



# Region 5 Status Report 2020

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**ASSOCIATION OF STATE  
FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS**

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## Introduction and Overview

The region had an active year for flooding...and then the pandemic started. The last few months have brought an unprecedented level of change to our lives. Working from home, the threat of illness to family and friends, and schools, restaurants, sports, and concerts all shut down. The quarantine will likely have drastic effects on the economy for some time, which will undoubtedly affect all levels of government. But it is not all doom and gloom! My hope is that a few positive things with the potential to affect floodplain management come out of this event:

- A recognition by all that science is real, and that good science should guide policy and resource decisions.
- There is a realization that we do not all need to commute to an office every day to be productive. The emissions reductions realized will help efforts to stave off the effects of climate change as long as possible.
- A re-awakening from states and citizens that it should be states and not the federal government driving the bus.

Time will tell the effects and lessons we choose to learn from this event. But I have no doubt that ASFPM and the floodplain and emergency managers in Region 5 will help ensure that floodplain management continues to be a priority.

An email was sent to all of the state NFIP coordinators and state hazard mitigation officers in FEMA Region V requesting input into this report. The email contained a series of questions intended to help spur thoughts and input to this report. The questions covered the following topics: 1) Policy suggestions for ASFPM, 2) Legislation, 3) Disasters, 4) Challenges, and 5) Highlights. ASFPM policy suggestions and comments received from states on federal legislation are summarized under the headings below. State-specific information on legislation, disasters, challenges, and highlights are summarized under the heading for each state.

## Policy Suggestions for ASFPM

**Tiered State Framework** – ASFPM should continue to support FEMA's Tiered State Framework as a mechanism for rewarding states that enforce minimum NFIP criteria and incentivizing state to exceed minimum NFIP requirements. ASFPM should look for opportunities to improve the framework by including flood mitigation and disaster assistance efforts.

**Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)** – ASFPM must continue to provide feedback to FEMA on the design and implementation of the BRIC program. The program must not only fund, but prioritize traditional flood mitigation projects (acquisition/demolition, elevations, storm water projects etc.) and mitigation planning. FEMA should be encouraged to follow their strategic goal of “reducing complexity”, and design a program focused on results, instead of process.



## ILLINOIS

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

#### [Illinois Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4489\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on March 26, 2020

#### [Illinois Covid-19 \(EM-3435\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

#### [Illinois Severe Storms And Flooding \(DR-4461\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on September 19, 2019

### **NFIP**

**Policy Suggestions for ASFPM** – ASFPM needs to be more vocal and proactive in its support of state and local programs. Find ways to expedite increasing complicated and confusing federal programs and administrative processes.

**Legislation** – Although slowly chipping away at our programs, the current federal atmosphere has had little impact on state floodplain management programs. We have noticed a growing (and increasingly threatening) atmosphere against any sort of environmental or regulatory oversight. This attitude is being legitimized and empowered at the highest level of the federal government.

The state of Illinois' long-standing floodway regulations are under attack by agri-business and levee district representatives. These anti-FPM voices are getting strong support from legislators from one party.

**Disasters** – In the summer/fall of 2019, a major flood occurred on the Mississippi River. The flood was as large as the 1993 flood, yet flood damages and flood insurance claims were a small percentage of similar large events. The 2019 flood, although very damaging to the state, was viewed as a major victory for strong FPM programs and proactive mitigation.

After the recent flood disaster, IDNR worked closely with FEMA Disaster Assistance staff to ensure compliance with state and local FPM as a condition of disaster assistance. It is the first time this coordination has happened, and it is working very well. For instance, FEMA PA is now ensuring that no PA reimbursement will be provided until unpermitted levee increases are removed.

**2019 Challenges** – The state has been struggling with the FEMA re-interpretation of a rule that no longer allows the long-standing and well-established state mitigation program to be recognized as global match. FEMA is demanding that the state mitigation program use FEMA paperwork and FEMA administrative process before it can be used as match. This will slow down and complicate a program which has worked efficiently for nearly 100 years.

### **2019 Highlights**

- Illinois has a very strong state floodplain and mitigation program. Illinois also has a very strong post flood process for doing damage assessments. The state has established a team of experts to conduct damage



assessments if requested.

- Illinois leads the nation in overall reduction of repetitive loss properties (proactive mitigation). We also lead the nation in the fewest number of claims on new structures (strong compliance). This loss avoidance was very evident after the 2019 floods. Communities that were destroyed in prior flood events passed this flood unscathed. The flood was a non-event.
- Illinois remains the only state doing all mapping projects in-state (start to finish). More autonomy should be given to the state's administration and oversight of mapping.

## **INDIANA**

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

[Indiana Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4515\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on April 03, 2020

[Indiana Covid-19 \(EM-3456\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

## **MICHIGAN**

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

[Michigan Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4494\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on March 27, 2020

[Michigan Covid-19 \(EM-3455\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

## **MINNESOTA**

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

[Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Covid-19 \(EM-3508\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

[Minnesota Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4531\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on April 07, 2020

[Minnesota Covid-19 \(EM-3503\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

[Minnesota Covid-19 \(EM-3453\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

[Minnesota Severe Winter Storm, Straight-line Winds, And Flooding \(DR-4442\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on June 12, 2019



## OHIO

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

#### [Ohio Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4507\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on March 31, 2020

#### [Ohio Covid-19 \(EM-3457\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

#### [Ohio Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, Tornadoes, Flooding, Landslides, And Mudslide \(DR-4447\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on June 18, 2019

#### [Ohio Severe Storms, Flooding, And Landslides \(DR-4424\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on April 08, 2019

## **Mitigation**

### **Policy Suggestions for ASFPM**

**Legislation** – Ohio continues to have concerns about the development and implementation of the BRIC program created by the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018. The 10-page policy released by FEMA in April provided very little insight that will help state partners work with communities to prepare applications for the complex projects that FEMA desires to fund. The policy also did not address Ohio's major concerns, which were echoed in the national summary of comments, FEMA's BCA tool does not lend itself to evaluating the complex types of projects FEMA desires to fund. The program must be designed to ensure that FEMA's emphasis on large projects that increase community resilience does not put smaller communities that prefer traditional mitigation projects at a competitive disadvantage. Given the complexity that FEMA is sure to build into the program, Ohio is also concerned that FEMA Regions do not have the number of staff, or staff with the proper technical background, to assist communities and states to develop the complex projects that FEMA hopes to fund.

**Disasters** – In addition to Covid-19, Ohio had declarations for flooding in southeastern Ohio and a tornado outbreak concentrated in Dayton, but affecting 12 counties spread from the western to the eastern side of the state. The state of Ohio holds the record in the country for the fastest mitigation project funded, 51 days after the disaster declaration. Even though this was a single-structure project, it required that the state, FEMA Joint Field Office, and FEMA Region V all work together to get this project funded as expeditiously as possible. Unfortunately, Ohio's experience with the two most recent disasters did not produce similar results.

**Challenges** – The number of disaster declarations, in addition to managing the two competitive grant programs has continued to stress the current Mitigation Branch staff. Efforts to hire additional staff were hampered by state bureaucracy, then eventually halted due to a hiring freeze as the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Faced with a declining economy and several staff retirements, the program hopes to hire staff



soon.

**Highlights** – The State of Ohio Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved as continuing to meet “enhanced” plan requirements in May 2019. The Mitigation Branch is completing work on a digital summary of the plan that will be housed on an updated version of the Mitigation Branch website. The digital plan and website update will be completed in summer 2020.

## **WISCONSIN**

### **January 2019 – April 2020 Disaster Summaries**

#### [Wisconsin Covid-19 Pandemic \(DR-4520\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on April 04, 2020

#### [Wisconsin Covid-19 \(EM-3454\)](#)

Emergency Declaration declared on March 13, 2020

#### [Wisconsin Severe Winter Storm And Flooding \(DR-4477\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on March 11, 2020

#### [Wisconsin Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, And Flooding \(DR-4459\)](#)

Major Disaster Declaration declared on August 27, 2019

**NFIP** – Wisconsin has always had state regulations that exceed minimum NFIP requirements. However, recently, the state has rolled back one of their most effective higher standards. The law that was amended required substantially damaged/improved structures to be removed if they were in the floodway. The new law allows substantially damaged/improved structures to be elevated instead.

**Mitigation** – Wisconsin continues to manage a high volume of disasters in the state. Mitigation staff are needed to ensure continued successful management of the workload. Wisconsin supports FEMA's strategic goal of “reducing complexity of the programs” as this would help new staff become more effective sooner, and speed the delivery and effectiveness of the Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. The new state budget provides funding for two new mitigation staff.

Recently, Wisconsin Emergency Management has had great success working with the USACE and USGS as their regulatory and program authorities supplement FEMA well.

The state is also in the process of expanding its state public assistance program to include all categories of work, plus mitigation. Previously, the state public assistance program would pay for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and road and bridge repair. The new program will pay for water control facilities, buildings, equipment, utilities, parks, and other damaged facilities.