Natural Defenses in Action: Harnessing Nature to Protect our Communities

The National Wildlife Federation, in collaboration with ASFPM and Allied World Assurance Company, published a report that highlights the important role natural and nature-based approaches can play in reducing the mounting risks to communities from weather and climate-related natural hazards. “Natural Defenses in Action” not only documents the value of harnessing nature to protect people and property, but provides examples where it’s already being implemented. The report profiles a dozen best-in-practice case studies that showcase examples of how natural defenses are being put to use to avoid or reduce hazard risks from flooding, coastal storms, erosion and wildfire.

The best way to reduce risk, of course, is to avoid it altogether. Like ASFPM’s report “Flood Mapping for the Nation – A Cost Analysis for the Nation’s Flood Map Inventory,” Natural Defenses in Action reinforces that avoiding risk depends on having an accurate understanding of where natural hazards exist, as well as what areas may be exposed to those hazards in the future given the impacts of climate change. The associated Dauphin Island, Alabama case study shows how state and local land use regulations can be used in
conjunction with a federally-designated Coastal Barrier Resource System unit to conserve open space and natural ecosystems on geologically-dynamic coastal barrier islands.

Where existing developments are already exposed to risks from severe weather, storm surge, flooding and other hazards, a variety of risk reduction approaches are emerging that make use of natural features, or hybrid approaches that blend natural and human-engineered features. Case studies including restoring wetland and flood flows, relocation, living shorelines and using beavers to enhance flood storage are some examples used to demonstrate that ecological approaches to risk reduction can be good for people and nature.

Deploying natural defenses is good not only for the environment, but also the economy. Natural and nature-based approaches can be as cost effective, or more cost effective, as traditional manmade structures. And by avoiding or reducing community risk, can decrease taxpayer liabilities for disaster response and recovery and result in lower insurance costs to property owners.

The report also includes policy reforms to expand the use of natural defenses by strengthening incentives for the use of nature-based approaches and discouraging the proliferation of hard structures like seawalls, bulkheads, levees and dams.

As risks from natural hazards mount in the face of rapid climate change, urban population growth, and development pressure, working with, rather than against, the power of nature to protect our communities will only become more imperative.

By Alan Lulloff, ASFPM Science Services Program Director and Karl Schrass, NWF Climate Adaptation

NOAA launches America’s first national water forecast model.

New tool hailed as a game changer for predicting floods and informing water-related decisions. Read all about this new forecasting tool that can be used to simulate how water moves throughout the nation’s rivers and streams here.
New Study Finds U.S. Coastal Military Installations Will Lose Land to Sea Level Rise in Decades Ahead

U.S. East and Gulf Coast military installations are at risk of losing land—where vital training and testing grounds, infrastructure and housing now exists—as sea level rise moves the high tide line inland in decades to come, according to a Union of Concerned Scientists analysis released July 27.

“The US Military on the Front Lines of Rising Seas,” analysis found that coastal installations will experience more extensive tidal flooding and when hurricanes strike, deeper and more extensive storm surge flooding.

“We’re now at the front end of the changes that will occur, with some installations already dealing with flooding during extreme high tides,” said Erika Spanger-Siegfried, lead author of the report and senior analyst in the Climate and Energy program at UCS. “Depending on how fast sea level rises in the second half of this century, tidal flooding will become a daily occurrence in some areas; that is, those places become part of the tidal zone as opposed to useable land. This also depends on how installations respond and whether they have the resources to adapt.” Read the full press release here.

American Meteorological Society releases 2015 State of the Climate

The report, compiled by NOAA’s Center for Weather and Climate at the National Centers for Environmental Information, is based on contributions from scientists from around the world. It provides a detailed update on global climate indicators, notable weather events and other data collected by environmental monitoring stations and instruments located on land, water, ice and in space. This is the 26th edition of the annual assessment now known as State of the Climate. 2015 saw the toppling of several symbolic mileposts: notably, it was 1.0°C warmer than preindustrial times, and the Mauna Loa observatory recorded its first annual mean carbon dioxide concentration greater than 400 ppm. Beyond these more recognizable markers, trends seen in recent decades continued.
Are YOU Prepared for September’s National Preparedness Month?

Now’s the time to get messages ready for the public (via social media, emails, handouts, websites, free public service announcements), organize events and contact your local media to help get the word out on HOW and WHY to get prepared for emergencies. And guess what? Ready.Gov resources are available in 13 languages!

Ready.Gov has tons of online resources and ideas to help you get your community prepared.

Here is a sampling...

2016 Weekly Focused Themes

- From Aug. 28-Sept. 3: Begin promoting National Preparedness Month
- Week 1: Sept. 4-10 theme: Multigenerational Preparedness
  Make a family emergency communication plan
- Week 2: Sept. 11-17 theme: Community Service
  Get involved in your community and plan with neighbors.
- Week 3: Sept. 18-24 theme: Individual Preparedness
  Take individual steps to prepare for a disaster today like downloading the FEMA app.
- Week 4: Sept. 25-30 theme: Lead up to National PrepareAthon Day, which is Sept. 30. This is also a good time to focus on floods (how to mitigate flood damage to property, how to protect critical documents, make sure you have flood insurance regardless of whether you live in a mapped floodplain or not, develop and test a neighborhood/family communications plan).

Be counted and register your preparedness event for National PrepareAthon Day!

FEMA has developed all kinds of tools, like graphics, publications, PSAs and videos, to help you get emergency preparedness messages out. And it’s all FREE, so take advantage!

Screenshot of a 60-second public service announcement from Ready Campaign and Ad Council on the importance of creating a family emergency communication plan. View the actual video here.
What’s happening around the world?

A collection of the most viewed stories on our Facebook page

California
"Game of Floods" That's awesome. A board game that challenges players to address the effects of sea-level rise has earned the County of Marin staff a statewide award for public outreach. Way to go! Read about the game and award here.

North Carolina
In Dare County, according to maps released last month, 15,970 buildings are either removed from a flood zone or placed in a zone where the hazard is reduced. Entire neighborhoods in Nags Head, Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills are suddenly not so prone to water surging into the living room. Read the Virginia-Pilot article here.

United States
Fascinating story on the Corps' early flood modeling systems. In the beginning, the Corps constructed crude models, mere ditches cut in the dirt with water flowing through them. These showed promise in their ability to predict flooding, and the effects of proposed dams. So USACE began building more sophisticated models in the dirt. This story, “America’s Last Top Model” from 99% Invisible, also delves into the models of today.

Doing battle with the mighty ocean to protect our changing coastline is futile as ‘hand-wrestling with God.’ Read this OpEd piece from Karl Grossman, a veteran investigative reporter and columnist in NY.

Can you imagine living in a property that has flooded 10 times? How about 20 times? It’s hard to fathom enduring that kind of situation, yet owners of 2,109 properties across the United States experience just that. Not only has each of these properties flooded more than 10 times, but the National Flood Insurance Program has paid to rebuild them after each flood. One home in Batchelor, Louisiana flooded 40 times and received a total of $428,379 in flood insurance payments. Read NRDC's “Flood, Rebuild, Repeat: The Need for Flood Insurance Reforms.”

ICYMI: Overwhelming scientific evidence shows climate change is leading to rising sea levels and more extreme storms. But you might not know it by looking at the federal government’s flood hazard maps. Read this May 2016 Frontline piece here.
South Carolina
Way to go, guys! More than 150 million gallons of sewage were surging into the Columbia, SC wastewater treatment plant, and a nearby dike was threatening to break at the height of the city’s historic flooding disaster last October. Plant workers were told to shut down and evacuate, but five men voluntarily stayed behind to ensure the filthy deluge of wastewater would not contaminate the Congaree River and, ultimately, the city’s drinking water. Read the full article from The State here.

Maryland
The ‘other’ human influences on the Maryland floods you may overlook: urban impervious surface and stormwater management systems. Read the OpEd piece in Forbes here.

Florida
Absolutely AWESOME story about flood insurance in Tampa Bay and Florida in general. Read “Remember the flood insurance scare of 2013? It’s creeping back into Tampa Bay and Florida.”

Japan
Five giant cisterns, 500-ton columns, and more than 6.5 kilometers of cavernous tunnels all lie below the world’s largest metropolis. Tokyo, one of the densest cities on the planet, is home to one of the most ambitious and enormous flood-control systems ever created. And it is almost entirely invisible to Tokyo residents. Read the full Global Citizen article here.

Louisiana
Only about one in eight businesses and residences in East Baton Rouge Parish is covered by flood insurance, a reality that is sure to take a financial toll on those living in the vast swaths of neighborhoods that flooded during this weekend’s storms. Read The Advocate’s story here.

“On average from year to year, about one-third of flood claims happen outside of flood zones,” Jeff Albright, CEO of the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of Louisiana, said. “So people who kid themselves into thinking they don’t need flood insurance are making a bad decision.” Read this Greater Baton Rouge Business Report article, “Flooded business owners realizing business interruption insurance won’t do any good.”

Louisiana Loses Its Boot. The boot-shaped state isn’t shaped like a boot anymore. That’s why reporter Brett Anderson revised its iconic outline (right) to reflect the truth about a sinking, disappearing place. Read his incredible investigative report here.
ASFPM spares no expense when it’s time to celebrate “big news” from a staff member. On Aug. 5, we busted out champagne and our fine crystal in honor of our event planner Jenny Seffrood’s engagement…and the fact that it was Friday. Congrats Jenny!

ASFPM just updated its No Adverse Impact Mitigation and Infrastructure How-to Guides. The updates were possible through funding from the ASFPM Foundation. Check the guides out here and tell us what you think: http://bit.ly/1Ei2r19

Job Corner
Baton Rouge has an immediate need for a senior debris technical advisor. Abt Associates is hiring a senior analyst (water resources), and the University of Oklahoma is looking for a director of the Oklahoma Water Survey. Check out these jobs and all the others listings on ASFPM’s Job Corner. Or post your own job opening. It’s completely free!
Hey, potential sponsors and exhibitors. It’s never too early to start planning for ASFPM’s national conference, which will be held in Kansas City, MO from April 30-May 5, 2017. To help in this important decision process, we’ve completed our Sponsors/Exhibitors Prospectus extra early. Check it out here.

Thinking about presenting at ASFPM’s annual, national conference on flood risk management? Now is the time to prepare because our Call for Presenters will go out in September. The conference website will be up and running soon. We hope to see you at “Managing Flood Risk in the Heartland.”

Coastal GeoTools is set for Feb. 6-9, 2017 in North Charleston, South Carolina

The Coastal GeoTools conference, established in 1999, is typically held every two years and focuses on geospatial data, tools, technology and information for coastal resource management professionals.

Who Should Attend

The Coastal GeoTools 2015 conference attracted nearly 300 attendees from all over the U.S. and several foreign countries. Coastal professionals from many different sectors find the networking opportunities of the conference unique and important for furthering the goals of their organizations. Anyone interested in the development and application of geospatial technology for management of coastal resources will benefit from this conference.

The Call for Abstracts is now open. Submit an abstract, or two, to share your geospatial application story, tool or resource. Click here and follow the directions for the online submission. Abstracts are due by Monday, Sept. 26.
Policy Matters!

Larry Larson, PE, CFM
Director Emeritus – Senior Policy Advisor, ASFPM

Once again we are seeing heavy flooding in Louisiana. There have been a number of extreme rainfall events around the nation this year. In recent floods in Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin, people lost all or most of what they owned. Lost their business, house, personal possessions—and possibly their lives.

The usual headline stories pick a person or family and show how it impacted them so readers empathize with them and see it as a tragedy with victims. Then the stories start to talk about how many millions of dollars the flood will cost to help the homeowners and businesses recover. Readers from around the nation are seeing these stories and the disaster cost numbers over and over. However, we note a trend now of “taxpayer fatigue” in the website comments associated with the stories. Floods in the last decade alone have cost federal taxpayers more than $200 billion. They are coming to realize that the vast majority of the recovery costs, along with the response costs of rescuing people from rooftops and swept away automobiles, will be paid by them—the federal taxpayer.

The tendency of those from non-flooded areas is to blame people who were flooded: “Why are you building in a place where it obviously is going to flood?” and “Why don’t you have flood insurance?” I would submit that much of the time, especially in riverine areas, it is the fault of states and communities, not just the people who are flooded. I say that because most of those people did not build their home or business, they simply bought or rented what was available and already built in areas the community allowed to be developed.

Some tend to blame the developer, since in an effort to maximize their profits they buy cheaper land—and floodplain land is generally cheaper because it will flood—duh! People say developers don’t care because they are usually long gone when the flood happens. While I understand that argument, I say let’s go another step beyond to officials who allowed them to build in high risk areas in the first place. Why did the community allow that high risk land to be developed?

Where development occurs is dictated by local and state governments. After all, land use and building codes cannot be dictated by the federal government under our Constitution. They are the province of state governments, which generally delegates that authority to local governments. The state government can put conditions on allowable land use, and many of them have done that with floodplain management standards that prohibit development in the highest risk areas and require certain conditions in medium risk areas. You can see what kind of standards each state does or does not have by looking at the ASFPM publication, “Floodplain Management 2010 State and Local Programs.”

State and community focus should be on public safety, thus protecting their citizens from the costs and human suffering from flooding. They should look at how their development practices reduce or increase those adverse impacts. Communities that analyze and understand the standards in the National Flood Insurance Program realize those will not prevent increases in future flooding and costs by that standard alone. They go farther by using stronger practices for mapping flood hazard areas, prohibit development in the highest hazard areas, enforce the “do no harm to others” concept when reviewing development proposals, and aggressively pursue mitigation of existing buildings by relocating them from floodways and other high risk areas. These communities also recognize rainfall and coastal storms are intensifying, so mapping and development standards need to
consider future conditions. And not just future climate conditions, but also watershed development that can greatly increase runoff and flood levels as well as development that alters the natural system’s ability to absorb and convey flood water.

Many communities approve almost any development on the belief that taxes on development will provide more money for the community. New development, especially in outlying areas, generally costs existing taxpayers more money, not less. But the myth continues, and it continues to drive community development decisions. There are a number of communities that have moved past this myth to wise use of all lands, including lands subject to natural hazards like floods, wildfires, hurricanes, etc. We have publications on our website that showcase these progressive communities, and we provide tools like our No Adverse Impact How-to Guides and more to assist them.

How can the nation turn this circumstance around? We believe there are measures starting now that will limit the use of federal taxpayer funds in ways that will reduce future flooding and protect taxpayer investments. The new Federal Flood Risk Management Standard is such an initiative. We urge more incentives and restrictions for wise use of taxpayer funding that is tied to flood loss reduction.

Finally, I suspect we are not far from the time when courts will hold communities accountable for development decisions because they approve development where they have full knowledge it will increase flooding on other property. We had a short lived case of that in Texas that got overturned, but eventually the courts will see community decisions are what increases flood risk and flood damage.

Image is of the John Day River in Oregon from the Willamette Partnership Organization’s “Smarter Floodplain Management” fact sheet.

National Science Foundation’s Environmental Sustainability Program is offering grants for research in the area of environmental sustainability. The proposal submission period is Oct. 1-20, 2016. From the Synopsis: “The Environmental Sustainability program supports research that would affect more than one chemical or manufacturing process or that takes a systems or holistic approach to green engineering for infrastructure or green buildings. Improvements in distribution and collection systems that will advance smart growth strategies and ameliorate effects of growth are research areas that are supported by Environmental Sustainability. Innovations in management of stormwater, recycling and reuse of drinking water and other green engineering techniques to support sustainability may also be fruitful areas for research.

All the details are spelled out here.
Upper Mississippi River Conference slated for October in Moline, Illinois

"Raising the Grade" is the theme for the 9th Annual Upper Mississippi River Conference, which will be held Oct. 13-14 and focus on the health of the Mississippi River watershed and what can be done to improve water quality.

The "Report Card for the Mississippi River Watershed," released last October by America's Watershed Initiative, rated the condition of the overall watershed as D+.

"The Mississippi watershed faces many interconnected challenges," Kathy Wine, Executive Director of River Action, Inc., said. "A working conference is a necessary step in developing a shared vision, to identify and form partnerships, and to advance solutions in the Upper Mississippi and beyond. We hope this conference will result in solid recommendations for improving each of the graded sectors of the AWI Report Card."

Wine said the conference will bring together a wide array of stakeholders in the Mississippi River, including elected officials, planners, educators, engineers, architects, landscape architects, economists, environmentalists, floodplain managers and those in public works and the transportation industry. "We want this conference to be a chance for attendees to network, learn and collaborate in working sessions dedicated to the seven broad goals identified in the AWI Report Card, including ecosystems, economy, recreation, flood control and flood risk management, transportation, water supply and Gulf hypoxia," Bob Sinkler, water infrastructure director for The Nature Conservancy, said.

"Measuring seven broad goals for the watershed using factual data and pertinent information identified by experts, the Report Card indicates how well we – as river citizens – are meeting these goals. With a grade of D+, we have a lot of work to do to protect one of America’s most important resources," Sinkler said. The conference also will offer attendees the opportunity to earn continuing education credits (number will vary by discipline).

For more information about the Mississippi River watershed and links to the AWI Report Card, visit America's Watershed Initiative.

For registration and speaker information, click here for the conference page.
From the Chair
Ceil C. Strauss, CFM & State Floodplain Manager in St. Paul, Minnesota

What’s the Deal with Compliance?

I’ve been reading through recent articles on flooding in Louisiana. And I know I’m not alone among my fellow “flood geeks,” since many of those articles have been forwarded.

But some of the figures being quoted get me—and probably others—to thinking. A few points I’ve seen about the impacted area include:

- About 87 percent of homes and 91 percent of businesses are in the “flood-affected areas.”
- The Louisiana Insurance Commissioner is quoted saying the number of residences with flood insurance is 12 percent in Baton Rouge and 14 percent in Lafayette.
- In the Baton Rouge area, 42 percent of those in the Special Flood Hazard Area have flood insurance policies.
- Two-thirds of the homes in Livingston Parish carry mortgages.

We’ve heard the “flood-affected areas” extends beyond the SFHA—more like a 500-year or 1000-year flood in some areas. So it’s not surprising a lower percentage of those affected have flood insurance. But if about two-thirds have mortgages, and 42 percent of those in the SFHA have flood insurance, that means many who should be mandated to have flood insurance don’t have it.

So what are the types of non-compliance we are seeing? Where are the biggest problems in terms of non-compliance and geographic areas? As far as I can see, the compliance problems fall into three main categories:

1. **Lender compliance**: not being required to purchase flood insurance when it is mandatory due to:
   a. Loans: new loans, transfer of loans, and renewal of the policy while that loan is in effect;
   b. Post Disaster Assistance: not being required to renew or obtain flood insurance and hold that policy in perpetuity after the three-year group policy has expired, as is required as a condition of receiving Individual Assistance or getting an SBA loan and other types of post disaster assistance; and
   c. Incorrect rating: not being rated correctly (e.g., having a preferred risk policy based on the mailbox location rather than the correct A zone policy for a house that is actually many feet below the base flood elevation).

2. **Regulatory compliance**: not enforcing local floodplain regulation requirements for new buildings or to meet the ordinance standards once a building has been substantially improved or substantially damaged.

3. **Mapping issues**: the two most common types I see or hear about are:
   a. Fill violations that may or may not be in floodways or involve buildings with basements that get mapped “out” due to re-delineations with updated topography; and
   b. Letters of Map Revisions based on fill where neither the lowest floor is above the BFE or the “Reasonably Safe from Flooding” standards were met.

In the one-page *ASFPM Principles for NFIP authorization and reform in 2017*, one of our principles is to: “Strengthen compliance with mandatory insurance provisions of the NFIP. Two areas are particularly problematic: owners maintaining flood insurance policies as a condition of loans after the first few years; and owners maintaining policies after receiving disaster assistance and/or after the three-year group flood insurance policy expires.”
It’s difficult to get good figures on most of the above categories of compliance. I know, for example, that some past reports on the mandatory purchase compliance show numbers that are not consistent with what I find when I look at the better information we have at the state level. A big part of that is that it’s impossible to accurately identify the structures in the SFHA with the inaccurate digital floodplain boundaries we have in many parts of the country.

But we can get a feel for the problem areas:

- During times of flooding: Did any post-Flood Insurance Rate Map buildings have claims? If so, was it due to not meeting the ordinance standards or because the flood was so much above that magic line on the edge of the 1 percent annual chance floodplain? Did any buildings that are in non-participating communities have a policy using a neighboring community’s ID? Were there repetitive loss buildings that had substantial damage in the past?
- During Community Assistance Visits and similar monitoring efforts.
- When checking premium ratings: Starting Oct. 1, 2016 as policies are renewed the underwriters are to be verifying the ratings. Hopefully corrections will be made for those properties rated using the wrong community ID, zone or elevations, or rated based on getting credit for vents that don’t exist, etc.

Dealing with compliance won’t be easy. Enforcing regulations is hard work, especially if there are not pots of mitigation money to help those who don’t have flood insurance rebuild in compliance. But it is important work in our roles to reduce future flood damage and anguish of those affected.

But some of the other areas of non-compliance are due to issues beyond the authority of local floodplain managers, and make it harder for local officials to enforce their regulations. Lenders and agents need more training on determining zones and proper ratings.

I am very interested in evaluating whether that requirement for insurance policies to be double checked beginning later this year makes a dent in the high percentage of incorrectly rated policies I find when I check the actual building location and elevation, and whether they really have vents, etc. If it doesn’t, we need to work with FEMA to find better ways to correct insurance rating errors that lead to lower (or higher) premiums for the actual level of risk. If an A Zone property is rated as an X Zone property due to an incorrect determination, they may not be required to get a policy, or they may pay preferred risk policy rates, or decide to drop the policy and have no incentive to do some type of mitigation or come into compliance with the local regulations.

Some ASFPM representatives will be partnering with others to evaluate compliance issues and make recommendations. These thoughts are my own initial understanding of the key compliance issues. Let me know if you disagree with my observations, or if I’m missing any big compliance issues. Working together, I hope we can improve compliance and reduce future flood risk.

**Registration now open for the Gulf Coast Community Flood Resilience:**

Application of No Adverse Impact for Coastal Communities.

Can a community plan in such a way as to avoid future damaging events and reduce liability exposure? You bet! The objective of this workshop is to introduce an approach and tools to make a community more resilient in planning for future conditions on the Gulf Coast. Aimed at community officials and local elected leaders, this workshop will focus on the legal and policy frameworks that impact the day-to-day activities of decision makers, practitioners, planners and managers in the Gulf Coast region.

*Click here to learn more and register.*
Longtime ASFPM member Eugene Henry, hazard mitigation manager for Hillsborough County in Florida, was named to the National Advisory Council. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate appointed Henry, the non-elected local government official, and four other new members and reappointed seven current members Aug. 18.

NAC is an advisory committee established by federal law to ensure effective and ongoing coordination of federal emergency management activities. Members represent the whole community and include representatives from a wide array of backgrounds and communities involved in or affected by the emergency management profession.

“I commend the work that the members of the National Advisory Council do to advise FEMA on carrying out our mission,” said Fugate. “The NAC plays a pivotal role to ensure effective and ongoing coordination of federal preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation for natural disasters and manmade disasters. Their recommendations have a direct impact across the agency, survivors and others we serve. I welcome these new members to the team, trust their counsel and appreciate their dedication and commitment to ensuring effective emergency management.”

FEMA received many applications for the open positions. All applicants were carefully considered through an intensive review process, which included a panel of senior government officials. Most appointments are for three-year terms.

In addition to Henry, the other four NAC members include: Donna Boston, director of Emergency Management Division, Orange County Sheriff’s Department (Silverado, CA); Gabriele Almon, independent consultant (Monrovia, CA); Jeff Stern, state coordinator of Virginia Division of Emergency Management (Richmond, VA); and Peter Ginaitt, senior environmental affairs, safety compliance officer and emergency manager with Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (Providence, RI).

The seven reappointed members include: Chris Howell, Director of Tribal Relations, BNSF Railway (Fort Worth, TX); Linda Langston, Director of Strategic Relations, National Association of Counties, (Washington, DC); June Kailes, Associate Director, Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy, Western University of Health Sciences (Playa del Rey, CA); Emily Kidd, Project Director, Texas Disaster Medical System (San Antonio, TX); Robert Salesses, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and DSCA, U.S. Department of Defense (Washington, DC); W. Nim Kidd, Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management and Assistant Director, Texas Homeland Security Department of Public Safety (Austin, TX); Suzet McKinney, Executive Director, Illinois Medical District Commission (Chicago, IL); and Teresa Scott, Public Works Director, City of Gainesville Public Works Department (Gainesville, FL)

The next NAC public meeting will be in the Washington, D.C. area Sept. 13-15.

Part 1, “Recommendations for Operating a Sediment Diversion that Balances Ecosystem and Community Needs,” was written by Natalie Peyronnin, Director of Science Policy for Environmental Defense Fund’s Mississippi River Delta Restoration program.

Part 2, “Exploring the Hydrodynamics of a Sediment Diversion at Mid-Barataria,” was written by Dr. J. Alex McCorquodale, the Freeport McMoRan Professor of Environmental Modeling in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of New Orleans.

Part 3, “The Geology of Land Building Using Mississippi River Sediment Diversions,” was written by Dr. Alex Kolker, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and Tulane University.

Part 4, “Building Land While Balancing Historic and Cultural Effects,” was written by Shirley Laska, Professor Emerita of Sociology, University of New Orleans, and cofounder of Lowlander Center.

Sunset flight over the Mississippi River Delta from six miles up on Jan. 2, 2010. Photo by Jim Mullhaupt via Flickr.
2016 Mary Fran Myers Scholarship Winners

The Mary Fran Myers Scholarship, which ASFPM is a proud financial supporter, recognizes outstanding individuals who share Myers’ commitment to disaster research and practice, and have the potential to make a lasting contribution to reducing disaster vulnerability. At least one scholarship recipient each year will receive financial support allowing them to attend the Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop in Broomfield, Colorado. Learn more about Mary Fran Myers and the scholarship here.

**Jishnu Subedi** teaches at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Canada. Before joining SAIT, he taught at University of Calgary and also Tribhuvan University, Nepal where he contributed in the initiation, development and launching of the master’s program in disaster risk management. He also contributed to Calgary’s report on River Flood Mitigation as thematic subject matter expert in the Expert Management Panel. Subedi has experience working in different countries to implement housing earthquake safety and school earthquake safety projects while serving in United Nations Centre for Regional Development in Kobe, Japan. His areas of interest in research and scholarly activities include resilient infrastructure, urban risk management and post-disaster construction. He has published journal papers and book chapters in the field of disaster risk management and also serves in technical and advisory committee of different international forums.

**Deb Kleinman** is a consultant based in Laramie, Wyoming with 20 years of experience as a facilitator, trainer, program designer and evaluator, and nonprofit executive in a wide range of settings. She has a particular passion and talent for connecting people, building relationships, and bringing diverse stakeholder groups together to solve complex problems using proven collaborative approaches. Her work focuses on facilitation, coaching, training and program management for organizations, coalitions and individuals working in climate change, natural resources and the environment, hazard mitigation, agriculture and food systems and public health. Since 2014, she has worked as a consultant with the Model Forest Policy Program, an organization that works to build community capacity for climate resilience for at-risk urban and rural populations, and the critical forested watershed ecosystems and ecosystem services upon which they depend. Kleinman received a BA in history from Carleton College, and she has a MA in Public Health from the University of Michigan. Previously she was the executive director of the U.S. Green Building Council Colorado Chapter.

**Sarah Thompson** has been an active member of the emergency management community in Canada for more than seven years. She has worked for the National Energy Board, universities and municipal agencies, including the cities of Vancouver and Toronto. In 2012 she began program development in municipal Rapid and Advanced Damage Assessment, and for the last five years she has also served as a volunteer Emergency Social Services team leader and program coordinator. She currently works at Toronto’s Office of Emergency Management. Her current research is focused on two main topics: Emergency Social Services and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment methodologies.

**Ted Serrant** is a research specialist at the Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas. He is also an adjunct faculty at the Open Campus at University of the West Indies Ed.D. program. Serrant holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His research focus is on education in emergencies, particularly chronic low-intensity hazards and the policy imperatives. His dissertation, “Children, learning, and chronic natural disasters: How does the Government of Dominica address education during chronic low-intensity hurricanes?” won the 2014 Best Dissertation Award from the Institute for International Studies in Education at University of Pittsburgh. His
current work investigates weather-related emergency management policies in a large urban school district in the United States, as well as the extent to which existing education policies in the Eastern Caribbean address education during emergencies.

Serrant served as the Ministry of Education’s representative on the National Emergency Planning Organization in Dominica and was president of the St. Joseph Community Disaster Management Committee there. He conducted inter-disciplinary disaster research work in Haiti including fieldwork after the 2010 earthquake to determine the country’s transition from response to recovery, and in San Diego, California following the 2010 H1N1 epidemic to understand organizational response under emergencies and stress.

Free Planning Information Exchange Webinar

State Resiliency Initiatives: From Issue to Action!
Sept. 22, 2016, 1-2 p.m. CDT

In cooperation with the American Planning Association, ASFPM presents the eighth Planning Information Exchange webinar. PIE is a free eight-part quarterly webinar series focusing on tools, best practices and strategies on the role of hazard mitigation planning and its connections with other community planning and hazard risk reduction initiatives.

In New York and Colorado, resiliency initiatives have been given a boost by state-level actions. Facing sea level rise and extreme weather events, the New York passed the Community Risk and Resiliency Act in 2014 to ensure certain state monies, facility-siting regulations and permits include consideration of the effects of climate risk and extreme-weather events. No stranger to flooding and wildfire hazards, Colorado in 2015 adopted the Colorado Resiliency Framework, a plan representing the state’s long-term investment and commitment to a more resilient future following the natural disasters that affected the state.

The eighth part in the PIE series involves discussions with Bill Nechamen, floodplain management chief for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Iain Hyde, deputy director of Colorado Governor’s Resiliency & Recovery Office. Chad Berginnis, executive director of ASFPM, will moderate as they discuss how two different statewide approaches are being implemented to better enable their communities and citizens to be more resilient. The conversation will focus on the drivers for these state-level initiatives, ties to planning efforts, implementation opportunities and challenges and community level actions that have resulted. Register here.
This month in Flood History

After the March 1964 "Good Friday" Alaska earthquake, seismic waves and resulting tsunamis, Congress in August 1964 ushered in the direct subsidy, or grant, as a federal disaster relief policy through PL 88-451 (1964 Amendments to the Alaska Omnibus Act).

On Aug. 10, 1976, Hurricane Belle threatening much of the U.S. East Coast. Hurricane warnings were issued from Georgia to Maine. An estimated 500,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas. Overall, impacts from Belle were less than expected and mainly attributed to flooding across New England. Hundreds of thousands of residents lost power due to high winds. A total of 12 people lost their lives, mostly incidents indirectly related to the hurricane, and damage reached an estimated $100 million. Portions of NJ, NY and VT were later declared major disaster areas by then-President Gerald Ford. Photo via @BigJoeBastardi on Twitter.

On Aug. 13, 2004, Hurricane Charley, after throwing a scare into the Tampa-St. Petersburg metro area, rapidly intensified and took a right turn into Charlotte Harbor as an intense Category 4 hurricane. Charley's small but intense eyewall swept through Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte, wreaking heavy damage. Charley then accelerated as it sliced northeastward through central and northeast Florida, whipping strong winds through the heart of the Florida Peninsula and an EF1 tornado ripped through the south side of Daytona Beach. Charley later made a second landfall south of Myrtle Beach, SC, and tracked into southeast Virginia before losing its tropical characteristics. At the time, Hurricane Charley had become the second-costliest hurricane in U.S. history, with damage estimated around $15 billion (2004 dollars). Charley was directly responsible for 10 deaths in the U.S.

Around midnight on Aug. 17, 1976, a strong earthquake hit Moro Gulf in the Philippines. After the initial earthquake, people were unaware of the need to move to higher ground when the tsunami hit and "sucked most of the victims out to sea." 5,000 people died (thousands are still missing), 10,000 were injured and 90,000 became homeless that night. Based on the investigation on the affected region it was confirmed that the waves reached 13-16 feet when they hit the area.

Hurricane Camille first made landfall in the Gulf. As it moved from the Gulf inland over the Appalachians, she unleashed a series of flash floods before entering the Atlantic Aug. 20, 1969. In Virginia alone, the storms swept away more than 100 bridges and left only one highway intact. The James River in central Virginia, as the meeting point of several tributaries, experienced severe flooding that devastated the nearby community of Richmond. Camille caused $1.4 billion in damage nationwide; was responsible for 250 deaths; and changed the way people thought about a hurricane's potential to affect inland communities and led to passage of the Disaster Relief Act of 1969.
Hurricane Andrew was a small hurricane, but it packed extreme winds, estimated to be Category 5 strength at landfall along the southeastern Florida coast Aug. 24, 1992. The pressure at landfall was 922 millibars. After striking southern Florida, Andrew made a second landfall in south central Louisiana as a Category 3 hurricane. The intense winds caused catastrophic damage in southern Florida, destroying or damaging approximately 127,000 homes. Andrew’s total cost was $26.5 billion (1992 USD), mostly in Dade County, Florida. At the time, it was the most costly natural disaster in U.S. history.

Hurricane Irene took a pretty crazy path in August 2011. Initially designated as Tropical Storm Irene on Aug. 20, 2011. After intensifying, Irene made landfall in St. Croix as a strong tropical storm later that day. Early Aug. 21, the storm made a second landfall in Puerto Rico. While crossing the island, Irene strengthened into a Category 1 hurricane. The storm paralleled offshore of Hispaniola, continued to slowly intensify in the process. Shortly before making four landfalls in the Bahamas, Irene peaked as a 120 mph Category 3 hurricane. Thereafter, the storm slowly leveled off in intensity as it struck the Bahamas and then curved northward after passing east of Grand Bahama. Continuing to weaken, Irene was downgraded to a Category 1 hurricane before making landfall on the Outer Banks of North Carolina Aug. 27. Early on the following day, the storm re-emerged into the Atlantic from southeastern Virginia. Although Irene remained a hurricane over water, it weakened to a tropical storm while making yet another landfall in the Little Egg Inlet in southeastern New Jersey Aug. 28. A few hours later, Irene made its ninth and final landfall in Brooklyn, New York City. Early on Aug. 29, Irene transitioned into an extratropical cyclone hitting Vermont and New Hampshire after remaining inland as a tropical cyclone for less than 12 hours. Throughout its path, Irene caused widespread destruction and at least 56 deaths. Damage estimates throughout the United States are estimated near $15.6 billion. In addition, monetary losses in the Caribbean and Canada were $830 million and $130 million respectively for a total of nearly $16.6 billion in damage.

Hurricane Katrina, the eleventh named storm and fifth hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, was the costliest natural disaster and one of the five deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history. Overall, at least 1,836 people died in the hurricane and subsequent floods. Total property damage was estimated at $108 billion (2005 USD). Katrina originated over the Bahamas Aug. 23. Early the following day, the new depression intensified into Tropical Storm Katrina. The cyclone headed generally westward toward Florida and strengthened into a hurricane only two hours before making landfall at Hallandale Beach and Aventura Aug. 25. After very briefly weakening to a tropical storm, Katrina emerged into the Gulf of Mexico on Aug. 26 and began to rapidly deepen. The storm strengthened to a Category 5 hurricane over the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, but weakened before making its second landfall as a Category 3 hurricane Aug. 29 in southeast Louisiana. More than 50 breaches in New Orleans's hurricane surge protection are the cause of the majority of the death and destruction during Katrina Aug. 29, 2005. Eventually 80 percent of the city and large tracts of neighboring parishes became flooded, and the floodwaters lingered for weeks.
Clearly August is a big hurricane month, but it’s also a pretty big month for national flood policy too.

**August 1951:** Following massive flooding in Kansas and Missouri that causes more than $870 million in damage, President Harry Truman recommends the creation of a “national system of flood disaster insurance, similar to the war damage insurance of World War II.” In Truman’s words: “The lack of a national system of flood disaster insurance is now a major gap in the means by which a man can make his home, his farm, or his business secure against events beyond his control.” Truman proposes a system of flood insurance based on private insurance with re-insurance by the federal government.

**August 1954:** The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566) authorizes flood protection structures in upstream watersheds (defined as smaller than 250,000 acres). The Act also authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) to participate in comprehensive watershed management projects in cooperation with states and their subdivisions.

**August 1956:** The Federal Flood Insurance Act of 1956 (PL 84-1016) directs the Housing and Home Finance Agency to establish a program of federal insurance and re-insurance against the risks of losses resulting from floods and tidal disasters. The program is intended to provide up to $10,000 in insurance per dwelling and to encourage private companies to provide coverage for risks above that amount. The cost of coverage for policyholders will be the same regardless of their location.

**Aug. 31, 1959:** The Tennessee Valley Authority submits a report to Congress proposing a program to reduce damage associated with floods (A Program for Reducing the National Flood Damage Potential: Memorandum of the Chairman to Members of the Committee on Public Works, U.S. Senate, 86th Cong., 1st Sess., 31 Aug. 1959). In its letter of transmittal, the TVA states that it “believes that local communities have the responsibility to guide their growth so that their future development will be kept out of the path of floodwaters. With the states and communities of the Tennessee Valley, TVA has developed a means of putting this proposition into action.” Floodplain management formally enters the federal agenda with the report’s submission.

**Aug. 10, 1966:** The Task Force on Federal Flood Control Policy, with Gilbert White as chair, issued *A Unified National Program for Managing Flood Losses* (U.S. House of Representatives, House Document 465, 89th Cong., 2nd Sess.). The report examines ways in which the federal government can decrease flood losses without large expenditures for flood control. It is supportive of state and local regulation of the use of lands exposed to flood hazard. Concluding that federally-subsidized insurance will provide an important incentive to local communities to participate in a flood insurance program. The report recommends a system of structural and nonstructural approaches to flood control, and that a practicable national program of flood insurance be established and calls for an integrated program to manage losses from floods that would involve federal, state and local governments and the private sector. The report also recommends a limited, experimental test of a national flood insurance program before nationwide implementation. The report warns, however, that “if misapplied an insurance program could aggravate rather than ameliorate the flood program.” The report estimates that subsidies for existing high-risk properties will be required for approximately 25 years.

**Aug. 10, 1966:** Executive Order No. 11296—Evaluation of Flood Hazard in Locating Federally Owned or Financed Buildings, Roads, and Other Facilities, and in Disposing of Federal Lands and Properties, is issued. It directs federal agencies to provide leadership in encouraging an effort to prevent unnecessary use of the country’s floodplains and to lessen the risk of flood losses; evaluate flood hazards; and develop procedures to ensure that flood-hazard evaluations are conducted before initiating federally financed or supported actions in floodplains.
What’s the ASFPM Foundation been up to?

Meeting the Challenge of Change

*Meeting the Challenge of Change* report addresses implementation of the President’s new federal standard for flood risk management (Executive Order 13690), including its requirement to consider future flood risk when planning taxpayer-funded projects in areas prone to flooding. Throughout this report, the challenges are paired with implementable actions. It concludes that, in many cases, use of an approach based on climate-informed science will provide better risk estimation and planning outcomes than other “one size fits all” options such as building to the current 500-year flood standard or applying extra freeboard for construction. The report also explores ways floodplain management is meeting the challenge of managing future flood risk, summarizes key provisions of EO 13690, and makes a number of specific recommendations aimed at resolving policy issues, building cooperation and collaboration, and identifying, communicating and mitigating future risk. The foundation encourages you to share the “Meeting the Challenge of Change” message with colleagues and policy makers in your state.

WHAT IS THE ASFPM FOUNDATION?

In 1996, ASFPM established a non-profit, tax exempt foundation, which serves as an advocate for the profession and as a voice for you, the practitioner, supplier or service provider. The foundation seeks and directs funds to help ASFPM meet its goals and support floodplain management activities that originate outside of ASFPM.

Foundation donations have supported development of the CFM program, *No Adverse Impact* publications, college student paper competitions, higher education opportunities in FPM, and specialty think tank meetings, including the *Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forums*.

ASFPM Foundation promotes public policy through select strategic initiatives and serves as an incubator for long-term policy development that promotes sustainable floodplain and watershed management. If you’d like to learn more or donate to the foundation, click here.
FEMA released the updated Special Flood Hazard Determination Form
"There aren’t really any changes that I see that would affect floodplain managers," ASFPM Flood Insurance Committee Co-chair Bruce Bender said. "But here are a few highlights of minor changes to note."
- Section I, Box 2: Collateral description does not include reference to parcel number;
- Section I, Box 3: Lender ID number is now optional;
- Section IIB, Box 3: Now includes the LOMC Case number in addition to LOMC date. In the instructions, it clarifies that if there is no LOMC, the space can be left blank; and
- Section IIC’s instructions about availability of flood insurance clearly states it is about community eligibility (based on NFIP Community Status Book, but also references CBRS and OPA), not individual building.

Click here to view the updated form.

Fall review of Risk MAP guideline and standards include TMAC recommendations
FEMA has a maintenance plan for the Risk MAP guidelines and standards and issues updates on a semi-annual basis. This notice provides information about the fall semi-annual update, expected to be released November 2016. In addition to routine maintenance, FEMA plans to issue new and updated standards, guidance documents, technical references and related templates to address recommendations from the Technical Mapping Advisory Council, a federal advisory committee that advises FEMA on the flood mapping program. Read the full press release here.

FEMA’s Oct. 1, 2016 Community Rating System Updates
FEMA sent bulletin W-16049 Aug. 10, which provides updates to the Community Rating System eligible communities list that will become effective Oct. 1, 2016. This updated list will also be included in the Oct. 1, 2016 edition of the NFIP Flood Insurance Manual when it is published on the FEMA website. To see the full bulletin, go here.

FIMA Releases Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities Job Aids
The purpose of these job aids are to help communities applying for CRMA under Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants comply with the technical feasibility and effectiveness, and environmental and historic preservation requirements of the application. The job aids provide a checklist of information required by FEMA to determine grant eligibility and to complete a thorough review of the application. The available job aids include:
- Aquifer Storage & Recovery
- Floodplain & Stream Restoration
- Flood Diversion & Storage

The CRMA are available for HMPG funding resulting from a major disaster declared on or after Sept. 30, 2015, and for competitive PDM and FMA funding for which the application period opened on or after Sept. 30, 2015.

FEMA is revising the acceptable error percentage for reviews of a WYO company’s underwriting operations from 20 percent to 7 percent
In keeping with FEMA’s commitment to excellence in service of NFIP policyholders and appropriate spending of taxpayer funds, FEMA is working to increase oversight of WYO companies. Effective Oct. 1, 2016, FEMA is revising the acceptable error percentage for reviews of a WYO company’s underwriting operations from 20 percent to 7 percent. Read full bulletin here.
ASFPM Update on the FFRMS

ASFPM frequently gets asked what is happening with the roll out of the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard established in the President’s January 2015 Executive Order 13690. Formal guidance on the FFRMS was approved by the Water Resources Council and issued Oct. 8, 2015. Federal agencies are now in the implementation stage. Each federal agency must decide which of their programs will use the FFRMS, and then issue rules or guidance to implement the standard in those programs. FEMA posted its proposed rule to implement FFRMS for public comment Aug. 22 and comments are due Oct. 21. We urge everyone to review and comment on the rule. Keep watching our website to see ASFPM comments, which will likely include some broad comments in next couple weeks with more detail later.

Background
Since the issuance of the floodplain management Executive Order 11988 38 years ago, we as a nation have learned a lot about floodplain management and flood risk. The changing nature of flood risk, including increased risks due to sea level rise and increased storm intensity, demands competent standards that will withstand the test of time and the forces of nature.

Between 1980 and 2013, the United States suffered more than $260 billion in flood-related damage. On average, more people die annually from flooding than any other natural hazard, and the costs borne by federal taxpayers are more than any other hazard. Flooding accounts for approximately 85 percent of all presidential disaster declarations. With climate change, we anticipate flood risks will increase over time, and we are already seeing unprecedented extreme rainfall events. That damage can be particularly severe to our infrastructure, including public buildings, roads, ports, industrial facilities and coastal military installations. Repair costs to all of these are largely borne by the federal taxpayers.

Elements of EO 13690 and the FFRMS
The EO and new standard would apply to federal actions such as federal grants used for repair and redevelopment after a natural disaster. In fact, the definition of federal actions to which the EO would apply is unchanged from EO 11988 issued in 1977. The FFRMS gives agencies the flexibility to select one of three approaches for establishing the flood elevation and flood hazard area they use in siting, design and construction. They can:

- Use data and methods informed by best-available, actionable climate science;
- Build two feet above the 100-year (1%-annual-chance) flood elevation for standard projects, and three feet above for critical buildings like hospitals and evacuation centers; or
- Build to the 500-year (0.2%-annual-chance) flood elevation.

Other elements of the EO include a directive for agencies to use, where possible, natural systems, ecosystem processes and nature-based approaches when developing alternatives for consideration. Also, the new EO specifies that it is the policy of the U.S. to improve the resilience of communities and federal assets against the impacts of flooding and recognizes the risks and losses due to climate change and other threats.

Current status
While the primary visible action over the past 10 months is the posting of FEMA’s proposed rule, we are just back from DC and gathered some information. Presently, there are two areas of activities on the FFRMS: one bad, one good.

The bad – This one is Congress tacking poison pill riders on appropriations bills that would prohibit agencies from spending any funds to implement the FFRMS. We are pleased that none of the Senate appropriations bills contain language prohibiting implementation of the FFRMS. Two House bills do: Financial Services/General Government and Transportation-HUD (or called the THUD bill – seriously!). The riders basically use language that says something to the effect that the agency being funded is prohibited from funding any efforts to further develop or
review the FFRMS – effectively killing the whole thing for that fiscal year. The rider on the FY16 appropriations bill directed FEMA not to utilize FFRMS when implementing the NFIP. FEMA is not applying it to the NFIP, which is what they said all along.

The other is more positive – this Administration appears to be working on these issues until the very end, which would be inauguration in January. So we are hearing that the first agencies will be issuing their implementation standards to comply with the FFRMS in a matter of weeks. Two most likely candidates out the door first are FEMA and HUD. The White House Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Management and Budget are working very hard to get more agencies to get their rulemaking ready to go out for public comment. Some agencies implement the standard through revised guidance documents.

As we expected, in the case of FEMA, the proposed rule went out in the Federal Register and interested parties will have the opportunity to comment. ASFPM sent out a member alert on the FEMA rule so everyone has a chance to provide input – the Administration needs to hear from the nation’s floodplain managers! However, we have also heard there are some smaller agencies not regularly involved floodplain encroachment – those agencies may modify internal policy changes. Nonetheless, all agencies have pledged to have some sort of public input/notification process as they undertake their changes. We will keep our eye out for these too!

### 2016 Committee Co-chair Retreat

Mid-August was that time of year again, when ASFPM committee co-chairs and pod facilitators descend upon Madison to develop workplans for the coming year; listen to briefings on what the EO has been up to; discuss important issues that might have an impact on flood risk professionals such as: private flood insurance legislation, Increased Cost of Coverage, mapping, Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, cross agency resiliency initiatives, climate change, NFIP reauthorization, No Adverse Impact strategic direction, and nationwide flood public education strategy (just to name a few); and general bonding and network time aboard a Betty Lou dinner cruise on beautiful Lake Mendota. And we have an announcement. **Brian Eber**, CFM, was named to fill the **Stormwater Management Committee** Co-chair seat vacated when **Bill Brown** accepted the ASFPM project manager position. Eber is the Northeast Illinois Floodplain Program Coordinator for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Welcome!

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*ASFPM committee co-chairs, pod facilitators and staff just before boarding the Betty Lou Dinner Cruise. Photo by Jessica Baker.*

*Getting down to committee business. Photo by Diane Brown.*
From the Director’s Desk
Chad Berginnis, CFM
Executive Director, ASFPM

Baselining Local Floodplain Management Programs

One of the more unique ways ASFPM contributes to the overall knowledge base in the field is to periodically survey floodplain managers and get a baseline of the knowledge, issues and changes occurring over time. In fact, since the 1980s we have been doing this primarily on the state level with our survey and report “State and Local Programs” documents. The state survey did touch on local programs to some extent, but more from the viewpoint of overall state efforts. In other words, we didn’t have very good data on local program themselves from community’s floodplain managers.

Well, that is about to change. Soon ASFPM will be releasing a report and posting the data online from our first local program survey. The survey, which occurred this past winter and spring, reached more than 800 community floodplain managers. ASFPM was able to get good information on the demographics of a floodplain manager such as: What background do most floodplain managers come from? How long do floodplain managers typically work for a community? Salary information and education level. From there, we asked about current program capabilities and activities: Are communities involved in addressing flood insurance issues, and what about climate change? Are communities actively participating in mitigation programs? Have they even heard of some programs that might be available? What are the higher standards communities most commonly adopt? We then moved to challenges and needs: How big of a role do local politics play in floodplain manager decision making? What about enforcement – is that a big challenge? What are the tools and information needed to make a community floodplain management program more successful? Finally we tried to better understand relationships: How well do communities work with states and federal agencies?

We asked all of this and more with the hopes of developing a rich data set that can be used by ASFPM, our chapters, community officials, states, federal agencies, private sector partners and researchers to better improve the delivery of services and products. Also, similar to the state program survey, we hope to conduct this survey every 5-7 years, so we can track data through time. In briefing ASFPM leadership on the survey data, I was so happy to hear of literally dozens of ways this data could be used. Also there are some surprises in the data, challenging some long held notions I had about community floodplain managers. I am hopeful that you will find this data interesting and useful too. This is just another way ASFPM tries to be an overall resource for the nation’s floodplain management community.

Your partner in loss reduction,

Chad
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