

FLOOD CURRENT



National, State Organizations Stay on Top of Flooplain Issues

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In late June, I was fortunate to attend the 26th annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) in Phoenix, Arizona. At this extremely interesting and educational event, the nation's leading flood hazard management professionals—including planners, engineers, consultants, insurance professionals, and community floodplain managers from virtually every state—were afforded a rare opportunity to share floodplain protection strategies. The ASFPM represents some 4,500 floodplain managers from across the country.

This year's theme "*Breaking the Cycle of Repetitive Flood Loss*", inspired almost 700 government and private professionals to attend. A major topic of discussion was President Bush's proposed increase of \$300 million for floodplain mapping and modernization, including increased accessibility through the Internet, within the nation's 20,000 flood-prone communities. Flood maps serve many purposes and accurate maps have a direct influence on the magnitude and costs of flooding events. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates that local regulation of flood hazard areas, predicated on FEMA's flood maps, saves the nation about \$1 billion each year in flood-related property losses.

In early August, the Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management hosted a three-day training session entitled "Disaster Response & Recovery Operations." The course covered the basic concepts and procedures involved in responding to major disasters. It addressed federal, state and local roles and responsibilities in major disaster recovery work. The workshop also included an overview of preliminary damage assessment, disaster recovery centers, and special needs of victims and disaster workers is also included. All who attended left with stronger perspectives of this vital issue, especially important in light of the events

last September, and are now better prepared to serve citizens who are impacted by virtually any manner of disaster or emergency.

I want to encourage all state floodplain managers and partners of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association to attend OFMA's 12th Annual Conference to be held September 21-24 at Quartz Mountain Resort. Consistent with the recent push to balance structural and non-structural flooding solutions in a manner that will not cause additional flood damage on other properties, the conference theme is "No Adverse Impact: Taking Ownership at the Local Level." The meeting will feature local hazard mitigation success stories, provide extensive information on floodplain mapping, and review the latest floodplain management techniques. Plan on taking a couple extra days, arrive Saturday and enjoy some of the special attractions at Quartz Mountain Lodge and the adjacent area in southwest Oklahoma. OFMA will host a golf tournament on Sunday as well as a Sunday evening social. Rooms have been reserved at a special rate of \$55 per night. Please register early by calling the OWRB at 405-530-8800.

A related aspect of the No Adverse Impact initiative, and a top priority of Oklahoma's floodplain management program, is adequate training of insurance agents in writing flood insurance policies as well as familiarity with general principles of the National Flood Insurance Program. I am continually frustrated and disturbed by the relative lack of knowledge possessed by insurance agents in this area, especially since flood insurance policies are so closely tied to home insurance policies. OFMA leaders have pledged to intensify their efforts and provide more training opportunities to educate insurance agents about flood policies and the NFIP. It will require a very intense effort to get the attention of the insurance industry and improve service to property owners and businesses in Oklahoma. But working together, we can get it done.

Conference at a Glance

"No Adverse Impact: Taking Ownership at the Local Level"

12th Annual Conference of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association
Quartz Mountain Resort Park
September 21-26, 2002

Saturday, September 21

OFMA Board Meeting

Sunday, September 22

Golf Tournament or Local Tour/Recreation
Social

Monday, September 23

Registration
OFMA Committee Meetings
Opening Plenary Session
Cookout

Tuesday, September 24

Annual Business Meeting
Breakout Sessions
Hazard Mitigation
Natural/Beneficial Uses Of The Floodplain
Floodplain Mapping
Awards Banquet

Wednesday, September 25

Past Chairs' Breakfast
Closing Plenary Session
Adjourn Regular Conference
Board Of Directors Meeting
Floodplain Management 101

Thursday, September 26

Floodplain 101 (continued)
OFMA Certified Floodplain Manager Exam

Flanagan Honored with Walking Trail

Ron Flanagan, Tulsa planning consultant and prominent member of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association, has been honored by the City of Tulsa through designation of Flanagan's Way, a four-mile walking trail along the city's Mingo Creek. Flanagan has been intimately involved in local flood awareness, mitigation, and planning for more than three decades.

Around the time of Flanagan's brief service as zoning administrator for the Tulsa planning commission, the city was considered one of the nation's major disaster-prone areas. The infamous 1984 Memorial Day flood caused 14 deaths and \$183 million in property damage. Today, due in part to Flanagan's push for a non-structural approach to floodplain management, Tulsa serves as a model for municipal floodplain management.

Workshop Success Due to Board Staff

The work of OWRB employees Rhonda Kouba (pictured below), Virginia Roy, and James Leewright was critical to the success of the OWRB's recent Floodplain Management 101 workshops. Kouba, assisted by Roy, organized the workshop and lesson materials while Leewright contributed graphics and developed workshop certificates awarded to those who successfully completed the one-day course. The workshops—held this May in Norman, Tulsa, Woodward, Lawton, and McAlester to coincide with Flood Awareness Month in Oklahoma—trained some 124 local floodplain officials and related individuals from throughout the state on the latest floodplain management procedures.



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Flood Map Store News

Store Catalog Last Updated
06/21/2002.

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Map Store is now accessible at www.msc.fema.gov. The site, maintained by FEMA's Map Service Center, offers online Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to its wide range of customers, including the public.