2018 Strategic Plan.

2018 FUTURE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT RECOGNIZED AT ASFPM 2018

In 2017, the ASFPM Foundation established the Future Leaders Scholarship. This two-year scholarship will provide funding for college tuition and expenses up to $25,000 each year, to the successful recipient who will advance flood risk management research, and practice through his/her studies. Jesus Mulgado is the first-ever recipient of the scholarship (for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years). Mulgado attended the ASFPM annual national conference in Phoenix this June and spoke at the Tuesday Luncheon (we'll have a video of his inspirational address soon and share it with you all). He attends the University of Arizona in Tucson, is studying...
biosystems engineering, and works as an intern at Pima County Flood Control District. The next Future Leaders Scholarship will be awarded for the 2020/21 school year. Applications will be available in late 2019 for sophomores moving into their junior and senior years of undergraduate study. If you would like to donate to this scholarship, click here.

**ASFPM 2018 IN PHOENIX YIELDS DONATION SUCCESS FOR ASFPM FOUNDATION**

Each year, the ASFPM annual national conference presents an important opportunity for the ASFPM Foundation to tell its story. We explain what we do as an organization, what benefits we provide, and our ongoing commitment to do whatever it takes to promote reduced flood risk and resilient communities. This year was no exception, and we want to thank each and every flood-risk professional for your financial contributions to the foundation that allows us to continue to do good work. At this year’s conference we received $63,072 in donations. This includes $4,338 from the silent auction, $4,040 from the live auction, and the rest is from various corporate and individual donations made at the conference. Thank you to the following who donated items for the live auction: Dewberry (two tickets to an All-Star baseball game at Nationals Park in D.C., along with an official game patch and Rawlings authentic on-field baseball and case), AECOM (American Airlines $800 gift card and $100 travel care package), Stantec (Amazon Echo Show, two-pack Netgear Arlo Pro 2 home-security cameras, two-pack TP-Link Smart WiFi plugs and Nest 3rd generation thermostat), and CDM Smith (Quadcopter Drone with a 4K video and still camera). And congratulations to the winning bidders: Brian Kempf, Sally McConkey, Del Schwalls and Tom Schweitzer!

**8TH ANNUAL COLLEGIATE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

This year’s Annual Collegiate Student Paper Competition was integrated as part of the program at the 2018 ASFPM annual national conference in Phoenix. The goals of this program are to encourage student engagement in floodplain management topics and to identify talented individuals with the potential to make lasting contributions to floodplain management’s body of knowledge. In January 2018, two students were invited to present full papers at the conference. Winning first place with a $1,000 scholarship was Pamela Reber with the University of Washington-Seattle. She presented her paper titled “The Case for a Floodplain Enhanced Rating System: Has the Time Come for an ASFPM Accreditation Program?” Winning second place with a $500 scholarship was Simone Domingue, PhD candidate with the Department of Sociology at the University of Washington. Congratulations to Pamela and Simone!
of Colorado-Boulder. Her paper was “Who Knows What Comes Tomorrow? A Case Study of Disaster Resilience in Boulder County, Colorado.” Congratulations to both for their academic commitment to furthering the floodplain management profession – well done!

HERE ARE YOUR 2018 ASFPM FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES & ASSOCIATES

2018 ASFPM Foundation Executive Board of Trustees L-R: Don Mcvoy, Jeff Sparrow, Vince Dicamillo, Bo Temple, Joe Bruno, Diane Brown, Ann Terranova, Tim Hillier, JoAnn Howard, Ceil Strauss, Jerry Sparks, Sam Medlock, Doug Plasencia, Matt Koch, Brad Anderson, Marko Bourne, Dale Lehman, Larry Larson, Elise Ibendahl, Mark Forest and Molly O’Toole. Photo by Michele Mihalovich.

2018 ASFPM Foundation Associates from L-R: George Riedel, Veronica Villalobos-Pogue, Mike Robinson, Terri Turner, Bruce Bender, Jessica Ludy, Alisa Sauvageot, Janice Roper-Graham and JoAnna Wagschal. Photo by Michele Mihalovich.

For more information about the ASFPM Foundation, please visit www.asfpmfoundation.org.
There were a lot of hot topics at this year’s Flood Insurance Committee-National Policy Issues Meeting at ASFPM’s annual national conference, and the 100+° weather was not one of them. While a copy of the presentations can be found on our committee webpage, here are some of the highlights:

**NFIP Updates (John Hintermister-FEMA Underwriting Branch Chief)**
- Not many changes for October 2018 (yay!), so he provided an update on FEMA’s Risk Rating 2.0. Take a look at the very informative slides he provided for details.

**CRS Update (Molly O’Toole – CRS Managing Consultant)**
- 1,486 communities providing discounts to 70% of all NFIP communities!
- Activity 370 - A lender is no longer required on the committee.
- Now have a centralized review of Elevation Certificates.
- Working on 2020 CRS manual – looking to see how CRS can support FEMA’s Moonshots.

**Elevation Certificate Update (Bill Nechamen – ASFPM EC Workgroup Chair)**
- EC expires this November. FEMA put together a workgroup last November that includes ASFPM, surveyor and insurance representatives.
- Minimal changes to the EC form. Several suggested changes to instructions to improve clarity and continuity (and just plain errors). See the presentation for details.

**Base Level Engineering – BLE (Diane Howe – FEMA R6 Risk MAP Lead)**
- BLE is being used more and more to map large areas where no data exists or provide estimated Base Flood Elevations. It can be used for LOMAs as well as a source for BFE on the EC, which will result in a better insurance premium than using no BFE.

**Office of the Insurance Advocate – OFIA (David Stearrett- Director, OFIA)**
- Beneficial outcomes of the OFIA’s efforts were highlighted, with about ¾ of inquiries being insurance related. Also, recommendations to FEMA to improve the program based on common inquiries were presented. Read their Annual Report for more details.

**Proposed NFIP Changes for Agricultural Structures (Erin Cobb – FEMA Floodplain Management Division)**
- Erin provided a teaser to the upcoming Ag Early Bird Session, which was held two days later. FEMA has finished its research and will be issuing draft policy guidance for public comment later this year. Cobb’s Early Bird presentation can be found on our committee’s webpage.

**Private Flood Insurance – Stories from The Field**
- Committee co-chairs shared stories about private flood as well as issues and concerns from the insured perspective as well as the NFIP program perspective. Note that the Congressional Research Service issued a report on barriers to expanding private flood and potential effects, which can be found on our committee’s webpage.
New Business/Next Year’s Goals

- We will be working on next year’s plan. Participants provide comments regarding what the committee could focus on, which included bringing ICC back up, including more on private flood, working more with Realtors, and inviting FEMA Underwriting and National Flood Association to be on our calls.

A lot going on...and we encourage your input and feedback.

Humbly yours,

Bruce Bender and Steve Samuelson
— Your Flood Insurance Committee Co-chairs

Webinar Recording Available on NOAA’s 2018 High Tide Flooding Outlook

The webinar, hosted June 15, included presentations by Dr. Billy Sweet, oceanographer for the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, and Doug Marcy, coastal hazards specialist with NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management. They discussed the new, national flooding thresholds and how they are related to NOAA’s expanding mission around water prediction. • Discussed why the report and number of flood days are different from previous years. • Reviewed inundation mapping products based off of the new, national thresholds. • And explained how to get support with messaging these changes when working with communities tracking and planning for high tide flooding. View the webinar here.

Floodplain Management Training Calendar

For a nationwide listing of floodplain management-related training opportunities, visit ASFPM Online Event Calendar. Looking for training opportunities to earn CECs for your CFM? Check out our event calendar with LOTS of training opportunities listed for 2018! Search the calendar by state, or use the category drop down menu to search by event category. The only events without a state listed in the event title are EMI courses, which are listed with their FEMA course number and are all held in Emmitsburg, MD.
What’s Happening around the Nation?

A collection of the most viewed stories on our Facebook page

Texas—Rain quickly drenched the Houston area July 4, including 6 inches at Hobby Airport. Because of the rain, parts of Harris County, which includes Houston, remain under flash flood warning until July 5, according to the National Weather Service. Read the CNN story here.

Florida—Since permitting rules on living shorelines were eased a little more than a year ago, 34 small living shorelines have been approved or built in Florida, according to USACE figures, with the Destin area east of Pensacola emerging as a hotspot. That’s more than half of the 60 approvals issued nationwide during the same period. The rest were farther west on the Gulf Coast or north along the East Coast, including 13 in the Norfolk area. Read, “As Seas Rise, Americans Use Nature to Fight Worsening Erosion.”

The Nation—Great graphic coastal floodplain managers should share on their websites and with the media as a public service announcement.

Have you heard of Flood Economics? Powered by The Economist Intelligence Unit and FEMA, this socio-economic analysis focuses on 21 communities across the nation and how they benefited from flood mitigation action. Read, “Community case studies—Flood Economics.”

There are at least four potential strategies local governments can use to lower the tax burden of buyouts, according to the Wharton Risk Management and Decision Processes Center. Would any of these work in your community? Read, “Must floodplain buyouts decrease tax revenue?”

Rhode Island—These maps, created with the mapping tool Coastal Environmental Risk Index, are the product of what experts say is one of the most sophisticated models to project future damage from storm surges and sea level rise. Read, “Rising seas, rising stakes: R.I. researchers project future flooding.”

California—Officials from Santa Barbara to San Diego will face an awful choice as the sea rises, a USGS study says: save public beaches enjoyed by millions, or close them off with boulders and concrete walls to armor the shore and stop the waves in a bid to save homes. Read, “California will face a terrible choice: Save cliff-side homes or public beaches from rising seas.”
Implications for the future of flood insurance


Their most notable findings were:
- Flood is insurable—mostly.
- The riskiest areas may not be privately insurable and need aggressive flood-risk reduction.
- Going forward, is competition the best model for the NFIP and the private sector?
- Resilience requires public sector roles.

The National Academy, a congressionally-chartered, independent nonprofit, is conducting one-hour interviews via telephone. Pamela Haze, project director at the National Academy of Public Administration, would like to speak with representatives of non-federal entities who have had experience working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on partnership projects (more specifically Project Partnership Agreements (PPAs) or Local Cooperation Agreements (LCAs)). They want to know about your experience in the development, negotiation and approval of the PPA; your views of the templates or models used by USACE; views on any changes sponsors may have seen in the last 4-5 years; and suggested improvements to the process.

They are also speaking with associations or legal agents who represent these non-federal entities. Haze said, "We are interested in talking with all types of sponsors to get a good representation, including states, counties, water and flood control districts, Indian Tribes, cities, etc. We believe that the more input we can get from sponsors, the better will be our findings and recommendations."

If you're interested in participating in the evaluation, email Haze at phaze@napawash.org. More information available here.
Washington Legislative Report

Meredith R. Inderfurth,
ASFPM Washington Liaison

Busy Congressional Week Leading Into August Recess

The House of Representatives will recess July 26 until Labor Day. The Senate, however, is scheduled to cancel most of its recess and will be in session all month except the week of Aug. 6-10. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell decided on this schedule in order to confirm more judicial and Administration nominees and to make more progress on appropriations measures before the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. There is still some possibility that the Senate schedule could be adjusted.

There are many pieces of legislation in limbo that are of interest to floodplain managers. Probably most importantly for the final week before the House recesses is extension of the National Flood Insurance Program. Its authority is set to expire July 31. The House voted July 25 to pass a simple extension to Nov. 30. A bill has been introduced in the Senate to extend the program until Jan. 31, 2019. It seems likely, however, that the Senate will agree to the Nov. 30 date, given that the House will recess at the end of the week.

A number of appropriations bills are moving forward. Finally, the Homeland Security Appropriations bill was marked up in subcommittee last week and full Appropriations Committee mark-up is underway on Wednesday, July 25 as this article is being written. The Senate already reported its bill out of committee, but it has not yet made it to the Senate floor. These bills are challenging to move because they include funding for the President’s border wall as well as other border issues.

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act is another bill in limbo. It passed the House as part of the Federal Aviation Administration authorization bill. In the Senate, it has been reported out of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, but it is not clear if the bill, or parts of it, will be attached to the Senate’s version of the FAA bill. That bill differs significantly from the House bill. The Senate’s version of the DRRA does not include all of the provisions in the House bill and adds some other provisions. Movement through the Senate and eventual agreement with the House are important steps still ahead.

Another bill in the works is the Water Resources Development Act of 2018. The House passed its version in June. The Senate bill has been reported out of committee, but has not been considered by the full Senate. Although it was originally thought that the Senate would have taken up the bill by now, it has slipped in favor of other claims on Floor time. It could be taken up in the next few weeks and then negotiations between the House and Senate to resolve differences will be necessary.
NFIP Reauthorization

A short-term reauthorization is necessary because the current authorization is set to expire on July 31st and there has been no consensus on a longer term reauthorization including a variety of reform measures. The House passed its five-year reauthorization with reforms (H.R. 2874) last year. The Senate has three versions of reauthorization with reforms but continues to grapple with a number of issues including promotion of the private market for flood insurance, NFIP affordability and the NFIP debt.

On July 24, the House debated S. 1182, an otherwise unrelated bill which included a clean NFIP extension to Nov. 30. A vote on the measure is expected on July 25 and it is expected to pass. House Financial Services Chairman, Jeb Hensarling, is opposing the bill as he prefers another bill, H.R. 6402, introduced by Reps. Royce (R-CA) and Blumenauer (D-OR) which would also extend the program to Nov. 30 but would include some of the reforms passed earlier by the House.

The Senate prefers an extension to Jan. 31. An NFIP extension was attached to the Farm Bill and a Motion to Instruct Conferees was passed to include the extension in an appropriations measure. Neither of those are expected to be finalized before July 31st, however. A stand-alone bill to extend authority to January 31st was introduced by Senator Kennedy (R-LA).

The likelihood is that the Nov. 30 extension will pass in the House and the Senate will agree to it. That means further activity in the Lame Duck session after the elections in November. There could be another short extension or there could be pressure to finalize reform legislation. House Chairman Hensarling is retiring at the end of this congressional session.

Appropriations

The Senate’s Homeland Security Appropriations bill (S. 3109) was reported out of committee but has not yet been taken up on the House floor. It includes $250 million each for flood risk mapping and Pre-Disaster Mitigation. The House Homeland Security Appropriations bill (no number yet) reported out of subcommittee includes $262 million for mapping and $249 for PDM. Those are the amounts enacted for FY18 and are the highest levels ever appropriated for both accounts.

So prospects look promising for both mapping and PDM, but larger differences remain problematic between the House and Senate bills. The Senate bill includes the $1.6 billion the Administration officially requested for the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Later, the president informally requested $5 billion for that purpose and the House bill includes that amount. Given those and other differences and differing budget allocations for the two bills, the final amounts for mapping and PDM won’t be known until both bills have passed and a conference agreement has been reached.

There is some progress in passing other appropriations bills as part of packages known as “mini-buses”. All 12 regular appropriations bills have at least been reported out of committee (after House Homeland Security mark-up), but none of the bills have seen final action or been signed into law. When the House returns in early September, there will only be a few weeks until the end of the fiscal year.
**Disaster Recovery Reform Act**

The House version of the DRRA passed as part of the FAA reauthorization bill, H.R. 4. The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee reported out its version of the DRRA, S. 3041. The Senate intends to pass its own different version of the FAA bill. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Thune (R-SD) has already agreed to add bills dealing with the TSA and the National Transportation Safety Board to his bill, but it is unclear whether or not he will include S. 3041 or parts of it.

ASFPM, along with a number of partner organizations, has written to the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of both the Senate Commerce Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to express strong support for portions of the DRRA that would set aside an amount equivalent to 6% of the costs of a declared disaster for pre-disaster mitigation. That fund would be available to fund grants nationwide. Additionally the letter supports a provision championed by ASFPM to provide for expense reimbursement under EMAC (Emergency Mutual Assistance Compact) for floodplain managers and building code and permitting officials who assist with building inspections and substantial damage assessments after declared disasters. The letter strongly opposes, however, a provision (Section 10) which would allow Governors to request waivers of the Stafford Act’s prohibition of duplication of benefits after a disaster. That provision is also included in the House passed version along with language specifically allowing funds from the Disaster Relief Act to support major Army Corps of Engineers flood control projects.

**Water Resources Development Act**

The House passed its version, H.R. 8, on June 6. The Senate has reported its version, S. 2800, out of committee but it has yet to be taken up on the Senate floor. Reports accompanying the two bills are: H. Rept. 115-708 and S. Rept. 115-294. ASFPM is very concerned about a Section 3210 in the Senate WRDA because it would strike a provision (subsection (e)) included in a previous WRDA requiring flood risk management plans for areas below dams.

All bills referenced can be found by going to [www.Congress.gov](http://www.Congress.gov) and typing in the bill number or title.
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