Association of State Floodplain Managers
2013-2014 Vice Chair Report
Ceil Strauss, CFM

During my first year as Vice Chair, I have been amazed and impressed by the knowledge, efforts and passion of the ASFPM’s POD facilitators, committee co-chairs, executive office staff and officers. As a member, I understood that the ASFPM provides lots of valuable information and updates on national & local issues of interest to the members through the “Insider” and “News and Views” newsletters and member alerts. But as Vice Chair, I have been exposed to more of the depth and breadth of ASFPM involvement and efforts.

The primary responsibility of the Vice Chair, in addition to serving on the board, is to interact with the ASFPM’s Co-Chairs of the 14 Policy Committees through a summer retreat, bi-monthly calls, and in other conference call / email forums on a regular schedule or as issues arise. Our committees are grouped into four PODs, each with a POD Facilitator who helps with communicating between all the committees that should be involved with a particular issue or topic. Our committee co-chairs and POD facilitators have a great breadth of knowledge and experience.

This year the committee retreat was held August 13-15, 2013 in Madison, WI. It was a very productive time, with high energy and great ideas being discussed. We got briefed on the evolving issues of concern, while leaving time to work at the committee and POD levels on updating the committee websites and determining priorities for the year. We had a higher number of new co-chairs than typical years, and they worked well with our “experienced” co-chairs and POD facilitators.

Throughout the year, the staff and volunteers have provided invaluable comments, recommendations and analysis through a variety of formal & informal comment opportunities. The committees are often called upon to provide comment or insight on very short timelines. With implementation of Biggert-Waters Reform Act of 2012 (BW12) and the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act (HFIAA) of 2014, our executive office and many of our committees and POD facilitators have been especially busy this year. There have been some formal comment opportunities on proposed federal rules or policies, and opportunities to give testimony before congress. The Flood Insurance and Flood Mitigation committees have been especially busy with helping the ASFPM to be able to comment on proposed law or policy changes and to disseminate information on what the new legislation or policies mean at the local level.
The committees have also been involved in many other types of projects. Some examples include: the Arid Regions committee’s 3 day Arid Regions conference in Scottsdale, AZ, that had about 150 participants in October 2013; the Nonstructural Floodproofing committee’s planning for the National Floodproofing Conference 6 scheduled for October 26-31, 2014 in Bloomfield, CO; the No Adverse Impact (NAI) committee’s “How-To Guides” on “Planning” and “Education & Outreach” that are being written in 2014; white papers, discussion papers and templates by several committees with topics ranging from a white paper on “Unsteady and 2-D Modelling” to a template of case studies using natural beneficial functions as a tool.

We realize that many members are not familiar with what our committees do, or how they as a member could be more involved in the committee efforts. Yet, the committee level work is where a major portion of the ASFPM work is done. And if a member has a particular interest or passion for a topic, the committee level is the best way to get involved! In order to help our members understand the work our committees do, our new ASFPM Public Information Officer, Michele Mihalovich, will be highlighting several of the committees in each of the next several issues of “Insider.”

As we start our transition to the next year we’ll be welcoming a few new board members and new leadership on a couple of our committees. I’d like to thank our co-chairs who are stepping down: Will Meyer of the International committee and Lou Sidell of the Coastal committee. Both have shared much effort and knowledge with the members of the ASFPM, both as co-chairs and in other roles in the past.

It has been my honor to serve as your Vice-Chair this past year. I truly appreciate the hard work of so many of our volunteers and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Ceil Strauss, CFM