

NEWS & VIEWS

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2013 Summer Issue,
Conference Summary

ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS

*Dedicated to reducing flood losses
and protecting
floodplain resources . . .*

INSIDE

Letter to Pres. Obama	Pg. 1
New Board of Directors	Pg. 2
From the Chair	Pg. 3
Director's Desk	Pg. 4
Policy Matters	Pg. 5
2013 Nat'l Awards	Pg. 6
2013 Conference Update	Pg. 8
2014 Seattle, WA	Pg. 8
Book Review	Pg. 9
Calendar	Pg. 9



ASFPM Sends Letter to President Obama on the Need for Flood Mapping Funding

ASFPM is concerned about the reduction in support for production and maintenance of flood data and flood maps, which could impact the 22,000 flood prone communities across the nation. We believe flood mapping to be a key piece to the President's recently unveiled Climate Action Plan and we advocate that the President support adequate funding for the NFIP flood mapping program beginning with the FY15 budget proposal. Please see the [full letter here.](#)

ASFPM Comments on FEMA Policy 203-074-1

On July 30, 2013, ASFPM submitted comments to the proposed FEMA policy 203-074-1 "Minimum Design Standards for Hazard Mitigation Assistance Projects in Flood Hazard Areas." ASFPM believes the FEMA mitigation programs are essential to reducing the costs of future disasters in the nation. In that context, we provide these comments with the objective of assisting to make these programs as effective as possible, while ensuring citizens living at risk, as well as the taxpayers are protected from future damages and costs. [See the comments here.](#)

Meet your new BOARD of DIRECTORS! See page 2

ASFPM 2013-14 Board of Directors



New Officers and Directors are underlined, we congratulate and thank all our Board volunteers!

Seated L-R: Chad Berginnis, CFM, ASFPM Executive Director; Bill Nechamen, CFM, Chair, NY; Ceil Strauss, CFM, Vice Chair, MN; Joy Duperault, CFM, Secretary, FL; Joe Ruggeri, PE, CFM, Treasurer, NJ; Ingrid Danler, CFM, ASFPM Associate Director-Operations; Larry Larson, PE, CFM, ASFPM Director Emeritus, Senior Policy Advisor.

Standing L-R: Rod Renkenberger, PLS, CFM, Region 5, IN; Janet Thigpen, CFM, Chapter District 1, NY; Jacob Tysz, CFM, Region 2, NJ; Michelle Burnett, CFM, Region 1, RI; Mike Cothard, PE, CFM, Chapter District 2, IL; Jessica Baker, PE, PMP, CFM, Region 6, TX; Bob Freitag, CFM, Region 10, WA; Jeanne Ruefer, CFM, Region 9, NV; John Gysling, PE, CFM, Region 3, DE; Valerie Swick, CFM, Chapter District 5, AZ; Brian Varrella, PE, CFM, Region 8, CO; Terri Turner, AICP, CFM, Region 4, GA; Shawn Putman, CFM, Chapter District 3, SC.
Not pictured: Erika Stanley, CFM, Region 7, KS; Kyle Riley, PE, CFM, Chapter District 4, IA.

ASFPM 2013-14 COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

A number of our Committee Co-Chairs turned over this year. You can see all our leadership and their contact information on the [ASFPM Board and Committees sheet](#).



From the Chair

William S. "Bill" Nechamen, CFM

I hope that people who attended the Annual Conference in Hartford have recovered, but that you still have the enthusiasm that comes with attending an ASFPM conference. I want to thank the membership for having the confidence in me to elect me Chair.

As your new Chair, I know that I have my work cut out for me. We also have a new Board of Directors, with several new faces. Congratulations to Jacob Tysz, (Region 2 Director), John Gysling (Region 3 Director), Rod Renkenberger (Region 5 Director), Erika Stanley (Region 7 Director), Jeanne Ruefer (Region 9 Director), Janet Thigpen (Chapter District 1), and Shawn Putnam (Chapter District 3) who are beginning their terms as new Board members. I also look forward to working with Ceil Straus from Minnesota, who is our new Vice-Chair. A majority of the Board is either a new Board member or a new Board position. Please check out www.floods.org to meet your new Board members, and contact your Regional Director or Chapter Director if you have questions or comments.

Some major issues that we will be tracking in coming months include carrying out the requirements of the Biggert-Waters NFIP Reform Act, advocating for continued support for flood mapping and for hazard mitigation programs, supporting states with respect to Sandy and other disaster response, tracking the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program successes and challenges, making sure that the Technical Mapping Advisory Committee gets underway, and working on a flood insurance affordability framework, including innovative flood insurance approaches.

Our committees continue to do much of the heavy lifting for the Association. In fact, the best way for you to make an impact on important policy issues is to get involved in a committee of your choice. Review the committee menu on the web site to see what the committees are working on, and to lend your support. Most of the committees have periodic conference calls. Contact memberhelp@floods.org for information about committees other ASFPM activities.

I'm very proud to be following Sally McConkey as Chair. Sally worked hard to have more direct communications with state floodplain and mitigation representatives and more frequent calls with state and multi-state chapters. I plan to continue that work. I also plan to work with our new Board to make sure that the Board represents your interests and hears your concerns.

One thing that I've learned through my years on the Board is that the staff in Madison does indeed work for you and hears your concerns. So please don't hesitate to contact the Madison office, your committee co-chairs, or your board members with questions, comments, and suggestions.

Sincerely,
Bill Nechamen, Chair

From the Director's Desk

Chad Berginnis, CFM
Executive Director, ASFPM



A Landmark Policy Directive

Not often do I use the superlatives like “the greatest,” “the best,” or the “most wonderful” when talking about flood related policies at any level of government. However, I want to tell you about what I think is truly a landmark policy directive that has recently come out and one which you may not be aware of.

On June 18th, 2013, FEMA issued policy directive “FP-108-024-01: Consideration of Environmental Benefits in the Evaluation of Acquisition Projects under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Programs.” This directive includes, for the first time, proper accounting for environmental benefits for flood acquisition projects under FEMA’s mitigation programs. It is the culmination of at least five years of hard work, research, input and development. While we will eagerly await its usage over the next few years, the policy clearly puts FEMA among the Federal agency leaders in using cutting edge benefit-cost analysis methodology. The policy document and calculator can be found here:

<http://www.fema.gov/benefit-cost-analysis>

Why is this such a big deal? First, from a strictly ASFPM point of view it helps achieve our organization’s mission to reduce flood losses and protect the natural functions of floodplains. In order to protect those functions – especially in today’s benefit-cost driven world – you must be able to quantify those benefits which has been devilishly hard to do for many years. While, on some level, floodplain managers know that the natural functions of floodplains are valuable whether for aquifer recharge, water storage, habitat, stream health, etc.; such benefits could never be accounted for in hazard mitigation projects. Now that these benefits have been quantified, mitigation project applicants can use FEMA’s calculator to add those benefits into project calculations. Second, this could mean that an otherwise good mitigation project application based on future damages avoided that is just below a benefit-cost ratio of 1.0 (which is the minimum threshold for eligibility), when properly including environmental benefits, becomes an eligible project. Third, I think it will also create a dialog within communities related to the fact that open and natural floodplain areas inherently are valuable and do provide significant services. If you have ever put a flood acquisition project together, how many times have you heard concern expressed about the loss of tax base, or that acquired land that has deed restrictions is largely “worthless?” With these new values and data, instead of talking about descriptive values of open space, you can show a truer apples to apples comparison in terms of the values of open space floodplain property versus benefits from developed. Finally, the addition of such benefits can be incorporated into loss avoidance studies that occur after a flood event to show that flood mitigation acquisition projects are an even better investment of taxpayer dollars.

Nationally, our first opportunity to use this methodology is occurring with FEMA’s release of the FY13 Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance program guidance. Unfortunately there is an exceptionally tight turnaround for project development, review, and submittal through the states and to FEMA. Please contact either your State Floodplain Manager or your State Hazard Mitigation Officer for more information how the program will be administered in your state.

Your partner in loss reduction,

Chad



Policy Matters!

Larry Larson, P.E., CFM
Director Emeritus – Senior Policy Advisor, ASFPM

The United States struggles with managing our flood risk. Despite hundreds of billions in structural protective works over the last century, and despite 45 years of the NFIP working with 22,000 communities to guide new and rebuilt development, our flood losses continue to grow. And our flood risk is growing even faster because we continue to develop and redevelop in flood risk areas at the same time storm intensity and sea level are increasing.

Do other nations manage flood risk better than we do? If so, how do they manage it? Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to discuss these questions with professionals from other nations. In May, four members of the Association and our Foundation traveled to Australia to participate in their first nation-wide floodplain management conference in Tweed Heads, NSW, just south of Brisbane on the Gold Coast of Australia. This meeting was hosted by the Floodplain Management Association of Australia. This organization evolved from one in New South Wales (Sydney, et al) that has existed for over 50 years. President Ian Dinham invited us and asked me to speak at the opening plenary on the challenges we face in managing flood risk in the U.S. Others from the U.S. group (Firas Makarem, Maribel Marquez, Mark Forest, and Joe Chapman) discussed specific aspects of our mapping and management programs and policies.

Throughout that week-long conference, I listened to many of the Australian speakers, and talked to many more of them about the approaches they use. In Australia, States have the primary role, and they seek increased assistance in policy and some funding from their federal government. Flood insurance is provided by the private sector and the states often buy reinsurance for damages to public facilities for billions in cover, with large deductibles. In England (we had a keynote speaker from the UK at the Gilbert White Forum this spring), insurance is again private, but the private insurance companies have a limited term agreement to provide it as long as the government undertakes some mitigation measures. In much of mainland Europe, it varies between these measures, with the Netherlands building huge levees (1,200 year) to protect their below sea level country (they sacrificed much of their fishery to do this), to other nations using both non-structural and structural approaches. Interestingly countries in the European Union (EU) have some initiatives that require the member nations to develop flood data and planning on a watershed basis over a given time frame. Similar issues exist in Japan, and even in China, where there is centralized planning, they are rethinking the approach of trying to protect everything with structures, recognizing they cannot protect everyone against all events, and that those who may be protected may need to compensate those who are intentionally flooded in major events in order to provide that protection. In a Communique I just received from the UN Global Risk Reduction Chair, she echoes these same issues and concerns, which was in her synopsis of discussions among 3,500 global hazards risk managers.

While the standards for mapping, regulations for development, standards for structural protection, and approaches to insurance differ in a number of ways from ours, in the end a couple very common issues emerge: First, we all spend way more money on response to flooding than on mitigation measures which could reduce or prevent flooding. One speaker in Australia calculated that they spend 98 cents of every flood disaster dollar for response and only 2 cents on mitigation. We do about the same in the U.S. Politically, it is much easier to provide disaster relief than fund mitigation programs. The floodplain management professionals in all these nations are struggling with how to convince politicians that mitigation saves big money. I suspect politicians may know this, but are not sure it engenders votes. Somehow, we need to engage the voters in this dialogue---I sense they are becoming more concerned with sending their money to those who insist in building or rebuilding in high risk areas.

The second issue we all seem to be realizing is that we are losing the natural systems that will minimize flood damages. We did that through development right on the river banks and coastal barrier islands, by pinching in our rivers with levees and dams, by filling in what we once called “waste lands” [wetlands and similar land that would store or convey flood waters were actually labeled such on old federal maps). Many nations are now having a Pogo moment: he observed; “We have found the enemy and it is us”. Even the Netherlands, with its massive levees realizes those will one day fail or overtop and is now initiating a plan to “make room for the river”. With rising sea level and more intense storms, it would seem practical to plan for “gradual retreat” from high risk areas. I often hear the plea: “we have no other land to build on”. In the U.S. where only about 7% of the land area is in the high risk floodplain that does not seem plausible. All the nations I have talked with recognize the value of natural systems to reduce flooding, but we all struggle with how to enact policies and programs that make this happen.

There is a need for U.S. (hopefully in cooperation with other nations) to begin to formally evaluate international flood risk trends and quantify flood risk standards, approaches and investments in order to determine similarities/differences in approach and above all, to measure and evaluate outcomes.

In conclusion, while our governance and programs may differ from other nations, we can all learn from each other. None of us have found the silver bullet yet. So for all of you starting in this profession of managing flood risk, think of the massive opportunities ahead of you!

NATIONAL AWARDS CONFERRED!

The Annual National Awards for Excellence in Floodplain Management were presented at our conference in Hartford during the Thursday annual awards luncheon, with the following results. Please see the [2013 Conference page](#) for photos.



James Lee Witt Local – City of Montevideo, Minnesota, for their exemplary Flood Hazard Mitigation Program

Tom Lee State – State of Illinois Floodplain Program, for mitigating 500 floodprone Federal cabin lease sites

Media and Outreach –

1. Nadeau Land Survey’s “*Welcome to the Flood Zone*”, a monthly online newsletter
2. Nurture Nature Center’s “*Science on a Sphere*” globe, exhibiting changing climate impacts on flooding around the world.
3. City of Arlington Texas’s annual “*Flood Safety Awareness Campaign*”, and innovative new “novella” flood risk comic book, “*Sink or Swim*”.

Ivey Certification – Diane Calhoun, Pilot Point, Texas

Sheaffer Floodproofing – Oval E. “Gene” Barr, Barboursville, West Virginia

Larry Johnston FPM of the Year – Landon “Lannie” Smith, Orange Beach, Alabama

Louthain Service to Members – Deborah Mills, Fairfax, Virginia

Meritorious Service – Mike Robinson (posthumously) 1945-2007, for career leadership in the NFIP

Goddard White – not presented this year



UPDATE on ASFPM 37th Annual National Conference, June 9-14, 2013 Hartford Convention Center | Hartford, CT

ASFPM would like to thank each and every one of you who participated in this year's Conference. You're the reason we do this and we couldn't do it without you. We'd like to send a special thank you to the Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and all of the volunteers who helped plan, organize, and conduct the conference. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to all of the Conference Sponsors for their continuing support and ensuring the ASFPM National Conference remains the world's Premier Flood Conference. Please see the [2013 Conference page](#) for photos and program summaries.

As far as registration numbers are concerned, we did fairly well in light of the Federal Sequester. We had 910 registrants plus their guests bringing our total participation number to 987. Here's how the numbers broke down:

- General Registrations: 731
- Exhibit Booth Registrations: 79
- Exhibit Booth Representative Registrations: 35
- One-Day Registrations: 61
- Workshop-Only Registrations: 4
- Registered Guests: 77

We had representatives from all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, as well as 11 international representatives from 5 foreign nations. Virginia made a comeback this year taking first place with 91 participants. Our hosts from Connecticut made a strong second place contender with a whopping 86 participants.

THANK YOU 2013 SPONSORS!



Thank you to our sponsors at the Diamond level!



L-R: ASFPM Chair Sally McConkey; Dewberry, Grant Smith; AECOM, Scott Edelman; URS, Dale Lehman; Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., Jeff Sparrow; ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis

ASFPM 2014 – Seattle, Washington

As you may have seen in the promo during the Awards luncheon in Hartford, the Northwest Regional Floodplain Management Association (NORFMA) are making room for a successful conference next year in Seattle! NORFMA will be our host when we convene June 1-6, 2014, at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle to discuss issues relevant to our theme: "**Making Room for Floods & Fish.**" We appreciate your patience as we redesign our conference website at <http://asfpmconference.org> for Seattle!



ASFPM Washington Liaison Report

-Meredith R. Inderfurth, Washington Liaison

This report will now appear regularly in the INSIDER, ASFPM's member newsletter produced in the odd months. Please see [ASFPM 2013 Legislative and Policy Priorities](#) on ASFPM's website. This and other documents are also available at [National Policy and Programs > Working with Congress](#).

BOOK REVIEW: Federal Flood Policies: The Cause of Flood Disasters

Leslie A Bond, CFM, 575-682-1359, lbond@labond.com

“Federal Flood Policies: The Cause of Flood Disasters” is a just-released book that discusses past and current federal flood policies on flood damage reduction and the need for revisions to our current policies. This book is written for two audiences: those who make federal policy and the floodplain management professionals that the policy makers turn to when they have questions. Flood disasters cost Americans between \$40 and \$60 billion, on the average, each year. These costs are increasing at 5% to 10% each year. Floods will cost between \$2 and \$4 trillion between 2010 and 2050. Research shows that increasing costs of floods are proportional to increased population in floodplains. Federal policy encourages new floodplain development and redevelopment of areas that are destroyed by floods. A set of recommendations for changes in federal policy are presented. These changes would arrest the increase in the costs of floods and gradually reduce these costs. Essentially, we must stop building in our floodplains and relocate buildings which are destroyed by floods outside the floodplain. www.federalloodpolicy.org.

This book became available in digital form in May, 2013, just in time for display at the annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) in Hartford, Connecticut in June 2013. Mr. Bond welcomes comments and questions. Leslie A. Bond has 39 years of experience in floodplain management, flood hazard mitigation, flood warning and related areas. He earned a B.S. in hydrology from the University of Arizona in 1972 and a Masters in Public Administration from Arizona State University in 1982. He worked for Maricopa County Flood Control District and Arizona Dept. of Water Resources in the 70s and 90s before starting LA Bond Associates in 1987.

ASFPM Calendar

The events listed below are only the highlights of events of interest to floodplain managers. A complete list of flood-related training, conferences, and other meetings, including ALL the workshops and conferences of State Chapters and associations is always posted at http://www.floods.org/n_calendar/calendar.asp

June 1–6, 2014: 38TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Seattle, Washington. Contact (608) 274-0123 or see <http://www.floods.org>

May 31–June 5, 2015: 39TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, Atlanta, Georgia. Contact (608) 274-0123 or see <http://www.floods.org>

Are you looking for training opportunities to earn CECs for your CFM? If so, be sure to check out our web calendar, which already has LOTS of training opportunities listed for 2012! You can search the calendar by state using the directions below. Or you can use the category drop down menu to search by category.

<http://www.floods.org/n-calendar/calendar.asp>

- Go to the calendar and click on the search feature icon at the top of the calendar. Type your state's initials in parenthesis (for example “(WI)”) into the search field and it will pull all the events (training, conferences, etc.) that are currently listed on the calendar for your state. What a great way to find upcoming training for CECs! The only events without a state listed in the event title are EMI courses which are all held in Emmitsburg, MD.

NEWS & VIEWS

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Deadline is the first day of odd-numbered months.

For address changes and member services, contact the ASFPM Executive Office at the address in the box above.

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