



ASFPM FOUNDATION
ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS
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April 2010

Mission Statement

The mission of the ASFPM Foundation is to promote public policy through select strategic initiatives and serve as an incubator for long-term policy development that promotes wise floodplain management.

Third Assembly of the Gilbert F. White Flood Policy Forum Series

“Managing Risk to Humans and to Floodplain Resources” was the topic of the Third Assembly of the Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forum, held March 9-10, 2010, on the campus of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Designed and hosted by the ASFPM Foundation, the Forum brought together almost 100 of the nation’s experts in resource management, flood hazards, insurance, mapping, public awareness and behavior, policy, and other fields. The challenge facing the group was to consider the wisdom and feasibility of developing a comprehensive flood risk management strategy for the United States.

Scott Edelman, President of the ASFPM Foundation, opened the Forum with a welcome and introductions. Four speakers then set the stage for handling the topic.

First, Sam Riley Medlock, Policy and Partnerships Manager for the Association of State Floodplain Managers, summarized the conclusions and recommendations from two symposia and one roundtable, all held in the fall of 2009 in preparation for the March Forum.

Second, Jeanne Christie, Executive Director of the Association of State Wetland Managers, presented

to the group a comparative analysis of the management of wetlands and the management of floodplains. She highlighted differences and similarities between the two in terminology, graphics, maps, regulatory and other management techniques, research, and relative success.



Third Assembly of Forum – Photo courtesy of John McShane

Next, Dennis S. Mileti, Professor Emeritus of the University of Colorado at Boulder, explained the results of recent research that demonstrates the futility of attempting to communicate “risk” to the public and expecting them to act appropriately. Instead, he cautioned, people need to be told precisely what to do, how it benefits them, and where to get more details.

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Finally, Doug Plasencia, Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., set out the concept of a comprehensive, integrated flood risk management strategy. Such a framework is essential, he said, if we are to truly minimize flood damage in the future and also forestall ecosystem degradation. He suggested that the framework should encompass a range of principles, embrace measurable goals, establish individual and collective behaviors that will foster progress toward those goals, and likely will involve changes to policy and programs, as well as additional data and research.

What is our vision of successful risk and resources management? What should the future look like? In a brainstorming session, the Assembly listed possible answers to those questions, such as: the nation has sustainable, disaster-resilient communities and states; infrastructure is resilient, maintained, and retrofitted; society's inequities are not exacerbated by flood risk; human occupancy of all high risk flood zones has been abandoned; flood insurance is universally held; room is provided for rivers and their floodplains to function naturally; and the principle of individual responsibility is reflected in public policy.

The second day of the Forum was devoted to the difficult task of assembling the basic components of a flood risk management strategy and conjuring the individual and institutional behaviors that would foster progress. In facilitated small groups the invited experts devised suites of indicators of progress in the management of flood risks and floodplain resources.



Sponsors of the 2010 Forum – Photo courtesy of Doug Plasencia

Changes in the behavior of individuals and organizations (including governments) will be necessary to effect changes in those indicators. Among the possible ways suggested to induce such behavioral changes were providing incentives (financial and societal) for avoiding floodplain and coastal areas in development and redevelopment; providing clearer definitions and delineations of areas of flood risk and of vulnerable resources; the revival of programs that foster locally driven processes for change; making flood insurance premiums reflect the true risk; increasing the involvement of stakeholders such as real estate agents, lenders, and insurance agents; and devising a unified, appealing motto or mascot to convey responsible action toward minimizing flood risk and maximizing floodplain resources.

Four over-arching conclusions were reached over the course of the Forum.

- There is more work to be done to arrive at a commonly accepted definition of “flood risk.” However, the natural resources of floodplains must be included in any such definition.
- Too much time has been spent to date in attempting to communicate the complexities of flood risk to the public on the assumption that they will take action in response to that message. A different, science-based path is needed to foster appropriate behaviors.
- It is unlikely that any progress will be made without some defined goals and indicators that will show whether “success” is approaching or receding.
- Although a national strategy is essential to managing flood risks and floodplain resources, most action occurs at the local level, so goals and approaches should be locally based.

For more information about the Forum, including the 2010 Background Reading and agendas of the symposia and the Forum, see the Foundation's website.

The ASFPM Foundation thanks the sponsors of the 2010 Forum: AECOM, Bender Consulting Services, Inc.; CDM; Dewberry; ESP Associates; Greenhorne & O'Mara; H2O Partners; Michael Baker, Jr., Inc.; PBS&J; Stantec Consulting, Inc.; URS Corporation; and The Council Oak

NAI Policy Matrix

The ASFPM Foundation is seeking a grant to perform research to identify those specific practices, policies, and laws that support or inhibit implementation of NAI principles by the Federal government, and by States and local governments due to Federal support, policy, or practice.

Research will target Federal policies and practices that serve to prevent or allow certain adverse impacts, including shoreline and streambank erosion, increases in flow velocities and volumes, sedimentation, flood elevation, and concomitant



impacts to water quality, water supply, and habitat. Through research of existing bodies of laws, regulations, and procedures,

along with interviews with agency representatives and practitioners, researchers will populate an NAI Policy Matrix, cross-walking Federal agency policies against the NAI Building Blocks articulated in the publication, *No Adverse Impact: A Toolkit for Common Sense Floodplain Management*. The building blocks are Hazard Identification, Education & Outreach, Planning, Regulation & Development Standards, Hazard Mitigation, Infrastructure, and Emergency Services. Additional policy metrics are Climate Change, Floodplain Resources and Functions, and Horizontal & Vertical Coordination.

We selected the U.S. Army USACE of Engineers (USACE) to serve as the research pilot - the first of several agencies - to be studied to identify opportunities to promote NAI principles and prevent unintended harm that may result from Federal policies and practices. Additional agencies would include Department of the Interior / Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Transportation / Federal Highways Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the

Department of Agriculture / Natural Resources Conservation Service, the US Geological Survey, and others whose policies and practices may present opportunities to support Federal efforts to implement NAI principles, as well as those that may serve as obstacles to effective implementation of NAI principles.

Ultimately, the populated USACE component should identify those policies, practices, and laws that promote implementation of NAI principles, and conversely, those that inhibit implementation. Those policies that incentivize or promote NAI implementation should be supported, expanded, and otherwise showcased as successful policies. Those that inhibit, discourage, or serve as barriers to the successful implementation of NAI principles should be identified and analyzed as contributors to resource and economic inefficiencies and instabilities, and considered for modification.

For more information on the NAI Policy Matrix, please contact Sam Riley Medlock, J.D., CFM, ASFPM Policy & Partnerships Program Manager at sam@floods.org.

GFW Memorial Funding Update

The GFW Memorial Committee is pleased to announce that it has reached its initial funding goal of \$100,000. The funds were collected from over 400 gifts from individuals and organizations worldwide including the ASFPM, the ASFPM Foundation, and several ASFPM state chapters. The Committee continues to solicit and accept donations in order to cover the administrative expenses of the Boulder Community Foundation (2%), the non-profit which serves as the "bank" for this project, and for some cost adjustments over the two years it has taken to raise the funds since the original budget was formulated.



Permit applications (building, floodplain and wetland) have been submitted to the City of Boulder and are expected to be approved in the next 10 days. It is our intent to start the construction immediately upon permit approvals, as

our goal is to unveil the memorial in conjunction with this summer's annual Natural Hazards Conference organized by the University's Natural Hazards Center (July 10-13, 2010).

Plenty of work remains! We are finalizing costs and schedules with engineers on anchoring the foundation, with vendors for the granite base and the recycled glass, and the City on signage, disabled access, seating, landscaping and lighting. It's a tight schedule, so we're all hoping there will be no unforeseen delays. We promise to keep our supporters up-to-date as we inch towards our final goal ---- construction and dedication! We guarantee that upon completion, much conversation will take place regarding the vulnerability of Boulder to future flooding! Public art at its finest!

Thanks so much for all your continued support. If you have any questions or seek additional information, contact Clancy Philipsborn at ClancyPh@aol.com

**FloodManager:
Experience a Town at Risk**
Information Session / Workshop

The ASFPM Foundation will be presenting their newest outreach tool FloodManager, as a special session at the 2010 ASFPM National Conference in Oklahoma City, OK. This workshop is an excellent opportunity to earn 2 CORE Continuing Education Credits (CECs) for CFMs.

Sunday, May 16th, 2010
2:00 - 4:00pm
2 CORE CECs for CFMs
No fee, walk-in session
Cox Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK

**LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION COMING
TO OKLAHOMA CITY MAY 16-21**

Visit the ASFPM National Conference Web Site at <http://www.asfpmfoundation.org/auction.htm> and see what has already been donated for our Silent Auction. You can also see the exciting items scheduled for Tuesday. Join the fun and excitement while helping our Foundation meet its fund raising goal for the year! See you there!

**AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR
SPONSORS....**

We appreciate the generous support we receive from our corporate sponsors. We thank Dewberry for their continued support of the Foundation. Below Dewberry talks about their firm and the services they provide:

Dewberry is a leading professional services firm with a proven history of providing architecture, engineering, and management and consulting services to a wide variety of public- and private-sector clients. Recognized for combining unsurpassed commitment to client service with deep subject matter expertise, Dewberry is dedicated to solving clients' most complex challenges and transforming their communities.

Dewberry's work associated with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) includes:

- Current support of Risk MAP as a joint venture partner of Risk Assessment, Mapping, and Planning Partners (RAMPP)
- 122 ASFPM Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs)
- Nationally known experts in field surveys and reconnaissance, riverine hydrology and hydraulics, coastal flood hazard analyses, and floodplain mapping
- Expert knowledge of FEMA guidelines and standards
- More than 35 years' experience performing flood studies and producing Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) as a FEMA contractor

Dewberry is an *Engineering News-Record* "Top 50" design firm and ranks in the top 25 in several of ENR's market categories. In 2009, the firm ranked as the second-largest engineering firm based in the Washington, D.C. area, according to the *Washington Business Journal*.

Established in 1956, Dewberry is headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia, with more than 40 locations and 1,800+ professionals nationwide. To learn more, visit www.dewberry.com.

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FOUNDATION DONATIONS UPDATE

With a goal of \$210,000 this year, we still need your help! As of March 16, 2010, contributions equal \$88,270. Only through your generous support can we reach our final goal. Together we can help guide the future of wise floodplain management!

To donate online, please visit
www.asfpmfoundation.org

Donors from July 1, 2009 to March 16, 2010

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The ASFPM Foundation would also like to thank all of the individual donors as well. Thank you for your support!

