Charting the Course at ASFPM

“Charting the Course to New Perspectives in Floodplain Management” was the theme of the 31st annual Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) conference held June 3-8 in Norfolk, VA. As in past years, both FEMA and the MOD team had a strong presence at the conference, with representatives from FEMA and MOD headquarters, the Regions, and the Regional Management Centers in attendance.

The ASFPM conference is the largest floodplain management conference in the Nation, with over 1,200 attendees from both the public and private sectors. Bringing together Study Contractors, Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs), State and Federal agencies, and local floodplain managers allows everyone to discuss experiences, challenges, and solutions.

Given that Map Mod has passed the mid-way point, several Map Mod-related presentations and discussions pointed to the successes of Map Mod, such as the creation of the Floodplain Boundary Standard and centralization of data in the Mapping Information Platform (MIP). The presentations also outlined FEMA concepts for Phase II of Map Mod and examined how FEMA can build from the successes to reduce the Nation’s vulnerability to flooding.

The MOD team supported FEMA with many aspects of the conference, such as those described on the subsequent page.

Heading West to the ESRI International User Conference

FEMA and the MOD team sent representatives to sunny San Diego to attend the ESRI International User Conference June 18-22. Highlights included several Map Mod presentations, FEMA’s map gallery, and the highly visited Map Mod exhibit.

The MOD team supported FEMA with many aspects of the conference, such as those described on the subsequent page.

Kevin Long of FEMA and Andrea Ryon and Karen Mitchell of the MOD team staffing the Map Mod booth

The ESRI exhibits hall

The ESRI International User Conference is an important Geographic Information System (GIS) convention and workshop. A world leader in developing GIS technology software and hardware, ESRI developed the software platform the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) tools in the Mapping Information Platform (MIP) are based on.

Map Gallery

To showcase how GIS is used for different purposes and to kick off the week’s vendor exhibits and presentations, the conference attendees were invited to the annual Map Gallery exhibition. The exhibit included thousands of map posters and exhibits illustrating the use of GIS in the global GIS community.
Presentations

Exchanging information and learning about the latest floodplain management and flood hazard mapping challenges are important aspects of the conference. The MOD team presented or co-presented with FEMA in over 25 Map Mod-related seminars, workshops, and training sessions.

The MOD team supported FEMA by reviewing presentation concepts, checking content with subject matter experts, creating graphics and handouts, and editing presentations for consistency. Presentation topics ranged from Louisiana and Texas Gulf Coast Mapping after the 2005 hurricanes to the Letter of Map Change review process.

Plenary Session

One of the plenary sessions on Wednesday was given by Doug Bellomo, Acting Chief, Risk Analysis Branch, Mitigation Division. Entitled, “Map Modernization: Long Term Mapping/Maintenance Needs,” Mr. Bellomo started his presentation by premiering the new Map Mod video, which is a dynamic mix of animation, photographs, music, and video footage that showcases Map Mod and its accomplishments to date. A joint effort with FEMA and the MOD team, this video is approximately 8 minutes long and includes a narrative of Map Mod, including the past, present, and future of mapping. (See the May 2007 issue of the MOD Team Times for more information.)

After the video was shown, Mr. Bellomo transitioned into a status of Map Mod Phase I and highlighted the successes. Specifically, Mr. Bellomo focused on the following areas:

- Digital Vision  
- Levees  
- Post-Preliminary Processing

The exhibits allow GIS users to demonstrate how they make a difference in their local community, share ideas, and provide inspiration to others. Authors and designers were available to discuss their many renderings in greater detail.

FEMA was an ardent Map Gallery supporter, having 17 posters selected for display. FEMA’s poster, Homeland Security Mapping Standard: Point Symbology for Emergency Management, placed second in the “Best Instructional” category in gallery judging. This poster can be viewed in FEMA’s Information Resource Library (IRL) at [www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2044](http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2044). It was developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) with the assistance of Scott McAfee of FEMA. Additionally, FEMA’s Enhanced DFIRM poster was selected to be included in the 2007 ESRI Map Book: Volume 22 that was distributed at the conference.

Exhibit Booth

The Map Mod booth received many visitors who were interested in Map Mod and FEMA’s flood hazard mapping program. FEMA and MOD team staff enthusiastically answered questions and provided resources to the visitors. Visitors ranged from local, State, and Federal representatives to international delegates who plan to model their mapping efforts on FEMA’s.
Finally, Mr. Bellomo closed his presentation by discussing some general concepts for Phase II and asking for stakeholder input on how FEMA can meet their mapping needs.

Town Hall

On Wednesday afternoon, conference attendees had the opportunity to meet in a small group setting to interact with FEMA and MOD team subject matter experts on specific topics related to Map Mod. To keep discussions focused and to allow people to attend two sessions, the breakout sessions were limited to 30 minutes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Hall Topic</th>
<th>FEMA Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Vision</td>
<td>Scott McAfee</td>
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<td>Floodplain Boundary Standard</td>
<td>Rick Sacbibit</td>
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<td>Mapping Information Platform</td>
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<td>Levees</td>
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<td>Post Map Mod</td>
<td>Allyson Lichtenfels</td>
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MIP Room

To help educate mapping partners on the studies workflow portion of the MIP to complete mapping projects and to give them hands-on experience, FEMA hosted a room dedicated to the MIP. Kevin Long, the FEMA MIP Acceptance lead; Josh Smith, the MOD team MIP Acceptance lead; and staff from FEMA and MOD headquarters, the Regions, and the RMCs met with MIP users to answer questions and guide them through the MIP’s workflow. MIP Help staff in Alexandria also were instrumental in registering new users and immediately resolving any issues.

ESRI

The addition of the interactive kiosk was a success, and FEMA and MOD team staff guided visitors through the many features of Map Mod, the MIP, the Map Viewer, and the FEMA Web site that are available on the kiosk. When not in use by a booth visitor, the kiosk prominently displayed the new Map Mod video, drawing in more interested parties while garnering numerous compliments.

The conference proved a great tool for general and specific program outreach. One of the more popular questions, “Where’s my map?” allowed booth staff to introduce visitor to the Multi-Year Flood Hazard Identification Plan (MHIP) via the kiosk. Using the MHIP as a publicly accessible document is a valuable resource for community officials, Cooperating Technical Partners, and interested residents.

The HAZUS exhibit, with similar interests in GIS technology, played a familiar complement to the Map Mod booth. Situated near each other in the Federal Showcase section of the exhibit hall, staff at both booths worked seamlessly to answer the many questions regarding FEMA’s flood, hazard, and risk management initiatives.

MIP and Map Service Center Presentation

To compliment the Map Mod exhibit and the FEMA Map Gallery, Jeff Tornatore, MOD team GIS lead, worked with Paul Schapiro from the Map Service Center (MSC) to explain what FEMA’s geospatial products and services are and how to access each one by using the MSC Web site or the MIP. The MSC Web site, http://msc.fema.gov, provides instant access to digital flood map products, including products from the DFIRM database. The MIP, http://hazards.fema.gov, provides the ability to view DFIRM data and also includes the information for taking advantage of FEMA’s Web Map Service of the available digital flood hazard data.

Source: Nat Elliott
(703) 960-8800 x5527

The Michael Baker Corporation was pleased to support the ESRI International User conference by sponsoring receptions for the Transportation, Federal, and Water/Wastewater user groups.
The MIP room staff were also able to give users insight into the upcoming Service Pack 14 upgrades. The upgrades are based on feedback collected by the Regions and recommendations made to the MIP team at FEMA headquarters, who consolidated and prioritized the recommendations. Staff in the MIP room received positive feedback that changes will improve the workflow and collected new feedback on how to make the MIP more beneficial to all users.

FEMA also was able to educate mapping partners on the Corrective Action Plan that FEMA developed after listening to feedback from the Regional Offices and the mapping partners. The CAP allows mapping partners to bypass certain MIP requirements for studies initiated before the studies workflow in the MIP existed.

**Exhibit Booths**

Conferences give FEMA and the MOD team the opportunity to interact directly with stakeholders and engage in two-way dialogue about the program. The exhibit booths provide an ideal setting for the distribution of fact sheets and brochures and for these conversations to take place.

This year, ASFPM clustered the FEMA booths in what came to be known as “FEMA Row.” Having the Map Mod, Floodplain Management, Map Service Center, Mitigation, Flood Insurance (FloodSmart team), HAZUS, and Community Rating System booths near each other was beneficial because it illustrated the coordination that exists among the different FEMA programs and initiatives.

The Map Mod booth also featured a new addition this year—an interactive kiosk that featured a touch screen monitor and a large 42-inch LCD monitor. The kiosk allowed conference attendees to learn about topics such as levees and coastal issues, the MIP, program guidance, and Map Mod. The kiosk quizzed users on Map Mod and the National Flood Insurance Program, linked to select program-related Web sites, and allowed users to view program related fact sheets. While an individual was using the kiosk, a wider audience could watch their on-screen interaction on the large LCD monitor. The kiosk also featured the Map Mod video that Doug Bellomo featured in his plenary session.

**Baker Soirée**

For the Tuesday evening social event, the Michael Baker Corporation sponsored a boardwalk-themed soirée that featured a lively mixture of boardwalk-themed food, drinks, decorations, and live music. Held at the recently opened Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Centre along the St. Elizabeth’s River, the soirée provided an opportunity for conference attendees and their families to eat, relax, and network.

Baker was proud to once again be a platinum sponsor of the conference and to continue to help FEMA and ASFPM chart the course in their ongoing missions to make the Nation safer from flood hazards. Baker also thanks the ASFPM Foundation for recognizing the company as a Ruby Donor “in appreciation of sustained significant contributions.”