

Association of State Floodplain Managers

*Dedicated to reducing flood
losses & protecting
floodplain resources*

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NEWS&VIEWS

Vol. 29, No. 3

June 2016

Meet Your 2016-17 ASFPM Board of Directors



From left to right: ASFPM Board Secretary Karen McHugh (MO); Treasurer Leslie Durham (AL); Vice Chair Maria Cox Lamm (SC); Region 8 Director Brian Varrella (CO); Region 10 Director Dave Carlton (WA); District 5 Chapter Director Dianna Woods (WA); Region 4 Director Del Schwalls (FL); Chair Ceil Strauss (MN); Region 3 Director John Gysling (DE); Region 9 Director Jeanne Ruefer (NV); District 3 Chapter Director Shawn Putnam (SC); District 4 Chapter Director Kyle Riley (IA); Region 7 Director Steve Samuelson (KS); Region 5 Director Rod Renkenberger (IN); District 2 Chapter Director Mike Cothard (IL); Region 6 Director Jessica Baker (TX); District 1 Chapter Director Janet Thigpen (NY); ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis; Region 1 Director Michelle Burnett (RI); and ASFPM Deputy Director Ingrid Wadsworth. Not pictured: Region 2 Director Jacob Tysz (NY). *Photo by: Dan Sherwood.*

Play-by-play of ASFPM's 40th national conference held in Grand Rapids (aka #ASFPM2016)



Sunday June 19



Former treasurer now Secretary Karen McHugh, former secretary now Treasurer Leslie Durham, Executive Director Chad Berginnis, Chair Ceil Strauss and Vice Chair Maria Cox Lamm. Photo by Terri Turner.

All our national conferences open with an ASFPM Board of Director's meeting, where leadership heard reports about the budget, membership, ASFPM Foundation, Certification Board of Regents and the CFM program and they develop their goals and objectives for the coming year. The luncheon included a presentations on streamgaging by USGS's Marie Peppler. After that, the policy committees meeting gets underway, where they heard updates on the private flood insurance bill, Technical Mapping Advisory Council reports, residual risk behind structures, how the National Marine

Fisheries Service's Oregon Biological Opinion could affect the NFIP and Increase Cost Compliance. But then it ends on a festive note at the Welcome Fest, hosted by the Michigan Stormwater-Floodplain Association and Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management and their local sponsors.



Left: Don't feel too bad for the BODs and the day-long meeting. They had plenty of 40th anniversary cake and cupcakes. Photo by Terri Turner.

Right: Maria DiSalvatore, vice chair of New Jersey Association of Floodplain Managers, enjoys the faux campfire at the Welcome Fest. Photo by Sheila Hascall via @Dare2Mitgate



Monday June 20...Committees & ASFPM Member Day

Want to get involved with ASFPM's 14 Policy Committees? Go to the committee pages to learn what each are working on.



The Watershed Pod that eats together, succeeds together!! Photo by Terri Turner.



Conference goers toured the Grand Rapids floodway, and enjoyed a lonnnnnngggg walk around the city. Photo by Kyle Barnhart.

Exhibits Grand Opening Social Event



We had 75 booths at the conference representing 60 companies. Photo by Terri Turner.

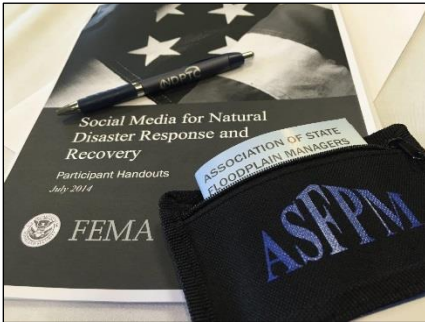


Photo by Allison Hardin with National Disaster Preparedness Training Center.



Big shout out to all of our sponsors. Without their help, this conference wouldn't be affordable for most of our flood risk professionals. Thanks for all you do for us every conference!



Photo via @DisasterCTR



Strong media presence at #ASFPM2016 resulting in 8 pieces of media coverage, 42.9M online readership, 94.4K coverage views and 1.31K social media shares.



L-R Roger Garner and Chad Berginnis interviewed live by WGUV Radio.



L-R Chad Berginnis and Mark Walton interviewed live by WJRW Radio.



ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis and Event Planner Jenny Seffrood interviewed for this video from Experience Grand Rapids: bit.ly/28YBcEv

Tuesday June 21



2016 is a monumental year for ASFPM. Our organization is 40 years old and Grand Rapids marked our 40th annual gathering. ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis honored all the people who have built ASFPM into an exceptional organization, while slides from the last 40 years of conferences ran. [Watch the slideshow here](#). Great memories!

Plenary Session 1



The first plenary opened with a “Welcome to Grand Rapids' Programs & Partners!” message from Grand Rapids City Manager **Eric Delong**. Attendees enjoyed hearing that the city has a plan to remove the dams on Grand River in the downtown area next summer with plans for a whitewater recreational area.

Kevin Shafer, Executive Director of the [Milwaukee \(WI\) Metropolitan Sewerage District](#), presented on the district’s “Zero At-Risk Floodplain Development.” He talked about how he not only got buy-in from his commissioners, but the community as well. “Water management is what we do, but you have to bring the community into the conversation,” Shafer said. The district has completed multiple projects where the natural state of streams are returned after a community “fixed” it with structural flood mitigation.

James R. Morris, Director of USGS Michigan and Ohio Water Science Centers, presented on the opportunities and challenges of floodplains and water resources management. He gave this advice: Good data creates useful information. Useful information creates informed knowledge. And informed knowledge supports effective actions. Morris also said, “If you don’t have a favorite stream gage, go adopt one” by subscribing to [USGS WaterAlert](#).

Photo at left, from L-R: Eric Delong, ASFPM Chair Ceil Strauss, Kevin Shafer, James R. Morris and ASFPM’s Chad Berginnis on the screen. Photo at right: Kevin Shafer. Photos by Michele Mihalovich.

The great thing about flood risk professionals? They just calmly evacuate a conference—no questions asked—when a fire alarm sounds. P.S. False alarm.

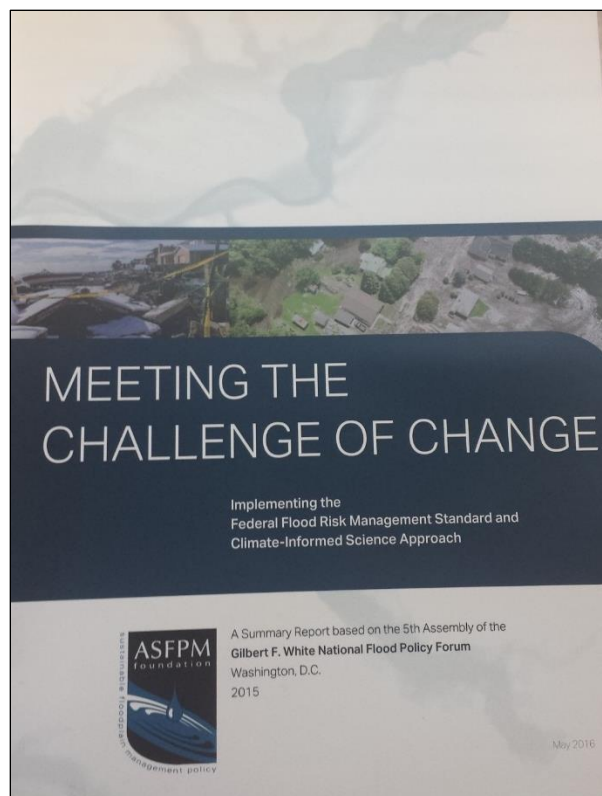


Keynote luncheon was all about meeting the challenge—of climate change



ASFPF Foundation President **Doug Plasencia** with Michael Baker International (left) and **Dr. Gerald Galloway**, Professor of Engineering at Glen L. Martin Institute Affiliate Professor at School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, presented on the foundation's report from the 5th Gilbert F. White's National Flood Policy Forum, which was held last September in D.C. The report, "[*Meeting the Challenge of Change: Implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and Climate-informed Approach.*](#)" During the presentation, Galloway said, "We need a nature-based approach to longevity and resilience as we address climate change. Plasencia said, "The heart of the report is that we don't need to change modeling. We need to make assumptions smart." Request a hardcopy of the report from asfpmfoundation@floods.org. The luncheon was sponsored by AECOM.

Photo by Tara Coggins (@CogginsTara).



AECOM

Several took advantage of the USACE Sediment and Ice Jam Study Canoe Tour in Big Rapids



In 2013 ice jam flooding caused approximately \$3 million of damage on the Muskegon River, the latest of at least seven significant ice-affected floods since the 1966 removal of an upstream dam. The ice-affected reach is also actively depositing, potentially exacerbating ice jam flooding and increasing future flood risk. The Corps presented how they integrated sediment transport modeling, ice jam simulations and ice scar dendrochronology into a mixed population flood frequency analysis to quantify flood risk, predict increases in future flood risk, and evaluate flood risk management opportunities. The tour highlighted forensic evidence used to reconstruct the flood history, including tree scars and demonstrate how tree cores were used to date historic floods.

First Diversity in Floodplain Management Event Held



ASFPM and its first all-female Board Officers hosted the diversity event to begin to address a need to recruit diverse leadership and representation, and for floodplain managers with interest in this issue to meet. ASFPM Deputy Director Ingrid Wadsworth, the association's first female senior executive, introduced JoAnn Howard, H2O Partners President and the first female FIMA Administrator, to highlight her commitment to having diversity in leadership. Molly O'Toole, President of Molly O'Toole & Associates and our Nominations and Elections Co-chair, spoke about creating a pipeline to leadership with a focus on year round recruiting of more women and persons of color. The 22 people who attended said they were excited about this new event and requested ASFPM to sponsor again in Kansas City, which we will do. Any interested in assisting planning next year's event, please contact ingrid@floods.org.

Wednesday June 22

Running of the Chapters: Fourth Annual 5K Fun Run & Walk

This year, 129 registered and 117 actually woke up at the crack of dawn to compete. Below are the top three women and top three men. But if you want to see all the race results, [go here](#):

Women:

- 1 MICHELLE PHILLIPS, HELENA MT, 20:08.4
- 2 CHRISTINE ESTES, WASHINGTON DC, 22:07.3
- 3 KARIN OHMAN, ALEXANDRIA VA, 23:05.4

Men:

- 1 MICHAEL BASH, LINCOLN NE, 18:43.3
- 2 NATHAN CAMPEAU, MINNEAPOLIS MN, 18:54.3
- 3 DEAN GOODISON, RALEIGH NC, 19:15.4



Plenary Session 2

This plenary focused on tools for building flood resilience.

Iain Hyde, CFM, Deputy Director, Colorado Resiliency & Recovery Office, started off by discussing what the state has done in the aftermath of the 2013 floods. Namely, a [Colorado Resiliency Framework](#) was developed to help lead and coordinate the state's long-term recovery efforts and support to local communities. Hyde said, "Implementation is about protecting and enhancing our future. We needed a roadmap for our future."



L-R: Moderator Larry Larson (ASFPM), Iain Hyde, Rob Moore, Jeff Payne and Roy Wright. Photo by Tim Hallinan (@HallinanTim).

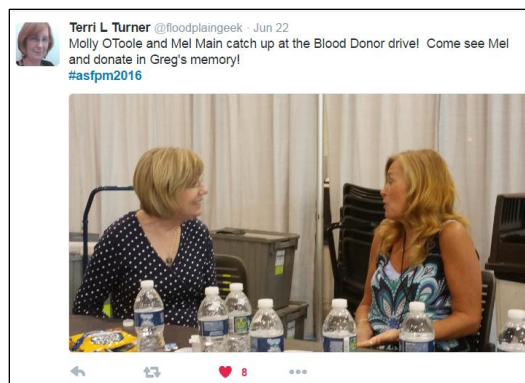
Rob Moore, Senior Policy Analyst, Water Program, Natural Resources Defense Council, said, "Climate change is completely changing the equation for mitigation and we need to incentivize people to move out of the floodplain." He said the NRDC is proposing a low cost flood insurance policy backed with an acquisition guarantee once a house is substantially damaged.

Jeff Payne, Ph.D., Director, Office for Coastal Management, NOAA, talked about the [Digital Coast](#), which ASFPM is a proud partner. The most important note about the Digital Coast website is that it makes data easily accessible and sharable for the coastal floodplain manager who might not have many resources available.

Roy Wright, Deputy Associate Administrator for FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, said what we all know, that having flood insurance is the best tool an individual can have for recovery. And yet, property owners are still foregoing that protection. As an example, he said half affected by last fall's South Carolina floods didn't have flood insurance, but 100,000 families registered for individual assistance. Those payouts averaged about \$5,000 each. Moderator **Larry Larson**, ASFPM's Director Emeritus, punctuated that fact by saying, "The myth that the feds will bail you out still stands as a blockade to true risk reduction investments."

Greg Main Memorial Blood Drive a Great Success

This was the first time a blood drive was held at an ASFPM conference, and this one was pretty special to us. We lost Greg, a long-time ASFPM leader, to cancer last October. And our local host teams from Illinois and Michigan thought this would be an excellent way to honor him and the great work he's done for the association and Indiana. Sixty five of you flood risk professionals donated 66 pints of blood (60 of you donated for the first time at #ASFPM!) and 198 patients will receive life-saving blood thanks to you. We love that Greg's wife Mel made the trip, and we know this meant the world to her. Hillary George with Michigan Blood had this message for everyone who donated: "On behalf of the people who need blood in our community, we are very grateful to everyone who took part in your drive. Please give our special thanks to all who participated. Thank you again for supporting the lifesaving community service of Michigan Blood, you all have been a pleasure to work with!"



State & Federal Panel Roundtable

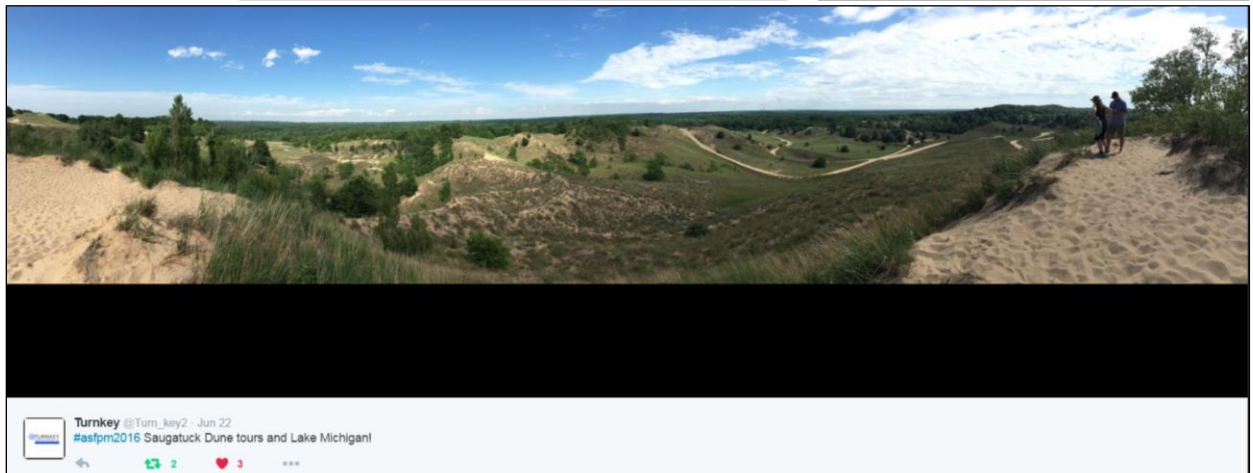


L-R: James Morris (USGS), Sam Medlock (OMB), Kevin Bush (HUD), Rachel Sears (FEMA), Dave Stearrett (FEMA), Randal Behm (USACE), Jennifer Dunn (USACE), Lori Cary-Kothera (NOAA), Luis Rodriguez (FEMA), Eric Letvin (FEMA). Photo by Michele Mihalovich.

This was the first time ASFPM held a special session for state floodplain managers and hazard mitigation officers. Federal officials from several agencies as well as regional staff were on hand to have an open and forthright dialog on partnership opportunities, programmatic issues and how states and federal agencies can work together to reduce the nation's flood risk. ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis said he received very positive feedback from the participants who asked that it be repeated at future conferences.

Dune buggies, shopping, art galleries and a cruise? Sign me up!

ASFPM's Certification Board of Regent President Mark Riebau shared this great photo from the Saugatuck Dunes Tour.



Silent and live auctions raise nearly \$27,000 in donations for ASFPM Foundation



Thanks to **Luci and Dan Sherwood** and ASFPM Accountant **Suzanne Gillingham** for your incredible organization skills in pulling off the annual silent auction. This year it raised \$3,494 for the ASFPM Foundation. The live auction generated the highest ever amount in donations...a whopping \$12,744. The New York “ESPerience” package from ESP Associates pulled in the highest bid ever received at the live auction (\$4,765!). And you can see why in [this YouTube video](#). And finally, many people paid \$100 to attend the donor appreciation reception. When all was done and said, the [ASFPM Foundation](#) had a record year with nearly \$27,000 in donations so that it can continue the fabulous work it does. Thank you to all foundation volunteers and to you—the donors!



FEMA Town Hall



Attention!!!

ASFPM will have all of the presentation PowerPoints that we have permission to use on our website next week. Be sure and check our LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter pages to see when they are up. We will also be making videos available of all the plenaries, FEMA Town Hall, and keynote and awards luncheons soon after.

Thursday June 23

Plenary Session 3: Exemplary Local Efforts in Building Flood Resilience

Linda Langston, a former Linn County Supervisor in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and now director of Strategic Relations for the National Association of Counties, focused her presentation on an elected official's perspective on flood hazards and resilience and NACo's Resilient Communities Initiative. The biggest takeaways: building resilience takes collaboration and being prepared is far less expensive than being unprepared.



Above left: Harriet Festing, Director of the Water Program and RainReady at the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Above right (L-R): Moderator Maria Cox Lamm, ASFPM's Vice Chair; Harriet Festing; Linda Langston, NACo; and Mike Kline, Vermont State Rivers Program Manager. Photos by Michele Mihalovich.

Mike Kline, State Rivers Program Manager of Vermont DEC Watershed Management Division, presented on how to incentivize communities to do effective mitigation while protecting natural and beneficial functions. He said that more than 50 percent of Vermont channels had been altered to improve flow, but resulted in deepening and incising streams, which worsened the hazard. Kline said that basing Vermont stream restoration on stream geomorphologic protocols led to more successful stream restoration and amassing river data; and that its online map datasets show 2,000 miles of FIS, FIRM and erosion hazards maps, which informs project design. Grants for working toward stream resilience through the state's resilience fund rewards a community's good actions.

Harriet Festing, Director of the Water Program and RainReady at the Center for Neighborhood Technology, presented on urban flood management at the neighborhood level. Neighbors in a Chicago area who were living with repeated urban flooding were having trouble getting city leaders to listen to their stormwater concerns (especially since hardly any of them lived in a Special Flood Hazard Area). So these "flood heroes" became advocates for themselves. They started holding neighborhood meetings in garages to build community support and working with the RainReady program, which did forensic analysis of homes. RainReady used that analysis and came up with recommendations for better resiliency for these homes. Festing also said that officials should use the term "nature-based solutions," which is a much easier term for citizens to understand than "green infrastructure."

ASFPM's July newsletter, *The Insider*, will have special sections on all of our award winners who were honored at our Thursday Awards Luncheon. We will also feature the three college students who presented at the ASFPM Foundation Student Paper Competition.

Parting is such sweet sorrow. But a Thursday Night Networking Reception at the Grand Rapids Public Museum (and other spots) Softens the Blow.



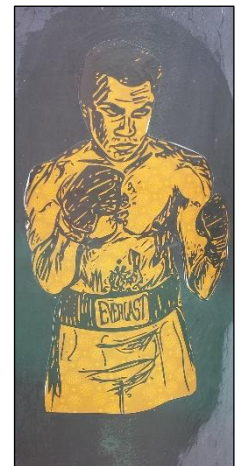
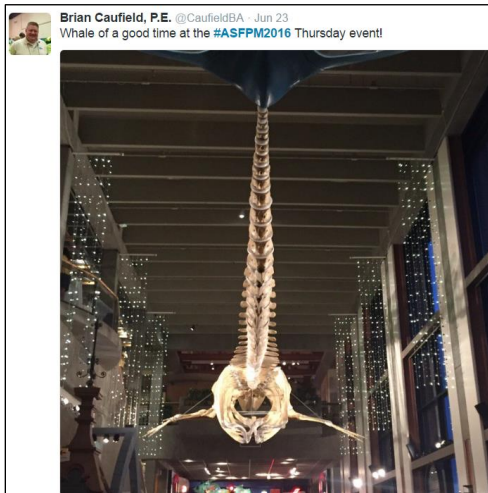
Now THAT'S a wok!



Floodplain manager humor.



Are they riding sidesaddle?

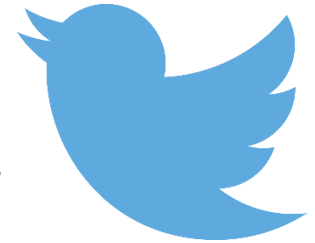


As ASFPM Chair Ceil Strauss rides into the Grand Rapids sunset on her merry-go-round horse, she sang, "Happy trails to you, until we meet again...in Kansas City!"


















According to Twitter & Tweetchup.com...

First off, you guys were amazing this year! We had an army of flood risk professionals tweeting about #ASFPM2016. But special thanks goes to the following prolific and content-rich tweeters, (we include their handles and number of times they used the conference hashtag): Terri Turner (@floodplaingeek, 98 uses), Lilah Haxton (@lilyhax, 80 uses) Tom McDonald (@TMcDjr, 46 uses), Deborah Mills (@MillsDeborahG, 32 uses), Del Schwalls (@dschwalls, 28 uses) and Alisa Sauvageot (@alisauva, 25 uses).


















With @FloodsOrg's 537 uses, the total number of times people tweeted using #ASFPM2016 was...1,600, reaching nearly 250,000 people! And ASFPM gained 107 followers during conference, so great job EVERYONE!

Most retweeted tweets

	The Pew Trusts @pewtrusts June 22, 2016, 08:15 PM Living shorelines can stabilize coasts and combat erosion. Share your support: https://t.co/KMD96BNB1u #ASFPM2016 https://t.co/CS9h101Uh9	 15  13
	TFMA @TexasCFM June 23, 2016, 01:14 PM TFMA wins Outstanding Chapter of the Year at #ASFPM2016 So honored! TFMA members celebrate after Awards Lunch! https://t.co/SbAT7cm5YV	 11  23
	CASFM @CasfmOrg June 22, 2016, 07:52 AM Colorado's @IainHyde advocates for teamwork, partnering & community vision for #resiliency at #asfpm2016 https://t.co/Z7p8Z9bEUW	 11  12
	The Pew Trusts @pewtrusts June 22, 2016, 10:58 AM Flood insurance lessons from the past—and how to prep for the future: https://t.co/s9ziZEEQER #ASFPM2016 https://t.co/FnF5AJHGRq	 8  7
	Iain Hyde @IainHyde June 23, 2016, 10:03 AM Human brain has difficulty processing risk. How do we better communicate, establish common understanding? #ASFPM2016	 7  11

Most favored tweets

	TFMA @TexasCFM June 23, 2016, 01:14 PM TFMA wins Outstanding Chapter of the Year at #ASFPM2016 So honored! TFMA members celebrate after Awards Lunch! https://t.co/SbAT7cm5YV	 11  23
	Terri L Turner @floodplaingeek June 23, 2016, 02:30 PM Congrats Kim Neiman - Local FP Manager of the Year! (Pilger, NE) You rock girl !! #asfpm2016 @FloodsOrg https://t.co/PdwTIBAFw	 5  21
	ASFPM @FloodsOrg June 22, 2016, 12:50 PM Cat's out of the bag. This year's outstanding chapter is Texas Floodplain Management Assn. @TexasCFM #asfpm2016 Congrats!	 7  20
	Terri L Turner @floodplaingeek June 23, 2016, 02:41 PM Congrats Dave Fowler on the Louthain Award at #asfpm2016 @FloodsOrg "Good Dave for a Day!!" https://t.co/vkzAXuD7bf	 5  18
	Chad Berginnis @CBerginnis June 24, 2016, 11:11 AM That's a wrap #asfpm2016 is history. Thanks to all who attended and hope to see you at #asfpm2017 in KC! @FloodsOrg https://t.co/pKrxYf9cx0	 2  17

*Too early to get jazzed about ASFPM's 41st Annual
National Conference in Kansas City?
Nah, it's never too early!
April 30-May 5, 2017*



Some West Haven, Connecticut Homeowners Choosing to Accept Buyouts on Flood-Prone Properties



The “Sound Outlook,” a newsletter put out by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, featured a story in June about homeowners in the floodplain who approached city leaders for assistance with buyouts. The Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Flood Plain Easement (EWPP-FPE) allows eligible landowners to voluntarily enroll land impacted by Storm Sandy into permanent easements to prevent future damage from flooding. Future development of the property is prohibited and the area is restored to natural conditions, which in turn provides additional flood storage to the adjacent area. Read the [full article here](#).

Job Corner

The city of Findlay, Ohio is hiring an enforcement officer for its floodplain and Neighborhood Enhancement and Abatement Team areas (**deadline July 3**). Check out this job and all the others listings on [ASFPM's Job Corner](#). Or post your own job opening. It's completely free!

The making of a riskier future: How our decisions are shaping future disaster risk



Tomorrow's risk is being built today. We must therefore move away from risk assessments that show risk at a single point in the present and move instead towards risk assessments that can guide decision makers towards a resilient future, according to a new report by [Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery](#).

Some key messages from this report:

- Most disaster risk assessments today are static, focusing only on understanding current risks. A paradigm shift is needed toward dynamic risk assessments, which reveal the drivers of risk and the effectiveness of policies focused on reducing risk.
- Global disaster risk is changing extremely fast, due to combined dynamics of hazard, exposure and vulnerability.
- The drivers of disaster risk are in the control of policy makers, society and individuals—but accurate assessment and continuous reevaluation of risk are required to enable effective risk reduction and prevent drastic increases in future losses.

Read the [full, 166-page report here](#).

Policy Matters!

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



What is your Flood Risk Management Message?

Have you ever thought about the message you really want to convey to others? Whether it be a local elected official or property owner seeing a proposed new flood map? How about those who just experienced serious flooding to their home or business? Or maybe you are just trying to explain to your kids and spouse what you do when you go to work every day.

You have heard some trainers teach you the 3-9-27 rule: that your message should be only three bullets with nine words max in each bullet and 27 words maximum. We call that the elevator speech, designed for getting on the elevator with some key decision maker, like a governor, who you need to quickly convince about your point or issue. In those situations, that approach has validity.

More often, you will be in a meeting or conversation with community officials, developers or property owners where you need to rationally explain to them what is needed to reduce flood risk, save them money long term or help the community become more resilient. That risk may be caused by more at-risk development, increased storm intensity or sea level rise. Usually you are seen to be the subject matter expert. You often (but not always) start from a position of knowledge. That doesn't mean they like what you say, usually because it has some negative impact on them financially or socially.

So what are the steps you use to convince others your information or recommendations are valid? Here are some points that may help you organize your conversation or presentation:

- Have a simple, convincing way to tell others about what you want them to hear.
- Use graphic language that leaves a visual picture in the listener's mind.
- Prove your point with data or comparisons.
- Be clear about what action you want the listener to take.

These are not a guarantee to success, but may generate ideas you can put to use in your floodplain work—whether that be with maps, regulations, enforcement or mitigation of flood impacted persons. Preparation is always helpful. I am reminded of a community meeting I attended years ago to present a new flood study and map to a set of property owners who could not believe flooding would ever get that high (sound familiar?). One older gentleman gave the standard “I have lived here 80 years and never been flooded” statement. Luckily I was prepared. I pulled out a photo showing a house standing in water and asked him, “Whose house is this?” He paused and said, “It's my house, but I do not remember that flood.” I could tell that he honestly did not remember. We must remember that memory is selective—we remember the good, not the bad (fortunate for us).

Here is a typical challenge you might have encountered: trying to convince a property owner (whose house is just outside the mapped floodplain) to buy flood insurance. Factors and data you can use include: a quarter of all flood insurance claims are for damages outside the identified floodplain; floods are becoming larger as storms



Short and sweet messages make their points—quickly and effectively. ASFPM member Abbie Jones, P.E., PLS, CFM, from Lexington, Kentucky, snapped this photo while driving through St. Charles, Missouri in June.

intensify due to climate changes; [*disaster assistance for individual claims averages less than \\$5,000, while 6 inches of water can cost more than \\$39,000*](#); premiums outside the floodplain are less expensive; and insurance is the best way to recover from a flood. Perhaps you have an actual example of a person who did have insurance and how well it worked out. And there are no shortage of news stories after floods showing people who did not have insurance and the long-term impacts—like losing the home.

Now you may be asking: “what does this have to do with flood policy?” My answer would be that it is the crux of flood policy. If we can’t help you explain to local officials and property owners what the policy is and why the flood policy is important to the property owners and community in the long term, perhaps that policy needs to be adjusted. When we meet with people in Congress, agencies or the administration, we tell them, “This may look good on paper here inside the beltline, but at the community level, where real flood risk reduction happens, it doesn't make sense and needs to be adjusted.” That is why we rely on our members to give us that feedback and direction. Please keep doing it. In the end, all of us are helping communities manage flood risk with targeted messaging. The right message makes all the difference in the world.

From the Chair

Ceil C. Strauss, CFM &
State Floodplain Manager in St. Paul, Minnesota



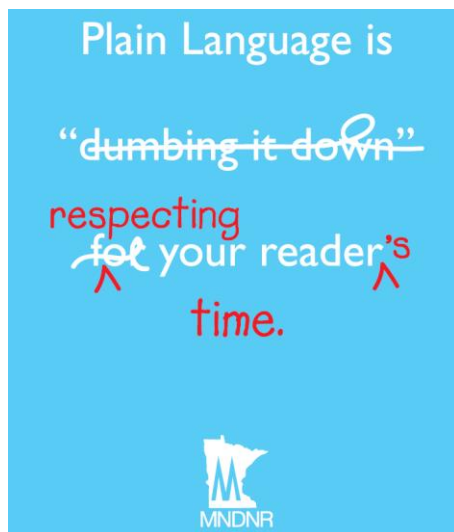
The Importance of Plain English (Or Avoiding “FEMAese” and Acronyms)

Imagine you are a mayor or local official reading a “letter of final determination” from FEMA. It’s got FEMA’s logo, so you know it might be important. But after attempting to read through the three-page letter several times, you are still not sure what it means for your community. Buried in the third paragraph it mentions that “the FIRM for your community will become effective on” (date specified). It tells you “all the standards specified in Paragraph 60.3 (d) of the NFIP regulations must be enacted in a legally enforceable document.”

At an ASFPM function, this letter came up as an example of correspondence that is not in plain English. All the states starting talking about how we routinely send out follow up letters that explain what the FEMA letter said, and what the communities need to do.

And I thought we had a lot of acronyms in my previous state Department of Natural Resources positions, but that was before I joined the floodplain program. When I went to my first region 5 FEMA/state coordination meeting in Chicago, it was like learning another language. Between the acronyms, new terms and convoluted processes that needed to be followed, I understood only a fraction of the discussion. When this coordination meeting was held in St. Paul several years ago my supervisor, who was not familiar with the details of the National Flood Insurance Program, joined us. We got about halfway through the first afternoon and were going around commenting on something, when she noted she was already up to 26 new acronyms!

While it’s easy to pick on FEMA’s letters and outreach materials that are full of bureaucratic language and acronyms, we also need to take an honest look at what we produce at the state and local levels.



A banner that was in the MNDNR lobby as a reminder.

In March 2014, Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton issued an Executive Order “Implementing Plain Language in the Executive Branch.” Some initially pushed back, but I think most of us recognized we have many areas where we could improve. Letter templates, sample ordinances and educational materials are teeming with language that is unnecessarily bureaucratic or archaic. In many cases the language is “what we’ve always used,” and long overdue for a review. We found language in our sample ordinance that had not been updated in many decades. Admittedly, even our floodplain staff didn’t know what some parts of the sample ordinance meant. And upon closer review, sometimes the language didn’t actually say what we thought it said. Bit by bit, we are getting things updated.

We’ve made a more concerted effort to insert lots of photos and graphics into our training and outreach materials, and to keep the language more understandable. But the website updates have lagged behind. We have a newer employee in our division who’s helping with an overhaul of our website. Her signature block says “Information Officer/Web Odds & Ends.” As part of our website update, we looked at many other state sites for ideas. We were surprised at the lack of materials we could “utilize,” so hope to see more plain language outreach materials to share in the future.

At ASFPM, we've also recognized the need to improve our communications. Over the last couple years the executive office added our Public Information Officer Michele Mihalovich and is well into the process for major website updates. Michele has helped guide (ok – push) us to use plainer language in the newsletters, and to greatly expand our use of social media.

Sharing resources with and between states, chapters and local communities came up during our discussion of the draft for our 2017 Goals & Objectives that the board adopted June 19. Two goals that include this priority (along with some other efforts) are:

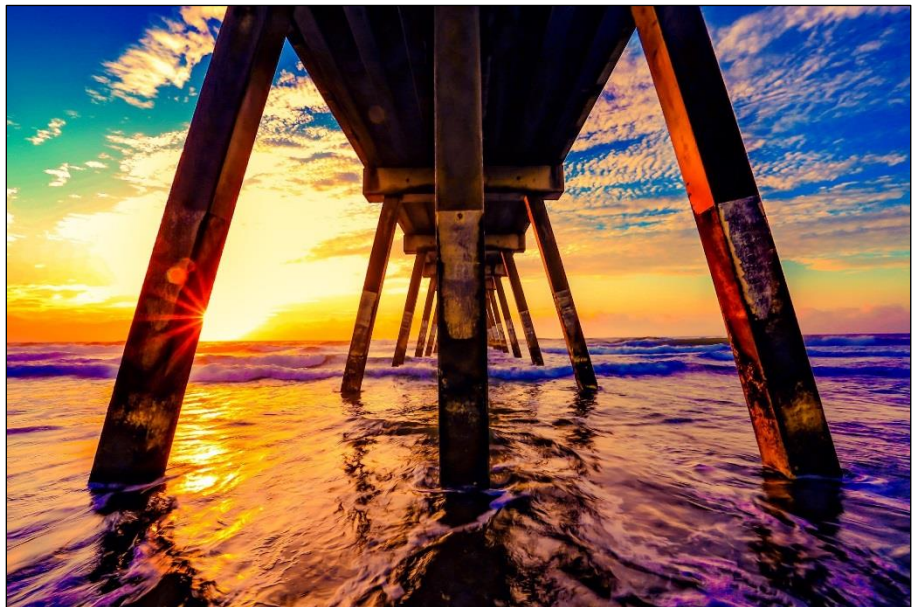
- Consider additional opportunities to support state floodplain managers, CTPs and state hazard mitigation officers (SHMOs). (3.1.4)
- Strengthen chapter networking and the sharing of resources with and between chapters, including resources for training at the local level. (3.1.6.)

As we tell local officials at our trainings, we want you to call us out if we use an acronym or term without explaining it first. And while I hope to see major progress on updates to our outreach materials to use plain language and lots of helpful graphics and photos over the next year, we all want to at least take baby steps in the right direction.

Federal Interagency Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup is requesting comments on “Looking Forward: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate”

The Federal interagency Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup has released for public comment the draft document [*“Looking Forward: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate.”*](#) The workgroup is accepting comments through **July 15**. Send your comments and questions to: water_climate_change@epa.gov.

As background, the Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup is comprised of more than a dozen agencies that have been working together on climate change adaptation since 2009. This document updates the 2011 National Action Plan. Agency co-chairs include Council on Environmental Quality, U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and participating agencies include Army Corps of Engineers, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of the Interior, FEMA, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



This month in Flood History



On June 5, 1976, the Teton Dam collapsed in southeast Idaho, killing 11 people. Here is a [flickr link to 142 photos of the disaster](#) from WaterArchives.org:

On June 9, 1972, heavy thunderstorms caused devastating flash flooding throughout Rapid City, South Dakota and the eastern foothills of the Black Hills, destroying homes, vehicles, businesses and bridges and claiming 238 lives. Read more about the flood [here](#).



On June 15, 1955, Congress enacted [PL 84-71, the Coastal and Tidal Areas Survey Damages Act](#), which requires the Corps of Engineers to conduct a study of the behavior and frequency of hurricanes on the eastern and southern coasts and to assess “possible means of preventing loss of human lives and damages to property...” This Act was largely enacted because of the devastation caused during the 1954 Hurricanes Carol (pictured left) and Edna.

From June 14-23, 1972, Hurricane Agnes affected the Yucatán Peninsula, western Cuba, Florida Panhandle, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York and resulted in 128 fatalities. Though Agnes made landfall in Florida June 19 as a hurricane, no hurricane-force winds were reported, but 26 twisters hit the area. And along the coast, abnormally high tides resulted in extensive damage.



The first communities joining the NFIP become eligible for participation using data from the USGS and Corps of Engineers. Metairie, Louisiana, and Fairbanks, Alaska, enter the NFIP on June 25, 1969. Alexandria, Virginia, enters on Aug. 22, 1969 with Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) based on Corps of Engineers' Floodplain Information Reports. Biloxi, Mississippi and other communities along the Mississippi River become eligible for program participation at the end of 1969 with studies using data from the USGS.



What's the ASFPM Foundation been up to?

2016 Texas and North Carolina State Flood Risk Symposia

In May 2016 the [Texas Floodplain Management Association](#) and [North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers](#), in collaboration with the ASFPM Foundation, each hosted a [one-day symposium](#) to discuss the many concerns about recent flooding, climate change impacts, flood risk identification and related topics in their respective states. The TFMA Symposium was held at the San Antonio Westin Riverwalk, and the NCAFPM Symposium was held at the Wake Tech Community College in Raleigh.

In recent years, North Carolina has experienced several flood-related hazards across the state, such as increased coastal flooding, coal ash dam spills and storm affects from Hurricane Joaquin. The state and several proactive communities have been working together for years to assess and analyze riverine and coastal flooding hazards. However, many within the emergency management and planning field recognize much more can be done within the state to further outreach, education and communication of these flooding hazards.

Recent flooding in Texas caused massive destruction and loss of life, and has heightened concern and awareness. This year, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed an initiative to provide the Texas Water Development Board with funds to implement a stream gage warning system and explore more options for early warning systems.

The goal for each symposium was to assemble a diverse group of individuals who will contribute toward productive discussions and potential solutions. Invitees include community staff responsible for managing floodplains within their communities, emergency managers, scientists, members of the engineering, business and environmental communities, and local elected officials who comprehend the flooding issues in their communities. We also invited representatives from state and federal agencies, including FEMA, which administers the National Flood Insurance Program.

The purpose of the symposium was not only to generate ideas and solutions from within our group of professionals and jurisdiction representatives, but also to understand and include the many challenges and multi-faceted interests of all other potential stakeholders as well. Only by working in serious partnerships with all stakeholders do we stand a chance of being successful in managing our floodplains effectively.

Each state symposium had a series of compelling plenary speakers, touching on critical needs for partnerships on issues very pertinent to each state throughout their presentations.

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](#).

For Texas, the following plenary speakers presented:

Don Ferguson, City of Wimberley, presented “Setting the Stage - A Review of the 2015 Texas Floods.” This devastating Memorial Day 2015 flood caused loss of life and property in the Wimberley area, initiating a call to action from emergency responders in all surrounding counties.

Paul Yura, National Weather Service – “National Weather Service – During the Storms” was a comprehensive report on the recent flooding in Texas. Yura shared data from a meteorologist’s perspective and showed not only the storms, but the buildup and aftermath.



Texas State Flood Risk Symposium attendees.

Texas Water Development Board Chairman **Bech Bruun** addressed the “Disaster Funding from Governor Abbott for TWDB Enhanced Flood Programs in 2016”. Bruun spoke on the need for stream gauges and preparedness in flood prone areas.

For North Carolina, the following plenary speakers presented:

Dave Canaan, Director of Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services in Charlotte, NC. He provides overall direction and guidance on financial, budgetary, organizational, planning and regulatory matters related to storm water/floodplain management, and land development services in Mecklenburg County.

John Dorman, Assistant North Carolina Emergency Management Director for Risk Management. He is responsible for all design, build, acquisition, analysis and dissemination of data, models, analysis, systems and applications associated with hazard risk management. He is currently the Chair of the National Technical Mapping Advisory Council. **Dr. Gavin Smith**, Director of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of Homeland Security’s Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence, a consortium of universities located across the country. He is currently engaged in a number of planning and policy-related research projects within the center, including an assessment of the role governors and state agency officials play in disaster recovery.



North Carolina State Flood Risk Symposium attendees.

Following the plenary presentations, the symposia attendees were broken up into three groups for Texas, and four groups for North Carolina, which were then led by facilitators from the foundation and group reporters and scribes from the chapter who helped lead discussions on the following breakout group topics:

Texas

- Over the next five years, what should state and local communities be working on to reduce the risk and damages of flooding and increase community resilience?
- How can we improve the communication and understanding of flood risk to the public, elected officials and business community to ensure community resilience in the future?

- What is the role of flood warning systems and weather forecasting on local flooding now and in the future and how can we improve collaboration utilizing new technologies?

North Carolina

- North Carolina has long been known for being a "data rich" state. Over the past 15 years, the state has acquired, updated and maintained vast amounts of flood-related data. In addition, applications and tools have been developed to view and use the data. Going forward, how can these assets be utilized/leveraged to improve resiliency and contribute to flood insurance affordability?
- Over the next 15 years, what should the state and local communities be working on to reduce risk and flood damage while increasing community resilience? Where are our training gaps and how do we close them? How do we deliver consistent and timely training to smaller and understaffed locations?
- Recent advancements in GIS mapping, federal and state maintained stream and coastal gaging stations, flood forecasting, H&H modeling as well as flood probability raster dataset have afforded the development of flood warning applications such as North Carolina's FIMAN site. What should the role of flood warning systems and weather forecasting play in today's floodplain management and emergency response?
- As we witnessed in October in South Carolina, some of the most devastating and life threatening flooding occurs following single and or multiple dam failures. It is widely known that the lack of dam breach inundation areas impact accurate and timely warning of such events. What are the lessons learned and data gaps revealed from the South Carolina floods with respect to dam failure? What are the existing and potential data, tools and processes that may be utilized to reduce future losses from dam failure?

These breakout groups were then given the opportunity to convene as a large group in the afternoon at each symposium, and provide group report-outs to all attendees. This was beneficial in allowing visibility to and input from all groups on all topics. The outcomes of these discussions will be captured in a final Flood Risk Symposia Report from each state, along with actionable goals to achieve in continuing the dialogues and outcomes.

In summary, it is clear that as the professionals who are considered "experts" in this field, we need to continue to reach outside of our comfort zone and have sustainable floodplain management conversations with a very diverse group of stakeholders to achieve the goal of protecting our communities from flood-related risk. As you are going about your work day, take a moment to think about collaboration, partnering and sharing resources. Who can you work with? How can you make sure all stakeholders are being supported? In addition to your projects and programs being successful, how can you develop a program to enhance and showcase other community interests as well?

ASFPF State Flood Risk Symposia Background

The ASFPF Foundation has a strong presence in national discussions about flood risk. Over the past decade, the foundation has sponsored five "[*Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forums*](#)," in which groups of 100 national and international experts and leaders convened in Washington, D.C.

The forums focused on reducing flood losses, managing flood risks and floodplain resources, the future of floodplain management, holistic coast approaches, and addressing new federal standards and requirements. The goal of each forum was to facilitate discussion on flood risk, establish priorities for improving policy and program implementation, and to formulate recommendations and directions for the future.

Based on the success of the national forums, in 2011 the foundation began promoting similar meetings at the state level. Since 2011, State Flood Risk Symposia have been held in Colorado, Indiana, Texas, Georgia, Florida, Illinois and Arizona. For 2016, New York, Texas (for a second time), and North Carolina were selected to host these State Flood Risk Symposia. In addition to productive discussions, there is a strong emphasis on proposed action items and how to measure progress in flood risk management at the community level.

What's happening around the world?

A collection of the most viewed stories on our [Facebook](#) page

Maine

Damariscotta, Maine hosted a meeting of the Climate Change Adaptation Providers Network May 19 at Town Hall. The town was chosen as the site of the meeting because its municipal parking lot flood resiliency project has become a pilot program for climate change remedies in the state. Read the [Wiscasset Newspaper article here](#).



Portions of coastal U.S.



The National Hurricane Center will launch storm surge inundation maps for the first time this summer, predicting where and how deep flooding will hit. Read [The Virginian-Pilot article here](#).

South Carolina

"South Carolina suffered a tremendous flood last October, primarily in areas not flooded before and not in a flood zone," South Carolina Insurance Director Raymond Farmer said to the Insurance Journal. "This hurricane season we are encouraging citizens to plan, prepare and protect their families." Read the [full article here](#).



Anywhere in the U.S.



As a new generation takes leadership of the preservation movement, they are focusing on climate change and sea-level rise as well as obsolescence, neglect, market pressures, flood insurance and zoning-law changes that favor the redevelopment of historic places. Read "[A sea of change on 50th anniversary of National Historic Preservation Act](#)."

Small, regular floods that inundate riverside floodplains are essential to a river's health, and provide a wide variety of benefits to wildlife, fish and people. When we manage rivers wisely, we can keep communities safe and enjoy all of the benefits healthy rivers provide. Read "[Why we Need to Restore Floodplains](#)," by American Rivers.



Texas



Texas needs to start taking flood management at least as seriously as it takes highway construction (and it needs to stop spending so much on sprawl-enabling highways). It is too late to unroll the Grand Parkway and other initiatives that have taken precedence over flood management in the Lone Star State. But it isn't too late for Texas to take storms seriously. They will keep coming. Read "[In Texas, Toll Roads or Flood Preparedness?](#)" from CityLab.com.

Thoughts on a Texas man protecting his home from flooding with the AquaDam? Read [this article from KARE11 TV about the Rosharon man](#) who drove to Louisiana and purchased an AquaDam, learned how to install it and with the help of two other men, the dam kept the water back.





FEMA News You Can Use

Revised Accounting Procedures for HFIAA Section 28 Premium Refund Procedures

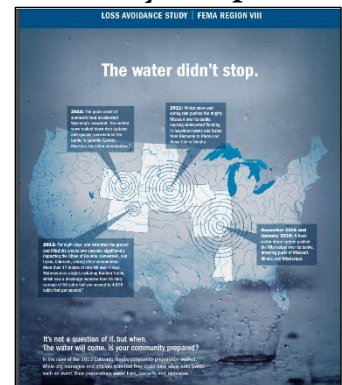
Bulletin W-16021, issued March 29, 2016, described how FEMA will rate policies under HFIAA Section 28 and included specific re-underwriting procedures for insurers to follow as part of this effort. This bulletin outlines the revisions. For the full bulletin, go here: <http://www.nfipiservice.com/Stakeholder/pdf/bulletin/w-16036.pdf>.

FEMA Released Fifth National Preparedness Report June 1

FEMA and its partners have released the 2016 National Preparedness Report. The NPR is an annual status report summarizing the nation's progress toward reaching the goals of a secure and resilient nation. To achieve this, the nation must continue to build on the significant progress to date and address identified areas for improvement. The 2016 report identifies 37 key findings across the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery mission areas describing the progress made during 2015 to advance national preparedness. For a comprehensive summary of the report, fact sheets and a copy of the full report go to: <https://www.fema.gov/national-preparedness-report>.

FEMA released brochure highlighting findings from the Losses Avoided Study completed following the 2013 floods in Colorado

"We had a unique opportunity to analyze and quantify a wide spectrum of mitigation efforts in communities impacted by the event," Matthew Buddie of FEMA Region VIII said. "Feel free to pass along the brochure to stakeholders you think might be interested, included any groups and organizations involved in mitigation. There is great information and I hope it will help communities (especially convincing elected officials) to consider adopting and enforcing higher standards than the minimum NFIP. There is a link to the actual report on the last page of the brochure." Click [here to read the brochure](#).



ASFPM submitted comments June 7 on the Federal Mitigation Investment Strategy

FEMA will be developing the strategy using the guidelines in the Mitigation Investment Framework. ASFPM is pleased to see the four guiding principles in the Framework as noted here: ASFPM strongly supports the four guiding principles for mitigation identified in the FMIS as (1) Resilience and Sustainability, (2) Leadership and Locally Focused Implementation, (3) Engaged Partnerships and Inclusiveness, and (4) Risk-conscious Culture. We agree these principles lay the foundation for the mitigation mission and the execution of its core capabilities. The focus on local implementation is absolutely essential to success. Building that local capability is key and state capability must be built to support local efforts.

Read [ASFPM's full comments here](#). Learn more about the FMIS effort, Mitigation Framework Leadership Group (MitFLG) and National Mitigation Framework by visiting <http://www.fema.gov/national-mitigation-framework>.

Fillable 2015 Elevation Certificate Now Available

FEMA announced June 16 that a fillable version of the 2015 Elevation Certificate (FEMA Form 086-0-33) is now available on the FEMA website at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/160>. The PDF form has been enabled to be filled and saved using Adobe Reader. For insurance purposes, we will continue to accept properly completed and certified elevation information, submitted on a different format than the FEMA EC, through Dec. 31, 2016. After that date, all elevation information must be submitted using the FEMA EC. Note that in the future, no further transition periods will be provided when a new FEMA EC is approved.

ASFPM Editorial Guidelines: ASFPM accepts and welcomes articles from our members and partners. “The Insider” and “News & Views” have a style format, and if necessary, we reserve the right to edit submitted articles for space, grammar, punctuation, spelling, potential libel and clarity. If we make substantive changes, we will email the article back to you for your approval before using. We encourage you to include art with your article in the form of photos, illustrations, charts and graphs. Please include a description of the art, along with the full name of who created the art. If the art is not yours originally, you must include expressed, written consent granting ASFPM permission to use the art in our publications. Copyright© Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc. Information and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the ASFPM Board of Directors. Reproduction, with credit, permitted for individual ASFPM-authored articles. Please contact Michele Mihalovich at editor@floods.org.



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