



Natural & Beneficial Functions Committee Status Report 2020

Eileen Shader, CFM

Rebecca Pfeiffer, CFM

Co-chairs



**ASSOCIATION OF STATE
FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS**

June 2020



Introduction

The mission of the Natural and Beneficial Functions Committee is to promote understanding and appreciation of the benefits provided by naturally functioning floodplains by the public, policy makers, and association membership. The committee champions the capacity of naturally functioning floodplains to provide multiple benefits to communities, including but not limited to flood damage reduction, water quality protection, habitat conservation, opportunities for recreation, and aesthetically pleasing landscapes.

By raising awareness and promoting the benefits provided by naturally functioning floodplains, the committee builds support for their protection and restoration. The committee works to pursue these objectives through leadership in the creation and support of educational tools, policies, and partnerships that advance and promote the protection of NBF as the primary option for flood risk reduction.

Ongoing Tasks

1. Engage in ASFPM committee responsibilities including committee calls and retreat, provide feedback on organizational documents, actively promote NBF at the national conference, collaborate with the Flood Science Center, etc.
2. Provide support to the association on NBF policy issues and update committee members.
3. Hold regular calls to update members on relevant developments related to NBF.
4. Provide outreach to and represent ASFPM on relevant coalitions and with partners
5. Support the Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance efforts, including annual meeting at the conference.

Current Priorities

1. **Track policy issues, inform members of developments, and assist ASFPM in development of positions and letters when needed.** There has been significant activity on federal policy issues related to natural and beneficial functions of floodplains this year. The Trump Administration has proceeded with rollbacks to numerous environmental laws and has had comment periods on proposed rules. The committee participated in drafting comments for ASFPM on revisions to the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Rule that would have adverse impacts on natural and beneficial functions of floodplains.

In collaboration with partners in the conservation community, we have been tracking developments on the Water Resources Development Act that could potentially result in projects that restore floodplains; the failure to include natural infrastructure in FEMA's BRIC proposal; and discussions about conflicts with restoring functional floodplains on acquired properties. Upcoming policy issues the committee may want to provide input on include economic stimulus proposals and recommendations to transition teams pending the results of the 2020 election.

2. **Help organize and participate in the third NFFA Integrated Mapping and Functional Assessment of Riverine and Coastal Floodplains and Wetlands workshop.** The committee has been actively engaged on the NFFA workshop planning team as we plan the third workshop, which was scheduled to be held in Washington DC in fall 2020. Unfortunately, the workshop has been indefinitely postponed due to meeting and travel restrictions related to COVID-19. The planning team is going to continue moving ahead with workshop planning, including developing a contingency plan for a virtual platform, if possible.

Recommended Actions

1. Continue to engage on the planning team for the NFFA workshop
2. Continue to track proposed rules and changes to environmental laws and support ASFPM with development of comment letters.
3. Inform ASFPM leadership of recommendations the conservation community is making to transition teams that are relevant to floodplain management and NBF.



4. Complete fact sheet on the spectrum of natural infrastructure, green infrastructure, nature-based approaches, and non-structural and define common terms used.
5. Update the NBF committee website.
6. Support Floodplain Regulations Committee in developing a Higher Standard Guide that incorporates nature-based approaches and protection and restoration of natural and beneficial functions of floodplains.