

**ASSOCIATION OF
STATE FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS**

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

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Nonprofit to engage Public in Flood Science & Mitigation

**Kate Brandes, CFM
Nurture Nature Foundation**

An environmental nonprofit organization that owned an important landmark in Eastern Pennsylvania learned the hard way recently that its newly renovated building was in the floodplain. This happened when the structure suffered thousands of dollars of damage in the 2006 flood on the Delaware River. The organization's board decided to make sure that others knew more, and earlier, about the important environmental topic of flooding. And so began an effort by the Nurture Nature Foundation (NNF) to educate the public about flooding.

The initiative began with the creation of a Nurture Nature Center in Pennsylvania, which is devoted primarily to outreach and education about flooding, and recently culminated in NNF's securing a planning grant from the National Science Foundation—not an easy task for an organization new to the field.

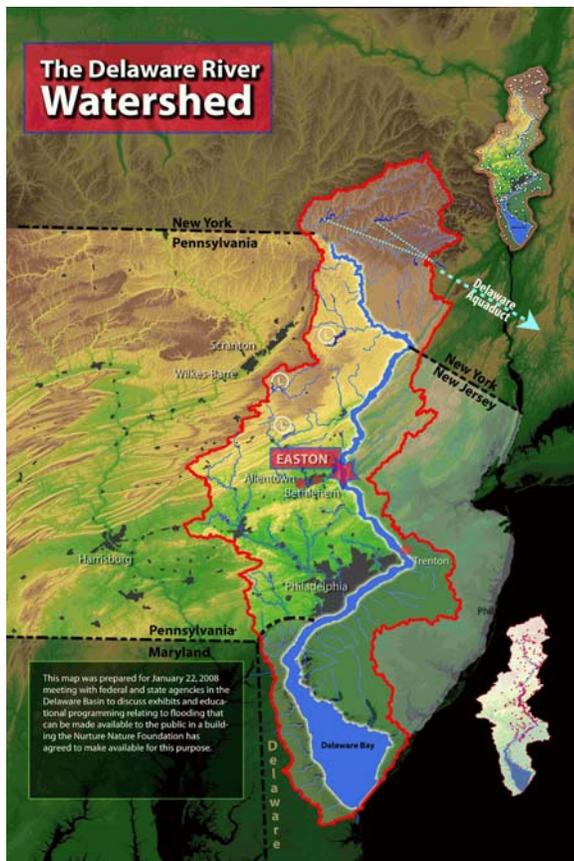
To win the award, NNF competed against some of the top science museums and universities in the country and against science public television to become one of 23 grant recipients applicants out of more than 400 preliminary applications. NNF's success was an impressive achievement for a nonprofit just becoming involved in flooding issues, but the success was not just a product of hard work. It also reflects the reality that flooding is an increasingly important issue nationwide, and that there is a glaring need for better public education on the subject.

The \$75,000 federal grant, which became effective August 1, 2009, for a two-year period, will be used to host forums about the science of flooding and about mitigation strategies for people living in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, which lies halfway between Philadelphia and New York—squarely in the center of the Delaware River Basin.

Using forums to involve the public in science issues is today a fledgling—but growing—movement among U.S. natural history museums and science centers. The movement is led in part by the Museum of Science in Boston (BOS) and the North Carolina Museum of Life and Science (NCMLS) in Raleigh, which have pioneered this field. Rigorous evaluation has shown that such forums can be an effective method of raising awareness and understanding of science-based issues.

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Nonprofit engages Public (cont.)



Kate Brandes, an environmental scientist who became a Certified Floodplain Manager in March, will be organizing the forums for NNF, with the help of an impressive team of 10 advisors, which will include Dr. Dork Sahagian at Lehigh University, who contributed to the Intergovernmental Panel Climate Change reports; the two leading voices in science forum development, David Sittenfeld of BOS and Brad Herring of NCMLS; and Marshall Frech, who has produced award winning films and educational programs on flooding in the United States. RMC Research Corporation, a national firm known for the thoughtful, creative, and practical contributions it has made in shaping new ideas about education and learning, will evaluate the forums for effectiveness.

The forums will target young people, first responders to flood events, and residents who are at the greatest risk for flood loss. They will be offered in both Spanish and English, in the cities of Allentown and Easton and in Lower Mount Bethel Township, three communities at high risk for flooding. The forums will be designed to give audiences the content and background needed to understand the social, economic, and technological issues surrounding floods, and to enter into civic debates about land use and known and future flooding patterns.

To help shape the content of the forums, a series of focus groups will be hosted. NNF expects that the forums it develops will become a model that can be used elsewhere to raise public awareness about the causes of flooding and ways that people can reduce flood damage and disruption.

Since it began working on flood outreach two years ago, NNF not only has received the NSF grant discussed here, but also has undertaken other efforts to educate the public about living

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How NNF Learned Hard Lessons about Flooding

The Nurture Nature Foundation's involvement in floodplain issues began in 2006, when NNF found that its efforts to save a former hotel in the town of Easton, Delaware, resulted in an apparent financial disaster, caused in part by the discovery that the building lay in the floodplain. The nonprofit, which owned several historic structures in the town, learned at that time that the city ranked among those with the greatest losses from the floods along the Delaware River in 2004-2006, and had experienced more flood damage since 1978 than almost any of the nearly 2500 communities in Pennsylvania. In fact, small Easton ranked just behind the much larger city of Philadelphia.

The nonprofit organization also found out that Pennsylvania was the most flooded of the states that are essentially noncoastal, had the most NFIP communities of any state, and had absurdly few resources devoted to educating its populace about the problem of flooding.

Dismal as these facts were, NNF saw in them an opportunity to make a difference. With a little research, NNF learned that there was no science center, museum, or similar facility in the country devoted specifically to educating the public about flood risk. The board and staff dreamed that a vibrant facility could help fill this gap. Blessed with ownership of another historic building, this one outside of the floodplain, the nonprofit set out to make it into such a center for outreach and education on flooding. And so the work began

Nonprofit engages Public (cont.)

near the water's edge, and to strengthen dialogue among public audiences, scientists, and community decision makers to inform public policy. Earlier this year, the foundation was awarded \$250,000 in federal funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support a flood awareness and emergency preparedness education campaign in the recently flooded regions along the Delaware River. That project will be the subject of a future story in the *News & Views*.

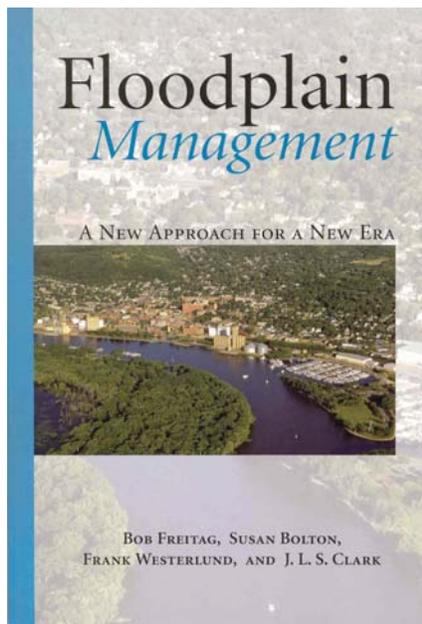
NNF also completed a film segment, titled the Pennsylvania Flood Challenge, in cooperation with film producer Marshall Frech, who will be working with NNF to develop educational and outreach materials for its two federally funded projects. NNF has also been working in partnership with local colleges and high schools, and has developed and presented flood education programs for professional audiences. The ASFPM's own Larry Larson visited Easton last year to see the Center, marking Easton as a place of interest for members of his Association, all of whom are invited to tour the Nurture Nature Center and meet with its staff whenever they are in the area.

➤➤➤ For more information about the NNF and its flood-related projects, visit <http://www.nurturenaturecenter.org>. For the video, see <http://floodproject.org/video/>.

Floodplain Management From Now On

Floodplain managers all know that “rivers will do what rivers will do” (and oceans, too, for that matter). But seldom has a volume of collective wisdom about these vital, yet threatening floodprone lands adopted that straightforward premise.

Now, *Floodplain Management: A New Approach for a New Era* brings into focus the need for and a process by which we can integrate the physical and biological systems of floodplains with our



societal needs and capabilities. This new book uses ten case studies to describe current floodplain management practices, often unfortunately based on dam or levee projects that do not incorporate an understanding of natural processes and functions of waterways. Then, the authors introduce a preferred approach—analyzing seven basic questions about what aspects of the river setting are valued, what approaches would capitalize on those values, what risks need to be minimized, what the costs and benefits of various approaches would be, and finally, how each alternative approach enhances the floodplain resource and/or reduces the flood risk. The outcome is a strategy for working with the natural tendencies of the river by retreating from the floodplain, using building practices to accommodate the effects of floodwaters, and giving strong preference to nonstructural measures, using flood protection structures only as a last resort.

The book's authors, Bob Freitag, Susan Bolton, Frank Westerlund, and J.L.S. Clark, have set up a website through which they are inviting “blog-like” conversation about case studies or projects that address issues in the book, such as storage of flood waters, living with flooding, levees, and managing land to preserve floodplain resources and functions.

Floodplain Management was published by Island Press, 2009, 242 pp. ISBN 97815997266342 (soft cover). Available for \$27 from <http://www.islandpress.org>. Visit the discussion website at <http://www.floodsnewapproaches.com>.

from the Chair

Greg Main, CFM

As summer ends and we move into fall, I hope everyone is well. On the legislative front, with the return of Congress, the law-making business has resumed and the ASFPM continues to be very active in monitoring and commenting on a number of key issues. Among the many major topics under consideration this fall are such things as health care policy, climate change legislation, the economy, and foreign policy. The National Flood Insurance Program reauthorization, revisions to the Stafford Act, and sustainable watershed planning all are active fronts. I encourage all members to check our website frequently for updates and to supply your own input on these important issues. The ASFPM recently was asked to participate with FEMA and provide input on the roll-out of the new mapping initiative, RiskMAP. I want to thank our ASFPM Mapping Committee for leading that effort.

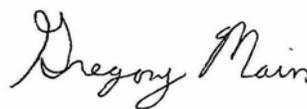
Although making newer and better maps is important, I still believe that we must continue to try to figure out how to communicate about flood risk in a way that is both technically accurate and yet makes sense to the public. I don't know how many times at mapping meetings I have had discussions (and at times spirited debates) with the public about how living in the floodplain means that they are at a certain level of flood risk. Usually, all the typical homeowners want to know is on what side of the "magic line" they are on the flood map—even if it means the "line" falls just off the edge of the home. Black or white, in or out, as if the flood maps are somehow magically 100% accurate (sorry, engineers, but we are not there yet). Despite my trying to explain the many variables that can come into play in making the maps and that there is ALWAYS still a level of risk, I know that I am not making a dent with most of the homeowners in acknowledging that a risk is there. Good thing my income is not based on the number of flood insurance policies folks get from talking to me at those meetings, because I think I may be up to a total of four policies to date.

Maybe if it was molten LAVA instead of water, folks would be more concerned about being on the edge of or in the floodplain. Perhaps a shift in terminology would improve the public's understanding of flood risks. We need to continue to work on ways to get the message out and get the public to buy into the fact that there is a risk when they are in or near a floodplain and that floods will happen.

After all, even a state floodplain manager can get flooded. In this case that person was me—thanks to a waterline break. The funny part, at least to me, was that it happened while I was away at our state floodplain association conference. The gods can be funny. Moral to the story: we all live at some level of flood risk.

Regards from my new temporary home at the local hotel, while I wait for my flooded home to be mitigated. ■

P.S. Do you think I could qualify for some of that FEMA disaster money?



(the Lava Guy)

NFDA Announces Results of Certification

The National Flood Determination Association (NFDA) recently announced the results of the second cycle of its Flood Zone Determination Certification program.



The companies that have achieved this distinction include American Flood Research, Inc.; First American Flood Data Services; LandSafe Flood; LPS National Flood; MDA Lending Solutions, Inc.; Nationwide Real Estate Tax Service, Inc.; and Signature Information Solutions, LLC. (Note that some flood zone determination companies have not sought certification and that some certified companies are not members of NFDA.)

The certification program aims to further the industry as professional businesses that are committed to providing critical services to mortgage lenders and insurance agencies. The program is designed to be rigorous so that a high level of performance is necessary to achieve certified status. On-site audits are conducted by a Certified Professional Accountant and include such business practices as having a business recovery plan, at least two years of experience, adequate financial viability, a quality assurance program, adequate recordkeeping, and a staff training program that includes specific key elements.

The NFDA acknowledges that accuracy is the most significant factor when making flood zone determinations. In the certification process, NFDA applies a blind, multi-level, peer review process to a randomly selected sample of a company's records. The records are checked and double-checked by accuracy review teams.

To be certified, companies must demonstrate at least a 99% rate of accuracy in identifying Special Flood Hazard Areas. It should be noted that certification does not guarantee a company's performance on any individual flood zone determination. However, it does confirm that a company has met multiple measures of quality performance at the time of certification. More details on the process are available on NFDA's website.

The ASFPM is represented on the NFDA Certification Committee by Rebecca Quinn, ASFPM Legislative Officer.

➤➤➤ The list of certified companies is available at <http://www.nfdaflood.com>.



Don't Miss Oklahoma City

The next Annual Conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers will be held May 16-21, 2010, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This is the year's foremost floodplain management gathering, attracting well over 1,000

professionals from all disciplines and practices related to the science and management of floodprone lands and the impacts of flooding. The theme, "Building Blocks of Floodplain Management," will be explored in large and small group presentations and discussions, training, workshops, and informal networking.

- Deadline for concurrent session presentation submissions is October 31, 2009.
- Workshop submissions are due October 31, 2009.
- Hotel and other information is posted on the website, with more to come.

Access all the conference information at

<http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuid=381&firstlevelmenuid=181&siteid=1>
and check back often!

Does Flood Terminology Matter?

Lately I received two emails from floodplain managers asserting that we in the profession use flood terms that mislead the public and property owners about flood risk. One, from Janet Thigpen, talked about using the words “flood maps” when, in fact, these maps do not depict where it will flood in a given event. They only show the flooded area for one event, and may not even accurately reflect that, since the flooded area depends on the runoff, which in turn depends on antecedent soil conditions, changes in watershed conditions after the map was produced, and the impacts of climate change which, in some areas, is producing fewer storms but more intense ones when they do occur.

We saw an example of that this week in Madison, when over 2½ inches of rain fell in a couple of hours. This was the first rain in many, many weeks, so the ground was like concrete, thus runoff was high. Needless to say, cars were flooded and people drove into flood water, as usual. That was even more pronounced this week in the Atlanta area, where up to 20 inches of rain fell and a number of people died.

Did these events show any relationship to the community “flood map?” Probably not, yet when we in the profession provide those maps to the community, the public assumes that the map shows the maximum extent of flooding. Calling them flood maps is not helpful, nor is the term Flood Insurance Rate Maps helpful—what does that mean to the person on the street? Calling them flood risk maps is no better, since that implies that all property in that shaded area has the same risk, which isn’t true. Risk is the probability of an event multiplied by the consequences if it does happen, so it varies across the shaded area (and beyond it).

Another email, from Tom Grisa, discussed the term “100-year flood” and how it grossly misleads the public, most decisionmakers and, frankly, some professionals. In his community, he has no credibility when he calls it that, since they have experienced five storms of that size in the last 25 years! As he says, “they think you are either lying or incompetent.”

Tom argues that ratings for other hazards, such as earthquakes and tornadoes, are based on the severity of the event, usually on a fairly simple 1–10 scale. He believes that the public identifies better with the ratings for these other natural weather events, since their main concern is how severe the event may be. However, the current rating for rain events is defined by how rare the event is, not how severe it is. He thinks that defining the storms by their frequency puts the idea into the public’s mind that once the event happens, it will be a long time until it happens again, since it is rare. His proposal develops a storm rating of 1 to 5, based on intensity and the total amount of rainfall.

This issue of terminology is of such significance that the ASFPM believes that there is a need to tap into all the nation’s flood professionals with an open discussion. Our intent is to have some papers with these ideas placed on our website in a “chat room” format for discussion. We will be asking, through our newsletters, that anyone with comments or ideas go to the website and share your thoughts. Based on all the input, we will prepare a paper that represents the best of what all of us offer.

Although we may not reach a new consensus about appropriate terminology within the next six months, the dialogue does need to happen. Who better to contribute to the discussion than those of you who work with all aspects of flooding and who work continuously to try to explain this complex issue to the public, property owners, elected officials, and other decisionmakers? ■

The Insurance Committee's Corner

When you Lose Your PAL

No, this month's column is not a segment from a Dr. Phil or Oprah show. But with the number of provisionally accredited levees (PALs) that already have or will soon be reaching the end of their two-year PAL designation (with California leading the way), lots of questions are being raised again about PALs . . . including questions about flood insurance.

When a levee loses its PAL designation and FEMA starts the map revision process, residents and business owners need to understand that the levee no longer provides the minimum protection and that they should seriously consider buying flood insurance NOW. The "good" news is that most properties in moderate- and low-risk areas will qualify for the National Flood Insurance Program's low-cost Preferred Risk Policy (PRP). Annual premiums for a PRP start as low as \$119 for a residence (for \$20,000 in building coverage and \$8,000 in contents coverage). In most cases, the policyholder can renew that PRP until their building is mapped into a high-risk area. (We are skipping the grandfathering discussion for now!) If the county or community provides the proper documentation before the new map revision goes into effect to show the levee can be accredited, then the property owners still should be encouraged to retain coverage because the risk of flooding has not been eliminated, ONLY REDUCED.

Often when a levee is accredited for the first time or re-accredited, the media, insurance agents, other stakeholders and even community officials will be caught saying that the property owners DON'T NEED flood insurance anymore. That is soooo wrong! We all should be saying that it will no longer be a federal REQUIREMENT for most properties secured with loans in high-risk areas. There is a big difference between "need" and "required." People behind levees NEED flood insurance to protect their property, even if it isn't required. Again, the risk is still there and they should be reminded of that. A good example of an outreach success was an instance in which about 75,000 properties were mapped out of high-risk areas (via two LOMRs) when levees along the Sacramento and American rivers were accredited. The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency undertook an aggressive outreach campaign, which convinced 70% of the policyholders to renew their coverage after the LOMRs became effective.

So, when you lose a PAL, let the property owners know early about the change, what it means, and what their flood insurance options are (e.g., grandfathering). Mother Nature won't wait until the new maps go into effect, so informing people early could save many from financial ruin if a flood hits . . . and it might just keep the situation from devolving into a bad-talk-show fiasco later, when the maps do become effective. ■

*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.*

Washington Report

✎ All referenced legislation and committee reports can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.
Type in the bill number, or go directly to the committee's website to read testimony . ✎

New Corps Guidance accounts for Sea Level Rise

The risk and potential consequences of sea level rise will now be accounted for in the “managing, planning, engineering, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining all future projects and systems” of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. New guidance from the Corps sets forth a procedure by which engineers are to estimate a range of potential levels of sea level rise in the area in question. In determining the sea level projections, engineers are referred to the Climate Change Science Program’s *Coastal Sensitivity to Sea-Level Rise: A Focus on the Mid-Atlantic Region* and the National Research Council’s 1987 report *Responding to Changes in Sea Level: Engineering Implications*. With the estimated levels in hand, engineers are to “determine how sensitive alternative plans and designs are to these rates of future local mean sea-level change, how this sensitivity affects calculated risk, and what design or operations and maintenance measures should be implemented to minimize adverse consequences while maximizing beneficial effects. Consider sensitivity relative to human health and safety, economic costs and benefits, environmental impacts, and other social effects.”

An article in the August 31, 2009, *Sacramento Bee* praised the Corps’ new direction. Many low-lying areas on the edges of the delta would be under water given sea levels predicted for the end of the century, and fragile levees could be overtopped with the addition of storm surge and high tides. The Bee quoted Will Travis, Director of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission as saying, “Sure, this will increase project costs. But it means you will be designing and building projects . . . that are resilient and sustainable rather than something you will have to repair, replace, or abandon later.”

➤➤➤ Download the new Corps guidance (EC 1165-2-211) at <http://140.194.76.129/publications/eng-circulars/ec1165-2-211/ec1165-2-211.pdf>.

NRCS Funding & Program to target Health of Mississippi River Basin

A new “Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative” (MRBI) will provide \$320 million over four years for voluntary projects in watersheds of 12 key states of the basin. The funds will be available to partners at local, state, and national levels through a competitive process and managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In announcing the initiative, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack noted that “the natural capacity of the Mississippi River Basin to remove nutrients has been diminished by a range of human activities over the years, including modification of floodplains for agricultural and urban land. . . . The NRCS is going to partner with farmers to implement a range of land stewardship practices, including conservation tillage, nutrient management, and other innovative practices. . . . We all live downstream of other water users and this initiative will help make the Mississippi River Basin and the tributaries healthier for everyone.”

The MRBI will focus on watersheds (8-digit or smaller hydrologic units) that contribute high loads of nutrients in the Basin. Priority watersheds will be identified by NRCS in consultation with conservation partner organizations using an evaluation process that will rely on Conservation Effects Assessment Project, the U.S. Geological Survey’s Spatially Referenced Regression on Watersheds

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Washington Report (cont.)

Attributes, state-level nutrient reduction strategies and priorities, and available monitoring and modeling of nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the Basin.

The Wisconsin-based Sand County Foundation's President praised the MRBI as "one of the boldest and most sound conservation initiatives I have ever seen an administration initiate. . . . Clearly the leadership of the Department of Agriculture and the NRCS have listened carefully to the farm and conservation communities about how to improve water quality and other ecosystem services through voluntary, incentive-based programs while enhancing farm economic viability."

➤➤➤ For information about the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative, including eligibility requirements, see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

Legislative Report

Anticipating an active Fall Season

In most years, Congress winds down the session's legislative activity in October. This year, however, many are predicting that the press of active legislation will keep the session going even into December.

A first draft of major climate and energy legislation was introduced on September 30th. Also on that day, a continuing resolution funding the government for the next 30 days at 2009 levels was passed and signed by the President, ensuring that there will be considerable activity during October to finalize action on most, if not all, of the 12 regular appropriations bills. Preparation for another round of flood insurance reform legislation may get underway. Draft legislation on sustainable watershed planning is likely to be introduced and acted on. Legislation amending the Stafford Act probably will be reported out of committee and considered on the House floor. Work will continue to develop levee safety legislation. It is possible that a bill to restore FEMA to independent-agency status will be considered.

Meanwhile, non-legislative policy development efforts will be continuing on new Principles and Guidelines for the Corps of Engineers and perhaps for broader application. Development of a new, revised Executive Order on Floodplain Management, to supercede E.O. 11988, is well underway. The Department of Homeland Security is conducting its national dialogue on policy guidance for the department, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Reauthorization of the NFIP and PDM

On September 30th, the President signed H.R. 2918, containing a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government through the end of October. Not only did the federal fiscal year end on September 30th, but also authority for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) expired as well. Both programs were reauthorized for 30 days in the CR. The Severe Repetitive Loss Program expired as well, but in this particular case, FEMA's Chief Counsel has indicated that the program may continue to operate as long as there is an appropriation of funds in place.

The House of Representatives had passed bills extending all three programs, but they have not been taken up in the Senate. Apparently, key Senate Republicans are opposed to reauthorizing the NFIP without associated reform legislation. Other factors delayed consideration of the PDM reauthorization. It then became necessary to keep the programs authorized via the appropriations bill. Further authority for these programs will remain an issue to be dealt with this month to ensure that they can function after October 31st.

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Washington Report (cont.)

Flood Insurance Reform

Once the immediate issue of NFIP reauthorization is settled, the House Financial Services Committee expects to turn to consideration of program reform.

Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) has signaled that he would like to hold hearings to re-examine the program, explore reform ideas, and re-consider the flood insurance legislation passed by the House in the last Congress. The ASFPM has provided the staff with thoughts on issues that might be considered including, for example, consideration of what the NFIP was intended to accomplish, what it has accomplished, and what it should accomplish that it hasn't. What are recent developments and scientific knowledge that could affect the future of the NFIP? Where are there gaps and problems with the NFIP? How can the NFIP better deliver the risk message and protect the general taxpayer? If the NFIP is to be a significant tool in FEMA's efforts toward integrated flood risk management, does the program need to be altered? What are some new ideas for refreshing and re-invigorating the program? The ASFPM is collecting NFIP reform suggestions and recommendations from its members. Please send them to the ASFPM Executive Office at memberhelp@floods.org.

Due to the extremely heavy work schedule of the Financial Services Committee, which includes a series on hearings in October on overhaul of the financial regulatory structure as well as ongoing work on legislation for consumer credit card protection and for mortgage foreclosure, it is hard to predict when hearings on flood insurance reform may begin. It is interesting to note, however, that FEMA's Administrator, Craig Fugate, is likely to gather flood insurance experts and practitioners later this fall to generate and explore reform ideas.

Appropriations

Only one of the 12 regular appropriations bills has been signed into law—that which funds Congressional operations. The House has passed all of the remaining 11 bills; the Senate has passed 6 of them. The Energy and Water Appropriations bill emerged from the House-Senate Conference to resolve differences and the Conference Report was passed on October 1st and sent to the President. The Agriculture bill has been through conference, but the Conference Report has not yet been passed. Several other bills are undergoing pre-conference negotiations and are expected to go to conference in the coming week. The conference on the DHS Appropriations bill, which includes FEMA, had been scheduled for October 1st, but was postponed. The Interior and Environment bill is awaiting conference. To review contents of these bills, look them up by bill or report number:

Energy & Water— HR 3183; H Rept 111-203;
S 1436; S Rept 111-45; the conference report is H Rept 111-278.

DHS— HR 2892; H Rept 111-157;
S 1298; S Rept 111-31.

Interior & Environment— HR 2996; H Rept 111-180;
S. Rept 111-38.

Agriculture— HR 2997; H Rept 111-181;
S 1406; S Rept 111-39; the conference report is H Rept 111-279.

The House and Senate leadership are pushing to get all 12 bills passed separately. In recent years only a few bills were passed individually and the rest were bundled into an omnibus appropriations bill. It is uncertain whether action can be taken on all of the bills before the end of October, so another short-term continuing resolution could be necessary.

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Washington Report (cont.)

Stafford Act Revisions

A bill to revise aspects of the Stafford Act (H.R. 3377) was introduced just before the August recess by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Much of the bill is an updated version of legislation from the previous Congress (110th Congress, H.R. 6658). The ASFPM provided informal comments on the bill, developed with the assistance of the Mitigation Policy Committee Co-Chairs, the Mitigation Pod Leader, and the ASFPM Legislative Officer. Action on the bill was expected in late September, but now is considered likely later this fall.

Elements of the bill include reauthorization of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) as a competitive grant program for 3 years at an authorized level of \$250 million per year. It also would strengthen building code enforcement by providing a 4% increase in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for states that enforce the codes state-wide. Additionally, it would restore the Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program, which was eliminated in 2000. It also directs the President to modernize the integrated public alerts and warning system and makes FEMA's Disaster Assistance Employees eligible for the Federal Health Benefits Program.

Independent Status for FEMA

A bill to re-establish FEMA as an independent Cabinet-level agency was introduced last February by House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) along with Ranking Minority Member John L. Mica (R-FL), as well as the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee of jurisdiction. Although the Administration considers it acceptable for FEMA to stay in DHS for the time being, there is a possibility that the bill (H.R. 1174) could be taken up this fall.

Sustainable Watershed Planning Act

The object of this draft legislation is to encourage and support coordination, collaboration and planning at all levels of government. It includes a federal framework to promote improved coordination among federal agencies and also regional and sub-regional planning boards. Grants would be provided to state offices of watershed planning and non-structural measures would be encouraged.

ASFPM representatives have met with committee staff and, at their request, the ASFPM has provided suggestions on incentives to support the bill's objectives. There have already been several drafts and the bill is still in development. Nothing has been introduced at present so there is no bill number, but it is likely that one will be introduced this fall.

Energy and Climate Change—Adaptation Provisions

The long-awaited Senate version of energy and climate legislation was introduced September 30th by John Kerry (D-MA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW). The Clean Energy, Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733) was referred to the EPW Committee.

The House had passed its American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454) in June. The Senate bill requires a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 as opposed to the 17% required in the House bill. The Senate bill notably does not address key issues such as establishment of a cap-and-trade mechanism and its authors indicated that this piece would be developed by the Senate Finance Committee. Several other Senate committees have elements to add, so the process is far from complete and actions by the other committees can be expected before the EPW Committee can

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Washington Report (cont.)

weave these provisions together. Chairman Boxer is hopeful that her committee can accomplish this before the United Nations climate summit in Copenhagen in December.

The ASFPM staff has been analyzing the “adaptation” aspects of the House bill and will do the same for the Senate bill. Activities that floodplain managers consider “mitigation” would fall under the adaptation parts of the energy and climate bills.

New Bills

A number of newly introduced bills were listed in the August issue of *News & Views*. Several bills dealing with mitigation and response were introduced in the House by Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee (H.R. 3026, H.R. 3027, and H.R. 3028). A number of bills also were introduced in the Senate by Bill Nelson (D-FL) and then-Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) dealing with catastrophic losses and hurricane research (S. 1484, S. 1485, S. 1486, and S. 1487). Of those, the one most likely to be acted on this fall is S. 1485, the National Hurricane Research Initiative Act. For descriptions of the bills, see the August 2009 *News & Views*.

On October 1st, Paul Kanjorski (D-PA), Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises, released discussion drafts of several new bills, two of which deal with financial regulatory reform and consumer protection. A third, however, would establish a Federal Insurance Office to coordinate insurance issues and better inform the federal government on insurance matters.

Hearings of Interest

September 29—A subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing, “Final Breakthrough on the Billion Dollar Katrina Infrastructure Logjam: How Is It Working?”

October 1—A subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee held a hearing on the state of the nation’s citizen and community preparedness in light of a recent FEMA report.

October 15—The full House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing on the Clean Water Act after 37 years.

Coalitions and Briefings

Congressional Hazards Caucus Alliance—The Alliance, with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) and FEMA, sponsored a briefing for Congressional staff September 10th on the Mitigation White Paper. The White Paper had been developed by NEMA under contract with FEMA and reflected the participation of many interested parties. The ASFPM’s Mitigation Policy Co-Chairs participated in the process. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate spoke along with representatives of NEMA, the Institute for Business and Home Safety, and the International Code Council. The Alliance is planning a briefing on coastal erosion sometime in October.

Water Crisis Briefing—American Rivers, in cooperation with Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Lois Capps (D-CA), sponsored a briefing on September 23rd in the Capitol Visitors Center for staff “to discuss the innovative water management strategies communities are using to prepare for increasing floods, droughts, and water pollution as the climate shifts.”

Sam Riley Medlock of the ASFPM staff participated as one of four speakers. The others were Andrew Fahlund, American Rivers’ Senior Vice President for Conservation; Michael Thomas,
[continued on next page]

Washington Report (cont.)

General Manager of the Clayton County Water Authority, Georgia; and Glen Abrams, Sustainable Stormwater Program Manager of the Philadelphia Water Department. The briefing was well attended by over 50 people, an excellent turnout for a busy day on Capitol Hill.

Stafford Coalition—The coalition met on September 11th with several guests. Alison Schwartz is the new head of Intergovernmental Affairs at FEMA so this was the first meeting with her for most of the groups in the Coalition. The ASFPM's Larry Larson and George Riedel had met with her, along with FEMA's new head of Legislative Affairs, Pat Hart, in August.

Other guests were the Majority and Minority staff of the House Transportation and Infrastructure's subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Stafford Act. They provided a briefing on their Stafford Act revision legislation (H.R. 3377) and their expectations for legislative action.

U.S. Geological Survey Coalition—The coalition sponsored its annual Congressional reception on September 14th, highlighting the many contributions of the U.S. Geological Survey. The coalition honored Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) for their support of the USGS and its important programs. Because several ASFPM representatives were in town for meetings, there was a strong ASFPM presence at the reception.

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



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Publications, Software, the Web

■ *Putting A Price On Riparian Corridors As Water Treatment Facilities* describes how the monetary value of natural riparian environments that provide water quality treatment functions can be estimated by calculating the costs associated with the construction of “brick and mortar” water treatment plants built to achieve similar functions (processing nutrients, storing sediment, moderating temperatures, and other services). A demonstration urban runoff treatment plant built by the City of Santa Monica provides water quality services similar to that provided by a 4,000–5,000 foot riparian corridor, and has annualized costs of approximately \$1.3 million per year over a 50-year period. A large, federally funded, multi-objective urban flood damage reduction project with water quality benefits has costs of about \$967,600 per year. Other urban stream restoration projects for 5,000 lineal feet of stream with riparian habitat can cost from \$1,900 for fencing projects to \$227,000 per year for “typical” restoration projects annualized over 50 years. While most riparian restoration projects will provide benefits for 100 years or in perpetuity, the life spans of the structural plants are generally much shorter, thereby requiring significant replacement costs. Ann L. Riley, Ph.D., Watershed and River Restoration Advisor, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Oakland, California. 2009. 18 pp. Available at http://www.floods.org/ace-files/Monetary_value_of_streams.pdf.

■ *At War with the Weather* delivers a long-overdue analysis of how western society thinks about catastrophes and (mis)manages risks. It argues that, in our centuries-long gamble with Mother Nature, we have now reached a breaking point because of the increasing concentration of population and activities in high-risk coastal regions. The authors ask, Who will pay for future weather-related catastrophes? Their answers incorporate empirical analyses of decades of data, and yield (1) a set of guiding principles for using insurance to deal more effectively with these events; (2) lessons from the management of natural disasters to be applied to other global risks such as pandemics, financial crises, and terrorism; (3) innovative ideas for the private sector, and (4) sustainable public policy solutions to protect trillions of dollars of assets and the residents at risk in hazard-prone regions. Howard C. Kunreuther and Erwann O. Michel-Kerjan, with Neil A. Doherty, Martin F. Grace, Robert W. Klein and Mark V. Pauly. 2009. The MIT Press. 448 pp. \$55. See <http://www.AtWarWithTheWeather.com>.

■ “Loss of Life Caused by the Flooding of New Orleans After Hurricane Katrina,” presents an analysis of the loss of life caused by Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans metropolitan area, which caused more than 1,100 fatalities throughout the state. A preliminary data set gives information on the recovery locations and individual characteristics for 771 fatalities showed that one-third of the fatalities occurred outside the flooded areas or in hospitals and shelters in the flooded area. These deaths were due to the adverse public health situation that developed after the floods. The other two-thirds of the fatalities most likely were associated with the direct physical impacts of the flood and mostly caused by drowning. The majority of victims were elderly: nearly 60% of fatalities were over 65 years old. Similar to historical flood events, mortality rates were highest in areas near severe breaches and where flood waters were deeper. The overall mortality among the exposed population was about 1%—similar to that for other historical floods. S.N. Jonkman, B. Maaskant, E. Boyd, and M. L. Levitan. 2009. *Risk Analysis* 29(5): 676–698.

■ *Social Vulnerability to Disasters* discusses why, throughout the world, the overwhelming majority of victims of natural disasters are women, children, elderly, disadvantaged, or disabled. The authors present evidence that social structure and social roles produce extensive human suffering and differential impacts during disasters. The book discusses why such extraordinary vulnerabilities exist and what can be done to foster change. Each chapter provides strategies for community-based mitigation by engaging those populations most at risk. All royalties from the book are being donated, in memory of Mary Fran Myers, to a special fund at the Natural Hazards Center. Brenda Phillips, Deborah S.K. Thomas, Alice Fothergill, and Lynn Blinn-Pike, editors. CRC Press. ISBN 978-1-4200-7856-5. \$69.95. Available from <http://www.crcpress.com>.

■ “Long Term Recovery from Disasters — The Neglected Component of Emergency Management” looks back on the author’s 30 years of research and practice in disaster recovery, and notes the many “fits and starts” in the minimal progress in this field. The author concludes that “recovery as a practice is virtually uninformed by the research that does exist. The national response framework . . . does little to enable local officials to address the challenges associated with the local and intergovernmental politics of disaster recovery.” Claire B. Rubin, 2009. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 6(1) Article 46. 19 pages. Access it at <http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1616&context=jhsem>.

■ *Preparing for the Next Flood: Vermont Floodplain Management* is a brochure targeted toward community leaders in that state, giving a concise overview of the significance of managing floodprone areas and the legal ramifications of doing—or not doing—so. Four main areas are described: the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in managing floodplains; strategies and tools for such management; the No Adverse Impact approach; and protecting property rights to reduce local liability for flood damage. The ASFPM’s Sam Riley Medlock was the principal author. Land Use Institute of the Vermont Law School. 2009. 24 pp. Available at http://www.vermontlaw.edu/Documents/VLS.065.09%20LAND%20USE%20PAPER_PFF.pdf.

■ The Fiscal Year 2010 *Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance* has been posted on the FEMA Library website in a new format, with internal links. It is now possible to jump between sections in the document based on the internal links. The substance of the guidance remains the same. See <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3649> or <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hma/index.shtm>.

■ *Adapting to Coastal Climate Change: A Guidebook for Development Planners* addresses climate concerns and adaptation options in coastal areas. It is intended to help practitioners and development partners understand the varied impacts that climate change is expected to bring to coastal zones in the developing world. Further, it lists options by which coastal planners and managers can help coastal communities adapt to these impacts. A collaborative effort of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center, and the International Resources Group, along with input from many practitioners, the guidebook is divided into three sections. The first is a summary for policymakers; the second describes the use of vulnerability assessments and action planning; and the third includes 17 practitioner briefs that outline management strategies for adaptation. U.S. AID. 2009. 172 pp. Available at http://www.crc.uri.edu/download/CoastalAdaptationGuide_ExecSummary.pdf

Calendar

Please note that the events listed below are only the highlights of what may be of interest to floodplain managers in the future. A complete list of flood-related training, conferences, and other meetings is always posted at <http://www.floods.org/n-calendar/calendar.asp?>

- October 14–16, 2009:** FALL WORKSHOP OF THE NEW MEXICO FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, Hon Dah, Arizona. See <http://www.nmfma.clubexpress.com/>.
- 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 STORM-WATER MANAGEMENT AGENCIES, Colorado Springs, Colorado. See <http://www.nafsma.org>.
- October 22, 2009:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGERS, Linthicum, Maryland. Contact Mgilliam@g-and-o.com or see <http://www.mafsm.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>.
- March 2–5, 2010:** ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MICHIGAN STORMWATER-FLOODPLAIN ASSOCIATION, Bay City, Michigan. See <http://mi.floods.org/>.
- April 19–22, 2010:** 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 25–29, 2010:** MONITORING FROM THE SUMMIT TO THE SEA—SEVENTH NATIONAL MONITORING CONFERENCE, Denver, Colorado. Sponsored by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council. See <http://acwi.gov/monitoring/conference/2010/index.html>.
- 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>.
- June 14–17, 2010:** 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/>.
- June 15–17, 2010:** SUSTAINABLE OCEAN SUMMIT, Belfast, Ireland. Sponsored by the World Ocean Council. See <http://www.oceancouncil.org>.
- August 9–12, 2010:** 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/>.
- May 15–20, 2011:** THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact (608) 274-0123, or see <http://www.floods.org>.



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