The Goddard-White Award is named in honor of the huge contributions made to floodplain management by Gilbert White and Jim Goddard. ASFPM presents this to individuals who have had a national impact carrying forward the goals and objectives of their work. It is an indication of esteem the association holds for the two namesakes, as well as the recipients, and is ASFPM’s highest award.

And this year’s winner, Jo Ann Howard, most definitely has had a significant impact on national flood policy over her long career.
She was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the NFIP Federal Insurance Administrator from 1998-2001, and managed more than $500 billion in flood insurance for the NFIP in thousands of communities across America.

Howard made major contributions during her time at FEMA. With her initiative and vision, FIA began the ONLY comprehensive analysis of the NFIP through a multi-year study that was completed by a number of researchers. This effort produced 14 reports on various aspects of the NFIP to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the program so adjustments could be made. She authored a chapter titled, “Building for Disaster Resistance” in the American Bar Association’s 2018 publication, “Homeland Security and Emergency Management—A Legal Guide for State and Local Governments,” with Ernest Abbott, former general counsel at FEMA.

She was a member of the Governor’s Commission for Disaster Recovery and Renewal in 2010 following Hurricane Ike, and recently was a member of the National Academies of Science Study Panel that issued its report that examined urban flooding in the United States.

Prior to her tenure at FEMA, she served as a gubernatorial appointee to head the Texas Department of Insurance as chief insurance regulator and as a member of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. Howard received a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, a master’s in public administration from East Texas State University, and a BS in education from Abilene Christian University.

Today this woman is president of Austin’s H2O Partners, a firm consulting on all things flood—including flood insurance, hazard mitigation planning, training and outreach, disaster protection and recovery, among many other areas. Throughout her career, she has advocated for sound flood-risk management, wise development in flood-risk areas, and planning to result in sustainable and safe communities.

Howard has been a leader and mentor for many of us in this profession and has long supported ASFPM activities, including serving as an ASFPM Foundation trustee, where she heads the Fellows Program. It was an honor to bestow this award to such an accomplished and deserving woman.

The Jerry Louthain Award for Distinguished Service to ASFPM is reserved for individuals who clearly support and advance ASFPM’s work.

The path Steve Samuelson took to this organization is probably similar to how many of us came to ASFPM. Several years ago he wanted to attend our national conference and get the CFM designation, so he became a member. He will admit, with a bit of embarrassment, that it wasn’t until about three years later that he read ASFPM’s mission statement, which resonated with him, especially the part about reducing human suffering. So he decided to get more involved with ASFPM. Samuelson was an
elections chair for ASFPM and a Region 7 director. He voluntarily stepped in to serve as a temporary Flood Insurance Committee co-chair, and now is the co-chair. He regularly contributes flood insurance training and outreach articles to ASFPM’s newsletters.

Samuelson, the Kansas state floodplain manager, also provides his expertise on national policy matters. Recently he conducted an analysis of FEMA’s proposed rules and their implications on agriculture structures in floodplains. ASFPM used that analysis to draft comments on that rule.

Additionally, this man is a prolific photographer, and shares many “best practices” photos on ASFPM’s Flickr page, making them available for all of ASFPM’s members and partners to use. He believes in ASFPM’s mission; he cares about our members; he joined ASFPM to us make a difference, and he is truly someone ASFPM can count on for every task asked of him.

The Meritorious Lifetime Achievement in Floodplain Management Award recognizes individuals who, throughout their career, have achieved success in a significant aspect of floodplain management, ranging from policy, outreach, research or litigation that demonstrates the advancement of flood loss and risk reduction.

As a national leader in floodplain management for more than 40 years, Vince DiCamillo has set the standard for how to lead, evolve with, and continue contributing to the mission of developing a more resilient country. His focus has been on identifying and mapping flood risks throughout the U.S. and assisting FEMA in helping communities mitigate future losses, all while contributing to higher building standards and proactive planning. Over the past four decades, he’s brought technical experience, program leadership and NFIP knowledge to 12 national-scale FEMA mapping and mitigation contracts, including PTS, TARC, MCC and TEC.

Collectively, these contracts have shaped much of the current body of knowledge that encompasses our floodplain mapping program, having guided teams of more than 300 staff and countless subcontractors. DiCamillo has participated in post-disaster assessments and developed dozens of FEMA mitigation documents such as the Coastal Construction Manual, Homeowner’s Guide to Flood Proofing, and National Mitigation Framework...just to name a few. He’s also been at the forefront of innovation and process improvements that have enhanced flood-risk programs and services across the country. Not only has he served this nation, but also this association. In 2008, DiCamillo became a trustee on the ASFPM
Foundation Board of Directors and is an active leader in that organization, working on the Fundraising Committee as part of the Award and Recognition team. He is truly worthy of this award.

Every year, the awards committee receives incredible nominations. And often hard choices are made to pick ONE winner. This year, the committee could not pick just one, so, we have a second Meritorious Lifetime Achievement in Floodplain Management Award Winner—William “Trak” Trakimas.

“Trak” retired this May and wasn’t able to attend our conference. But he has given his career to floodplain management. He was instrumental in the creation and success of the NFIP’s Community Rating System. Beginning with his work at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 1976 as the NFIP state coordinator, and continuing into his duties as the CRS program manager for Insurance Services Office, Trakimas has spent a career bringing out the best in others, seeking their unique strengths, building upon their best abilities, creating pride and a “we can get it done” style.

His enthusiasm, distinctive optimism and skill at finding solutions have left many floodplain managers strengthened in their resolve, and the communities they serve safer and better prepared. Trakimas’ significant contribution to floodplain management has been his dedication to the CRS, first as an ASFPFM representative on the CRS Task Force, and then as the CRS program manager for ISO. The CRS “creation” began in the 1980s and was officially launched as a program in 1990. Initially, 295 communities joined the CRS and today, more than 1,500 communities participate. Trakimas has worked to assist communities in improving in the CRS and these efforts have resulted in a reduction in the nation’s flood-risk portfolio. Regardless of a community being small or the largest city in our country, he encourages CRS participation to facilitate communities doing more flood-risk reduction each year. This commitment, without a doubt, serves the mission of FEMA, of states and of ASFPFM. His presence will be missed.

The Outstanding Chapter Award for Excellence is presented for outstanding activity that other chapters can replicate. And although we emphasize that the activity is replicable, there are few chapters that have brought their work more directly to the doorstep of communities in need.

This year, the outstanding chapter award goes to the nation’s oldest and one of the largest professional floodplain management associations—the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management.
In an effort to assist communities after a flood, and recognizing that many NFIP communities are small with limited staff, this chapter created the Rapid Assistance Flood Team, or RAFT, to provide volunteer assistance with post-flood activities including substantial damage determinations.

These response teams are all active chapter members, all CFMs, represent local, state and federal government as well as private sector and other professional disciplines. All RAFT team members are volunteers who have agreed to assist communities in times of need. Since its creation in 2015, RAFT has been deployed four times. In 2018 they developed a RAFT guide book to help the community better understand their responsibilities and is available online.

Also marking the 25th anniversary of this chapter’s largest mitigation effort, the Great Midwest Flood of 1993, this chapter developed a video that documents their efforts and points out that their work is not done. Congratulations to this innovative chapter!

The Tom Lee State Award for Excellence is given annually to recognize an outstanding floodplain management program or activity at the state level.

After extensive flooding across Iowa in 2008, the Iowa Flood Center developed and maintains a statewide network of stream stage sensors designed to measure stream height and automatically transmit data to the IFC. These sensors, which are installed on bridges, measure stage only. And while they don’t match the quality of the USGS gauges, they come in at a fraction of the cost. Iowa has already installed hundreds of them through the Iowa Bridge Sensor Project.

A recent USACE Silver Jackets pilot project developed a protocol for creating stage-discharge rating curves for several bridge sensors. The hope is that enhancing information provided by the sensors will increase their use for flood warning and forecasting purposes. The sensors fill a gap where USGS gauges don’t exist and provide a valuable flood warning tool. The average bridge sensor costs $3,500 to deploy, $2,500 for cross section by USACE, $1,000 for HEC-RAS model development and application of a rating curve at $1,500 for a total combined cost of $8,500. The bridge sensors are water and
weatherproof and have shown little need for maintenance. What’s great is that IFC has made available a website with all of the sensors so citizens can check them whenever they wish. The Iowa Bridge Sensor Project, with support from Iowa DNR, IDOT and research projects at the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, is a perfect example of recognizing a need for the state, and coming up with an affordable solution that will increase the safety of all their residents during potential flood conditions!

The James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management recognizes outstanding programs or activities at the front lines of floodplain management—local programs where “the rubber meets the road.”

The Chehalis River in Washington is a notorious flooder, but it was in the wake of a devastating 2007 flood that the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority was formed. We all know that it’s very hard...not impossible, but very hard to tackle something on your own. But there is strength in numbers. The “authority” is made up of three counties — Lewis, Grays Harbor and Thurston — as well as 10 cities and towns, and also works closely with the Chehalis and Quinault Tribes.

Over the past decade, it has led an aggressive program to mitigate flood risk, reduce flood damage, and increase flood threat awareness in order to transform floodplain management in the basin from a reactive to a proactive culture. Program highlights include unique loss reduction projects such as: retrofitting homes with effective flood vents; constructing “Farm Pads” at numerous rural locations to save livestock, farm equipment and feed.

Dr. Ibrahim Demir with the Iowa Flood Center and last year’s Outreach Award winner accepted the award on behalf of the Iowa Bridge Sensor Project. He’s standing with ASFPM’s Past Chair Maria Cox Lamm and Executive Director Chad Berginnis.

L-R: French Wetmore, consultant to the Flood Authority; Lara Fowler, former consultant to the Flood Authority; Mark Sigler, Building Official with Grays Harbor County; Orlando Howell, Building Official and Floodplain Administrator, City of Hoquiam; and David Curtis, consultant to the Flood Authority.
While the flood authority has had numerous effective basin initiatives, of note is the adoption of improved regulatory standards and implementation of an innovative flood warning system. Because of these initiatives, communities and residents in the Chehalis River Basin are now substantially more aware and better prepared for flooding than ever before.

Edna Fund, a flood authority board member, was recently quoted in the local newspaper, saying, “We’re the ground-level people. This is the only place where we have all these cities that are at the table. It’s really nice that we all go together to the Legislature to get things done and that the tribes are with us too. ... We’ve done a heck of a lot.” And ASFPM couldn’t agree more.

This year we also have a James Lee Witt “honorable mention” winner

The North Central Texas Council of Governments serves as the facilitator of nine cities, two counties, and two governmental entities that implement the Trinity River “common vision.” Because of concern that potential cumulative flood impacts could not be adequately assessed through individual permit reviews, the Fort Worth District of the Corps and NCTCOG launched this regional initiative that is still going strong decades later. Through the Trinity River Common Vision, the NCTCOG has promoted higher floodplain management standards throughout the Upper Trinity River Watershed. In the late 1980s NCTCOG adopted a Regional Policy Position on the Trinity River Corridor, which affirmed that local governments must be the stewards of the Trinity River Corridor, that individual local goals can only be achieved through cooperative management, and that a comprehensive approach addressing flood damage reduction, recreation and environmental quality must be pursued. An innovative Corridor Development Certificate process was implemented to stabilize the flooding risks. This process does not prohibit floodplain development, but ensures any development that does occur in the floodplain will not raise flood water levels or reduce flood storage capacity. A CDC permit is required to develop land within a specific area of the Trinity floodplain called the Regulatory Zone, which is similar to the 100-year floodplain. Under the CDC process, local governments retain ultimate control over floodplain permitting decisions, but other communities along the Trinity River Corridor are given the opportunity to review and comment on projects in their neighbor’s jurisdiction. This regional coordination facilitated by NCTCOG is the key to the success of the Trinity River Common Vision.

L-R: Audra Valamides with city of Arlington (NCTCOG member); Mia Brown, environment and development planner for the NCTCOG; and Clair Davis with city of Fort Worth (NCTCOG member).
The John Ivey Award for Excellence in Certification recognizes exceptional efforts to promote the professional certification of floodplain managers.

This year’s winner, Sally Cook, is the floodplain manager coordinator for the Manatee County, Florida Building & Development Services. Her special philosophy to floodplain management is, “We’ll get there together, or not at all – and not at all is not an option.” She is passionate about looking for ways to assist current and future CFMs by identifying resources, connecting people and sharing information with chapter members and floodplain managers all across her state.

Cook had a direct impact on Florida’s education program, which led to a significant improvement in class quality and availability, “flooding” the entire state with vital training, which allowed the Florida Floodplain Managers Association to grow from 338 members in 2012 to more than 900 members today.

She coordinates with a wide variety of organizations and has expanded education into key related disciplines and professionals, including engineers, surveyors, building officials, code compliance officers and insurance agents, inspiring them to become CFMs. Her dedication and passion for the CFM® program are why she won this award and is an example for others to follow!

The Larry R. Johnston Local Floodplain Manager of the Year is our floodplain management rock star award. And the big prize is to attend this conference as our special guest. With more than 19,000 members in ASFPM, we are fortunate to have so many excellent people to choose from. And this year, the honor goes to Todd Klietz, floodplain administrator for Missoula County, Montana.

In 2018, Klietz received the Lewis & Clark Local Floodplain Manager Award. This is a Montana DNRC award that recognizes outstanding individual efforts and contributions to floodplain management at the local level.

For the past 20 years, he has been a leader and advocate for floodplain and risk management in Missoula County and throughout the state. He’s testified before Congress, runs two CRS programs,
submitted and completed innovative mitigation grants dealing with one of the largest superfund structure removals, provides technical review and input on floodplain regulations and issues, assists other floodplain administrators every chance he gets, and has continued to help guide the understanding of floodplain regulations and management in Montana.

Klietz is a notable example of an individual who has committed to serving the public and not being afraid to question or advocate for change when needed. The communities he has served are fortunate for the standards he has set and maintains for floodplain management.

The association created the **John R. Sheaffer Award for Excellence in Flood Proofing** to honor its namesake for his pioneering work in demonstrating flood proofing as a viable flood-loss reduction measure, and for his decades of work in promoting and advancing the knowledge of these measures. **Jamila Johnson**, this year’s Sheaffer award winner, was previously the managing engineer for Houston, Texas during Hurricane Harvey and helped the city revise its floodplain ordinance that was adopted in April 2018.

The new ordinance requires elevation to the 500-year flood level +2 additional feet of freeboard in SFHAs and 500-year flood zones. These are now some of the most stringent floodplain regulations in the country. Johnson, now with the Houston Public Works Department, helped prepare the Houston Public Works Floodplain Management Data Analysis Chapter, which not only outlined the need and process for adopting the higher elevation requirements, but also helped to improve design and construction requirements as a whole. The new ordinance went into effect last September.

Her leadership has helped to guide and reduce future flood damage throughout the city. The impact of the new floodplain management requirements, in the form of elevating 2-feet above the 500-year flood elevation, should positively impact construction and reduce flood risk throughout Houston for generations.

Our **Outreach/Media Award** honors either the media, an individual, private organization or governmental agency that increased information and/or awareness of flood issues with the public. It acknowledges efforts that go above and beyond what many others might do. And that describes perfectly what the **Puerto Rico Office of Geology and Hydrogeology** did after Hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed into the island in September 2017.

Following the hurricanes, FEMA provided the Puerto Rico Planning Board, the territory’s floodplain administrator, with Advisory Base Flood Elevation Maps that provide updated flood hazard information to guide rebuilding.
After receiving these maps, the Office of Geology and Hydrogeology deployed an aggressive education and outreach campaign that first focused on 22 state agencies. The department gave two training sessions to the building permitting office and each of their building permit regional branches. To inform the rebuilding process, they traveled to every one of the 78 communities in Puerto Rico in the span of just a couple months to disseminate this risk information. They invited everyone to the table and tailored each presentation to the specific audience being addressed, reaching more than 1,000 people.

The planning board ensured the governor’s buy-in on adopting the ABFEs into Puerto Rico’s regulations, as well as incorporation of the 2018 International Codes and with an important design wind speed amendment into the 2018 Puerto Rico Building Code.

This outreach campaign will surely have a long-lasting educational benefit for Puerto Rico as its communities prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters.

Great news! The **PowerPoints of presentations from #ASFPM2019** are now ready for viewing. And as soon as the videos are ready, we will let you know via our social media sites. Please note this page can only be accessed by people who attended the conference. You should have received an email with the password. If you haven’t, please contact [sarah@floods.org](mailto:sarah@floods.org).
Special Thanks to Stevie Nicks (Shana Udvardy), Blondie’s Debbie Harry and Tom Petty’s head for serving as this year’s awards MCs!

We also want to thank the folks who served on this year’s awards committee: Chad Berginnis, Larry Larson, Michele Mihalovich, Rebecca Pfeiffer, Jerry Robinson and Del Schwalls.

Are you ready to nominate for our 2020 national award season? No problem! Our online nomination form is ready. Go to:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QZ3SQJG

Save the Date for #ASFPM2020
2018 CRS Award for Excellence Announced at #ASFPM2019

Sean Lanier, city engineer for Ocala, Florida, received the 2018 CRS Award for Excellence. This award, first available in 2010, recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in promoting flood insurance and advancing floodplain management and resiliency in CRS communities.

Lanier was honored for his vision in leading Ocala through continual improvements to its stormwater and floodplain management programs, and advancements in the city’s Community Rating System program, which has earned a CRS Class 3 rating. He has achieved outstanding success in his work to oversee stormwater capital improvements, to raise citizen awareness about flood risks and to promote the importance of purchasing flood insurance.

To ensure that residents better understand their flood risk and what can be done to minimize risk, Lanier has overseen improvements to the city’s website and established an open door policy for residents seeking mitigation technical assistance. His commitment to leveraging the CRS program to make investments that reduce risk, and close the insurance gap, has demonstrated CRS excellence, making Ocala more resilient to flood hazards.

3rd Annual 2019 CTP Recognition Program Award also Announced

In 2016, the Cooperating Technical Partners Program launched the CTP Recognition Program in an effort to honor top-performing CTPs who clearly demonstrate operational best practices at any stage of a Risk MAP project and who help communities get involved in mitigation action.

This April, around 100 CTP stakeholders from across the country participated in a live vote to select the award winner, which is the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The Iowa DNR is being recognized for outstanding achievement in developing CTP Communications and Outreach and Program Management activities. It has enhanced traditional communications and outreach activities by embracing the use of technology to communicate flood risks. It also developed the Draft Flood Hazard Outreach Program, which provides clarity and dialogue for the department, community and public officials.
The 2019 Mary Fran Myers Scholarship, Award & Students Paper Competition Recipients Announced

From left to right: Bernadette Resurrección, Tabitha Payne, Olumide Abioye, Shaila Shahid, Lalrinpuii Tlau and Homalota Borah.

Each year, the Mary Fran Myers Scholarship—named in honor of the late Natural Hazards Center co-director—recognizes outstanding individuals who share Myers’ passion for disaster loss reduction nationally and internationally.

The scholarship, which ASFPM contributes to, provides financial support to recipients who otherwise would be unable to attend and participate in the Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop to further their research or community work and careers.

Read the full bios of the three 2019 Mary Fran Myers Scholarship recipients.

The Mary Fran Myers Award was established in 2002 to recognize disaster professionals who continue Myers’ goal of promoting research on gender issues, disasters, emergency management and higher education. The Gender and Disaster Network have named Bernadette Resurrección as the 2019 Mary Fran Myers Award winner.

The Natural Hazards Center created the Annual Hazards and Disasters Student Paper Competition as a way to recognize and promote the next generation of hazards and disaster researchers. The selection committee has chosen two winners for the 2019 competition, representing graduate and undergraduate scholarship: Olumide Abioye and Tabitha Payne. Read more about them here.

Check out ASFPM’s 2018 Year-in-Review Infographic!
Genius Outreach Campaigns you can Share, Borrow or Imitate

“What the Flood!” Quiz Helps Americans Understand Flood Insurance

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners released a new online quiz, "What the Flood!" as part of its #YourRiskIsReal campaign, an ongoing effort to educate consumers about flood risks and the need to consider purchasing flood insurance. The campaign educates consumers about flood risks and dispels dangerous misconceptions about flood insurance.

The short, interactive quiz presents complicated insurance concepts in easy-to-understand terms. Sample questions include: "Is damage from a busted bathroom pipe and a burst levee covered by the same policy?" and "If a hurricane floods your car, do you file a claim with auto or home?"

"There's a lot of confusion out there about insurance coverage for water-related damage. Insurance commissioners want consumers to understand which insurance covers the various flood perils," said Eric Cioppa, NAIC president and superintendent of the Maine Bureau of Insurance.

Know Your Zone a Home Run in St. Louis

What do a rapper, baseball umpire and Twilight Zone narrator all have in common? They are part of Know Your Zone, a public awareness initiative by the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District to encourage residents to find out what flood zone they live in, and to research flood insurance. There's a great mix of funny and serious videos to explain flood zones, flood insurance and why you don't need to live in a flood zone to experience flood damage.

FLASH Unveils InspectToProtect Campaign Focusing on how Stronger Building Codes Protect Us

We all know stricter building codes mean less damage during disasters, and fewer lives lost. But the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes created a new InspectToProtect program and website explaining this concept to consumers, code officials and contractors. People can even put in their address to see if their community is using the latest building code practices and standards. #NoCodeNoConfidence
Despite the snail pace, national flood policy changes do happen.

For those of us who deal with national flood policy over long periods of time, we often lose track of long-term progress because we are dealing with scores of potential changes at a time, and many of them die on the vine. As such, we may think significant changes seldom happen.

I just had an opportunity to take a look at flood policy changes that have occurred since the Great Midwest Floods of 1993 (26 years). In light of the massive Midwest flooding this year that matched or exceeded many flood crests and devastation of 1993, I was asked to provide a commentary on an article written by Mary Fran Myers and Gilbert F. White in the immediate aftermath of the 1993 massive flooding. In the article they posed the question of what lasting impact that flood might have on key elements of national flood policy such as levees, nonstructural mitigation options, substantially damage buildings, equity between those with or without flood insurance, tying taxpayer assistance to mitigation actions and whether federal assistance would be expanded in helping communities look comprehensively at managing flood risk.

Let me start with one of the costliest and most damaging issues that has seen almost no change—levee rebuilding. This year we again saw more than 110 levee failures in the Midwest, flooding huge areas of farmland and many residential, farm and commercial buildings. The first option when levees fail continues to be “let’s rebuild it as it was or higher.” Everyone likes this option because the federal taxpayer pays with 100% or 80% of the cost and states or locals need to do almost nothing. Since 1993 only a few sections of the Missouri River levee system in the Midwest have been “setback” to reduce future flooding. To USACE’s credit, and despite heavy political pressure, USACE did ask Congress this spring for authority to do a comprehensive study of the Missouri River before major repair or strengthening of failed levees.

Were there any positive impacts of the 1993 flood? Let’s look briefly at a few:

**Hazard mitigation and buyouts go mainstream**—While the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program was established in the 1988 reform of the Stafford Act, it wasn’t until Congress re-evaluated the program after the Great Midwest Floods and made several important changes that it became widely used. The Mitigation Act of 1993 increased the federal cost share of HMGP to 75% (up from 50%). The “basis” of HMGP was increased to 15% of all Title IV grant expenditures under the Stafford Act (up from 10% of public assistance expenditures only). And maybe most importantly, the Mitigation Act of 1993 added property acquisition and relocation assistance as a mitigation option to HMGP to encourage the purchase of properties and conversion to open space. This was a landmark shift in the prioritization of hazard mitigation as part of the total federal disaster assistance effort. Buyouts have now become an acceptable mitigation option because FEMA used an upgraded HMGP to perform some 14,000 buyouts after the 1993 floods.
Substantially damaged buildings—Two changes have helped move this needle. First was buyouts when FEMA agreed to pay pre-flood value. The second was adding Increased Cost of Compliance to the flood policy to assist with mitigation.

Protecting public facilities—FEMA is becoming more aggressive in adding mitigation to the cost of repairing/replacing public facilities.

Equity in assistance to those who did not buy flood insurance—Mixed bag. FEMA is better at not funding those without insurance, but HUD—CDBG DR funding has gotten much larger and is allowed to fund repairs for those without insurance.

Tying flood or crop insurance to mitigation—Little progress. Crop insurance is heavily subsidized, and has only a few cases where it would not be available. In years of heavy flooding and levee failure in the Midwest, heavy agriculture losses do occur since much of agriculture land is former floodplains or wetlands.

Federal capacity to help locals mitigate—Moderate progress. Local hazard mitigation plans are now required, but many are cook-booked without citizen involvement and do not get integrated into other local plans for development, transportation, etc. Nonstructural mitigation like buyouts and elevation are now accepted options for FEMA programs like HMGP, FMA and PDM. However, the new PDM formula-funded program may move more toward infrastructure, threatening nonstructural efforts.

Overall, you can see that a number of positive changes have flowed from the 1993 flood—some administrative, some congressional. The Disaster Resilience Reform Act of 2018, which created a new set-aside of 6% of disaster costs for mitigation, and the upcoming NFIP reauthorization, provide more opportunities to move forward. We urge members and others to join ASFPM in efforts to move the needle forward.

Job Corner

Looking for a job? Looking for someone to fill a position at your company or agency? Please check out available career opportunities on ASFPM’s website. It’s free, whether you’re looking at job postings, or an employer wanting to post an opening!

- City of Flagstaff, Arizona is hiring a stormwater manager.
- Flood Barrier America is seeking a project manager in Manhattan.
- City of Austin, Texas is currently looking for a director of the Watershed Protection Department.
From the Chair
Ricardo Pineda, P.E., CFM

Allow me to introduce myself!
This is my first article as chair of the association. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to share some thoughts with you via “News&Views” and to continue to do this in the future. For those of you who attended the ASFPM 2019 Annual National Conference, you will have noticed that I was not present when the new board was introduced. I apologize for that, but in early April I committed to a three-week trip to Honduras, Central America to work on my deceased mother’s house, visit with two aging uncles (both 88 and going strong), make a delivery to an NGO, and help a friend who is wheelchair bound with Muscular Dystrophy. It was a busy trip with some long bus rides and my time there went by very fast. Luckily for me, I was able to squeeze in two full days of swimming in the Caribbean near a spot where Christopher Columbus landed in 1502.

Why do I mention these details of my recent trip to a country that many consider the “third world”? Well, I have been traveling to Honduras since I was a young child in Los Angeles. It helped shape who I am and has given me a great appreciation of diverse cultures and of people of all economic backgrounds. Most of all, it has shown me how good governance in the United States at the federal, state, local and regional level is key to creating an environment that provides education and economic opportunities for most of our residents and contributes to our evolution towards resilient communities. While we recognize the need for substantial investment in new water/flood infrastructure at all levels, we have built, operated and maintained extensive water infrastructure where in most places in the USA, you can safely drink the water from the tap and most high-risk flood areas have developed flood infrastructure to reduce flood damage.

For almost 39 years, I have worked as a civil engineer for the California Department of Water Resources. I have worked on the state’s massive water projects and modeled my agency’s role as an interconnected electric utility. Most of my time at California DWR has been in flood-risk management. I have worked performing flood forecasting, hydrology studies, hydraulic studies, flood operations, planning studies with USACE and implementation of flood projects with the Corps. I could go on, but will finish here by saying I have worked in and managed the state’s floodplain management program since 2000, almost 19 years. I currently serve as a supervising engineer and program specialist in the FPM Office.

During this time, I have worked with multiple federal agencies that give me great confidence that working together at the local, regional and state level, we can collaborate with our federal partners including NOAA, FEMA, USACE, USGS, NRCS, EPA, HUD and others to reduce the nation’s flood risk. Competent and hardworking staff at all levels of government with support from the consulting industry delivers projects and programs that can help a community develop a portfolio of nonstructural and structural elements that can substantially reduce the impacts of a major flood or hurricane. I will continue this thread or thought-stream regarding community resilience through a robust flood-risk management portfolio in future issues.

Please feel free to email me at ricardo.pineda@water.ca.gov if I can be of service to you as chair of ASFPM.
The Louisiana Floodplain Management Association Disaster Response Team embarked Aug. 16, 2016, on its first team mission to assist communities affected by what is commonly referred to as the “Great Flood of 2016.” The storm produced historic and widespread flooding throughout 22 parishes and affected more than 150,000 homes. Despite having formed as an official committee of LFMA one month prior, the resourceful and dedicated team was able to band together to assist five jurisdictions on the fringes of the Baton Rouge metropolitan area.

Under the leadership of LFMA DRT Coordinator Shandy Heil, the team of 15 volunteers, comprised of floodplain managers, building code officials and mitigation professionals were able to assist communities with flood-damage reconnaissance of the entire jurisdictional boundaries; collect high-water mark data that was put into GIS maps to capture the historic flood depths; provide flood recovery education to property owners; and perform Substantial Damage screenings. SD assessments in East Feliciana Parish were conducted by DRT volunteer/former retiree Russ Hicks, with assistance from the DRT coordinator. It is interesting to note that Hicks came out of retirement to fill the floodplain manager role for his community to ensure SDE determinations were handled and to aid residents during the recovery process.

While FEMA PTS contractor support was provided to many of the larger jurisdictions affected by the August 2016 flood, utilization of the LFMA DRT was essential for the smaller communities needing assistance. In two cases, where there were several thousand affected structures within the jurisdiction needing SDE assessments, the DRT’s flood damage reconnaissance and high-water mark data collection was still used by the local floodplain administrators to communicate the actual conditions in the days following the flood event, and provide this data to the FEMA PTS contractors who were not able to arrive until three to four weeks after the flooding. This ability to be nimble and respond immediately after waters receded proved to be the DRT’s greatest strength, capturing the most accurate flood inundation levels as possible and helping communities expedite recovery in the days and weeks following the flood.

Bill Smith of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association’s DRT has been leading the way for the DRT concept since 2008, proving that dedicated volunteers are willing and capable of performing the post-disaster code enforcement requirements for affected communities. Smith reports that since many of the communities prone to flood are small, most of the SDE field work and evaluations are fully taken care of by LFMA’s LDRT, rarely requiring assistance from FEMA and preventing duplication of efforts when FEMA assistance is needed. It is important to note that DRT coordination with the State Emergency...
Operations Center and FEMA region is a must when forming a DRT and is still critical during disaster events to ensure clear communication and proper documentation is achieved.

Although the LFMA and OFMA DRTs differ somewhat in the ancillary services they provide, their post-disaster code enforcement operations are the same. This is done in an effort to standardize training and certification requirements across state boundaries in hopes of satisfying a FEMA Region VI initiative to promote increased disaster response capabilities throughout the region, creating an alliance for disaster response and recovery assistance between Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and New Mexico.

This vision of interstate mutual aid assistance through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact is now becoming a reality for floodplain administrators and building code professionals after the revision of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, DRRA Section 1206, Eligibility for Code Implementation and Enforcement amendment allows building code enforcement and floodplain management (including substantial damage determinations) to be eligible under the Stafford Act. This overturns the 1998 policy prohibiting reimbursement of mutual aid assistance through EMAC under Cat. B of Public Assistance.

However, in order for these DRT capabilities to be realized, planning and preparation during blue sky operations must be done in advance before a disaster strikes. State chapters of ASFPM, ICC, AIA and other member organizations with building safety, code and floodplain management personnel should begin now by creating an inventory, or Mission Ready Package, of the trained and certified professionals capable of performing SDEs and building safety assessments. FEMA’s National Integration Center is in the process of creating resource typing within the National Incident Management System to include building professional in the disaster response arena to make this process easier for a professional group that has not been traditionally viewed as disaster responders.

For more information about DRT formation or mutual aid deployment through EMAC, please contact Shandy Heil at Stantec at shandy.heil@stantec.com. Bill Smith can be reached at wbsmith@hisinc.us regarding questions about the OFMA DRT.
Concern over resilience to natural disasters often focuses on moral hazard problems: Expectations of disaster assistance may lead households in hazard-prone communities to forego costly insurance and mitigation investments. This phenomenon has been dubbed “charity hazard” in the literature on natural disasters, though previous research has found mixed results. Employing a dataset for which previous analysis found evidence inconsistent with charity hazard, these researchers re-examined flood insurance market penetration, testing and controlling for endogeneity of survey responses regarding the likelihood of government aid in the wake of a disaster. Results from bivariate probit estimation of flood insurance market penetration indicate households that exhibit optimistic expectations of disaster assistance are much less likely (almost 23%) to hold flood insurance. The researchers offer some policy recommendations. Read the full paper here.
FEMA announced it will release 50 million records from the NFIP
As reported in Politico, the release will include “data on every individual flood insurance claim going back to 1978 and every policy sold going back a decade.” The dataset are available on the OpenFEMA website. Read more here.

FEMA and EPA sign MOU
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and FEMA announced June 4 a Memorandum of Understanding to streamline coordination between FEMA and the EPA-funded State Revolving Fund programs. Now, the funding used to restore vital water infrastructure can be provided quicker in times of disaster. Read more here.

FEMA admits it’s “short a few thousand employees” as hurricane season begins
FEMA said June 12 that the disaster aid and recovery agency is still significantly understaffed, nearly two years after recovery efforts during the devastating 2017 hurricane season were hindered by a lack of staffing. Read more here.

But wait, there’s more…
After ASFPM posted the above story on Facebook, our “friend” Gary O’Neal wrote the following comment (We love the information exchanged on our social media sites!):

On the one hand, it’s difficult for folks not in this field or who lack understanding about the challenges of staffing up for positions in civil service at either the local, state or federal level, in this case, to hear an entity like FEMA is understaffed.

An agency or entity can’t just hire 5,000 employees seasonally that possess the skill set necessary to adequately respond to disasters. Those skill sets and the natural inclination towards workers seeking and finding full-time permanent work translate to a universe of potential employers that will almost never be truly sufficient to simply “staff up,” to handle a Hurricane Season.

They also definitely can’t hire full-time permanent workers because Congress would be screaming at FEMA during the first mild Hurricane season that their staff was bloated and the payroll needed to be reduced. The unpredictable nature of disasters and FEMA’s role in preparation and response will always make that a moving target for them to try and hit.

The best thing they can do is what they already are doing: attempting to simplify their processes, reduce bureaucracy and—perhaps most importantly—focus funding opportunities on Mitigation and (by extension) resilience.

The more we mitigate, the more we reduce reliance on FEMA and the less stress on the Agency itself for this type of issue.

At ASFPM’s National Conference in Cleveland a few weeks back, we heard from FEMA Staff in Puerto Rico and Region II that they were spending more money than ever before on Mitigation in 406 or Public
Assistance. This is shrewd as there is no cap on 406 funding post disaster. It’s also shrewd because it allows you to aim your 404 Hazard Mitigation Funding farther down the list of priorities which essentially stretches those dollars to make communities even more resilient. Projects that we could never get funded for may now be a reality in 404 because of how much more focused FEMA is on spending Mitigation dollars in 406 in PA.

That’s a story that frankly isn’t being told in Puerto Rico. It’s a story that wasn’t told in this article, either. It was told at ASFPM and I was fascinated to hear about it as well as the future of BRIC, which promises even more focused funding on Mitigation.

Which means these types of chronic staffing issues may-over time-be less of a potential issue for FEMA as it responds to future disasters.

In the here and now it’s difficult to see. The movement and pace of any government agency will always be slow when it tries to change. Those of us who work on the 404 side understand that.

But the efforts FEMA is undertaking now will yield benefits moving forward in my opinion…and we should understand this article doesn’t provide a truly balanced look at how FEMA is addressing its issues in unique ways.

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**One Water: Stormwater – Groundwater Connections and Bluff Stability**

*Southeastern Wisconsin Coastal Resilience* interviewed ASFPM Flood Science Center’s Chief Scientist Alan Lulloff. He describes how stormwater and groundwater are connected, how they impact bluff stability and how management has changed over time.

He answers questions such as:

- In what ways could stormwater be managed to prevent bluff slumping or failures?
- Are management practices such as rain gardens or porous pavements that allow infiltration of surface water to groundwater helpful or harmful to bluff stability?
- In your professional experience, how have groundwater issues and bluff management changed with development, land use changes, and new management techniques?

*You can read the full interview here.*

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**ASFPM Upcoming Webinar Opportunities**

Check the ASFPM Webinars Schedule Regularly for Upcoming Events.

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Have a story you’d like to share with ASFPM newsletter readers? Email ASFPM PIO Michele Mihalovich at [michele@floods.org](mailto:michele@floods.org).
What’s Happening Around the Nation?

A collection of the most viewed stories on our Facebook page

**Maine**—New sign in Maine promotes flood awareness outreach and mitigation efforts through FEMA’s High-Water Mark Initiative. And there’s a picture of ASFPM member Sue Baker, who we got reacquainted with at our annual national conference in Cleveland. Read the article here.

**Texas**—In an interview with News 88.7, Houston’s flood czar, Steve Costello, said that for now the city has no plans to stop building in the 100-year floodplain. “I know people would like that to happen,” he said. “But that’s not going to happen.” Read the article here.

**North Carolina**—Before the cameras, crews relied on Raleigh, NC residents calling or emailing in about the trouble spots. City leaders hope the new monitoring tools will get crews out earlier to block off flooded roads and prevent drivers from going through them. Read the article here.

**Ohio**—Interesting. What do you think about this concept: The idea is to use three modular buildings similar to a trailer or shipping container. One would be used as a kitchen, the others as a bar and bathroom, all on wheels so they can be moved quickly during floods. Read the article here.

**The Nation**—“In retrospect, it’s clear: We’ve misunderstood how rivers work. They don’t follow wishful parameters of the Army Corps of Engineers’ 100-year flood guidelines, or the routes we’ve penciled in between levees, or even the climatic expectations of the past. A national program that presumes we can choreograph today the floods of tomorrow is fundamentally flawed.” Read the OpEd by Tim Palmer here.

When a hurricane, flood or earthquake affects your area, you may want your people to get of town as quickly as possible. Google is launching a new navigation warning system as part of Google Maps to keep everyone informed and safe during such a crisis. Read the article here.

This is just a fascinating story! “This article pulled data showing that the value of properties in climate risk areas depends on whether you’re in a climate denial community or a community that accepts the science. Houses in believer neighborhoods tend to sell lower than in climate denier neighborhoods, by 7%.” Read the article here.

**Louisiana**—A New Orleans newspaper does a fabulous job showing how communities along the Mississippi River that work “with” the river rather than fighting it, are doing quite well, thank you!
What’s the ASFPM Foundation been up to?

ASFPM Foundation Luncheon Focused on Supporting Educational Opportunities

The ASFPM Foundation hosted the Tuesday luncheon at #ASFPM2019 in Cleveland. This year’s event focused on ways the foundation supports educational opportunities that shape the future of floodplain management. After ASFPM Foundation Board President Doug Plasencia provided opening remarks and introduced board members to the audience, Scholarship Committee Chair Molly O’Toole gave an overview of the Future Leaders Scholarship. She highlighted the direction the board would like to take to be able to offer the two-year scholarship application round every year. Jesus Mulgado, the first recipient of the Future Leaders Scholarship, then gave another moving speech on the first year of his scholarship and how it has impacted his life in a positive way. He pledged to pay the opportunity forward once he is a floodplain management professional and said that one day he’d like to be the president of ASFPM Foundation! Molly returned to the podium to mention the 9th annual student paper competition as one more way the foundation provides opportunities for university students who are pursuing degrees in floodplain management related fields.

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 and Larry Larson Speakers Series.

ASFPM Foundation promotes public policy through strategic initiatives and serves as an incubator for long-term policy development that promotes sustainable floodplain and watershed management. Learn more or donate here.

Bottom (L-R): Doug Plasencia, ASFPM Foundation President; Jesus Mulgado, Future Leaders scholar; Molly O’Toole, scholarships committee chair; Brad Anderson, Projects Committee Chair; Tony Mendes, FEMA Region VIII; Owen Brandewie, Estes Park Middle School; Vince Meldrum, Earth Force. Top: Future Leader scholar Jesus Mulgado.
Projects Committee Chair Brad Anderson spoke next giving an overview of some of the projects the foundation has funded and introduced one in particular, the Rocky Mountain Environmental Challenge. Tony Mendes, FEMA Region VIII, and Vince Meldrum, Earth Force, shared with the audience how RMEC is collaborating with Colorado public schools to enhance STEM curricula with project-based learning focused on mitigation education. Over the course of the year, elementary and middle school students are challenged to research local flood risks, devise realistic mitigation methods, and collectively develop a proposal to enter into competition with other school districts. The foundation provided sponsorship funding as well as a judge for the competition. This year’s winner was Estes Park Middle School.

Following a quick video presentation from the team, one of the team members – Owen Brandewie – spoke about the experience and what it meant to him. We were all impressed with 10-year-old Owen’s stage presence and enjoyed seeing future generations engaging in flood risk related education.

9th Annual Student Paper Competition

To enter the 9th annual student paper competition students submitted abstracts in January, and semi-finalists were invited to submit their full papers in April for review and presentation at #ASFPM2019 in Cleveland. Finalists Jasmine Thomas, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, presented her paper “A Win-Lose Situation for Floodplain Buyouts: Exploring the
Impacts on Participants in the State of Illinois” and Nora Schwaller, University of North Carolina, Department of City and Regional Planning, presented her paper written jointly with Jordan Branham, “Disaster Exposure and Mitigation: The Impact of Major and Minor Flood Events on Population Loss.” First prize ($1,000) was awarded to Nora and second prize ($500) to Jasmine. The ASFPM Foundation would like to thank all who attended Tuesday afternoon’s student paper competition session for your active interest and constructive commentary for both finalists.

ASFPM Foundation Signs Historic MOU

L-R: Chad Berginnis, executive director of ASFPM, Doug Plasencia, president of ASFPM Foundation and Ian Dunham, president of FMA. Photos by John Hays.

Floodplain Management Australia, ASFPM and ASFPM Foundation have had a long-standing partnership for a number of years, which has included mutual attendance of each other’s annual conferences. At Wednesday’s foundation board meeting in Cleveland, this relationship was formalized by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between all three organizations. Chad Berginnis, executive director of ASFPM, Doug Plasencia, president of ASFPM Foundation, and Ian Dunham, president of FMA, were all present for the signing. Allan Gear will serve as FMA’s non-voting member of the ASFPM Foundation Board and foundation treasurer Mark Forest will serve in the same capacity on FMA’s board. We look forward to many years of continued collaboration and sharing.

Donor Appreciation Reception and Live Auction

The ASFPM Foundation wrapped up Wednesday night celebrating our 2019 donors. Awards were presented to those whose lifetime donations took them to one of our Giving Leaders Levels. A list of all Giving Leaders, including this year’s award recipients, can be found on our website. The event featured a very raucous live auction with foundation fellow Diane Brown making a surprise appearance as auctioneer, and with Jeff Sparrow and George Riedel hawking bids. The event was capped off by the surprise auction item donated by FMA of free registration with hotel accommodations to attend Floodplain Management Australia’s 2020 Conference in Toowoomba, Queensland. With Ian Dunham and Allan Gear auctioneering, bidders battled it out, with Tara Coggins winning the trip. Photos from the event can be viewed online here.
Thank you to all of our generous donors and volunteers who helped us raise over $47,000 at this year’s conference!

The final breakdown of donations at the conference:

- Silent auction - $4,350
- Walk-up and online donations throughout the week (not at live auction) - $9,737 (including $102 for the beads)
- Text-to-Donate - $560
- Live auction - $12,450
- Other donations at live auction - $20,150

_Total conference donations: $47,247!

That is amazing! We sincerely thank everyone who donated monetarily and with items, bids and volunteered time. Your support for the ASFPM Foundation is heartwarming and greatly appreciated!

FEMA Flood-risk Communication Toolkit for Community Officials

The Flood-risk Communication Toolkit was developed to help community officials begin and maintain an open channel for communication. The toolkit includes templates and guides for designing a communication plan, effective public meetings and a social media strategy for addressing flood risk. It is supported by story maps and videos that visually communicate the objectives of updating flood risk data and maps. Check out the toolkit here.
ASFPM welcomes all of our new members who joined in May 2019! Can’t wait to get to know you all!

Abigail Obligacion, Independent Code Consultants, Inc., Pleasanton, CA
Alana M. Wilson, Dewberry, Stockbridge, GA
Amanda G. Parson, City of Pearl, MS
Anna E. Faloon, Waggoner Engineering, Jackson, MS
Anthony J. Picarazzi, FEMA, Fredericksburg, VA
Benjamin Michael Brown, City of N. Charleston, SC
Benjamin P. Rhodes, Terrebonne Parish, LA
Bradford L. Bates, Lynker Technologies, LLC, Boulder, CO
Bradley S. Robertson, City of Pearl, MS
Brian M. Neuman, Lamar County, MS
Brik R. Zivkovich, Wright Water Engineers, Inc., Denver, CO
Brittany L. Wilferd, Kiewit, Colorado Springs, CO
Cecilia Estrada, City of Las Cruces, NM
Charles B. Jones, Avoyelles Parish, LA
Charles T. Polk, City of Decatur, AL
Christopher D. Huch, Tetra Tech, Inc., Stafford Township, NJ
Claudia M. Judele, Medina County, OH
Constance Wilson, Avoyelles Parish, LA
David H. Edwards, REC Consultants, Temecula, CA
Dennis R. Bonds, City of Tupelo, MS
Derek Thomas, II, City of Delray Beach, FL
Donald Chauvin, City of Carencro, LA
Donna Rupp, City of Grants Pass, OR
Duane Wallace, City of Tarpon Springs, FL
Dustin L. Alexander, City of Gautier, MS
Dustin R. Kimbrow, City of Auburn, AL
Ellyn M. Cavin, City of Jacksonville, FL
Enrique J. Lai ret, National Flood Experts, LLC, Tampa, FL
Evelyn Fraley, Village of Islands, Islamorada, FL
Evelyn Spencer, Pinellas County, FL
Everard Baker, USACE, New Orleans, LA
Gerard J. Evenwel, National Flood Experts, Tampa, FL
Glenn DeHaven, T&M, Coatesville, PA
Gregory Cole, Self Employed, Charlotte, NC
Gwynith K. Berry, City of Snoqualmie, WA
Ibrahim Demir, Univ. of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Jamiel Ishaque, Sam O. Hirota Inc., Ewa Beach, HI
Jared Schneider, King County, WA
Javier Andrade, A&M Consulting Engineers, Visalia, CA
Jeremy B. Payne, BayLand Consultants & Designers, Inc., Hanover, MD
Jeremy M. Hohnbaum, City of San Juan Capistrano, CA
Jerome Parco, City of San Juan Capistrano, CA
Jesus Francisco Mulgado, University of Arizona, Avondale, AZ
Jonathan R. Kaufman, City of West Monroe, LA
Justin S. Westbrook, Town of Aberdeen, NC
Kevin J. Pilgrim, Pilgrim’s Places, LLC, Buena Vista, CO
Kristen Jenkins, Tetra Tech, Inc., Ashburn, VA
Kristin A. Baltadonis, PPS&S, Morristown, NJ
Kyle Magyera, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Madison, WI
Laurie M. Kozisek, City of Alameda, CA
Leslie M. Sitko, City of Norfolk, VA
Lucila B. Dunnington, SMITH Environmental and Engineering, Dacono, CO
Luis Parra-Rosales, REC Consultants, Temecula, CA
Maria C. Cavallo, NYS DHSES, Albany, NY
Matthew C. Anderson, Innovyze, Portland, OR
Matthew Dunn, Pare Corporation, North Scituate, RI
Megan M. Lush, EA Engineering, Science & Technology, Lincoln, NE
Michael A. Naber, Arizona State Land Dept., Phoenix, AZ
Michael Goldstein, FMCMTE Assoc., Howell, NJ
Patrick L. Wenzel, Manatee County, FL
Raymond C. Reich, City of Rocky River, OH
Reyn T. Yoshimura, Sam O. Hirota, Inc., Honolulu, HI
Robert C. Perry, Town of Indian River Shores, FL
Robert D. Hamilton, Jr., Marlboro County, SC
Rohan T. Charles, City of Norfolk, VA
Ronald B. Guerrero, Sam O. Hirota, Inc., Honolulu, HI
Samuel Henriquez, Vista, CA
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Stacia S. Franklin, Clark County, IN
Stephanie A. Raucci, Manatee County, FL
Stephen Blake, DHI Water Environment, Inc., Lakewood, CO
Traian Dragomir, Michael Baker, Intl., Woodbridge, VA
Uday C. Khambhammettu, Kimley-Horn & Assoc., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA
William M. Love, Harrison County, MS
Yettes R. Crain, Town of Jean Lafitte, LA

Have questions about your membership?
Contact memberhelp@floods.org
Reasons Buyouts are one of the Best Mitigation Options

The flood buyout (or acquisition) has long been recognized as one of the best mitigation options. Why? For starters, it is its permanence. At least with FEMA buyouts, there is a requirement that the property be deed restricted so that it remains in open space in perpetuity. It basically eliminates future disaster assistance on the property from you (the federal taxpayer). Also, buyouts ensure the occupants will be finally free from harm (as long as they don’t acquire a future property in a flood-risk area) and the misery associated with flooding.

It means one less family in harm’s way in case first responders are needed who will be putting their own lives in jeopardy, and it also eliminates the cost of local infrastructure repair serving that property. Finally, acquired parcels can be used to enhance a community’s open space amenities such as through pocket parks or larger parks if the parcels are large enough or there are contiguous small parcels, community gardens, and even key features of a community’s green infrastructure plan. Acquired parcels can be converted to habitat for all types of plants and animals. In short, there are a lot of options that can be done with acquired parcels.

I was really excited to come across a publication that is about two years old now, but probably not known to many of you. *Floodplain Buyouts: An Action Guide for Local Governments on How to Maximize Community Benefits, Habitat Connectivity and Resilience* was produced by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill’s Institute for the Environment and the Environmental Law Institute. It is one of the best publications I have seen that outlines all of these different options for acquired parcels.

Here in the Midwest, where ASFPM is located, buyouts have been a big part of the way we’ve managed flood risk since the Great Mississippi River Flood of 1993. Since that time, Illinois has bought out most of its repetitive loss properties; Minnesota has used buyouts to address flooding hotspots, and Wisconsin has used it to help relocate parts of entire communities. But one of the states that ironically has been significantly impacted by flooding in 2019 is Missouri. According to a St. Louis Public Radio article, Missouri has acquired more than 5,100 parcels since 1990—more than any other state. Unfortunately, it seems buyouts have been trending downwards in recent years. Just last week, a fabulous editorial in the “Jefferson City News Tribune" touts the benefits of buyouts and the “visionary plan of 25 years ago paying off.” Indeed, it may take years or decades, but the value of buyouts is evident with every major flood that occurs afterwards.
In my opinion, buyouts will become even more valuable in the future, especially when it comes to dealing with sea level rise on the coasts and the increasing number of extreme precipitation events driven by climate change. But we must be vigilant that our national policies and priorities keep buyouts high on the list of flood mitigation approaches. In fact, there is a way you can help. Currently, FEMA is taking comments for the new program that will replace the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. It is called Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities or BRIC. Public comments are being taken through July 15 on the design and focus of the program. One of my big fears is that traditional, nonstructural mitigation (buyouts, relocations, elevations, flood proofing) will lose out to larger infrastructure type projects, which will be eligible. Any of you reading this article can submit comments either by emailing BUILDBRIC@fema.dhs.gov or going to FEMA’s IdeaScale site and posting your comment there. I urge all of you who believe in the value of traditional, nonstructural mitigation to provide input to FEMA.

Your partner in loss reduction,

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