

# POLICY COMMITTEE Status Report

## Natural and Beneficial Functions Committee

### 2017 - 2018

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## 1.0 Overview

### Committee Mission

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 the 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 of and promoting the benefits provided by naturally functioning floodplains, the committee builds support for their protection and restoration.

### Committee Objectives

The committee will pursue this mission in order to reduce flood losses, improve public safety, protect ecosystem services that help to minimize flood risk and promote/enhance the long-term sustainability of our communities and nation.

### Committee Strategy

The committee will 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.

### Committee co-chairs:

Rebecca Pfeiffer; VT DEC, Watershed Management; Essex Junction, VT  
Eileen Shader; American Rivers; Camp Hill, PA

### Liaisons:

Dave Carlton, dkcarlton & Associates, Seattle, Washington – CRS  
Dave Fowler, Stantec (retired) - NFFA & ASWM liaison  
John McShane – Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup, ASFPM representative

## 2.0 2017-2018 Work items with updates

### Work items for the 2017-2018 year:

1. In collaboration with the Arid Regions Committee and Mapping & Engineering Standards Committee, implement the Riverine Erosion Hazard working group, as a follow-up forum to the 2016 Erosion Hazards White Paper.
  - a. A small group of interested members participated on the group's first call in March 2018. A follow-up call was held in April with intentions to have group participants get together at the annual conference for further discussion. Part of the focus of the group has been how to advance the recommendations from the 2016 Erosion Hazards White Paper. The idea of the group is to put together a follow-up report that would be able to detail changes since the 2016 report was published – successes and setbacks. The group has also explored what kind of group it may be in the long run (i.e. continue to be a NBF subcommittee, look to become some other board sanctioned entity, etc.) and to continue to explore other alternatives outside of the FEMA mitigation/mapping framework.
2. In collaboration with the Insurance and Regulations Committees, provide feedback or input for FEMA's updated guidance for agricultural structures:
  - a. This effort has been largely taken on by the Insurance and the Regulations Committees.
3. Working with ASWM & NFFA, help to host and participate in a Washington D.C. workshop to continue discussion around natural restoration project barriers and unintentional federal disincentives to natural restoration projects.
  - a. Committee leaders worked with the NFFA and Wetlands Mapping Consortium to organize and host a workshop on "Exploring Opportunities for Integrated Mapping and Functional Assessment of Riverine and Coastal Floodplains and Wetlands" April 10, 2018. The ASWM facilitated the planning committee and ASFPM Foundation provided critical financial support for the workshop. Participants expressed significant support for integration of wetland and floodplain mapping and functional assessment. Water resources are naturally integrated systems – by addressing them more holistically and identifying the capacity of their beneficial functions we can make better land use decisions. Mapping these functions can also provide useful visual aids in efforts to communicate about the natural and beneficial functions of natural floodplains and wetlands which can potentially lead to changes at the program and policy levels. Next steps include:
    - i. Developing a workgroup to continue exploring opportunities and challenges over the next year, develop webinars, and participate in conference calls.
    - ii. Planning for a second workshop in 2019 that will dig deeper into the technical challenges and opportunities. An area of particular interest will likely be exploring how to map floodplain functions to support protecting and restoring natural infrastructure and establishing green infrastructure. During the workshop an action plan will be developed for the third year.
    - iii. Planning for a third workshop in 2020 to identify program and policy changes that need to be made in order to implement an integrated approach

4. In collaboration with the Mapping & Engineering Standards Committee, continue to engage FEMA regarding natural restoration project barriers, such as LOMR/MT-2 requirements, etc.
  - a. This collaboration has been quiet this past year, as no new work was completed.
5. In collaboration with the NFFA, ASWM & the ASFPM Foundation, explore the proposal of mapping natural floodplains
  - a. This effort has been rolled up into work Item #3 and will continue with the second and third workshop in 2019 and 2020. This work will also continue with the work group's efforts in this next year.

### **3.0 On-going work items:**

1. Participate in ASFPM Policy Committee Conference Calls and Retreat
2. Attend Policy Committee Chair Meeting at the annual conference and hold an annual meeting
3. Promote a NBF track and Early Bird session at the upcoming national conference.
4. Support Watershed Pod education and outreach efforts, including White Paper development or How-To Guides, as needed.
5. Continue to provide support to the Association on the USEPA/USACE "Waters of the US" rule process
6. Continue to provide support to the Association regarding implementation of FEMA's NPEIS Preferred Alternative
7. Outreach to environmental organizations on behalf of the Association as volunteers are identified and as requested by the Board
8. Support the executive office on providing feedback and expertise to promote natural floodplain function considerations for the policies and procedures issued by FEMA or other entities, including Mitigation Policies
9. Collaborate with the Flood Science Center on integrating natural functions & ecosystem services considerations into their projects.
10. Continue to provide support to the Association regarding the Pacific Northwest or other regional Biological Opinions
11. Coordinate with (and promote ASFPM goals and objectives to) the Association of State Wetland Managers
12. Support NFFA efforts, including participation in a meeting at the annual conference
13. Represent ASFPM on the Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup
14. Support CBOR on NBF-related CFM Exam question development
15. Act as a liaison for ASFPM with the Green Infrastructure Collaboration that has been organized by the EPA