Notes from Downundah...

By Jessica Ludy, ASFPM Training and Outreach Committee Co-chair and International Committee Liaison

In late March I traveled to Australia because I’ve always wanted to visit, because vegemite is an enigma, and because koalas are high on my list. As with all my holidays, I also wanted to learn a little about local floodplain management to see whether there isn’t something I can take away with me.

Mission: successful. I saw not one but two koalas in the wild, vegemite on toast with an egg isn’t terrible, and I also connected with our counterparts at Floodplain Management Australia to get some local flavor.

My gracious host, Allan Gear (you may remember him from Grand Rapids and Seattle) outfitted me with views of Sydney Harbour, coffee with cutting-edge researchers, a field trip to the Loyalty Road Detention Basin upstream of Sydney (with giant spiders), flash flood watch in the Blue Mountains, and great craic (pronounced “crack”) with Sydney’s finest floodplain managers. To be clear, he’s not a drug dealer—“craic” is “good company and conversation.”
Find me in Kansas City and I’ll tell you all about fairy penguins, gawking at elevated houses on the Great Ocean Road and my fear of giant spiders. In the meantime, here are some topical highlights:

*Risk Frontiers* is doing fascinating research on the consequences of flooding. As many of us know, most flood casualties occur from driving through floodwater. Risk Frontiers is going deeper. They have found out who is driving (age, gender), what type of car, and which road types seem to be more dangerous than others. Come to Andrew Gissing’s presentation on the topic in Kansas City for the answers.

I also learned that flood insurance coverage automatically comes along with a homeowner’s policy and it is actuarially priced. Policyholders then have the choice to opt out of flood coverage. I can’t help but wonder whether this gives Australian homeowners a better understanding of their risk than in the U.S. where we purchase flood insurance separately (and often we see subsidized rates, never knowing our true risk).

With most of Australia’s population living on the coast, sea level rise will undoubtedly have widespread impacts. Not unlike the U.S., discussion and integration of climate change into floodplain management and development considerations varies by region, state and even city.

Most emergency response is led by the State Emergency Service. And most responders are volunteers. This really struck me as different than here, where some responders are volunteers. It also gives a new perspective when thinking about where to permit development. Not only could unsafe development put residents at risk, but it threatens the life of the volunteer rescue teams as well.

Finally, I spent a morning in Wollongong, a town south of Sydney situated on a coastal floodplain just below an escarpment. The city’s dominant flood threat is debris flows down the escarpment. They are acutely aware, though, that their future flood threat will be driven by the ocean. The city is quite active in buying out the riskiest properties at the base of the escarpment, and they plan to improve interior drainage as well. But in the long term, there is little land available to relocate households, and engineering solutions will only go so far. Land use planners and engineers will have to talk more to each other to address compounding challenges, something the local FPM believes is lacking. I think we can relate to this in the U.S., and this is where the great work that you all do becomes increasingly important to bridge the gap!
From left: Allan Gear (Floodplain Management Australia), Jessica Ludy (ASFPM Training and Outreach Committee Co-chair and International Committee Liaison) and Andrew Gissing (Risk Frontiers).

These are just a few of many observations, and we have lots to learn from one another. The more we step out of our day-to-day and see how others approach similar challenges, the broader our body of knowledge and toolbox becomes (and the more hosts we have when traveling! Think of the benefits. Thanks again, Allan and FMA!)

FMA’s annual conference is this May in Newcastle, and along the Gold Coast in 2018. Consider your next holiday?

As part of ASFPM’s International Committee, we will continue to collaborate with FMA, and we’re hopeful more of you will share your own experiences and observations abroad. Find us in Kansas City, follow us on twitter (@TheWaterAway, @allan_gear), or contact our International Committee Co-chairs Bo Juza and Shana Udvardy. We’d love to hear from you.

Poll Finds nearly 75% of Voters Support Flood Reforms

Almost three-quarters of registered voters—across party lines—support policies that would enable communities to better prepare for and respond to floods, according to a nationwide survey. The poll, conducted by the research firm Public Opinion Strategies for The Pew Charitable Trusts, examined attitudes toward flood-related disasters and proposed policy reforms aimed at improving preparedness and reducing recovery costs. Specifically, participants were asked about the National Flood Insurance Program. The flood insurance program is nearly $25 billion in debt. Respondents overwhelmingly support proposals to require property sellers disclose flood risk and communities take steps to lessen flood impacts to reduce the costs of rebuilding. Click here to see key findings from the poll.
ASFPM Member News

Dewberry promoted ASFPM member Jerri Daniels, CFM, to senior associate in its New Orleans office. Daniels manages flood risk projects for FEMA, Louisiana and other local communities in the Gulf Coast region. Her extensive experience includes serving as a project coordinator for the flood insurance rate map update for the greater New Orleans area, organizing major outreach initiatives for FEMA Region VI, and serving as the client and contract manager for the recently awarded Cooperating Technical Partnership between the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and FEMA. This three-year, $5 million contract allows LADOTD to manage flood risk identification updates throughout the state to enhance and encourage resiliency and mitigation planning efforts. Read the full press release here.

You can learn some pretty cool information from our chapter newsletters. Here are two interesting tidbits from the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management’s spring newsletter. Paul Osman was presented with the IAFSM Lifetime Achievement Award. Osman, the statewide floodplain programs manager for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources and the state NFIP coordinator, has worked with the NFIP program for more than 25 years and continues to work with the nearly 1,000 Illinois communities that participate in the NFIP program. Also in that newsletter, we learned that the name of the chapter’s Lifetime Achievement Award will change to the French Wetmore Lifetime Achievement Award. We understand it was pretty emotional for Mary Lu and French upon hearing the announcement at the IAFSM annual conference. The Wetmores lived in Illinois for decades before moving to Steilacoom, Washington. Congrats on these very deserving honors.

We saw this write up on Twitter from long-time ASFPM member John Miller. “The municipality of Toms River, New Jersey has received more federal flood insurance claims paid dollars than 38 entire states, including California,” shares John Miller, a Master of Environmental Studies (MES ’17—expected) student and current fellow in New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez’s Office. “When Hurricane Sandy came along, it dramatically changed my career as an engineer. I had already been working with the NJ legislature and municipalities pushing the idea that the state needs to take preventative flood measures. I started getting more interested in the bigger picture—funding, land use, policy, etc. So, at 46 years of age, I came back to school full-time.” Read the full article from the University of Pennsylvania’s College of Liberal and Professional Studies.

#ASFPM2017 needs Volunteer Photographers!!! Snap everything you can and share it on Twitter. But don’t forget the #ASFPM2017
**Policy Matters!**

*Larry Larson, P.E., CFM
Director Emeritus – Senior Policy Advisor, ASFPM*

**Mitigate Now, or Pay More for Disasters Later**

This administration has said it wants to curb federal spending. That’s why we’re optimistic it would support ASFPM’s call to reduce spending on disaster costs. But we also need to help the administration and Congress understand that paying for mitigation projects up front WILL save money in the long run.

We know flood mitigation returns to the federal taxpayer $4 for every $1 spent. An article from the Pew Charitable Trusts indicated that from 2005 to 2014, the federal government spent $277.6 billion on disaster assistance, while Congress designated less than $600 million toward FEMA’s primary pre-disaster mitigation program. That is roughly 500:1 in disaster costs vs. mitigation costs. Congress will seldom not provide funding for disasters, but spending more on mitigation up front makes sense, and costs less in long run. As one witness in a recent house hearing said, “Flooding will happen, so you can help pay for mitigation now, or pay more for disaster costs later.”

ASFPM also believes we can, with your help, convince this administration and Congress to support FEMA’s proposal to establish a deductible for its Public Assistance program. In other words, states that are funding mitigation projects and taking more responsibility toward making their communities more resistant to disaster with stronger building standards and flood risk management actions, will receive credit for those activities when disaster hits. We also submitted comments for the Supplemental Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the PA deductible, which you can read here.

ASFPM supports proposals like this, but mitigation needs to be broader then just FEMA programs. Federal programs in DOT, HUD, USACE, NOAA, DOI and other agencies could foster and encourage hazard mitigation. Those programs could also provide wiser use of federal taxpayer funds by ensuring the actions those funds are used for will withstand reasonable projections of future conditions such as increased storm intensity and storm surge. Those future conditions may be worsened by more development on pervious surfaces with parking lots and rooftops, increased rainfalls, or sea level rise that is happening now and will continue to rise in the future.

The Congressional Research Service analysis of supplemental appropriations laws passed by Congress after large-scale disasters found that after Hurricane Sandy, FEMA was NOT the largest driver of federal agency spending. FEMA spending accounted for 23% of overall Hurricane Sandy disaster costs, with the Department of Defense at 11%, Department of Transportation at 26% and Housing and Urban Development at 32%. Remember, Sandy cost the federal taxpayer over $50 billion, although we find it difficult to know how much disasters really cost when considering indirect costs of businesses closing, long-term health costs, tax deductions for casualty losses, and private insurance costs for wind, auto, business interruption, etc.

There was a proposal for federal agencies to consider future conditions, but it is uncertain if those actions will continue under the new administration. Additionally, reduced funding for hazard mitigation cost sharing programs in several agencies is also threatened by proposals to greatly increase defense spending. Congress will be making these decisions and that presents you with an opportunity to inform your legislators about how those decisions will impact your community, state or yourself. ASFPM provides data and information to decision makers, but the voices of Congresses constituents are very impactful. There is a wealth of information and data on our website you can use, or ask us how you can effectively address your concern. As one of the nation’s professional flood risk managers, your voice is important.
From the Chair
Ceil C. Strauss, CFM & State Floodplain Manager in St. Paul, Minnesota

Looking Back, and Forward

Transitions are a great time to reflect on the past and think about future goals. I’ll be stepping down after my two-year term as chair (and an additional four years on the board). Time has gone by quickly, and it’s been crazy busy with national policy matters (and state and local matters as well). But it’s also been thoroughly enjoyable to work with so many dedicated and knowledgeable volunteer leaders and our executive office staff.

My original goals were pretty broad—work with ASFPM leadership, staff and members to see improvements in risk mapping, opportunities for mitigation, and resources to help state and local officials work to reduce risk and better use natural systems. As some of you know, I also had—and still have—a few specific pet areas of concern, but I won’t get into those weeds here.

I learned a lot about aspects of our laws I had not been as familiar with and how our programs work. We worked with FEMA’s staff (through ongoing transitions) to look for ways to overcome frustrations (some very long term) of local and state officials. We prepared simpler, shorter documents on the principles and priorities for the National Flood Insurance Program reform and other topics of concern, as we discussed priorities, issues and unintended consequences of proposed legislation with congressional staff and our partner organizations.

ASFPM was asked on three separate occasions this past year to testify before congressional committees. It is the combined efforts of all in ASFPM that gives us credibility and the ability to share experiences and concerns of floodplain practitioners from around the country. During my experience giving testimony, it was intimidating and such a privilege to see that part of our law-making system up close and personal.

While we can point to a few steps forward and give examples of how our message is being heard, my original goals are far from being attained. And the new administration has introduced a few new twists and turns that makes our challenge to clearly communicate even more fascinating.

Going Forward

The new ASFPM board will be introduced at the Thursday awards luncheon at the annual conference in Kansas City the first week of May. Due to board members terming out or starting new phases of their lives, I know we will have new board members. It was wonderful to see so many great candidates step up to be nominated, although it did lead to difficult voting decisions in many races. We have a great mix of experienced board members returning and new members who I know will bring added energy, ideas and knowledge.

I know I’ll stay plugged into ASFPM issues and efforts as well as those at my state and chapter. There is certainly still more to do.

Kansas City Conference

For the immediate future, I’m looking forward to our conference in Kansas City. Here are my top five reasons people should attend the national conference:

1. Reconnect with members who I only get to see in person at the conference.
2. Meet new members from around the county. I will make a special effort to meet new state contacts, and listen to what’s happening and new perspectives from the broad spectrum of all those attending.
3. Get the latest program updates and materials from FEMA and others. Hear (and react to) the new direction and guidance for floodplain management, mapping, mitigation and flood insurance. Since there
are so many floodplain management practitioners at this conference, many agency staff and our policy committees recognize it’s a great time to roll out updated information and get feedback on conceptual ideas.

4. **Get involved with a policy committee** for the first time or continue your involvement. The 8 a.m. Monday “Floodplain Management General Issues Overview and Legislative Update” includes focus summaries of the 14 policy committees, how the committee process works, and how to get involved. Most committees meet either Monday morning or afternoon (check your pocket guide). Those meetings are often a mix of update presentations and discussions of issues, priorities and recommendations. This is a great opportunity for first-time conference attendees to hit the ground running, give input and share concerns and ideas.

5. **Learn new things**—I always have trouble deciding which of the eight concurrent tracks to attend, not to mention the many workshops. There are so many phenomenal technical talks, examples of what’s being done in different parts of the country, and demonstrations of new tools and websites. And there’s even more to learn and see as you visit exhibitors (again, check your pocket guide to try and narrow it down).

Looking forward to seeing you in Kansas City!

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**Job Corner**

- A floodplain manager is needed in the Illinois Office of Water Resources (metro Chicago)
- DeKalb County (GA) Flood Management Program and CRS is hiring a staff engineer
- Acclivity Associates needs an environmental protection specialist in Baton Rouge

Check out these jobs and others on [ASFPM’s Job Corner](#). Are you an employer? Post your own job opening. It’s completely free!

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**ASFPM Family Increases with Arrival of Two Cuties**

Charlotte Rose Messina (left) took her sweet time getting here, but finally made an appearance April 13. This adorable little yawner is the daughter of ASFPM Research Librarian Melissa Haig. Proud papa Alan Lulloff (right), ASFPM’s chief scientist in our Flood Science Center, brought his new puppy Libby into the EO April 21. She’s sooooo fluffy and sweet! Welcome you two cuties!
What’s the ASFPM Foundation been up to?

ASFPM Foundation in Kansas City!

The Kansas City conference offers FOUR opportunities for you to engage and support the ASFPM Foundation, which promotes sustainable floodplain management. Foundation donations are vital to continue our research and outreach efforts.

Silent Auction – The foundation’s silent auction will be open anytime the exhibit hall is open. Stop by early and often to bid on state-themed gift baskets, gourmet foods, restaurant certificates, jewelry, wines, liquors, beer and other items.

ASFPM Foundation Exhibit Booth – Learn more about our mission and see how you can get involved.

Donors’ Reception and Live Auction – Wednesday evening at the conference, the foundation hosts a reception for those who donated $100 or more to us since last year’s conference (or during this one). The foundation’s live auction is held during the reception and features six, high-level items up for bid – always a fun time! Here’s a sampling of what to expect:

- The Ultimate Kansas City BBQ Package—a $100 credit to the famed Kansas City BBQ Store to complement the ultimate cooking experience of a Big Green Egg (the most versatile barbecue/outdoor cooking product on the market, with more capabilities than all other conventional cookers combined). ($800 value)
- Bose Soundtouch 130 Home Theater—Wifi compatible, a bonus for playing directly off of any device (Smart Phone, tablet, etc.). ($1,000 value)
- The Internet of Things Package—Includes two Amazon Echo, two WEMO Insight Switches, and one iDevices Outdoor Switch to make your life easier! ($540 value)
- Col. Edmund Haynes Taylor, Jr. is known as the “Father of the Modern Bourbon Industry,” as demonstrated by the high quality of his bourbons. Up for auction is a Commemorative E.H. Taylor Wooden Box, as well as eight bottles of fine bourbon. ($600 value)
- Two Hamilton (Chicago) tickets and a $500 Southwest voucher (to help with airfare if the recipients aren’t from Chicago). ($1,000 value)

Twitter – Follow the ASFPM Foundation on Twitter @ASFPMfoundation and share your #ASPM2017 tweets about conference sessions and flood issues throughout the conference.

We thank everyone who has supported the ASFPM Foundation since it was created in 1996. Donations from individuals, chapters and corporations fund our current efforts and allow us to look ahead at the
Special Foundation Event – Join us July 9, 2017 in Broomfield, Colorado!

The ASFPM Foundation presents its third “Larry A. Larson Speaker Series” July 9, 2017 in Broomfield, Colorado. The featured speaker is Dr. Dennis Mileti, professor emeritus of sociology, University of Colorado Boulder and director emeritus of the Natural Hazards Center. Mileti and his panel will present, “Floodplain Management and Community Resilience in a World with Changing Contextual Factors.” This year’s speaker series is being held in conjunction with the 42nd Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, which takes place July 9-12. If you have any questions about how to participate in this event, please contact Diane Brown at asfpmfoundation@floods.org.

Make Room for Water—A Federal Framework Is Needed

OpEd by Janet Thigpen, CFM, ASFPM’s District 1 Chapter Director

Current policies for managing flood risk are driven largely by a line on the map that marks the boundary between areas with a 1% or greater annual probability of flooding and those with a lower probability. Within the “flood zone,” there are standards for “less vulnerable” development; and outside of the “flood zone,” the risk of flooding is often ignored. There are many notable exceptions, but this 1% probability flood remains the foundation of many federal, state and local flood risk management strategies.

Floodplain managers recognize the multiple benefits of keeping development out of flood-prone areas and restoring beneficial floodplain functions. Many would tell you there are some high-risk areas that simply should not be developed. They advocate and seek funding for removal of existing development from these locations.

What is missing is a federal framework for identifying those areas where the best policy is to “make room for water.” I propose we need a new line on flood risk maps that marks a zone where federal resources should not be used to support new development or maintain existing development. The federal government’s role in these highest risk areas should be limited to helping communities manage retreat. Federal funding could support removal of existing development or restoration of natural features. It might also fund construction of amenities...
that support low-impact recreation or other water-dependent uses. However, within these unsafe areas, federal tax dollars should not be used for building construction or for elevation, floodproofing or other in-place mitigation of existing structures. The federal government also should not finance infrastructure improvements that support development in unsafe areas. Individuals and communities that wish to remain in these locations—or even expand—could be allowed do so, but only if they have sufficient resources to cover the direct and indirect costs without assistance from federal taxpayers. Support for high-risk development is not a wise use of federal resources.

What criteria should be used to identify areas where flood safety concerns or the risk of severe or repetitive damage are so high that federal policy should support open space use? This standard may need to be tailored for the different kinds of flood risk in different areas, building on existing local and state policies. Criteria might include high velocities, water depths or wave heights during the 1% probability flood; inundation by a high frequency flood (such as the 10% probability event); areas flooded during king tides; future condition estimates for any of these standards; areas with a history of repetitive or severe repetitive damage; or riverine and coastal erosion hazard areas.

Once a framework is developed for delineating areas where the best strategy is to “make room for water,” then we can work on crafting local, state and federal policies for achieving this objective.

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**ASFPM’s 41st Annual National Conference**  
**Kansas City, MO**  
**April 30-May 5, 2017**

This is the last newsletter you’ll receive from us before *ASFPM’s 41st annual conference in Kansas City, Missouri!* So this is our last chance to try and woo you to attend #ASFPM2017—the world’s largest and most comprehensive floodplain management conference. Here’s what you’ll be missing if you’re not in Kansas City:

Incredible **workshops**, presenters, **technical field tours**, demonstrations, exhibits, informative panel discussions and effective networking opportunities to help you do your job...including **IMMERSED!**, a virtual reality challenge that puts users in command of navigating through a real-world flood experience.

The 5th Annual **Running of the Chapters** (5K Run/Walk).

A **blood drive** being held to honor ASFPM past chair Greg Main, who lost his battle with cancer far too young. This is the second year for this event. Let’s roll up our sleeves!

The annual **silent auction** helps ASFPM Foundation promote sustainable management of the nation's floodplains and watersheds. Check out the webpage to get some ideas on what to bring.

Check out the full program of plenaries, networking events, hotels and things to do in the “City of Fountains” [here](#). We look forward to welcoming you to Kansas City!

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**Mark Your Calendars for our Upcoming National Conferences**  
**Kansas City, Missouri, April 30-May 5, 2017**  
**Phoenix, Arizona, June 17-22, 2018**
Dave Fowler AKA “Mr. Smith” Goes to Washington...Again

During my visit to Washington DC this month, I was able to do double duty. I attended the Association of State Wetland Managers annual state/tribal/federal coordination meeting. I also delayed my departure from DC one day to meet with Paul Hallett, legislative assistant for House Speaker Paul Ryan (WI) and Alexis Alber, legislative counsel for Sen. Ron Johnson (WI).

At the ASWM meeting there was a great line-up of speakers. The presentations were informative and sparked lively discussions afterwards. I was particularly interested in a panel on “What’s Next for Clean Water Act Jurisdiction,” presented by Stephen Samuels, Department of Justice (Retired) and Virginia Albrecht, Huston and Williams, LLP. Samuels is considered by many to be the foremost legal authority on the CWA Jurisdiction, and Albrecht has been involved with many cases involving CWA Jurisdiction as a lawyer for the regulated community. It was a fabulous historical narrative of the CWA Jurisdiction from both sides and both speakers agreed the current approach being taken by the Trump Administration is flawed politically and legally. Samuels was quite vigorous in his critiques and even titled his presentation, “Steve Samuels Unchained.” I also enjoyed a presentation by Mindy Eisenberg, US EPA acting director of the wetlands division. She presented a more positive discussion on “Opportunities for State-Federal Coordination in the New Administration.” Speaking with her after her presentation, I was able to get ASFPM invited to an invitation only consultation meeting in DC. I believe it was attended by ASFPM Director Emeritus Larry Larson. So overall it was a productive and informative meeting, and they had inexpensive craft beer on tap at the lodge for those evening discussions.

The congressional visits primarily dealt with NFIP reform and educating congressional staff that the NFIP is NOT just an insurance program, but a comprehensive, flood-risk reduction program that happens to also sell insurance. The program is a four-legged stool, Larson likes to say, and it has a primary role in floodplain mapping, floodplain management and flood mitigation. Significantly altering one leg of the program can negatively impact the other three. The NFIP is by far the most widely implemented approach to flood loss reduction in the nation.

Other issues addressed were funding FEMA floodplain mapping and maintenance funding. FEMA flood maps and data are largely produced by the private sector. While private sector risk assessment methods can develop structure-specific information, it is not publicly available nor does it produce a “map.” So it really can’t be substituted for the other needs of the program including mitigation and floodplain management. Such methods compliment, but do not replace FEMA maps. That the NFIP is a success with over 22,000 communities participating and complying with requirements for land use and construction standards, it is a widely adopted land use and construction standards in the country.

Overall Takeaways from my DC Trip:

- The NFIP has created tremendous public benefits that go far beyond policyholders. Federal taxpayers especially benefit from reduced disaster costs paid after flood disasters.
- FEMA has implemented all financial risk management tools Congress has asked of it: rate structure moving to actuarial, reserve fund, reinsurace, etc.
- Congress must deal with debt and the long-term risks of catastrophic flood events to the program. Currently NFIP pays $400 million/year of interest on debt, financed at historically low interest rates. If we get close to historic interest rates, the much higher debt service alone will destabilize the NFIP.
- Any 2017 reform must also address affordability. ASFPM believes in the principle of subsidizing mitigation versus subsidizing premiums. We are concerned about timing of affordability framework and deadline for reauthorization. Is there time to debate and pass well thought out affordability measures?
- We still don’t know the impacts to the NFIP from the reform acts in 2012 and 2014, which created nearly 80 sections of new law. Not all have been implemented to see how well they work.
- Shorter reauthorization period may be necessary (perhaps 2-3 years) for Congress to address affordability, monitor rate increases and allow for continued implementation of past reforms.
**What’s happening around the nation?**

*A collection of the most viewed stories on our Facebook page*

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**The Nation**
ASFPM’s Senior Policy Advisor Larry Larson is quoted in this story about the possible dumping of Obama’s Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. Read the [E&E News article here](#). A day later, here is the news we read, “ASFPM has confirmed that Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and EO 13690 are NOT included in yesterday’s EO on energy independence and climate change. That is good news on an otherwise bloody day for climate change and resiliency efforts!”

Homebuilders fighting the idea of building a more resilient structure may want to make note of this story. The takeaway: People are willing to pay more for homes mitigated against flood damage! Read, “*Lake Katherine home prices soaring from post-flood rebuilding.*”

Plants are an important part of green infrastructure! Not just window dressing. Read “*Designed to Fail: How Green Infrastructure Standards Create Conditions for Failed Plantings*” by Thomas Rainer.

**Florida**
A Fort Lauderdale beach homeowner with a leaky roof got a shocking response when he applied for permits: First, elevate your house. Read the *Sun-Sentinel story here.*

Demand and financing could collapse before the sea consumes a single house. Read “*The Nightmare Scenario for Florida’s Coastal Homeowners*” by Bloomberg reporter Christopher Flavelle.

“All we’ve been focused on is the seas rising,” ASFPM member Rod Scott said. “It’s all gradual. It’s a slow storm that’s building. Historic preservation is a little behind the curve. They don’t want to change these buildings. But all of these buildings can be elevated.” Read “*South Beach Wants to Save Art Deco Gems before the Seas Rise. One Solution: Jack Them Up*” by Miami Herald.

**Iowa**
The Corps is not naming the districts in violation. However, a close examination of survey charts – which remain unpublished – shows numerous examples of levees over the allowed height, some by as much as four feet. Read “*Levee Heights Spark Debate* from The Telegraph.

**Washington**
Ferry County Sheriff’s Office shared a lot of incredible photos on its [Facebook page](#) during recent floods. This one by far got the most attention on our Facebook page.
From the Director’s Desk
Chad Berginnis, CFM
Executive Director, ASFPM

ASFPM Leads the Charge!

Wow, 2017 has been a whirlwind and it isn’t even May yet. We’ve seen flooding in the nation, a near catastrophic emergency spillway failure, important policies under threat of repeal, and programs we care about facing significant cuts or elimination altogether. And that’s on top the biggest policy challenge of all—the 2017 NFIP reauthorization. I’ve been traveling from Madison to DC so much lately, the nation’s Capitol is starting to feel like a second home.

As ASFPM gears up for these challenges, whether it’s working in partnership with national, state or regional organizations, I have been thinking a lot about what it really means to be part of this organization. We have a significant mission component focused on promoting policies that reduce flood risk and protect the natural functions of floodplains. Some years it seems there is a strong alignment between politicians and policies ASFPM supports, and other years it feels like we are a contestant on American Ninja Warrior. I think 2017 falls into the Ninja category and it is those years we truly need to be leading the charge.

The good news is that ASFPM, the organization built by Director Emeritus Larry Larson and our hardworking staff, is positioned to do just that. We have invested years in relationships at the federal level, whether it be with agencies, educating Congress or other non-governmental organizations. I am humbled by the respect we have in DC, which I can’t help but think it is due to the tireless work where we try to bring the practitioner perspective to the national policy dialog.

At the same time, I am also aware that being big and bold can cause some discomfort within our membership ranks. Our most recent call to action where we asked you to weigh in with your members of Congress on flood map and mitigation funding resulted in two contacts from members that stick out in my mind. One questioned why we were taking the position we were when they couldn’t recall ever “voting” on that particular position. The other said they supported the current administration’s budget and need to get a handle on federal spending and ASFPM needed to get its “big boy pants on,” implying that we need to go along with it as well. I mention these two not at all because I am calling out ASFPM members (I enjoy and try to read all feedback we get, good or bad). Rather, I think it is instructional as to how we operate and gives me an opportunity to explain some common misunderstandings that may exist out there.

The first misunderstanding is the formulation and basis of ASFPM’s policy positions. I urge all members to read our “policy bible,” the National Flood Programs and Policy in Review (2015). After a yearlong and very grassroots effort (all ASFPM members were asked to participate in this), I am proud of the ASFPM Board of Directors leadership in adopting the 400+ policy recommendations on an array of issues and programs. Please understand that since our founding, ASFPM’s policy recommendations have almost always been forward looking and based primarily on what changes are needed to reduce flood losses and protect the natural functions of floodplains (ASFPM’s mission). We are not like some professional organizations whose mission is to solely advocate for their members needs or concerns. There is a very big difference. While it is true we try very hard to understand our member’s concerns and issues and address them in various ways (whether it be elevating concerns to national policy makers or develop tools/data/research to help address those concerns), our prime directive (if I can borrow from Star Trek) is our mission.

Second, when it comes to federal budgets, we are going to fight hard for programs that help reduce flood losses. While Congress and the administration will ultimately determine how we address the long-term deficit and debt in this country, make no mistake – every program Congress funds has stakeholders and supporters – and they are making their voice heard too. So our objective is to bring the very best arguments and effort forward so our
priorities are not only in the mix, but stand above in terms of needing funds. For those concerned about budget deficits and overall debt in the country, one of the things I particularly like about ASFPM’s positions is that nearly all of the funding we support are good investments in the country. They tend to be cost effective and can actually lead to reduced taxpayer costs in the future (think Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants versus post-disaster aid assistance).

Third, while our push back against the “skinny” budget this year happens to be pushing back against one proposed by a Republican administration, ASFPM pushes back against any misguided budget cuts, regardless of which party is proposing it. I recall one of our most furious pushbacks against a federal budget was proposed by a Democratic administration when there was a proposal to eliminate the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program three years in a row! ASFPM will oppose cuts to key programs that support effective floodplain management, regardless of who is cutting them. In today’s bitterly partisan atmosphere, there may be more sensitivity to this than in the past. I understand and respect that some members may have different personal positions on the federal budget in general, but ASFPM will continue to ensure our members voices overall are heard loudly in Washington. And this year FEMA programs are just the tip of the iceberg. We’ll be asking for your help to push back on the elimination and/or reduction of a number of programs (for example there are several NOAA programs such as Sea Grant and the Coastal Zone Management Program also facing the chopping block).

As a person who considers himself a student of the political process, last week I attended a town hall meeting put on by my Congress member. Someone in the audience asked him what citizens could do to make their voices heard. One of the key actions my Congressman said is to invest in national organizations that can amplify your message and concerns.

In putting the final touches on ASFPM’s 2018 budget and analyzing data like membership trends, I am pleased and humbled that you, our members, have chosen to put your vote of confidence in ASFPM. In 2016 and in every single year since the 2008 great recession, we have seen our membership grow. Please know ASFPM will continue to work very hard to represent not only the concerns of floodplain managers across the nation, but will also work tirelessly to be a leader in promoting policies and programs that are consistent with our mission.

Your partner in loss reduction,

Chad

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**Funding for National Flood Mapping Program Threatened**

When the Trump Administration announced its “skinny” budget March 16, flood risk professionals learned that all funding for flood mapping and a substantial amount of pre-disaster mitigation grant funding were being cut. ASFPM did urge our membership to contact their members of Congress and explain why they needed to protect these programs.

A smaller group got together and developed this two-sided placemat that explains how all communities and all taxpayers benefit from the mapping program—not just NFIP policyholders. This graphic is a great tool for anyone reaching out to their members of Congress, whether by email or in person on The Hill. The graphic was created by ASFPM and our partners, and everyone is welcome to use it. Here is the link if you’d like to share it electronically, or print it out.
Draft NFIP Nationwide Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Published

FEMA published a draft NFIP Nationwide Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement April 7 for public comment. The EIS process is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to thoroughly address the environmental consequences of major federal actions that could significantly affect the environment. The draft would update the original EIS for the NFIP developed in 1976.

ASFPM has previously submitted comments to the Federal Register early in the process when FEMA was seeking feedback on the process including the scope, purpose and need. ASFPM submitted comments for the hearing record this past fall when the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was examining the relationships among the NFIP, Endangered Species Act and land use regulations. Both ASFPM documents have several recommendations related to improving the process and outcomes.

In participating in one of FEMA’s early webinars on this NPEIS release and based on a cursory review of the document by ASFPM leadership, two early concerns have arisen.

The NPEIS does not include any commentary or analysis on one of the more significant controversies in recent years – lawsuits against FEMA for inadequate consultation on the Endangered Species Act. In response to lawsuits brought under the ESA, FEMA has been required, either by the courts or through settlement agreements, to undertake consultations under the ESA on the implementation of the NFIP in particular communities or regions. In consultations undertaken in Monroe County, Florida, the Puget Sound region of Washington, and in Oregon, the services have found that the implementation of the NFIP in those areas was likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened and endangered species and adversely modify designated critical habitat. It would seem a primary purpose and need for the NPEIS that should be identified is to more properly address ESA coordination issues that have been identified in these lawsuits and judgements (or at a minimum, describe why FEMA thinks these are not relevant).

FEMA concludes that a) Everything that happens in the SFHA is purely a private property decision between the landowner and local community and b) the NFIP minimum standards are strictly performance standards, which means FEMA doesn’t tell communities how to meet them. Perhaps as a result of this logic, FEMA has chosen as the “preferred alternative” that requires communities, on a development by development basis, to maintain documentation of ESA compliance through permitting and for Letter of Map Change requests. It is concerning there was no consideration of alternatives that would change basic NFIP standards of 44CFR60.3 on a programmatic level so that through consultation with the appropriate federal agencies, basic floodplain management standards could address ESA concerns at a regional or state level, versus burdening communities on a per development basis.

The deadline to submit comments online to the Federal Register is June 6, 2017. To submit comments, go to www.federalregister.gov and use the search function to lookup Docket ID: FEMA-2012-0012. From there you can download or view a copy of the PEIS (605 pages) or shorter 15 page Executive Summary. ASFPM will be submitting comments, which are being coordinated by ASFPM’s Natural and Beneficial Functions committee. If you would like to submit comments to be considered as part of ASFPM’s comments, please email ASFPM NBF Committee Co-chair Rebecca Pfeiffer at rebecca.pfeiffer@vermont.gov by COB Friday, May 26, 2017.

FEMA will conduct public meetings and webinars on the draft NPEIS.
First Hazard Mitigation Assistance e-brief Published
The bi-monthly Hazard Mitigation Assistance e-brief was designed to keep you up to date on FEMA’s mitigation programs, resources and upcoming events. It’s provided by FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance Division. To get signed up to receive the emails, go to https://service.govdelivery.com and make sure to click the “mitigation” categories under FEMA.

Revised NFIP Flood Insurance Manual Posted Online
The revised NFIP Flood Insurance Manual, used primarily by insurers and agents selling and servicing federal flood insurance, is now available online. Significant revisions include:
Updates to the NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent Regional Staff information (REF Section).
• Revised rates and premium tables for policies written or renewed on or after April 1, 2017 (RATE and CONDO Sections).
• Removed guidance regarding reduction of coverage when an insured has a non-NFIP policy (END Section).
• Revised the Newly Mapped Multiplier table to include policies effective Jan. 1, 2018 through December 2018 (NM Section).
• Provided additional information regarding specific location of properties in Coastal Barrier Resource Areas (CBRS Section).
• Updates to the Community Rating Section Eligible Communities list (CRS Section).
• Updates to the Table of Contents and Index.

Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage, FEMA P-348, 2nd Edition now Available
The FEMA Building Science Branch announced the release of the second edition of Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage, FEMA P-348. The overall objective of this updated publication is to assist in the repair, reconstruction and new construction of buildings with building utility systems and equipment that are designed and built for maximum flood resiliency. It also illustrates design and construction of utility systems that comply with NFIP requirements for new or Substantially Improved residential and non-residential structures in flood-prone areas. It is also useful when evaluating structures for utility system upgrades or replacement, guiding users to meet floodplain management regulations and building code requirements. Even if NFIP compliance is not required, many building owners may find that applying the mitigation measures described in this publication will not only reduce future flood damage, but also facilitate faster recovery after flooding.

HiRise Engineering and Matthew Pappalardo Debarred from Government-related Work
The FEMA Suspension and Debarment official debarred HiRise Engineering and Matthew Pappalardo March 9 from conducting future business with any agency in the executive branch, for a period of three years. This means that participating Write Your Own companies, as fiscal agents of FEMA, the NFIP’s Direct Servicing Agent, and other entities doing business on behalf of the federal government must cease entering into contracts or other business obligations with HiRise Engineering and Matthew Pappalardo for any government-related work until the debarment is lifted.
ASFPM Members Were “Representing” at the April 22 March for Science

Clockwise from top left: ASFPM Foundation President Doug Plasencia in D.C. where 150,000 showed up to support Earth Day and climate science; Sally McConkey, past ASFPM chair on the far right with her Illinois State Water Survey “crew” at the Champaign, Illinois march (1,000 turned out); extremely active ASFPM member Paul Osman (left) with his wife Pauline (middle) and Jeanne Handy with ISWS at the Springfield, Illinois march (more than 700 marched that day); and another photo from Doug Plasencia at the DC march with his wife Beth (left), daughter Suzi and...friends?
ASFPM Editorial Guidelines: ASFPM accepts and welcomes articles from our members and partners. “The Insider” and “News & Views” have a style format, and if necessary, we reserve the right to edit submitted articles for space, grammar, punctuation, spelling, potential libel and clarity. If we make substantive changes, we will email the article back to you for your approval before using. We encourage you to include art with your article in the form of photos, illustrations, charts and graphs. Please include a description of the art, along with the full name of who created the art. If the art is not yours originally, you must include expressed, written consent granting ASFPM permission to use the art in our publications. Copyright© Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc. Information and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the ASFPM Board of Directors. Reproduction, with credit, permitted for individual ASFPM-authored articles. Please contact Michele Mihalovich at editor@floods.org.

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