

Co-chairs

Arid Regions Committee Annual Status Report



2020-21

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Co-chairs

Introduction

The primary mission of the [Arid Regions Committee](#) is to provide policy guidance and support of arid regions floodplain management issues to foster reduction of future losses, costs and human suffering caused by flooding. Historically this committee has influenced FEMA's Flood Mapping Program through education and outreach in the arid areas. This has been accomplished through forwarding local arid regions' floodplain concerns to ASFPM for actions, disseminating ASFPM policies and questions to local floodplain decision makers for action, and sharing information between communities in the arid regions.

Key Accomplishments

- Co-Chair Jeanne Ruefer participated in the Ad Hoc Committee that developed the [Priorities for Climate Change and Risk Reduction](#) Policy which was adopted by the board in June 2020.
- Jeanne continues to participate in the Climate Change Task Force, under the general direction of the Board. The intent of the Task Force is to provide support of all the Policy Committees, and act as a forum for climate change education.

Priorities

1. The committee will continue to track progress and adoption of the changes to the guidance around shallow flooding. Proposed are revisions to clarify the analysis, mapping and application of Zone AO depths of greater than 3.0 feet. The following language is proposed to be inserted: "In certain areas, the 1% annual chance flood depths may exceed 3.0 feet. When approved by the Regional Project Officer, mapped Zone AO with depths greater than 3.0 feet may be shown on the regulatory products for areas on alluvial fans."
2. The committee will track floodplain impacts of building a boundary wall along the border with Mexico, as part of the Social Justice/Equity policy under consideration by the ASFPM organization. We will do this by monitoring policy changes by the federal government, preparing informational materials about the floodplain impacts of wall construction for congress as needed.
3. The very severe fires in the west have resulted in significant damages from flooding that takes place in the burned areas, creating mass wasting events such as debris flows and erosion. The committee is interested in learning more about the dynamics of these events, to be able to suggest techniques for monitoring and mapping of Zone M (mudflow) and Zone E (erosion). This next year will be a learning year, during which we will attempt to schedule at least one webinar to learn from experts with experience in California on how we might accomplish this. The Code of Federal Regulations mentions Zone M and Zone E but does not give guidance about how to go about mapping these zones on a regulatory map.

The following work items are ongoing from last year. The committee intends to continue work on at least one of the priority arid issues this year and is committed to identify sub-tasks to initiate evaluation and progress of those efforts.

4. Develop recommendations for higher standards, building on the committee's previous review of the NFIP to reduce flood damage in arid regions. (Objectives 1.3.1 & 2.1.5)
5. Research and make recommendations for analyzing hydrology and hydraulics in arid regions projects. This continues to be an ongoing issue the committee will pursue.
6. Continue to work with the Natural and Beneficial Functions Committee to contribute to a working group/support group for the riverine erosion issue. (Objectives 1.3.2 & 2.1.5)
7. Work on adding Arid Regions Stormwater BMPs to the Arid Regions webpage, in coordination with the Stormwater Committee.
8. Work toward consensus regarding alluvial fan mapping and use of 2D models.

Recommended Actions

Continue monthly committee calls.

Check in with committee members to see how committee can help to achieve goals

Identify what committees can contribute to goals, get feedback from those committees, and develop an action and follow-up plan and schedule.