



NEW YORK STATE FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

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2009 Annual Report of the Association September 23, 2009

The NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association is a professional organization that promotes improved floodplain and stormwater management throughout New York State. The Association is a state chapter of the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

Directors, 2008-2009

Chair: Janet Thigpen, CFM
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Region 3: Edward Devine
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Region 5: Alton Knapp, III, CFM
Region 6: Matthew Putnam, P.E., CFM
Region 7: Kenneth Jennison, CFM
Region 8: Marvin Rethmel, CFM; Paul Czapranski
Region 9: Jennifer Marcy, CFM
Ex Officio Director, FEMA: Jason Fenn
Ex Officio Director, NYSDEC: Angus Eaton
Executive Director: William Nechamen, CFM

Public Policy Committee Report **Janet Thigpen, Committee Chair**

The Public Policy Committee provides guidance for the Association's response to policy and legislative issues related to floodplain and stormwater management. In the last year, the Association has sent letters to inform decision makers and the public about the following topics:

- Funding for US Geological Survey stream gauges: Stream flow information from USGS gauges is necessary for floodplain mapping, sizing structures, flood warnings, operation of flood control structures, etc. But funding for the gauges hasn't been stable. Last fall a long list of New York gauges were on the list to be discontinued due to lack of funding, including gauges at National Weather Service flood forecast points. In November 2008, the Association sent a letter to New York's Congressional delegation urging development of a more reliable mechanism for funding the

nation's river gauge system. The committee also shared information about gauge funding with Association members in newsletter articles and on the website.

- New York State budget: The lean State budget has impacted staffing levels for both the floodplain management and stormwater management programs. In December 2008, the Association sent a letter to the Governor urging him to place high priority on the need for adequate staffing in these programs.
- Paper flood hazard maps: As part of FEMA's conversion to digital flood hazard maps, they planned to all but eliminate distribution of paper maps. In New York, more than 2/3 of the municipalities have fewer than 5,000 residents with varying capability for utilizing digital products. In January 2009, the Association sent a letter to FEMA asking that they continue to provide paper maps for users who request them.
- Flood recovery in western New York: In August, there was severe flooding in and out of the mapped floodplain in the western part of the State. Flood damage included destruction of a manufactured home park that was outside of the 1% probability floodplain. The Association wrote and submitted two letters to the editor, but neither was published. The first stated that this wasn't an isolated event and encouraged readers to re-build smarter in order to reduce their vulnerability to future damage. The second letter emphasized the value of flood insurance: "People who are burdened financially by flood insurance should consider what the costs will be when they flood."

Web Site Committee Report

Matthew Putnam, Committee Chair

The Association's website (<http://ny.floods.org>) has been maintained and updated to enable access to current information about the Association.

Additional items completed in 2008 – 2009:

- Added "Current Issues" to web page
- Added link to the FEMA - Emergency Management Institute (www.training.fema.gov) web site.
- Added Web Site Hit counter to home page.

Items planned for 2009 – 2010:

- Add PayPal as an electronic payment solution for membership dues and conference registration.

Newsletter Committee Report

Jim Maxwell, Committee Chair

During the past year, the committee prepared two newsletters for distribution to the membership and concerned others. The two newsletters contained fifteen articles (plus a Message from the Chair in each) with twelve related to floodplain issues and three related to stormwater issues. Four of the articles were reprints from other publications and the remainder were generated by members of the Association.

Our organization has a varied membership consisting of public and private sector professionals, technical and administrative individuals. We should all challenge ourselves to provide an article, photographs or information for publication during the coming year. We should ask ourselves what efforts we have participated in, what the associated impact was on the community and how that impact has improved the quality life for the community.

Conference Planning Committee Report
Russell Houck, Acting Committee Chair

Planning started early in the year for the 2009 Annual Conference, with Rochester being the selected host area. However, in spring 2009, New York State, to reduce costs, issued severe restrictions on travel for state employees. To avoid a large reduction in conference attendees from the potential absence of many state employees, the NYSFSMA Board decided to move the 2009 Annual Conference from Rochester to the Albany area.

Even with the venue change, this year's planning has gone smoothly, with a number of key volunteer contributions from our members, including:

- Brochure development and production: Jen Marcy, Werner Mueller, Sri Gorugantula, and Bill Nechamen;
- Call for Abstracts/Speaker finalization: Jen Marcy;
- Pre-Registration: Jim Gabriel and Bill Nechamen;
- Sponsorships: Russ Houck;
- Bus Tour: Tom Blanchard and Jim Gabriel; and
- Conference registration/assistance: entire Conference Committee.

We appreciate the continued support of our members and sponsors at our yearly conference. Attendance numbers are just about on par with the 2008 conference. We will likely focus upon the Rochester area again for the 2010 Annual Conference.

We welcome all suggestions for adding to and improving the NYSFSMA Annual Conference.

Outreach and Education Committee Report
Jennifer Marcy, Committee Chair

- Held a Certified Floodplain Manager Training in June in Dryden, NY for over 100 people, mostly Code Officials.
- Plan to start working on a presentation for locals about flood hazard maps – what they are, what they mean, and why they change.
- Purchased (but have not yet received) the Stormwater Floodplain Simulation model that was developed by the Michigan Chapter and will come with educational materials including lesson plans.