

Region 3 Annual Status Report



2020-21

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Introduction

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Executive Office asks that each Regional Director provide an annual report on the status of their region. These reports are available on ASFPM's [website](#).

This report provides a snapshot of some of the floodplain management activities within the areas of Region 3 which include Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

This report is intended to be used as a resource by ASFPM members, federal and state agencies, local governments, and other flood-related stakeholders in the region.

For the creation of this report, ASFPM relies on contributions from floodplain and emergency management professionals within Region 3. Their input was invaluable and without it, there would be no report. We'd like to thank them and acknowledge their contributions here.

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Key Accomplishments

Noteworthy activities are listed by state/district.

Pennsylvania

Top 5 priorities/actions in the last year from the NFIP Office:

- Training for local floodplain managers
- Building code update at the state level to include the flood provisions
- Outreach to building code, building inspectors and floodplain managers, and others
- Update of the state [Flood Map Tool](#)
- Conducted Community Assistance Visits and Community Assistance Contacts in a virtual environment for compliance needs in the COVID-19 environment
- Assisting FEMA in the development of an L273 FPM course equivalent in the virtual environment
- Growing the Pennsylvania Association of State Floodplain Managers including increasing the number of CFMs

Top 5 Priorities/action in the last year from the SHMO's office

- FEMA High-Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) support to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Dam Safety Program
- Continuity of PDM, FMA and HMGP project awards and execution of projects in a COVID-19 environment. FEMA support was not available for these efforts because of travel restrictions due to COVID-19.
- Pulling double duty as the SHMO and Coordinator, State Long-Term Recovery Task Force and Recovery Support Function (7 teams) oversight
- Getting applicants signed up on FEMA Grants Outcomes. This was challenging as no training was provided to support this and the FEMA HQ Help Desk was understaffed. Time spent on this effort cut into application eligibility review time.

Providing support to localities for Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) assistance for projects.

Additional Item of Note

Pennsylvania held Flood Awareness week March 22-26, 2021 in partnership with NWS Offices in PA. Follow/Search #FloodsafetyPA to see posts and social media traffic as a result of the campaign.

Maryland

From the Maryland SHMO's office

- MEMA has led the State's effort to update the Statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan. Notable additions to the plan include adding dam risks, extreme temperatures, soil movement, human caused and public health hazards. The update has occurred in a purely virtual environment and we partnered with Maryland's ASFPM chapter, [MAFSM](#), in order to reach additional stakeholders to gain input for the plan. This included participating in the 2020 Spring Conference, 2020 Annual Conference, and a 2021 Lunch and Learn focused on the State's Repetitive Loss Strategy.

- In 2020, several communities sustained damage from Tropical Storm Isaias and the damages resulted in Maryland receiving a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration on February 4, 2021. The priorities for the Disaster will be to prioritize activities for those communities that were directly impacted with a focus on infrastructure to aid in erosion reduction and slope stabilization.
- MEMA provided technical assistance and successfully submitted the State's FY20 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) application. For the debut year of the program the State received a record number of applications from a variety of stakeholders. Additionally, we saw an increase in the number of requests for watershed studies.
- MEMA continues to prioritize community-based mitigation activities over asset-based activities. BRIC has provided a platform to future encourage infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
- MEMA is continuing to expand our partnerships in order to have a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to mitigation. This includes building partnerships with environmental organizations and the Netherlands. These partnerships provide opportunities for Maryland communities to learn more about innovative approaches to mitigation and available resources.

Maryland NFIP Community Assistance Program

- Multi State Agency, Local Government, NGO and private collaboration surrounding Maryland's inaugural [Flood Awareness Month](#) in April 2021. Not only do we have a dedicated planning team but have built out messaging throughout the month and involved many internal and external partners. Planning started in October 2020.
- The MD CRS Users Group continues to meet once a quarter and offer a variety of topics to help make CRS communities more successful (March 20, 2020, August 26, 2020, December 15, 2020 and March 30, 2021).
- Started biannual calls with our NFIP communities to provide them with regular updates on FPM information, including forms, documents and the status of the NFIP reauthorization (June 5, 2020 and December 18, 2020).
- Continue to offer virtual training to our communities (The NFIP, Floodplain Management, Building Codes and Maryland: How Does This All Fit Together?, April 30, 2020; Introduction to Floodplain Management, December 7-9, 2020).
- Maryland Silver Jackets Projects:
 - Baltimore City SW Baltimore/Frederick Ave Flood Risk Management Support and related community outreach. We produced some floodproofing documents related to the community, and some really cool YouTube videos that were produced by folks with Stillmeadow Community Fellowship, a resiliency hub in Baltimore City. There are 5 videos in total: 30 second, 1 minute, 3 minute, 5 minute and 30 minute.
 - Real Time Weather Tool in Whitemarsh / adding SHA Road Centerlines and Elevations
 - Real Time Weather Tool partnering with Community's Weather Alert System in Laurel to assess Stream Gauges in Tool.
 - Evaluating Flooding Problems and Evaluating Solutions in Leonardtown - Flood Assessment along Town Run and McIntosh Run

Maryland NFIP Community Assistance Program

- DFIRM Mapping Projects
 - Baltimore City: Effective June 2021
 - Baltimore County Preliminary August 2020 with Public Outreach Scheduled for April 2021
 - Frederick County by Corps for FEMA
 - Montgomery, Saint Mary's, and Howard by MDE as CTP
- Note: Upon Completion: Maryland will be fully model backed with an NVUE above 95 %
- Climate Ready Action Boundary (CRAB) released September 2020
 - Maryland's CRAB is a Coastal 100-year floodplain + 3 feet (Up and Out)
 - Maryland's CRAB aligns with the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMs) that was reissued in January of 2021
 - Maryland's CRAB is a Regulatory Requirement for State Agencies and State Spending over \$ 500,000
 - Maryland's CRAB promotes resilience by defining the limits (and elevations) of the higher, wider coastal floodplain
 - Maryland's CRAB is likely to be used for higher local standards, and higher bond ratings (several inquiries underway)
 - **MDE may need ASFPM assistance with getting a CRS assessment of credits likely for any Coastal Community interested in potential discount points**
 - Maryland's CRAB tool is Public Facing with Statewide DEM Elevations included for assessment of any property's vertical comparison to floodplain and CRAB elevations. (Public Facing Tool with DEM Elevations added in February 2021)

District of Columbia

From the National Flood Insurance Program

- On September 10, 2020, 3 inches of rain fell over portions of the District in less than 2 hours, causing damage to hundreds of residences. Following the storm, DOEE supported HSEMA information booths and canvassing activities in eight impacted neighborhoods. DOEE also contributed to a virtual Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking (DISB) Flood and Water Damage Forum by sharing information regarding flood protection strategies with members of the public.
- DOEE continues to perform research and engage stakeholders on proposed regulatory updates to adopt climate-informed higher standards such as an expansion of the regulated area to incorporate the 0.2%-annual-chance floodplain.
- The DC Silver Jackets team is working to enhance flood awareness by planning a “Flood Week 2021” outreach campaign. This effort is currently scheduled for summer 2021. It is proposed to incorporate public transit advertising, high water marks, media availability, updated Web platforms, educational seminars, and other communications strategies that empower stakeholders with information on reducing their flood risk. Another key Silver Jackets project is a research report exploring solutions to flooding in the Watts Branch areas that will be released in mid-2021.
- During the summer of 2020, DC DOEE released an updated [Flood Risk Portal](#) to better understand the full scope of flood risk in DC and communicate those risks to the public. This

tool enables District of Columbia property owners, design professionals, and developers to identify the degree of flood risk for a given property. The interactive map portal offers views of the risks of multiple types of flooding throughout the District. It includes over 50 interactive layers of flooding, sea level rise, socioeconomic, infrastructure, and political data. The Portal can display both the extent of flooding using the latest FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), as well as the depth of flooding at a given site. Users can also assess potential economic and infrastructure losses for a property in the event of a 100-year flood and export the results via PDF. Through a 'forecast' section, three stream gages show real-time water levels, with the Potomac River stream gage also serving as a trigger to then display the respective inundation layer. Additionally, DOEE can data mine flood-related key terms from tweets in real-time storing them for a potential historical analysis. The tweets are geotagged by time and location to the interactive map.

- A Request for Proposals was issued for the District's Integrated Flood Model (IFM). This multiyear project will produce an IFM that will enable the District to consolidate its modeling of all three types of flooding (coastal, riverine, and interior) and allow District agencies to have a tool to more effectively plan to mitigate, respond, and recover from floods.

From the State Hazard Mitigation Office

- The District established three interagency workgroups to identify and scope resilience projects that will decrease flood risks for hazard mitigation funding including BRIC and FMA.
- The District saw a 108% increase in the number of users that visited the ReadyDC page. In addition, the total number of new users (users who visited the ReadyDC site for the first time) increased by 117% with 23,077 in FY20 compared to 10,591 users in FY19. In fact, the hurricane specific page had 4,270 page views.
- The District saw an increase in the use of its emergency communication system AlertDC by 493% with nearly 72,750 new subscribers. 9,678 alerts were sent including on topics related to extreme weather.

Virginia

Priorities/actions for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) State Hazard Mitigation Officer's office:

- VDEM has continued to focus on the importance of equity within all mitigation projects and has hired staff to create programs and review prioritizations VDEM has been using for years. In addition, VDEM has worked with a contractor to create regional workshops to assist localities that score high on equity needs to develop mitigation projects for future submissions.
- VDEM has closed out all disasters prior to 2016 and has only one Flood Mitigation grant (FY 2013) remaining open prior to 2016.
- Non-Disaster 2019 - FEMA identified 13 Pre-Disaster Mitigation projects for further review for a federal share of \$22,777,044 and 9 Flood Mitigation Assistance projects for further review for federal share of \$12,891,976.

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
 - 4401 - 7 projects were submitted for \$4,430,825 including 2 planning projects, 2 generators, 5 quick connects, and two large scale acquisition projects that will revitalize two towns.
 - 4411 - 17 projects submitted for \$6,804,400 including 4 planning projects, 1 acquisition, and 4 drainage/dam projects. In addition, 14 generators will be purchased for critical facilities and one flood warning system.

Delaware

Top 5 priorities/actions in the last year from Delaware NFIP Office:

- Guidance for communities on substantial damage
- Updates to [Delaware Flood Planning Tool](#)
- Promoting NFIP compliance and higher standards
- Outreach regarding floodplain mapping and insurance
- Small map revision projects and identifying and prioritizing floodplain mapping needs

West Virginia

The 2020 Legislature created the [State Office of the National Flood Insurance Program](#) and designated the Offices of the Insurance Commissioner to administer this program. The coordinator of the program shall issue regulation, guidance and instructions as necessary to effectively administer the program. The coordinator shall conduct trainings and will adopt and enforce adequate land use and development criteria that are consistent with the minimum standards established by the National Flood Insurance Program.

The [West Virginia Flood Tool](#) is designed to provide floodplain managers, insurance agents, developers, real estate agents, local planners, and citizens with an effective means by which to make informed decisions about the degree of flood risk for a specific area or property.

The West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) serves as the state's emergency management agency. DHSEM's mission is to ensure the protection of life and property by providing coordination, guidance, support and assistance to local emergency managers and first responders. Learn more here: <https://dhsem.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

Recommendations

The respondents were asked to relay items/areas where they like ASFPM to support

- Additional webinars geared towards effectively utilizing FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance programs. Providing opportunities for members to hear success stories and unconventional activities (ie. beyond buyouts).
- Expand the approach to flood risk reduction. There is a great deal of emphasis on flood insurance. In light of the financial hardship many are facing due to the pandemic additional solutions need to be promoted that are feasible and low cost.
- Assistance in moving FEMA off of a FEMA GO Minimum Viable Product (MVP), poor use of the acronym that we are used to.

- Top down review of the current Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) process – NHMA has a draft white paper on the subject that will be available soon.
- What BRIC can and can't pay for checklist to help applicants understand what projects to submit for and reduce burden of reviewers on projects that do not meet BRIC eligibility requirements.
- BRIC State Set-aside – allow states to use all \$600k for planning but also provide more than \$300k for Project Scoping applications.
- Ensure FEMA has a FEMA GO training program in place for 2021 submissions.
- MDE may need ASFPM assistance with getting a CRS assessment of Credits likely for any Coastal Community interested in potential discount points and