

Association of State FloodPlain Managers

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Meeting: Conference Call between FEMA-Washington and ASFPM

Subject: Implementation of Map Modernization

Date: June 17, 2003

Participants: FEMA – Mary Jean Pajak, Allyson Lichtenfels, Kathy Miller
ASFPM – Mark Riebau, Alan Lulloff

I. Schedule for Conference Calls

The conference calls have been initiated to provide a forum for FEMA to keep ASFPM and its members apprised of the status of implementation of Map Modernization. This is the first of a series of conference calls/meetings between representatives of FEMA-Washington and ASFPM. Conference calls or meetings will take place every two weeks. Future calls/meetings will be held every other Thursday at 3:00 PM (CDT)/4:00 PM (EDT)

II. Status of Procurement of Mapping Contractor(s)

Phase I has been completed and a “short-list” has been selected to proceed to Phase II. All firms that submitted SOQ’s have been notified as to their status. Phase II is underway and includes the submittal of additional information as well as an oral presentation. FEMA procurement rules prohibit disclosure of which firms have been “short-listed” and public announcements will not be made until a contract has been negotiated with the selected firm(s).

III. FY03 Funding

The final plan for distribution of funds to the Regional Offices for the Regional projects is scheduled to occur by the end of June. Every effort is being made to finalize the plan and get money to the Regions within the next two weeks. FEMA’s spending plan for map mod has been approved by DHS but DHS does have to be “notified” in some cases prior to funds being released.. They are targeting high-risk areas in their project selection process. In some instances there were “other compelling reasons” for selecting projects – such as securing state or local cost share dollars.

ASFPM requested detailed information regarding the spending plan, and authorization to distribute it to its members.

FEMA will inquire about the appropriate protocol for dissemination of the information.

IV. Work Group to Develop “State Business Case”

FEMA is interested in pursuing the creation of a work group for this purpose but, due to staff limitations, the pressing need to address procurement of a new mapping contractor(s) and reorganization limited efforts have been done with respect to this initiative. FEMA is in the process of developing a “first cut” at the management functions that could be included in a business case. ASFPM’s offer to assist to develop “State Business Cases” is being considered favorably. In addition FEMA suggested that:

- ASFPM could develop education and training aids to distribute to States about business case development and implementation;

- ASFPM provide “peer review” for Business Cases submitted by States;
- NAFSMA be brought into the discussions to expand the CTP “horizon” particularly in States that have very limited capability and staff levels;
- The issue of differing floodway standards for States bordering the Mississippi River, particularly the Upper Miss (MN, WI, IL, IA, MO) be identified in each States Business Case as an issue that requires resolution. (This could become a “model” for other states that share a common border with a river.)

FEMA will return ASFPM’s offer to assist with suggested modifications within two weeks. ASFPM will resubmit its offer after reviewing the proposed modifications.

Concerns were expressed about timing. Cooperative Agreements are the normal model for developing working arrangements between non-profit organizations and federal agencies, but they have been taking many months to consummate. The States will soon be receiving funding to develop “business cases” and they must be developed within six months. An “add-on” to the Cooperative Agreement being developed by the Community Assistance Branch may be the most expeditious means of involving ASFPM in this process.

V. “Advisory Committee”

FEMA expressed a desire to form a new “technical mapping advisory committee” but there has been little progress toward that goal. There are numerous people willing to donate time to participate, but few who can afford to also pay for their air fare, hotel and meal expenses to go to Washington 2 to 4 times each year. If FEMA can offer to reimburse the participants for their travel expenses there would be little trouble setting up an advisory committee. Unfortunately, FEMA has been advised they need legislative authority to reimburse non-federal employees for expenses. ASFPM is considering alternatives that may assist FEMA in establishing this type of committee.

VI. Map Mod Implementation

The biggest issue identified in the past several weeks is the pronouncement that no coastal studies would be funded in FY03. Proposed new coastal studies would be deferred until FY 2004. FEMA said the reason coastal studies are being delayed is they believe it is important to first build consensus for the best scientific approach for coastal studies before making significant investments nationwide through Map Mod Implementation. FEMA recently became aware of efforts being done by the US Army Corps of Engineers with regard to a new storm surge model (adCirc). FEMA plans to coordinate with the USACE on this model as part of the consensus-building process.

VII. Miscellaneous Issues

- The next conference call will take place on July 3rd at 3 PM (CDT)/4 PM (EDT). FEMA to set up conference call ‘meet-me’ line.
{Note: The date has been changed. The second conference call will take place on June 26th at 4 PM EDT}
- ASFPM has been asked by GAO to provide ‘poster children’ examples of why flood maps need to be updated; requesting suggestions from FEMA.
- ASFPM is preparing a White Paper on use of best available topography for quality flood maps.
- ASFPM stated that NYSDEC indicated it has been asked to fund map publication costs for updated NY State flood maps.