

ASFPM Policy and Procedures	PPN: 2012-01
	Effective Date: 11/15/2011
	Supersedes: N/A
Discussion Papers	

Purpose: To establish a procedure and format for the creation and completion of ASFPM discussion papers.

Scope: This policy applies to all members of ASFPM.

Background:

The ASFPM has extensive involvement with national policy issues as they deal with flooding. Additionally, ASFPM members have significant expertise in these issues as well as those that are just emerging. To better inform the policy development process and/or educate ASFPM membership on a particular issue, the Discussion Paper process was created. This process will leverage the expertise, creativity and desire of any ASFPM member to develop a paper on a particular topic. Any member of ASFPM can avail themselves of this process.

Definitions:

A Discussion Paper is a topical paper discussing a current issue relevant to members of ASFPM that succinctly presents the issue, discusses the history of the issue and why it is now relevant, and presents a series of options on how to address the issue. A Discussion Paper should be treated like an academic paper. It presents well researched facts, problems and possible solutions. While it may suggest possible solutions, it stops short of recommending specific policy actions. A discussion paper should be fully vetted through the review process. Where the issues warrant, it may also be vetted through other professional organizations or even appropriate academic review. The Board of Directors does not need to approve a Discussion Paper. However the Board may recommend that the Discussion Paper be further developed into a White Paper.

Policy: It shall be the policy of the ASFPM that discussion papers be developed to inform policy discussions, educate ASFPM members on new or complex issues, and be the basis of future White Papers where necessary.

Procedure:

1. Discussion paper ideas may be generated by any ASFPM member. However, the discussion paper must be sponsored by an ASFPM Policy Committee. Sponsorship means that a Policy Committee provides leadership and accepts responsibility for ensuring that this process be followed.
2. Pod and Committee Chairs identify lead writer(s) and small peer review group (group agreed to with Pod and EO).
3. Official announcement in ASFPM publication (News and Views or Insider) that Discussion Paper will be drafted
4. Posting on Sponsoring Committee Web site; Information provided to indicate deadline, points of contacts, comments, etc.

5. 1st draft paper vetted by peer review group (include technical and policy experts for the review process) (2 weeks) Lead inserts comments (discuss w/ ASFPM Editor if needed) and develops 2nd draft.
6. 2nd draft is circulated for widespread comments by ASFPM members. It is posted on the sponsoring committee website, and is also submitted to the ASFPM Board of Directors for comment at their next available Board Meeting. Deadline for comments is set for no less than 30 days after notice in News and Views or Insider. Notice is provided that all non-editorial comments will be incorporated as received in an appendix to the paper, unless the author of the comment specifically requests otherwise.
7. After comment period closes all comments are considered. Comments that can be resolved are incorporated into the third (final) draft. Alternative options to resolve the problem are incorporated into the paper. All substantive comments are provided in the appendix, unless the author of the comment specifically requests otherwise.
8. 3rd draft is circulated to peer review group and ASFPM Technical Editor for the purpose of technical edits, cleanup, and finalization. Lead writer creates final paper. Final paper is posted on Committee website and submitted to ASFPM Board of Directors.

Format:

The introductory paragraph must contain a statement to the effect “This Paper was prepared to provide background and discussion it does not represent a position or policy of the Association of State Floodplain Managers, (ASFPM), a non-profit professional organization dedicated to reduction of flood losses etc.”

I. The Issue (1 or 2 paragraphs at most). *In this section, briefly define the issue in broad terms. This section should be understandable to the lay person.*

- What the issue is.
- What the problem is in relation to the issue; possibly from the standpoint of the national impact (one or two sentences)
- Historical background, if relevant and in many instances this should be a thorough but short discussion.

II. Background (from one to several paragraphs). *In this section, describe the issue or issues in specific terms.*

- What specifically is not working
- Why it is not working.
- Why it is important now.
- More thorough history of how we got to where we are. Provide references if possible.
- Examples of the problem in real world, if available (anecdotes from events or situations, if relevant).
- What the event or situation showed or taught us about this problem (if relevant)

III. Options to address the Issue (probably the longest section, varying in length). *In this section, give a full explanation of how we think the problem(s) can be solved.*

- List and explain a range of options (There should always be more than one, otherwise this becomes a white paper).
- Provide pros and cons to each solution. We may not agree with some – but others might so we need to list, explain and rebut.
- Examples of how each solution would address the issue. Use real life examples if possible.

IV. Conclusions

- Does ASFPM need to take a position (White Paper) or should it provide technical guidance instead without taking a position? Or does the Discussion Paper provide sufficient educational materials and references to be a stand-alone document?

V. Next steps (length will vary). *This section should be a short, action-oriented summary of the next steps needed to bring us closer to a consensus solution. Give clear and specific recommendation first, and then explain briefly. Repeat as needed.*

- Specific statement of what could be or needs to be done (more research, broader range of discussion, more in-depth evaluation of desirability and practicality of solutions...)
- Who could/should do it (locals, states, ASFPM & committees, feds, NGOs, consortium, other)
- Provide a listing and discussion of dissenting opinions as to what the next steps should be and why

VI. Resources (optional but recommended). *Here list any references used in paper, agencies already involved in the sort of action suggested, places to get more information, etc.*

VII. Appendices (optional but recommended). *This is where other comments that haven't otherwise been included in the discussion paper would be presented.*

Board of Director's Approval: 11-15-11
Date

ATTEST:


ASFPM Board Secretary