ASFPM Conference

Reno-Sparks, NV, played host to the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) 32nd annual conference at John Ascuaga’s Nugget Hotel May 18-23. More than 1,200 government and private floodplain management professionals, stakeholders, and mitigation experts flocked to the world’s “biggest little city” for the Nation’s premier flood management training event.

Themed “A Living River Approach to Floodplain Management,” this year’s conference offered attendees the opportunity to take advantage of workshops and sessions designed to teach and reinforce techniques of mitigating the effects of floods before floodwaters rise. As in previous years, FEMA and the MOD team played key roles in the conference, working in cooperation to answer questions, prepare and conduct presentations and training sessions, and help provide general support to the conference.

See ASFPM Conference, Page 5

National Flood Conference

This year’s National Flood Conference, held at the Grand Hyatt in Chicago May 7 -10, acknowledged history by marking the 40th anniversary of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the 25th anniversary of the Write Your Own (WYO) program, and the 25th anniversary of the conference itself.

Following a welcoming reception the night before, the conference got underway Thursday morning with an opening plenary session featuring a video chronicling the 40 years of the NFIP. Following the video, Master of Ceremonies and National Lenders Insurance Council President Michael J. Moye welcomed attendees and introduced the first of several speakers who detailed the NFIP’s past successes and future challenges.

Throughout the conference, teams of presenters held informational sessions and workshops that encompassed a variety of topics from floodplain management to hazard mapping and levee issues. These sessions catered to attendees at all levels of experience who deal with flood management.

The 25th annual National Flood Conference closed Saturday morning with a general session breakfast featuring addresses by former Federal Insurance Administrator Jeffery S. Bragg and current Federal Insurance Administrator David Maurstad. Former Administrator Bragg used this opportunity to reflect on the early years of the WYO program, while Administrator Maurstad highlighted the challenges facing the WYO and NFIP programs now and in the future.

WYO began in 1983 and was designed to allow participating property and casualty insurance companies to write and service the Standard Flood Insurance Policy in their own names. More information on WYO is available at www.fema.gov/business/nfip/wyo.shtm.

Additional information on the National Flood Conference or the National Flood Insurance Program is available at http://bsa.nfipstat.com/.

Source: David Taft, (703) 960-8800 x3128
FEMA Releases MHIP Version 3.0


MHIP Version 3.0 provides:

- Detailed tables of flood map production targets;
- Stakeholder input information;
- A summary of FEMA’s progress in meeting Key Performance Indicators for the Flood Map Modernization program; and
- Appendices that provide a detailed listing by State and county for all map production activities, both scheduled and completed.

MHIP Version 3.0, as well as previous versions, is available on FEMA’s Flood Hazard Mapping Web site at www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/mh_main.shtm. Interested parties with questions pertaining to the updated flood map production sequencing in MHIP Version 3.0 are encouraged to contact their appropriate local and State officials, who are working with one of FEMA’s 10 Regional Offices.

FEMA Releases MHIP Version 3.0

May MIP Enhancements

May was an exciting month for Mapping Information Platform (MIP) activities with the release of Service Pack 15 (SP 15), which improved usability and functions; FEMA’s new reporting tool called the MIP Ad Hoc Reporting System (MARS); and the semi-annual meeting for FEMA and MOD team MIP experts (called MIP Champions and Black Belt users, respectively). Read on for more information on each activity.

MIP Usability and Functions Improved

SP15, deployed on May 10, introduced several usability improvements and functional updates to the MIP. The goal of the usability changes were to reduce user errors and uncertainty and to provide a consistent and logical look and feel across MIP screens and tasks. FEMA and the MOD team conducted extensive analysis to determine the most valuable areas to improve.

FEMA implemented the changes to improve “user success rates” for completing tasks within targeted areas. Improvements include additional on-screen guidance, a redesign of the Work Items list, and changes in the display and order of fields and buttons on selected screens. Overall, the usability changes made in SP15 increased the user success rates in targeted areas from 69 to 85%.

Many of these usability changes are found throughout the MIP Studies Workflow, but changes were made to other areas as well. For example, the eLOMA tool was modified to decrease the number of eLOMAs that are selected for audit and to better accommodate the data entry needs of the eLOMA Licensed Professionals (LPs).

The changes to audit rules will dramatically reduce the effort and time spent by experienced LPs. Improved on-screen help and links to additional resources were added to provide more information about the requirements for the data entry fields.
For an overview of the usability changes introduced in SP15, please visit the MIP at hazards.fema.gov › MIP User Care › Recent and Upcoming Service Packs › SP 15 Overview May 2008.

A presentation of the Studies Workflow usability changes and functional enhancements, including screens shots, was provided on the May 8 open conference call with Studies users. The slides used during that presentation are available on the MIP at hazards.fema.gov › MIP User Care › Training Materials › Service Pack 15 Overview.

**Ad Hoc Reporting with MARS**

MARS is a flexible reporting tool allowing authorized users to use MIP Studies, Revisions, and Amendments data to create ad hoc reports on demand. MARS represents a way for FEMA HQ and Regional Offices to more fully use MIP data to manage and track program activities, realizing much greater return on investments in Data Quality.

Mapping partners and other stakeholders in the Regions can work directly with their MIP Champion or Black Belt to create individualized reports which can be e-mailed at scheduled intervals.

Additional training, focused on basic navigation, tool use, and scenarios is scheduled for FEMA HQ and other Regional MARS users.

For more information on MARS please visit the MIP at hazards.fema.gov › MIP User Care › Guides and Documentation › Recent and Upcoming Service Packs › MARS Overview April 2008.

**MIP Champions and Black Belts Meet at MOD HQ**

The MIP Champions and Black Belts group met for their semi-annual meeting in Alexandria, VA, on May 6-7. The packed agenda included training on the recent deployed usability service pack, SP15, and the new reporting tool, MARS. Other topics included MIP Earned Value data, the National Flood Hazard Layer and Map Viewer, and new policy guidance. In addition, representatives from FEMA HQ briefed the group on how the data entered in the MIP are analyzed and used by FEMA.

Many attending were excited about the new usability improvements introduced with SP15 and looked forward to returning to their Regions to share the information with their mapping partners. As a part of MARS training, the group spent time exploring the systems features and experimenting with the ad hoc report capabilities. Users were eager to use new capabilities offered with MARS and the opportunity to create individualized reports.

**FEMA Revises Levee Notation**

Procedure Memorandum No. 45 (PM 45), on the heels of Procedure Memorandum No. 43 (PM 43), was established to provide greater clarity in the risk assessment, messaging, and management of our Nation’s levees.

There are thousands of miles of levees that affect millions of people nationwide. Unfortunately, levees can fail as no structure can completely eliminate the risk of every flood event.

It is important for levee owners, communities, and homeowners to understand the risks associated with living behind levees and the steps they can take to address these risks. It is FEMA’s responsibility to identify and mitigate flood risks; therefore, levees must be properly accounted for on Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs).

PM 43 provides guidance that allows the mapping process, or map study, to continue while a levee owner or community compiles documentation that indicates they are in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program’s (NFIP’s) regulations. This guidance includes notations associated with Provisionally Accredited Levees (PALs) and revised notation for accredited levees shown on DFIRMs.

PM 45 takes that guidance to greater clarity, and applies feedback received on PM 43. Changes applied by the PM include “revised notes,” for accredited levees, and “Notes to Users,” for PAL systems to minimize the confusion over the current levee notation shown on DFIRMs.

You can view and download PM 45 from the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3281. For more information on Levees, please visit Levee Information for Stakeholders, www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/lv_intro.shtm.
Updated Map Change Application Forms Available Online

FEMA has recently updated the forms required for Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) and posted the forms in the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library. Below is a description of each form, the type of LOMC they are used for, and the link to the Resource Record in the FEMA Library.

**MT-EZ**

This application form is used for single residential lot or structure amendments to National Flood Insurance Program maps. It is used to request that FEMA remove a single structure or a legally recorded parcel of land or portions thereof, described by metes and bounds and certified by a Registered Professional Engineer or Licensed Land Surveyor, from a designated Special Flood Hazard Area via Letter of Map Amendment, or LOMA. The MT-EZ form is a condensed version of the MT-1 application form.

The MT-EZ application and instructions can be downloaded from the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2328.

**MT-1**

This application form is used for conditional and final LOMAs and Letters of Map Revision Based on Fill, or LOMR-Fs. It is used to assist requesters (community officials, individual property owners, and others) in gathering the information that FEMA needs to determine whether property (i.e., structure(s), parcel(s) of land) is likely to be flooded during the flood event that has a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (base, or 100-year, flood).

The forms in this package may be used for property that has been inadvertently included in a V zone or the regulatory floodway. However, if the property is to be removed from a V zone, it must not be located seaward of the landward toe of the primary frontal dune.

The MT-1 application and instructions can be downloaded from the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1492.

**MT-2**

These application forms are for conditional and final Letters of Map Revision. It is used for revisions to effective Flood Insurance Study reports, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, or Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps by individual and community requesters. These forms will provide FEMA with assurance that all pertinent data relating to the revision are included in the submittal. They also will ensure that:

(a) the data and methodology are based on current conditions;
(b) qualified professionals have assembled data and performed all necessary computations; and
(c) all individuals and organizations affected by proposed changes are aware of the changes and will have an opportunity to comment on them.

The MT-2 application and instructions can be downloaded from the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1493.

The FEMA Library

In addition to the resources described above, an array of other useful FEMA, National Flood Insurance Program, and Map Mod resources can be viewed or downloaded from the FEMA Library at www.fema.gov/library/index.jsp.

Source: Sheila Norlin, (703) 317-3054

**MT-2, MT-1, and MT-EZ Form Instructions**
Presentations

Sharing ideas and knowledge is one of the cornerstone ideals of the ASFPM annual conference. As such, MOD team members presented or co-presented with FEMA in more than 20 Map Mod-related seminars, workshops, and training sessions this year. Hundreds of conference-goers took the opportunity to listen to presenters on a wide variety of topics including flood risk management and mapping, levee certification and risk issues, and Data Capture Standards.

Plenary Session

This year’s conference featured a series of exceptional plenary sessions, including a session entitled “Levees – Can’t Live With Them, Can’t Live Without Them.” As part of this presentation, FEMA Risk Analysis Division Director Doug Bellomo spoke about the risks inherent with living in a 1-percent-annual-chance floodplain. Mr. Bellomo explained how the safety of a home is not necessarily determined by where it is located (such as behind a levee or inside of or outside of a “100-year” floodplain), but whether the risks are known and proper actions have been taken to mitigate potential risks. By drawing a comparison to driving a car, Mr. Bellomo pointed out that only by correctly identifying potential hazards, predicting how we would respond, deciding on a response, and executing that response can we avoid potential hazards.

Map Mod Town Hall

On Wednesday, FEMA officials held a “Map Mod Town Hall” to keep attendees abreast of several new developments. Two concurrent sessions were held to provide a broad choice of topics. In one room, FEMA officials Doug Bellomo and Roy Wright provided an overview of Risk MAP, designed to weave identified flood hazards into risk assessment and mitigation planning efforts. Meanwhile, next door, FEMA officials Beth Norton, Scott McAfee, Paul Rooney, Ben Hull, and Rick Sacbibbit gave presentations on the Cooperative Technical Partners Program, Digital Vision, Earned Value, and the Coordinated Needs Management Strategy, respectively.

MIP/Ask the FEMA Experts Room

To provide first-hand experience and to answer questions on the issues most important to mapping partners, FEMA hosted a room staffed in conjunction with Mod team members to help provide individuals with the answers they need. Open eight hours a day, Monday through Wednesday, conference attendees had the opportunity to stop by for some quick advice or in-depth one-on-one assistance from some of the field’s foremost experts. To help accommodate individuals with requests concerning specific content areas, experts were on hand to answer questions on a variety of topics including Hazard Mitigation Grants, Insurance, Planning, HAZUS, Dam Safety, Mapping, the Mapping Information Platform (MIP), Floodplain Management, and Dam Safety.

Exhibit Booths

At any conference, including ASFPM, exhibition booths provide the opportunity to open up lines of communication with attendees. This gives them a chance to converse with individuals directly engaged in Map Mod and other programs, as well as the opportunity to peruse and collect relevant reference material.

This year’s Map Mod booth included an interactive kiosk featuring a touch screen and a 42-inch LCD monitor. In addition to providing information on topic areas such as levees, the MIP, and Map Mod, it was also used to showcase the applications of the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) using Google Earth™.

The NFHL is a computer database that contains flood hazard map information. The data included in the NFHL can be used in conjunction with a variety of applications to provide municipalities, homeowners, insurers, and other interested individuals and organizations with an easy and accurate way to determine flood risk.

Baker also made a splash at its booth, demonstrating for the first time its new mobile technology application that gives users the capability of performing a full spectrum of geospatial queries on a mobile device, such as a Blackberry. This allows access to data—anytime and anywhere. From local communities to Federal partners, the application was met with great enthusiasm. For information on Baker’s mobile technology, contact Travis Clark at tclark@mbakercorp.com.
Baker Soiree

For ASFPM attendees, the place to be Tuesday night was the National Automobile Museum for the Baker Soiree. This event, held by ASFPM Platinum Sponsor Michael Baker Corporation, played host to nearly 1,000 individuals who sampled the delicious fare, inspected modern and antique autos, and danced the night away to live jazz. The success of this annual party was capped by the band’s encore, after which several party-goers took the opportunity to descend upon downtown Reno to take in the local sites.

Awards

At the awards ceremony on Thursday, Baker was extremely pleased that ASFPM recognized the work of several employees.

Mark Riebau received the Jerry Louthain Service to Members Award, the highest award that ASFPM gives to recognize individuals who, through their long term efforts, have clearly influenced the work of the Association.

John “Jack” Eldridge received Meritorious Achievement in Floodplain Management Award. This award recognizes individuals, other than local officials, who have achieved success in a significant aspect of floodplain management. These efforts include, but are not limited to, education, government, policy, research, litigation, outreach, implementation or other actions which demonstrate the advancement of flood loss reduction.

In Appreciation of his personal dedication to the education of multiple professions on flood risk, property rights, and public and private liability through No Adverse Impact (NAI) principles, Edward A. Thomas, Esq., received a plaque. Ed also received a Special Trophy “For Advancing Wise Land Use Throughout the Nation Using NAI and Legal Principles.”

For their work as ASFPM Region Directors, Alisa Sauvageot (Region 9) and Jeff Sparrow (Region 3) received recognition for their work with the association. Additionally, Diane Calhoun was recognized for her work as the outgoing Region 6 director. Diane currently is the President of the Certified Board of Regents.

For her work as the team coordinator for the local host, the Floodplain Management Association of California, Nevada, and Hawaii, Peggy Bowker of Baker’s newly opened Reno office was recognized.

Dave Greenwood received a Pioneer Award, which ASFPM gives out to those who have been active participants in the association for 25 years or more.

Lastly, Baker as a corporation received a plaque for their “partnership approach to support, develop, and implement NAI principles to reduce the nation’s flood losses.”

We are very proud to have such dedicated and experienced people working on Map Mod and pleased that ASFPM recognized their contributions at the national conference.

Sources: Jeanette Hanfling; (703) 317-6203; David Taft, (703) 960-8800 x3128