

**ASSOCIATION OF
STATE FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS**

*Dedicated to
reducing flood losses and
protecting floodplains . . .*

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NEWS & VIEWS

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Urgent Action needed on Levee Safety

Calling its proposal for A National Levee Safety Program a “reasonable and prudent investment that can turn the tide” on the burgeoning growth of risk to people and infrastructure, the National Committee on Levee Safety transmitted to Congress on January 15 a program design that was mandated in Title IX of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (known as the National Levee Safety Act). The report is the result of a year of technical, regulatory, and policy evaluation by the committee, which is made up of 23 members that include representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, and other government and private sector entities.

The Committee’s report describes the current levee safety reality of the United States as “stark,” based on uncertainty about the location, performance, and condition of levees nationwide, compounded by decades of lack of oversight, minimal technical standards, and ineffective communication of risks.

Tracing the history that brought the nation to this situation, the committee’s report explains that, in general, the threat of flooding from levees has been ignored because people and policymakers do not understand the risk. This is partly an unintended impact of widespread participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, which for several decades has been designating areas as particularly hazardous if they have a 1% chance of flooding each year. That standard has inadvertently encouraged communities to build just enough flood protection to offset that risk, while ignoring other and residual risks.

The Committee’s recommendations are prefaced by recognition of a need for a broader national flood risk management approach, the benefits of integrating national dam safety and levee safety programs, and call for leveraging levee safety as a critical first step in a national investment in infrastructure.

Observing that, “in some cases, the safest levee is no levee at all,” the Committee sets forth a set of recommendations that, it says, should result not only in a meaningful, comprehensive levee safety program, but also place levees in their appropriate place in an overall flood risk management context—that is, integrated with nationwide programs for dam safety, infrastructure investment, water resources management, flood loss reduction, and environmental protection. The proposed program also acknowledges that levee systems usually share space with natural networks for water conveyance and with critical ecosystems and habitats,

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Levee Safety at Critical Juncture (cont.)

and that accounting for that reality is vital if flood hazards are to be managed effectively.

For many years the Association of State Floodplain Managers has argued for a more vigorous and sustainable approach to the use and maintenance of levees throughout the nation. Although the ASFPM supports most of the Committee's conclusions and many recommendations, it also noted in its review that the report deals with levees as an entity unto themselves with inadequate attention to the connection between land use decisions, flood risk management, and existing or proposed levees. To be sustainable and a sound federal investment, the levee safety approach envisioned in the report needs to be augmented by requirements for investigating alternatives before levees are built or rehabilitated, by incorporating incentives to mitigate flood risk without relying on levees, and by requiring appropriate land use as a condition of federal investments in levees, the ASFPM noted.



FEEMA / Michael Rieger

The Committee's 20 recommendations for a National Levee Safety Program fall into three main categories: (1) leadership via a new National Levee Safety Commission; (2) development of strong levee safety programs in and within all states; and (3) a foundation of well-aligned federal agency programs and processes that would provide appropriate incentives and disincentives.

Among the more salient specific recommendations are these:

- Charge the Corps of Engineers with conducting a one-time inventory and inspection of all non-federal levees nationwide, to develop a baseline database.
- Develop and adopt national levee safety standards, guidelines for tolerable risk, and a classification system based on the hazard potential posed by a levee.
- Include leveed areas on NFIP flood maps.
- Make risk-based flood insurance mandatory in areas behind levees.
- Harmonize levee safety activities with environmental protection.
- Delegate levee safety program responsibility to states, who in turn will involve local governments and others in inspection, evacuation, emergency planning, public awareness efforts, and mitigation measures; and establish a cost-shared grant program to help states and localities build capability to develop and maintain levee safety programs.
- Establish a national levee rehabilitation, improvement, and flood mitigation fund to help repair, modernize, or remove aging levee infrastructure.

Setting up the commission, inspecting the non-federal levees, and establishing state levee safety programs is estimated to cost \$315 million annually over the first five years. The Committee also recommended setting aside \$923 million annually to repair some levees, build stronger levees in certain places, and move people out of floodplains.

Quoted in an Associated Press dispatch, Sam Riley Medlock, Policy and Partnerships Coordinator for the Association of State Floodplain Managers and a member of the Committee, explained that although "it may appear at first blush to be costly . . . we have to include the cost of not taking action. We cannot afford to ignore this hazard any longer."

➤➤➤ Access the draft 104-page report, *Recommendations for a National Levee Safety Program: An Involved Public and Reliable Levee Systems*, at http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/ncls/docs/NCLS-Recommendation-Report_012009_DRAFT.pdf. The ASFPM's comments are posted on the website at <http://www.floods.org/NewUrgent/Levee.asp>.

Musings from the Chair

Al W. Goodman, Jr., CFM

A Walk through the Looking-glass

As the title of this missive implies, I actually stepped through “Alice’s looking-glass” on January 5th and returned to my home environment on the 10th, after a journey of 18,605 miles.

I was lucky enough to join the American delegation on the first humanitarian assistance project to India, funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, which took place in the city of Hyderabad.* This workshop was organized by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, with the assistance of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and hosted by the Indian National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The NDMA is a new organization, created after 2005 by the Indian government, perhaps best described in U.S. terms as a combination of FEMA and the Corps of Engineers.



The aim of the workshop was to provide a U.S. contribution to the development of the Indian government’s national guidelines for management of urban flooding. The first three days were spent in the field, visiting various problem areas in the Hyderabad area. *[A fascinating city of seven million people, it is also called “Cyberabad” by the locals in reference to its prominence in the digital/electronic world. I believe several international corporations have a presence there.]* It was an interesting mental exercise, comparing our nation’s “progress” of the last 40-some years to this initial attempt by the Indians to establish a policy for managing urban flood risk.

The last two days in-country were spent listening to presentations by both the Indians and the Americans. My 45-minute talk on the federal, state, and local roles in flood risk management caused quite a stir among the various government and academic officials present. Their questions afterwards included “tell me how to make a flood map,” “when did your government decide it couldn’t control floods?” and “how do you deliver emergency supplies by helicopter without losing the items in flood waters?” The group was also interested in our CFM® program—yet another sign that flood risk management has truly begun to move into a recognized discipline in its own right.

Unfortunately, I missed the last day of talks, due to illness. All 10 of the Americans present, including the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, were stricken with gastrointestinal problems at various times throughout the week. *[I understand from my fellow travelers that the last day went well, with accolades all around. I myself received a nice desk clock from our hosts and reciprocated with a Mississippi Emergency Management Agency pen and pencil set.]*

Standing on a floodplain that was first settled in 500 B.C. tends to give you some mental pause. *[As introspective as I tend to be, it would have been easy to mentally pass through the gate in the wall of the ancient fortress of Golconda and disappear into the mists of time.]* The needs of the ancients were no different from those that confront the locals today: land and resources that aren’t adversely affected by flooding. There we stood, contemplating the exact same problem, in the exact same location, separated by more than two millennia of time. The original inhabitants’ policies and engineering programs could only be understood to a limited degree, by observation of the terrain and by transposing yourself into that era, a difficult task indeed. *[Whoa, I’m boarding my own train of transcendental thought here; let’s go back to 2009.]* What lessons can be learned, or relearned, on the grounds of the Golconda Fortress?

Many say that the functional distance that exists between policy and practice is often too great to bridge. I submit that an argument for good public policies/practices that identifies and reduces residual risk, no matter how polemic that argument might be, is worth the effort. With the advent of a new federal administration, your

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* Hyderabad (pronounced \’hī-də-rə-,bad\ in English, and rendered in Telugu script as హైదరాబాద్), is the capital city and most populous city of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. An American “sister city” is Orlando, Florida.

Musings from the Chair (cont.)

Association is and has been heavily engaged with these new players on the federal public stage. So as not to simply list our efforts, I direct you to the ASFPM's website for the various letters and testimony that have been generated in recent weeks. We believe that we are steering the correct heading through these difficult waters. Together, let's see what we can accomplish in 2009. Yes, this is yet another plug for you to get involved in our policy committees and in your state chapters. Without volunteers, your Association will fail to reach its goals and objectives. Everyone's talents can and will be used—just give it a try.

Oh, one last item: please make your reservations for the Orlando conference in June! It promises to be an excellent venue for the world's largest gathering of flood risk management experts and the room block will go fast. ■

GREEN WORKS TO REDUCE FLOOD LOSSES

33rd Annual Conference of the
Association of State Floodplain Managers
June 7–12, 2009 • Orlando, Florida



Join the ASFPM and hundreds of floodplain management professionals from throughout the United States and abroad in exploring the many issues and problems associated with reducing flood damage, making communities more sustainable, and managing floodplains and their fragile natural resources. The ASFPM annual meeting will feature technical presentations, panel discussions, field trips, the Certified Floodplain Manager exam, business meetings, training, networking opportunities, exhibits, and more.

Nominations for awards are due March 1st. See <http://www.floods.org/awards/nomination.asp>.

Access registration information at <http://www.floods.org/orlando>.

Insurers must encourage Mitigation, Lloyds says

Lloyds of London, the world's leading insurance market, is encouraging insurers and others worldwide to foster changes in individual and collective behavior to manage future coastal flood risk in the face of climatic changes. In a newly issued report, *Coastal Communities and Climate Change: Maintaining Future Insurability*, Lloyds notes that poor land use policies and increasing urbanization are key drivers of rising flood risk in the world today. Many coastal property owners rely on insurance to help manage that risk, but there are widespread concerns about the future affordability and availability of property insurance in coastal areas when sea levels rise and other impacts of climate change occur. If no action is taken, losses from coastal flooding for high risk properties could double by 2030.

However, the report maintains, losses for high-risk properties could be reduced by 70% through the application of a range of protective measures from elevation to retrofitting to regulatory zoning. The insurance industry can encourage such adaptation by providing further financial incentives. For instance, they can set policy premiums at a level that more closely reflects the risk to which individual properties are exposed. If mitigation measures are not taken, insurance will become more expensive and less available.

"The world cannot insure its way out of climate change," Lloyds says, but "insurance is an effective way of managing individual risk that cannot be dealt with by adaptation." A handful of case studies illustrates the concepts Lloyd's and its partners are promoting, and the report gives the layperson a glimpse of the complexities facing insurers in the wake of uncertain risk..

➤➤➤ Read the report at http://www.lloyds.com/NR/rdonlyres/33811190-E508-4065-BB15-92EF5F3DFD41/0/360_Coastalcommunitiesandclimatechange_final.pdf.

Is Change in the Wind?

There is a new sense of happening in Washington, D.C., lately. I was there the day after the inauguration, and again a week later. Energy levels and optimism are high, as is the level of discussion on many issues of interest to our members.

Whether this translates into action, whether the new Administration's appointees bring strong support for long-term solutions and can help Congress see the need for such approaches— all remains to be seen.

In my testimony to the House of Representatives on the Economic Stimulus package (written version on the ASFPM website) I pointed out that our past approach to building and repairing infrastructure often ignored hazard mitigation. As a result, those projects were not done with an eye toward long-term risk, resulting in taxpayers' often paying to rebuild the same infrastructure. To emphasize the impact of not doing it right, I used the following information, which members may wish to use in their own discussions:

We've been asked to discuss flood control (also called flood loss reduction) as part of the infrastructure in the stimulus package. I'd like to discuss the opportunities and pitfalls flood control can present.

Flooding is the nation's single most frequent and most costly hazard, increasing to an average of over \$6 billion per year by the end of the 20th century. In 2008, the second-highest cost disaster year globally, the U.S. federal government declared 52 flood-related disasters that qualified states, communities, and citizens for billions in unbudgeted federal dollars—with a good share of that disaster relief going to rebuild damaged infrastructure. Three events alone exceeded flood damage above that \$6 billion average: Ike at \$30 billion, Gustav at \$15 billion, and the Midwest floods at over \$6 billion. As you recall, in 2005 Katrina alone cost over \$150 billion. This trend so far in the 21st century tells us we cannot ignore natural hazard considerations when building and rebuilding infrastructure.

As a nation, we cannot afford to continually fund the cycle of build, flood, bailout, flood, and bailout over and over again. We need to turn this major stimulus funding into an opportunity to break this devastating cycle.

As I write this, the Senate has just developed its version of the stimulus package, which is somewhat more expansive than that of the House. What is in the final bill we'll have to see. Since these projects must be "shovel ready," and must have already cleared economic and environmental considerations, don't expect to see anything especially innovative. These are all projects that were planned long ago, have been in the pipeline, or were already under construction but not finished.

Beyond the first consideration of stimulating the economy, Congress has many other key policy and program considerations to address this year. We all hope that they can manage to address them in a bipartisan manner, but the House vote on the stimulus package was not encouraging in that respect.

When we are asked, your Association will continue to provide comments based on the wisdom and expertise of our members on the broad range of issues related to the costs and suffering from flooding in this nation. Our continued emphasis will be on the various approaches communities and citizens can use to avoid worsening those impacts, and if done right, actually begin to reduce the impacts. I often receive emails from members with suggestions the Association can consider. Those suggestions are truly appreciated—no one of us has all the answers, but our collective expertise is monumental. ■

CRS Activities set for Evaluation

Background

The Community Rating System (CRS) was initiated in 1990 to recognize and reward communities that implement floodplain management activities above and beyond the minimum criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In return for doing those advanced activities, residents of CRS communities receive reductions in their flood insurance premiums. These reductions range from 5% to 45% annually, depending on the rating the community earns by carrying out CRS-qualified tasks.

Today, 1,095 of the 20,000 communities in the NFIP are in the CRS. Those communities include 66% of all the flood insurance policies in force in the nation. Altogether, these policyholders are saving \$220 million annually with their CRS discounts, compared to what they would pay for flood insurance in non-CRS communities. Further, all residents of CRS communities—whether they have flood insurance or not and even if they do not live in floodprone areas—benefit from the CRS-credited actions those communities take, which improve public safety, reduce property losses and human suffering, enhance open space, minimize economic disruption, and protect the environment. The premium reductions and other benefits brought by the CRS make it critical to ensure that each of the credited activities is properly carried out by the communities that are awarded pertinent credit, and also to document that the activities implemented do reduce flood damage or further other CRS goals.

Looking Ahead

To do this and to further improve the CRS, in 2007 the CRS Task Force and FEMA released new, revised goals for the CRS:

- Reduce flood damage to insurable property;
- Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP; and
- Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

The CRS Task Force and FEMA also devised a new CRS Strategic Plan, setting out five objectives and several strategies per objective to accomplish the CRS goals. Implementation of the CRS Strategic Plan (summarized in the chart) will span federal fiscal years 2008–2013.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM, 2008-2013	
Objectives	Strategies
1. Ensure that all CRS credits are appropriate and fully earned.	1.1 Ensure that all credited activities properly reflect the CRS goals. 1.2 Ensure that all CRS communities are fully compliant with NFIP criteria. 1.3 Improve the CRS verification process.
2. Support FEMA's initiatives to reduce repetitive flood losses.	2.1 Improve CRS incentives and opportunities to encourage communities to reduce repetitive flood losses. 2.2 Use the CRS to support other efforts to reduce repetitive flood losses.
3. Encourage communities to improve floodplain management continually.	3.1 Develop a set of incentives for implementing each CRS-credited activity. 3.2 Review the CRS incentives in light of the CRS goals. 3.3 Help communities manage their CRS programs more effectively.
4. Support the CRS Strategic Plan with appropriate procedures and adequate resources.	4.1 Develop a CRS marketing plan. 4.2 Develop a method to evaluate the flood losses avoided through the CRS. 4.3 Improve partnerships with CRS stakeholders. 4.4 Improve the operations of the CRS Task Force. 4.5 Provide the tools and resources needed to implement the CRS Strategic Plan.
5. Implement a knowledge management plan for the CRS.	5.1 Develop a strategy for succession planning. 5.2 Ensure that there are sufficient qualified and motivated staff in both FEMA and ISO.
<i>Note: the objectives and strategies support the three CRS goals, but not necessarily in a one-to-one relationship.</i>	

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CRS Activities to be Evaluated (cont.)

ASFPM Involvement

The CRS Task Force has developed eight projects to pursue the Strategic Plan’s objectives and strategies. The biggest project is to systematically evaluate each of the 18 credited activities in the CRS over the next six years. The evaluation will examine various measures that are implemented by CRS communities—such as mapping, regulatory standards, public outreach, open space protection, and others—and develop ways to measure how well the techniques are carried out.

Stakeholder input during these activity evaluations is paramount. The ASFPM has responded to this need by asking its policy committees to designate liaisons for this effort and to act as conduits and sounding boards for member interest in improving the CRS activities. The liaisons will represent the ASFPM committees, review draft reports, and in general provide technical input as the evaluation progresses. The table below identifies the liaisons for the first activities to be evaluated.

CRS Activity/ Credits	ASFPM Committee	ASFPM Liaison	Contact
330 (Outreach Projects)	Training & Outreach	Jen Marcy, PBS&J	jkmarcy@pbsj.com
350 (Flood Protection Information)	Training & Outreach	Jen Marcy, PBS&J	jkmarcy@pbsj.com
610 (Flood Warning Program)	any interested member	Scott Jackson, USGS	sjackson@usgs.gov
630 (Dam Safety)	Dam Safety Working Group	Les Bond, Chair	lbond@labond.com
Natural functions credits and NPDES	Natural & Beneficial Functions	Burke Lokey, Flood Control District of Maricopa County	BurkeLokey@mail.maricopa.gov
Coastal programs	Coastal Issues	Pam Pogue, URS & Maria Honeycutt, NOAA	Pamela_Pogue@URSCorp.com maria.honeycutt@noaa.gov
Repetitive losses	Mitigation, Floodproofing, other	Michael Powell, Delaware DNR	Michael.Powell@state.de.us

The CRS and the ASFPM’s No Adverse Impact floodplain management approach can complement each other at the local level—one giving communities a philosophical basis for pursuing advanced floodplain management and the other providing an incentive for them to do so. The CRS teams are planning to incorporate NAI ideas and the *NAI Toolkit* into the evaluation process and into the explanatory materials distributed to communities. ASFPM member expertise on NAI and other aspects of the practice of floodplain management is critical to the success of this process.

The results of the activity reviews will be integrated into future editions of the *CRS Coordinators Manual*. The next edition of the *Manual* is scheduled to be published in 2011. Additional CRS activities will be evaluated in the coming years.

➤➤➤ Individuals with interests, comments, and suggestions should contact the appropriate ASFPM liaisons or send their comments to NFIPCRS@ISO.com.

Professional Opportunities

PBS&J wants Water Engineers

The PBSJ Corporation, an employee-owned family of businesses with expertise in engineering, environmental science, architecture, planning, and construction, has multiple opportunities now for an Engineer I (Water Resources) to join its team in Beltsville, Maryland; Marietta, Georgia; or Madison, Wisconsin.

This individual will conduct hydrologic and hydraulic analyses; prepare flood hazard studies for the National Flood Insurance Program; evaluate requests to revise existing flood hazard studies; and act as a technical liaison among various stakeholders. The salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications; full benefits included. Candidates should meet these qualifications:

- B.S. in Civil or Environmental Engineering required (water resources specialization preferred).
- Engineer-In-Training certification required at time of hiring or within 6 months afterwards.
- Knowledge of standard hydrologic and hydraulic models (HEC-HMS, HEC-RAS, XP-SWMM) strongly preferred.
- Knowledge of ArcGIS and HEC-geoRAS strongly preferred.
- Ability to obtain Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) status within one year of hire desired.
- 1 to 3 years work experience since B.S. desired.
- Authorization to work permanently in the United States for any employer.

➤➤➤ See http://www.pbsj.com/YOUR_CAREER/Pages/Job_Search.aspx and search for Requisition #12728. Or, see the other career opportunities displayed on the website.

Three Engineers needed in King County, Washington

The River and Floodplain Management Section of King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks needs three more engineers to join its 33-member team of river engineers, ecologists, scientists, and planners. They support the implementation of projects and programs for the recently formed King County Flood Control Zone District and the King County Flood Hazard Management Plan, through a variety of river and hydraulic engineering design and analyses, field investigations, project scoping, post-flood evaluations, and other duties. Compensation at the Engineer III level is from \$34 to \$43 per hour and at the Engineer IV level \$38–\$48 hourly. Full benefits are offered.

The qualifications for the two levels vary, but in general include

- A bachelor's degree in civil engineering, environmental engineering, water resources, or related field;
- Registration as a professional engineer (P.E.) in the State of Washington (or a state with reciprocity);
- Three years experience in open channel hydraulic engineering or closely related expertise; and
- Five to seven years of professional experience with increasing responsibility for program and project management work.

➤➤➤ The positions close on March 2, 2009. Full job descriptions and application instructions can be found on the King County website. Search for job #08MK7932 for the Engineer III position and #08MK7572 for the Engineer IV at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/ohrm/jobs/>. More information about the Flood Hazard Management Plan is posted at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/flooding/documents/flood-hazard-management-plan.aspx>.

Disaster Stories wanted for new Compilation

Kaplan Publishing is collecting first-person stories about the experiences health care workers have had in floods and other disasters. The compilation will be published as a new anthology, *To The Rescue: Stories from Healthcare Workers at the Scene of Disaster*.

All stories must be true, previously unpublished, and based on personal experience. They should reflect what it was like to interact with those directly affected by the disaster and how disaster response relief work has influenced the health care worker him- or herself.

➤➤➤ A typed, hard copy of the 1,000–2,500 word story must be submitted by February 21, 2009. If your flood disaster work has put you in contact with a health care professional whose story should be shared, let them know they can obtain more information by emailing KaplanStories@live.com.

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Professional Opportunities (cont.)

Mary Fran Myers Scholarship to Hazards Workshop

The Mary Fran Myers Scholarship Committee is accepting applications for the 2009 award, which will provide financial support for one or more deserving hazards managers to travel to and participate in the Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop in Broomfield, Colorado, July 15-18.

The scholarship is supported by contributions from the ASFPM and others, and is awarded in memory of Myers, a dedicated floodplain manager and former Co-Director of the Natural Hazards Center. She worked to foster the integration of scientific research and its application to real-world problems and was particularly concerned that financial need not preclude qualified and enthusiastic professionals from participating in the workshop, the most significant annual gathering of both scientists and research users in the hazards field.

Each year, the Mary Fran Myers Scholarship recipient or recipients are recognized at the workshop and may be asked to serve as panel discussants, where they can highlight their research or practical experiences in the hazards and disasters field. All hazards researchers, students, and practitioners are eligible. However, preference is given to individuals with demonstrated financial need and those who have not previously attended the Hazards Workshop.

➤➤➤ For information, visit the Natural Hazards Center website at <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/awards/myers-scholarship.html>. Applications must be received by March 30, 2009.

Report Card for America's Infrastructure 2009

The Report Card, produced by the American Society of Civil Engineers, is an assessment by professional engineers of the nation's status in 15 categories of infrastructure. In 2009, all signs point to an infrastructure that is poorly maintained, unable to meet current and future demands, and in some cases, unsafe. Since the last Report Card in 2005, the grades have not improved. The ASCE estimates the nation still stands at a "D" average. Deteriorating conditions and inflation have added hundreds of billions to the total estimated cost of repairs and needed upgrades, now at \$2.2 trillion.

The components of particular interest to floodplain managers, and their 2009 grades, are below.

Bridges C More than one-quarter of the nation's bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and the number in urban areas is rising. A \$17 billion annual investment is needed to substantially improve current bridge conditions, compared to the current \$10.5 billion annual expenditure.

Dams D Downstream development continues to increase while the dams themselves are aging. The number of deficient dams has risen to more than 4,000, including 1,819 high hazard potential dams. Over the past six years, for every deficient, high hazard potential dam repaired, nearly two more were declared deficient.

Levees D- More than 85% of the nation's estimated 100,000 miles of levees are locally owned and maintained. The reliability of many of these levees is unknown. Many are over 50 years old and were originally built to protect crops from flooding. With an increase in development behind these levees, the risk to public health and safety from failure has increased [*see related story on the front page of this issue of News & Views*].

Public Parks & Recreation C- Parks, beaches, and other recreational facilities contribute \$730 billion per year to the U.S. economy, support nearly 6.5 million jobs, and contribute to cleaner air and water and higher property values. Despite record spending on parks at the state and local level, the acreage of parkland per resident in urban areas is declining. While significant investments are being made in the National Park Service for its 2016 centennial, the agency's facilities still face a \$7 billion maintenance backlog.

Wastewater D- Aging systems discharge billions of gallons of untreated wastewater into U.S. surface waters each year. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the nation must invest \$390 billion over the next 20 years to update or replace existing systems and build new ones to meet increasing demand.

➤➤➤ See the whole report card at <http://www.asce.org/reportcard/2009/index.html>.

The Insurance Committee's Corner

Group Flood Insurance Policies—Do They Really Help?

Background

When property owners' homes are damaged as a result of a presidentially declared flood disaster, they become eligible for certain types of disaster assistance. If they qualify, they receive a low-interest disaster loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA), with the requirement that if they live in a mapped floodplain or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), they carry flood insurance from that time forward, for the life of the loan.* If they do not qualify for the SBA loan (i.e., due to low income, bad credit, etc.), they are eligible for a grant from the Individual and Household Program (IHP); the amount is dependent on the extent of damage and is currently limited to \$30,300. One of the grant's requirements is to carry flood insurance on that property . . . forever. To help the grant recipients obtain affordable coverage, FEMA created the Group Flood Insurance Program (GFIP) in 1996. A grantee who does not purchase his or her own coverage receives a 3-year GFIP "certificate" whose cost (\$600) is paid for out of the grant. At the end of the GFIP's 3-year period, the property owner (and future owners of the property) must purchase a standard rated flood insurance policy. If they don't, they will not be eligible for disaster assistance for any damage that would have been covered under a flood insurance policy. FEMA does not track whether coverage is maintained after the GFIP expires. Therefore, it is typically only discovered at the time of the next loss.

The Problem

For three years after such a disaster, the grantees have at least some coverage should a flood hit them again; therefore, they are able to recover more quickly and not cost the taxpayer for recovery. However, experience, anecdotal evidence, and investigations by the U.S. Government Accountability Office reveal that a very low percentage of property owners continue their flood insurance coverage after the expiration of the GFIP. For example, according to Al Goodman (NFIP State Coordinator in Mississippi and current Chair of the ASFPM), about 5,000 certificates recently expired in 14 Katrina-hit communities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast; only about 600 still have coverage. This can probably be contributed to the "it won't happen to me again" syndrome as well as not having the money to actually pay the premium. Is FEMA's up-front assistance setting up the low-income grantees to lose out later because they have no coverage when they (or the new property owners) are again flooded? State and local officials definitely want their tax-paying citizens to stay protected and to be able to recover quickly from a flood disaster. What else can be done to keep them protected? What can be done to help ensure that those most at risk maintain flood insurance coverage?

What's the Solution?

In terms of raising awareness of flood insurance, FloodSmart now is testing two mailings to Katrina, Rita, and Wilma GFIP certificate holders (who were not renters). These are in addition to what FEMA sends to them now.** It is too early to tell what the results will be, although early results indicate that more than 10% in Mississippi have purchased a standard policy. This is actually a positive sign, as numbers are suspected to typically be less than 5%. The state and the communities also could take an active role in notifying the grantees of the circumstances of not being covered. Outreach efforts and direct mailings (in plain English) to those dropped policyholders is strongly encouraged, from federal, state, and local levels.

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* In a conversation with SBA staff three years ago, they stated they did not have any way to track compliance for this.

** The GFIP program is managed by the NFIP-Direct contractor, which mails out two annual reminders, a 45-day expiration notice, and an expiration notice.

Insurance Committee's Corner (cont.)

Affordability can be a significant issue that needs to be addressed for those low-income property owners. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has actually purchased Standard Flood Insurance Policies for each recipient after each of their GFIPs have expired . . . and the Commonwealth continues to pay for that coverage at renewal. Most states and communities do not have that type of funding, so perhaps FEMA could agree to reverse the 75%/25% split used for disaster assistance and offer to extend the GFIP, but the state picks up 75%?

So, what's the solution? Send us your thoughts and ideas to the link below. ■

*This column is produced by the ASFPM Insurance Committee.
Send your questions about flood insurance issues to InsuranceCorner@floods.org
and they will be addressed in future issues of the newsletter.*

FPM Law

City Liable for Issuing Erroneous Building Elevations

A Lancaster County, Nebraska, judge has ordered the City of Lincoln to pay \$405,000 to three couples who were given city-issued building permits but not told that their new homes would be in a 10-year floodplain.

According to court records, the city knew well before the families purchased the lots that the area was in a floodplain. A state Department of Natural Resources study of the area, completed and submitted to the city in January 1997, showed a flood-elevation level of 1,208 feet. City employees put the map in the subdivision's file at the Building and Safety office. But when the city issued building permits to the families between 1998 and 2003, each was given a floodplain elevation based on an older, and inaccurate, map from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. When notified of the true flooding risk in 2005, after the homes were built, the three couples brought lawsuits against the city.

Based on the testimony of expert witnesses, the judge took the following factors into account in determining the damages owed: (1) there is a distinction between a home with a dry basement and one that takes on water, regardless of whether it is in a floodplain; (2) a home in a floodplain would be valued differently than the same home in another location (for this area, testimony established the value of floodplain houses at from 5% to 19% lower than non-floodplain houses); and (3) the frequency of flooding probably also would affect what someone would pay for a house.

➤➤➤ Read the full story at <http://journalstar.com/articles/2008/12/27/news/local/doc4956b94348451757377273.txt>

Environmental Fugitives Pursued

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set up a "Most Wanted" website to enlist the public and other law enforcement agencies in tracking down fugitives accused of violating environmental laws and evading arrest.

The website includes photos of the accused, summaries of their alleged environmental violations, and information on each fugitive's last known whereabouts. The alleged violations include filling wetlands, discharging pollutants into the air and water, smuggling ozone-depleting substances, illegally disposing of hazardous waste, and making criminally false statements.

The site also lists EPA's captured fugitives. Earlier this year, EPA found two men who had been on the run for four years. One had escaped prison after being convicted of multiple violations of the Clean Water Act in Montana, stemming from development of a recreational home site and subdivision that caused significant impacts to wetland areas and a stream. The other fled to Mexico after a failed appeal of his conviction for Clean Water Act crimes in 2004 and remained at large until his capture last March in Colorado.

The website has instructions for appropriate action if a suspected fugitive is sighted.

➤➤➤ Visit at <http://www.epa.gov/fugitives>.

FEMA Refines Mapping Procedures

Draft Guidance for Riverine Analyses—An updated version of *Appendix C: Guidance for Riverine Flooding Analyses and Mapping* has been developed by FEMA and is now available for review. The Appendix to *Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners* describes the standards and methods to be applied by Mapping Partners in the performance and presentation of results for riverine flooding analyses and mapping. The revised document will be available for public review and comment through February 20, 2009.

➤➤➤ Access the document and a summary of changes at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3499>. Written comments and suggestions may be submitted by sending an e-mail message to FEMACG&S@floodmaps.net. Alternatively, comments and suggestions may be mailed or faxed to National Service Provider, 3601 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304; (703) 960-9125, Attn: Will Thomas.

Quality Control in DFIRM Production—On June 20, 2007, FEMA issued Procedure Memorandum No. 42 (PM 42), *Quality Control Requirements in the DFIRM Production Process*, to better align quality reviews of Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs). Although PM 42 was largely successful, further alignment of quality review steps was needed to deliver quality flood hazard maps to communities for adoption.

Therefore, in December FEMA issued an update to PM 42, *Implementation*, which will streamline the quality review process required by PM 42, allowing mailing of final maps to communities soon after the issuance of a Letter of Final Determination. The changes became effective January 1, 2009.

Quality Reviews 6 and 7 were the only steps changed by the December revision. The requirements for all other quality review steps remain the same.

➤➤➤ See updated PM 42 at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2723>.

Coastal Mapping Guidance—With the intent to better communicate risk and guide safer development in coastal areas, in December FEMA released Procedure Memorandum No. 50 (PM 50), *Policy and Procedures for Identifying and Mapping Areas Subject to Wave Heights Greater than 1.5 feet as an Informational Layer on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)*.

PM 50 changes the mapping requirements for coastal studies. It states that “for all new detailed coastal study starts in Fiscal Year 2009, the landward limit of waves 1.5 feet in height will be delineated on the FIRMs and included in the DFIRM database as an informational layer with no National Flood Insurance Program floodplain management requirements or special insurance ratings. Communities are encouraged, but not required, to adopt higher standards than the minimum NFIP requirements in these areas.”

The limit will be included on the preliminary FIRM but communities may request, with justification, that it not be delineated on their final FIRMs.

➤➤➤ View PM 50 at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3481>.

During tax season, the question often arises whether money that individuals receive from state and federal governments for disaster assistance counts as personal income.

To this question, FEMA answers with a resounding, “No. Federal and state grants to individuals do not add to their taxable income, as long as the grants are given as assistance to recover from a disaster.” Public Law No. 109-7, enacted in 2005, amended the Internal Revenue Code to exclude qualified disaster mitigation payments from gross income. Nor are grants for disaster recovery assistance counted as income in determining eligibility for any income-tested benefit programs that the U.S. government funds. This means that benefits under Social Security, Medicaid, food stamps, welfare assistance, and Aid to Dependent Children are not reduced when the recipients have also received disaster recovery grants.

A partial exception to this is that improvements to a home made with mitigation grants could still be considered an increase in property value for purposes of calculating property taxes.

➤➤➤ See FEMA's Q&A at <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=46397>.

Washington Report

✧ All referenced legislation and committee reports can be viewed at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. ✧

Accountability Annals

Subsidized Flood Insurance and the National Flood Insurance Fund

In a November report to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the U.S. Government Accountability Office validated several observations that the ASFPM has been making about ways to address the impact “subsidized” properties are having on the financial stability of the National Flood Insurance Program.

FEMA estimates that subsidized properties—those that receive discounted premium rates that do not fully reflect the properties’ actual flood risk—experience as much as five times the flood damage as properties that do not qualify for subsidized rates. Almost one in every four residential policies has subsidized rates that are on average 35-40% of the full-risk rate.

Because of their relatively high loss experience and lower premium rates, the policies receiving subsidized rates have been a financial burden on the program, with total claims exceeding premiums by \$962 million over the period from 1986 through 2004, before the large losses from the 2005 hurricanes.

In its report, *Flood Insurance: Options for Addressing the Financial Impact of Subsidized Premium Rates on the National Flood Insurance Program*, the GAO outlined three familiar options for addressing the financial impact of the subsidized rates, each with advantages and disadvantages:

- Increase mitigation efforts, including making mitigation mandatory. Mitigation could help reduce flood losses, but the increased funding for such efforts could be high.
- Eliminate or reduce subsidies, which could improve the NFIP’s financial stability by increasing the number of policies that more accurately reflect the risk of flooding. However, the resulting higher premium rates could reduce NFIP participation and could meet resistance from local communities.
- Target subsidies based on financial need, which could help ensure that only those in need receive subsidies, with the rest paying full-risk rates. However, it could be challenging for FEMA to develop and administer such a program in the midst of ongoing management challenges.

Although the inherent difficulty in determining premium rates adequate to cover potentially volatile—and at times catastrophic— flood losses means that there always will exist a potential for the program to incur future operating deficits, implementing any or a combination of these options could significantly reduce the adverse financial impact of subsidies on the NFIP.

➤➤➤ Download GAO-09-20 (November 14, 2008; 48 pp) at <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-09-20>.

Other Nations’ Approaches to Hazard Mitigation and Hazard Insurance

At the request of the House Committee on Financial Services, the U.S. Government Accountability office explored the techniques used by other nations to reduce the loss of life and property caused by natural hazards and also to insure against such losses. The GAO studied six industrialized countries with a representative style of government but varied areas, populations, and administrative divisions, and also subject to the natural hazards that face the United States: Australia, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

The GAO report concludes, among other findings, that other countries’ policies to reduce losses from natural hazards are similar to those of the United States. These approaches include hazard assessments, land use planning, building codes, and public awareness campaigns. In all six nations, state-level and local governments have primary responsibility for formulating and implementing policies to reduce hazards losses.

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Washington Report (cont.)

On the insurance topic, GAO found that the six countries use various approaches to insure natural hazard risk and regulate insurers. In all six, natural hazard insurance involved both government and the private sector.

- In four countries with government insurance approaches, property insurance policies include natural hazard coverage at a fixed premium; three of these have a government guarantee.
- Four countries with private insurance approaches have optional coverage of various natural hazards and risk-based premiums.
- Five countries have centralized agencies that regulate the insurance industry.

The report, *Natural Hazard Mitigation and Insurance: The United States and Selected Countries Have Similar Natural Hazard Mitigation Policies but Different Insurance Approaches*, includes an appendix of useful slides with capsulized descriptions of the flood insurance frameworks of each of the six nations.

▶▶▶ Get GAO-09-188R (December 22, 2008, 42 pp.) at <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-09-188R>.

Legislative Report

Economic Stimulus, Nominations, and Organization

The Congressional agenda during this unusual January was focused on developing economic stimulus packages in the House and Senate (H.R. 1 and S. 336, respectively), on hearings and votes associated with Presidential nominees for appointments in the new Administration, and on organization of the 111th Congress. The latter has involved elections of House, Senate, and political party leaders, selection of committee chairmen and ranking minority members, appointment of committee members, adoption of rules for legislative procedures, and meetings to set committee agendas and schedules.

Most years, Congress opens with a quick session in early January and then late in the month to begin legislative business in earnest. This includes receiving the President's proposed budget for the next fiscal year and kicking off the appropriations hearings to examine the agency budget requests. This year is quite different. The Congress met throughout January and has already dealt with many of the organizational issues. Now, House and Senate committees are in the midst of additional organizational meetings with many taking place during the first week of February. The budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2010 to be submitted in February is, this year, only the first draft of a budget. The "real" budget proposal, reflecting the policies and priorities of the new Administration, is expected to be released in late March or, more likely, early April. Only then will the regular appropriations hearings begin in earnest.

Mitigation, Green Infrastructure, and the Stimulus Package

The ASFPM was asked by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to present recommendations for consideration in the stimulus package. Larry Larson, ASFPM Executive Director, gave ASFPM's testimony at a full committee hearing on January 22nd [see "Director's Desk" on p. 5]. He addressed the importance of economic and environmental sustainability associated with any federal investment in infrastructure. He pointed out that sometimes structural flood loss reduction projects turn out to be more costly in the long run, while non-structural measures are sustainable and create jobs as well. He urged that hazard mitigation considerations be involved in federal funding for rebuilding and building infrastructure, and recommended protection of critical infrastructure from natural hazards to ensure its operability during or immediately after extreme events. The ASFPM testimony is posted on the website. All other testimony presented at the all-day-long hearing can be viewed by going to the committee's website at <http://transportation.house.gov>.

The ASFPM has suggested that general language be included in the stimulus package requiring that hazard mitigation steps be considered as a part of all infrastructure investment funded under the bill. Although there was interest expressed in this on the House side, the House-passed bill does not contain such a provision. There have been significant indications of interest from the Senate Appropriations staff and from some Senate offices. With events moving so quickly, it remains to be seen whether such language will ultimately be included.

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Washington Report (cont.)

A coalition of groups originally formed to oppose adding wind coverage to the National Flood Insurance Program, known as the Smart Natural Catastrophe Policy Coalition, has urged a significant addition of funds for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The idea would be to fund projects that were previously highly rated, but not funded, as well as to expand the number of 2009 projects that can be funded. Lack of information about the effect this could have on the creation of jobs reportedly has been one impediment.

Also with the encouragement of this coalition, it is possible that Tom Carper (D-DE) will offer an amendment to the Senate bill that would establish a tax credit for hazard mitigation investments. The exact language of such a possible amendment is not yet available.

The draft stimulus measure contains a funding increase for the U.S. Geological Survey and, specifically, for the streamgage programs.

FY 2009 Appropriations

Also on the front burner are most of the appropriations bills for the current fiscal year, FY 2009. Budgets for the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Military Construction passed last Congress. The remaining agency budgets were included in a Continuing Resolution, which will expire on March 6th. Some form of action has to be taken before then. Given the focus on the stimulus package and the upcoming need to address the FY 2010 budget proposal, all indications are that the remaining FY '09 appropriations bills will be rolled into an omnibus appropriations bill providing funds through September 30, 2009. That bill likely would include an extension of program authorizations, notably the National Flood Insurance Program, also set to expire on March 6th.

Nominations

Hearings and confirmation votes for the first major group of new political appointees have moved rapidly. Many more will follow, so the process will continue throughout most of the spring.

DHS and FEMA—Former Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano has been confirmed and sworn in as the new Secretary of Homeland Security, but so far there has only been speculation about a nominee for FEMA Director. Additionally, there has been some discussion on the Hill and in the media about the advisability of FEMA's remaining within DHS. It is likely that legislation will be introduced in the House to make FEMA an independent agency. The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) has very publicly stated its view that FEMA should be independent. The ASFPM has reiterated its long-held position supporting independent-agency status as well. Secretary Napolitano reportedly is developing her views on the matter.

Army Corps of Engineers—No nominee has been named for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, although various lists of those under consideration are in circulation. A significant number of senators has signed a letter to the President urging early appointment of a new Assistant Secretary to ensure coordination with his Administration's policies and priorities.

Environmental Protection Agency—Lisa Jackson, former Commissioner of Environmental Protection in New Jersey, has been confirmed as Administrator of EPA [*see related story on page 17*]. Long-time ASFPM member, Mark Mauriello, was appointed as her successor in New Jersey [*see News & Views, December 2008, p. 8*].

Interior—Ken Salazar, former Democratic Senator from Colorado, has been confirmed as Secretary of the Interior.

Other Legislative Items of Interest

NFIP Reform Legislation—There are strong indications that a clean NFIP reauthorization for the remainder of the fiscal year will be included in the omnibus appropriations bill that will cover the nine regular appropriations bills that have not been finalized. Since no agreement was reached on resolving differences between House and Senate versions of flood insurance reform legislation last fall, authorization for the NFIP was extended until March 6th, 2009. At that time, it seemed that the choice of that date, rather than a full-year reauthorization, would keep the pressure on to get a compromise reform bill passed. Now that the first two

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Washington Report (cont.)

months of the session are being taken up with the stimulus package, appropriations for FY '09 and nominations, it seems highly unlikely that substantive action could be taken on reform legislation by early March.

At this point, reform legislation has not been introduced in either the House or Senate. Since this is a new Congress, the bills do have to be reintroduced and given new numbers even if the text remains the same. There is some indication that the House Financial Services Committee may make some relatively minor changes before reintroducing the bill and may incorporate some recommendations from U.S. Governmental Accountability Office studies and the *Evaluation of the NFIP* carried by the American Institutes for Research. There are no such indications from the Senate Banking Committee. The majority staff who handled this issue previously have left the committee and there have been no indications of how the committee will proceed.

Levee Safety—There is a possibility that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Water Resources Subcommittee will hold a hearing later in February on the report and recommendations of the Levee Safety Committee established under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 [*see cover article of this issue*]. Although the report has not officially been cleared by the Office of Management and Budget, Congressional committee staff have been briefed on the findings. The ASFPM has urged the committee to seek additional comments on the report and has shared its comments with both House and Senate committees. Those comments are posted on the website. Essentially ASFPM is concerned that the report, while containing important recommendations, has focused on the engineering aspects of levee safety and has not included the associated land use considerations.

Catastrophe Insurance—It is unlikely that the catastrophe insurance bill that passed the House in the last Congress (H.R. 3355, known as the Klein-Mahoney bill) will be re-introduced in its original format. Mahoney is no longer in Congress and Klein's thinking on the proposal is evolving. He also could be interested in developing a bill comparable to Senate proposals for a blue ribbon commission to study catastrophe insurance and re-insurance needs and ways to address them.

Climate Bill—Both the House and Senate Chairmen of committees dealing with climate change issues have indicated their intent to report out and pass climate change legislation this calendar year. Incoming House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA) has said he would like his committee to report out a bill before Memorial Day. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) has indicated she would like to have a bill reported out of committee before the end of the year. Boxer expressed commitment to a bill that is "straightforward" and has wide support. The House and Senate leadership have also expressed their support for action this year and the President has called energy and climate change priority issues for his administration.

Mitigation—The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) is leading a FEMA-funded effort to develop a Mitigation White Paper making recommendations for hazard mitigation policy and programs. A group of invited participants met for the first time on January 13th in Washington, D.C.. The ASFPM was represented by Mitigation Policy Committee Co-Chairs Deborah Mills and Steve McMaster. Merrie Inderfurth, ASFPM Washington Liaison, attended as well. There was considerable discussion of terminology associated with mitigation, the importance of communicating what is meant by mitigation, and the importance of mitigating disaster damage.

Other mitigation proposals are being developed by individuals and groups. As they are shared with the ASFPM, they are circulated to the Mitigation POD Leader and Policy Committee Co-Chairs for comment.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program—Legislation reauthorizing the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant program became bogged down in the Senate last year when Tom Coburn (R-OK) put a "hold" on the bill. It was later included in a major package of bills that had been subject to holds by Coburn. That package did not pass the Senate. The PDM program later was included in other legislation for a one-year reauthorization to expire on September 30th. Action to extend the program will be necessary this year.

Mitigation Loan Bill—Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, has indicated his intent to reintroduce his legislation to create a mitigation loan program. The measure was H.R. 6424 in the last Congress (110th). The ASFPM is assembling comments. It is unclear whether a hearing will be held or action will be taken by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Stafford Act programs.

Stafford Act Amendments—There is some possibility that amendments to the Stafford Act will be considered and acted on during this Congressional session.

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Washington Report (cont.)

Pallone Bill to Delay New Flood Maps—Frank Pallone (D-NJ) introduced H.R. 777 on January 28th. This measure would prohibit FEMA from updating flood maps until the FEMA Administrator submits a community outreach plan to the Congress. It also provides for an income-based tax credit for flood insurance premiums and for grants to communities for projects to improve their rating in the NFIP Community Rating System. The bill was referred to the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Ways and Means.

Omnibus Lands Bill—S. 22 pulls together 160 bills dealing with public lands and wild and scenic river designation that had been delayed by Coburn's "holds." The bill would designate over 2 million acres of wilderness areas and would codify the National Landscape Conservation System initiated during the Clinton administration. Although the bill has broad bipartisan support, one controversial element would allow a new road to be constructed in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to facilitate airport access for an isolated village. The Senate passed the bill and it will soon be voted on in the House.

—*Meredith R. Inderfurth, Washington Liaison*
Rebecca Quinn, CFM, Legislative Officer

Science to be "Backbone" of EPA in new Administration

The new Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa P. Jackson, has pledged the agency's adherence to three fundamental values set out by President Barack Obama. Foremost among them is reliance on "the best available science" and the "expert judgment of the Agency's career scientists and independent advisors." Jackson also emphasized that EPA actions must uphold the law, particularly any directives from Congress and court decisions, and that there must be no procrastination or misinterpretation in carrying out such agency obligations. The third value is transparency in the agency's decisionmaking, "reaching out to all stakeholders fairly and impartially."

Of the five top priorities Jackson has set for EPA, two directly concern floodplain managers.

- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions** as part of an effort to address climate change and to move toward a low-carbon economy. EPA "will stand ready to help Congress craft strong, science-based climate legislation" to that end.
- **Protecting America's water** through intensified work to restore and protect streams, rivers, lakes, bays, oceans, and aquifers, with special emphasis on restoration of "threatened treasures" such as the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay.

➤➤➤ See Jackson's letter at <http://www.epa.gov/administrator/memotoemployees.html>.

Department of Agriculture has new funds for Conservation

Up to \$58.4 million in financial assistance is being made available to agricultural producers and entities through a new Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), established in the 2008 Farm Bill. The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be administering AWEP under its existing Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Like other EQIP monies, funds awarded under the new AWEP may be useful in some flood mitigation projects.

AWEP offers financial and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers conserve ground and surface water and improve water quality on agricultural lands such as cropland, pasture, grassland, and rangeland. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, development of water quality or water conservation plans; water conservation restoration or enhancement projects, including conversion to the production of less water-intensive agricultural commodities or dryland farming; water quality or quantity restoration or enhancement projects; irrigation system improvement; and activities designed to reduce the impacts of drought.

Under this new program, NRCS can contract directly with agricultural producers who are included in approved partner proposals. Eligible partners include federally recognized tribes, states, units of local government, or agricultural or silvicultural associations. All AWEP funding must go to producers under contracts that run from 1 to 10 years.

➤➤➤ Project proposals are being accepted now through March 2nd. The Request for Proposals appeared in the January 14, 2009 *Federal Register*, [http://frwebgate3.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/TEXTgate.cgi?WAI\\$docID=05425716915+0+1+0&WAI\\$action=retrieve](http://frwebgate3.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/TEXTgate.cgi?WAI$docID=05425716915+0+1+0&WAI$action=retrieve). More on EQIP and AWEP can be obtained at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP>.

Publications, Software, the Web

■ *Mapping the Zone: Improving Flood Map Accuracy* is the final report of an investigation the National Research Council conducted over the past few years at the request of FEMA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The NRC's Board on Earth Sciences and Resources and Water Science and Technology Board assembled a committee that collected and analyzed information on selected streams in Florida and North Carolina and on the economic costs and benefits of creating new digital flood maps in North Carolina. They concluded that the United States could avoid significant loss of life, destroyed property and businesses, and repairs to infrastructure if the FIRMs were replaced with flood maps that contain high-accuracy and high-resolution land surface elevation data. Further, the committee notes, the benefits of more accurate flood maps will outweigh the costs of improving them. A number of recommendations for improving map accuracy are made, including updating and generating information using high-accuracy topographic data, such as that generated by LiDAR; replacing the one-dimensional model for calculating wave heights now in use with a two-dimensional wave model and coupling it with a two-dimensional surge model and models of erosion processes and other variables; and consolidating information on the maps to show where the flood hazard areas are located, the likely consequences of flooding (such as damage to houses or coastal erosion), and how the land elevation at a given parcel compares with possible flood heights. Noting that FEMA has made substantial progress in this direction with its Map Modernization initiative, the report states, "FEMA is moving from simply portraying flood hazard and flood insurance rates zones to communicating and assessing risk, an ambitious goal that could greatly improve the utility of flood maps for governments, business and the public." Committee on FEMA Flood Maps: Accuracy Assessment and Cost-Effective Improvements. 2009. 200 pp. National Academies Press. Available for free online reading or for purchase at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12573.

■ As of the first of January, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters website was moved to <http://www.usace.army.mil> and many of the old links may no longer work. It would be wise to check out those pages you consult frequently to establish the new shortcuts before you need them. Here are a few of the new URLs. The Corps' Planning Community of Practice (Planning CoP) home page, and links to the many subordinate planning pages, are now at <http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/PlanningCOP/Pages/ArticleTemplate.aspx>. The *Planning Ahead* newsletter archive can be found at http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/PlanningCOP/Pages/pa_news.aspx. The link to the Principles & Guidelines Revisions page has been restored at <http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/Pages/pgr.aspx>. The Corps' publications page is now at <http://140.194.76.129/publications/>. Thankfully, there is also a site to help you find anything else that was "lost" in translation: <http://www.usace.army.mil/Search/lostpages.aspx>.

■ *Abrupt Climate Change. Final Report, Synthesis and Assessment* is the latest product transmitted to Congress and the President under the ongoing U.S. Climate Change Science Program. Abrupt climate change is defined as "a large-scale change in the climate system that takes place over a few decades or less, persists (or is anticipated to persist) for at least a few decades, and causes substantial disruptions in human and natural systems." Based on an assessment of published scientific literature, the report concludes that there is the potential for some abrupt climate changes in the 21st century. Among the "likely" changes are a rapid and sustained September arctic sea ice loss and an abrupt period of increased drought in the southwestern United States. Although it is "very likely" that the northward flow of warm water in the upper layers of the Atlantic Ocean will decrease by 25–30%, it is very unlikely that this circulation will collapse or weaken abruptly. An abrupt change in sea level is possible, but predictions are highly uncertain due to weaknesses in existing climate models. Finally, there is unlikely to be an abrupt release of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, to the atmosphere from deposits in the earth, although the pace of such methane emissions will increase. Clark, P.U., A.J. Weaver, E. Brook, E.R. Cook, T.L. Delworth and K. Steffen. 2008. Product 3.4 of U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. 459 pp. The report and a summary (4 pp.) are available for download at <http://www.climatechange.gov/Library/sap/sap3-4/final-report/>.

■ *Disaster Communications in a Changing Media World* emphasizes that, today, the ability to communicate is no longer an afterthought or a luxury in disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, or recovery. Rather, timely communication is as important as logistics, technical expertise, or the readily availability of supplies. The
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emergence of new media like the internet, e-mail, blogs, text messaging, cell phone photos, and the increasing role played by “first informers”—witnesses who transmit information immediately from the event—are redefining the roles of government and media. Using examples from disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, the Loma Prieta earthquake, and various acts of terrorism, the authors explain that disaster communications must evolve to capitalize on the changes brought about by the “new” media and exploit the opportunities they provide. Further, the underlying principles of effective disaster communication—the need for transparency, increased accessibility, trustworthiness and reliability, and to create partnerships with the media—need to be embraced along with the practical ability to convey information effectively. Haddow, George D., and Kim S. Haddow. 2009. 218 pp. \$49.94. ISBN 978-1-8561-7552-8. Elsevier Press. http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/716238/description#description.

■ “Reduce Runoff: Slow It Down, Spread It Out, Soak It In,” is a on-line video that highlights green techniques to help manage stormwater runoff. It showcases rain gardens, green roofs, rain barrels, and other green techniques being used in urban areas to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff. The goal is to mimic the natural way water moved through an area before it was developed, by using design techniques that infiltrate, evaporate, and reuse runoff close to its source. Such measures have proved effective at reducing the volume of stormwater runoff and capturing harmful pollutants. Using vegetated areas also improves air quality, mitigates the effects of urban heat islands, and reduces a community’s overall carbon footprint. Produced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Botanic Garden. 2009. Go to <http://www.epa.gov/nps/lid>. For more on green stormwater management, see <http://www.epa.gov/greeninfrastructure>.

Calendar

See more flood-related meetings, conferences, and training at
<http://www.floods.org/Conferences,%20Calendar/calendar.asp>.

February 10–12, 2009: ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTION ‘09, Reno, Nevada. Sponsored by the International Erosion Control Association. See <http://www.ieca.org/conference/annual/ec.asp>.

February 11–13, 2009: FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT, Columbus, Georgia. See <http://www.gafloods.org/conferences.htm>.

March 2–5, 2009: BUILDING THE DIGITAL COAST: COASTAL GEOTOOLS CONFERENCE, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Sponsored by NOAA’s Coastal Services Center, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Coastal States Organization, the National Association of Counties, and others. See <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/geotools/>.

March 3–5, 2009: ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Great Falls, Montana. Contact the AMPM at mtfloods@mtfloods.org.

March 4–6, 2009: THIRD NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SUMMIT, Washington, D.C.. Numerous sponsors. See <http://www.EmergencyManagementSummit.com>.

March 5–6, 2009: SUSTAINABILITY: BEYOND THE PLATITUDES: 18TH ANNUAL LAND USE CONFERENCE, Denver, Colorado. Sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute. See <http://law.du.edu/forms/rmlui/conference.cfm>.

March 10–13, 2009: ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MICHIGAN STORMWATER-FLOODPLAIN ASSOCIATION, Bay City, Michigan. See <http://mi.floods.org/>.

March 10–13, 2009: ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOR HAZARD MITIGATION, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. See <http://www.scahm.org/>.

March 11–12, 2009: ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, Champaign, Illinois. See http://www.illinoisfloods.org/09_conference.html.

- March 17–19, 2009:** STATE, TRIBAL, FEDERAL WETLANDS COORDINATING MEETING, Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Sponsored by the Association of State Wetlands Managers. See <http://aswm.org/calendar/index.htm>.
- March 23–26, 2009:** UNIFIED MITIGATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (E212), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. See <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- March 23–26, 2009:** URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT 2009, Overland Park, Kansas. Sponsored by Pennwell Corporation, Industrial WaterWorld, and others. Contact Angela Godwin at (603) 891-9449 or angelag@pennwell.com or see <http://uwm09.events.pennnet.com/fl/index.cfm>.
- March 23–26, 2009:** ADVANCED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS III (E284), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- March 30—April 3, 2009:** NONSTRUCTURAL MEASURES FOR FLOOD RISK, Davis, California. Offered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Learning Center. Click on Course Control Number 345 at <http://pdsc.usace.army.mil/Default.aspx>.
- April 5–7, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL FLOOD DETERMINATION ASSOCIATION, Scottsdale, Arizona. See http://www.nfdaiflood.com/events_activities.php.
- April 6–9, 2009:** RETROFITTING FLOOD-PRONE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (E279), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Call (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- April 6–9, 2009:** BASIC HAZUS MULTI-HAZARDS (E313), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Call (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- April 6–9, 2009:** NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (E278), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- April 6–10, 2009:** NATIONAL HURRICANE CONFERENCE, Austin, Texas. Organized and sponsored by numerous groups and agencies. Direct questions to mail@hurricanemeeting.com or see <http://www.hurricanemeeting.com/index.asp>.
- April 15–17, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MISSOURI FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, Osage Beach, Missouri. See <http://www.mfsma.org/>.
- April 16–17, 2009:** SPRING WORKSHOP OF THE ARKANSAS FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, Jacksonville, Arkansas. See <http://www.arkansasfloods.org/afma/calendar/index.php?mo=4&yr=2009>.
- April 19–22, 2009:** NATIONAL FLOOD CONFERENCE, Boston, Massachusetts. See <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip> or email NFI PNFC@nfipstat.com.
- April 22–24, 2009:** DO ONE THING FOR FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Spring workshop of the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association. See <http://www.okflood.org/asp/page.aspx?Target=Springexhibitor>.
- April 22–24, 2009:** SPRING CONFERENCE OF THE LOUISIANA FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, Covington, Louisiana. See <http://www.lfma.org/calendar.htm>.
- April 28, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE RHODE ISLAND MITIGATION ASSOCIATION, location to be determined, Rhode Island. See <http://ri.floods.org/annualconf.htm>.
- May 3–6, 2009:** CONFERENCE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. Contact Conference Chair John Fullerton at john.fullerton@ci.wilmington.nc.us.

- May 4–6, 2009:** MANAGING WATER RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE, Anchorage, Alaska. Spring specialty conference of the American Water Resources Association. See <http://www.awra.org/meetings/Anchorage2009/index.html>.
- May 4–7, 2009:** ADVANCED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS II (E194), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- May 5–8, 2009:** BANKING UNDER THE NEW RULE: 12TH NATIONAL MITIGATION AND ECOSYSTEM BANKING CONFERENCE, Salt Lake City, Utah. Organized by JT&A, Inc., with many sponsors. See <http://www.mitigationbankingconference.com/>.
- May 6–8, 2009:** ARIZONA FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING, Sierra Vista, Arizona. See http://www.azfma.org/content.aspx?page_id=2&club_id=432775.
- May 11–14, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION OF MITIGATION MANAGERS, Jamestown, Kentucky. See <http://www.kymitigation.org/events.html>.
- May 18–21, 2009:** EXPLORING NEW HYDROLOGIC WARNING FRONTIERS, Vail, Colorado. Annual conference of the National Hydrologic Warning Council. Sponsored by the ALERT Users Group and many others. See http://www.hydrologicwarning.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=617218.
- May 18–21, 2009:** MANAGING FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (E273), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact EMI at (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- May 20–24, 2009:** MAKING MARINE SCIENCE MATTER, INTERNATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION CONGRESS, Fairfax, Virginia. Organized by the Society for Conservation Biology with numerous sponsors. Contact John Cigliano at John.Cigliano@cedarcrest.edu or see <http://www2.cedarcrest.edu/imcc/index.html>.
- June 7–12, 2009:** GREEN WORKS TO REDUCE FLOOD LOSSES: THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Orlando, Florida. 12 core CECs. Contact the ASFPM Executive Office at (608) 274-0123 or see <http://www.floods.org/orlando>.
- June 15–18, 2009:** UNIFIED MITIGATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (E212), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- June 22–25, 2009:** WETLAND CONNECTIONS: CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF WETLANDS SCIENTISTS, Madison, Wisconsin. See http://www.sws.org/2009_meeting/index.mgi.
- July 6–9, 2009:** NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (E278), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- July 6–9, 2009:** ADVANCED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS II (E282), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- July 11–15, 2009:** DELIVERING CONSERVATION TODAY AND TOMORROW, Dearborn, Michigan. Annual Conference of the Soil & Water Conservation Society. See <http://www.swcs.org/>.
- July 13–16, 2009:** BASIC HAZUS MULTI-HAZARDS (E313), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Call (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- July 19–23, 2009:** COASTAL ZONE '09, Boston, Massachusetts. Hosted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Services Center, with numerous sponsors. See <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/>.
- July 20–23, 2009:** MANAGING FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (E273), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact EMI at (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.

- July 20–24, 2009:** THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION, Los Angeles, California. Sponsored by the University of Florida, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and others. See <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ncr2009/orgcomm.html>.
- July 27–30, 2009:** HAZUS MULTI-HAZARDS FOR FLOOD (E172), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- August 2–7, 2009:** ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND A GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY, Albuquerque, New Mexico. 94th meeting of the Ecological Society of America. See <http://www.esa.org/albuquerque/>.
- August 3–6, 2009:** HAZUS MULTI-HAZARDS FOR MITIGATION PLANNING (E296), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Call (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- August 10–13, 2009:** ADVANCED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS (E194), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- August 17–20, 2009:** ADVANCED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS III (E284), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- August 17–20, 2009:** RESIDENTIAL COASTAL CONSTRUCTION (E386), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- August 31—September 3, 2009:** NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (E278), Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Contact (800) 238-3358 or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIweb/>.
- September 7–11, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, San Jose, California. See <http://www.floodplain.org/conference.php>.
- September 15–18, 2009:** FALL MEETING OF THE COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF STORMWATER AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Crested Butte, Colorado. See <http://www.casfm.org/>.
- September 15–18, 2009:** CONFERENCE OF THE INDIANA ASSOCIATION FOR FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, Angola, Indiana. See <http://www.inafsm.net/conferences/2009/conference09.html>.
- September 20–23, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE OKLAHOMA FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, Stillwater, Oklahoma. See <http://www.okflood.org>.
- October 15–16, 2009:** FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION FOR FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT, Somerset, New Jersey. See <http://www.njafm.org/index.php?id=2&category=annualconference&ann=N>.
- October 21–23, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLOOD AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCIES, Colorado Springs, Colorado. See <http://www.nafsma.org>.
- October 31—November 5, 2009:** IAEM ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EMEX EXHIBIT, Orlando, Florida. Sponsored by the International Association of Emergency Managers. See <http://www.iaem.com/events/annual/FutureConferences.htm>.
- May 16–21, 2010:** THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Contact the ASFPM Executive Office, (608) 274-0123 or see <http://www.floods.org>.
- May 15–20, 2011:** THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact the ASFPM Executive Office at (608) 274-0123, or see <http://www.floods.org>.



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