ASFPM REGION 10 DIRECTOR ANNUAL REPORT

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2015-2016
Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska
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Introduction and Regional Overview
The ASFPM Region 10 area includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. The only ASFPM chapter or floodplain management association in Region 10 is the Northwest Floodplain Management Association (NORFMA), which covers all four states and the province of British Columbia. NORFMA hosted the 2014 ASFPM national conference and holds an annual conference, several state specific mini-conferences and sponsors training opportunities.

Overview of events for the past year. The Floodplains by Design program in Washington state was extended by the Legislature for another two years. They provided $35,500,000 for projects throughout the state that not only reduce the risk of flooding, but provide increased habitat for endangered salmon and other species. The Nature Conservancy and the Puget Sound Partnership partner with the State Department of Ecology to administer the program and assist in the review of grant proposals.

All four states had a severe wildfire season the past summer and prepared for serious flooding issues due to the denuded ground. Fortunately we avoided any severe flooding this year in any of the states.

Alaska has a new state NFIP coordinator who is just beginning to learn about floodplain management. Meanwhile several of their coastal communities like Shishmaref are continuing to try to deal with the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Without winter sea ice they are more susceptible to high winds and waves that are causing significantly more damage each winter than in the past.

Idaho also hired a new NFIP coordinator this year who has been very busy getting to know her state by performing CAVs and providing a lot of much needed training.

On April 14, 2016 the Seattle office of the National Marine Fisheries Service issued their final Biological Opinion, http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/habitat/conservation/index.html, on the impacts of the NFIP on endangered fish species within the Oregon. This BiOP is the result of FEMA being sued in federal court concerning its failure to consult with
NMFS concerning how implementing the minimum requirements of the NFIP would impact endangered species. As a result of the lawsuit, FEMA agreed to the consultation, and after years of work the opinion has been released. The opinion contains NOAA’s Reasonable and Prudent for modifications to the NFIP within the Oregon that are necessary to prevent harm to endangered species or their habitat. The opinion contains short and long-term modifications to the NFIP and the CRS as recommendations to FEMA. The long-term modifications involve rule making and if implemented would change the minimum requirements of the NFIP nationally. The state will be working closely with FEMA over the coming year to provide training to local communities.

Some of the long-term modifications include a change in the definition of floodway, mapping of erosion hazards, map watersheds as small as 160 acres, use the 90th percentile estimate of the Q100 instead of the 50th percentile estimate, depict future conditions floodplains on the maps (development and climate change related), revise the map adoption process to shorten the timeframe to adoption, require that communities not allow new development in high hazard areas, require all new lots to have developable land that is not within the SFHA, new structures within the SFHA can cover a maximum of 10 percent of the land area, and more.

Region 10 Priorities

National Flood Insurance Program reform, especially given the recent Biologic Opinion for Oregon, will be a topic for the coming year. The BiOP recommends FEMA to include erosion zones on new maps and change many of the minimum requirements of the NFIP. These are all potential issues in the coming reauthorization.

- **Mapping**
  - Large parts of Region 10 do not have digital flood maps. With current funding levels and mapping requirements, those areas will remain unmapped. With the requirement in the BiOP for new maps throughout much of the state that include erosion zones, without additional money to develop maps in compliance with the BiOP, areas that have yet to be modernized or mapped in the rest of the region suffer. Accurate flood mapping is the first and most necessary tool for managing the floodplain. Mapping is a priority.

- **Training Needs**
  - There is always need for training and topics vary. One way to meet the need is through webinars. Another way Region 10 is meeting the needs of communities for training is to work across state lines to provide training, especially through NORFMA.
Recommend Actions

Based on input from the NFIP coordinators within the region and various other floodplain management professionals, the following goals and recommendations are made for the next year:

- ASFPM should promote NFIP reform that will ensure sound floodplain management policies. ASFPM should review the actions within the BiOP and determine which actions we should support and then support FEMA in the rule-making process as they implement the BiOP.
- FEMA needs to ensure it is fully staffed to meet the training and enforcement needs associated with the Puget Sound BiOP and the recent Oregon BiOP. Additional funding should be provided to both states so they can better assist in performing CAVs and relevant training.
- Funding for flood maps in accordance with the ASFPM publication, “Flood Mapping for the Nation.”
- There is a trend to provide outreach and training to areas after a disaster. We need to fund more outreach and training prior to disasters so communities are can better implement their existing ordinances and better respond to disasters.
- Increased funding for PDM is always an issue within Region 10.