

Official Newsletter of
The New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association

Message from the Chair:

The State of the Association

As we held our September annual meeting after our first full year in operation, we had 77 memberships representing 207 people. We came a long way to get to that point.

In the winter of 1999-2000, a core group began to plan for the future of a statewide floodplain and stormwater association. The association was conceived as a way to foster communication among professionals who deal with floodplain management and/or stormwater management from various vantage points. Among those who we wished to include were building and code officials, surveyors, engineers, contractors, consultants, planners, environmental interests, and state and federal officials. We envisioned an organization that could facilitate training and professional development beyond what is possible relying solely on state and federal agencies.

We had a model: similar organizations exist in 14 other states and in New England. Most of those are affiliated with the nation wide Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), which is the leading national organization concerned with floodplain management and related issues. ASFPM is extremely influential with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). ASFPM has in recent years increasingly recognized the importance of issues closely related to wise floodplain management, such as management of streams and shores, stormwater and wetlands.

As the planning group deliberated, we came to the conclusion that like ASFPM, we cannot focus solely on floodplains while ignoring stormwater. The two issues are closely linked. Poor stormwater management and certain upland development has increased the frequency and severity of floods. Stormwater management is heavily concerned with water quality protection, but floods themselves cause some of the most serious water pollution disasters that we face.

In September 2000, we met in Cohoes, New York to approve a constitution and bylaws and elect officers. Due to the geographical scope of New York, we decided to include in the Board of Directors nine regional directors to cover the state from Long Island to Lake Erie.

In the past year, we worked to to build the organization. We sent out a large mailing to prospective members. To our delight, many people joined. And not just from large communities and corporations with dependable budgets. Members also came from small towns where the local floodplain administrator also wears several other hats.

Winter Issue, 2002

People clearly see a need for such an Association.

With a growing membership came new anxieties. Now we had members and they expected something for their dues. So we got to work.

With the help of Long Island regional director Walter Bundy, we hosted a Long Island Flood Forum in March 2001, which included a lively discussion on FEMA's recent coastal erosion study.

We learned from that experience. A snowstorm earlier in the week cut the attendance to about half of what we expected, based on previous RSVP's. After discussion, we decided that future events should have a modest fee so that people feel a commitment to attend once they register. We used that model with regional events in November 2001 in Mt. Morris, Livingston County and at Onondaga Community College. Thanks to the help of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, respectively, we had successful regional symposia on successive days. In the coming year, we hope to have a regional event in the Binghamton area, and possibly in one or two other parts of the state. Please contact me if you'd like to help plan or host an event in your area.

Much of our attention in 2001 was focused on September's Stream and Floodplain Restoration workshop in Albany in September. Jon Kusler, who was one of the founders of the ASFPM and lives in the Albany area, approached us about hosting the Northeastern regional stream restoration workshop. ASFPM has an EPA grant to run 6 such workshops around the nation. We hosted the Northeastern one, which proved to be extremely successful, with over 120 attendees and extremely informative sessions.

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In the past year, we also hosted a two-day coastal construction workshop in Long Island, covering major points from FEMA's newly revised three-volume coastal construction manual. We hope to host follow up coastal construction workshops geared towards architects.

We finished the paperwork in December to achieve our not-for-profit status.

With all that, it was a very busy 2001. But we have many challenges ahead. We need to do more. We need to take advantage of the power of the Internet. We formed an e-mail list-serv, but it has not been well utilized. We'll give it another try, so that members can ask questions and give advice to other members.

With Joe Kudirka's (New York City area regional director) help, we developed the beginnings of a web page, but have not yet gotten it posted. We will.

One thing that people expect from an organization such as this is a newsletter. As Chair, I've discovered just how difficult it is to produce a routine newsletter. With Jessica Breiten's (regional director for Region 6: Herkimer-Oneida) help, we did put one very nice looking newsletter together last spring.

We need to regularly produce newsletters. Some members have been generous with articles. We also need people who would regularly collect articles, update the calendar, and format the newsletter.

We need to populate and activate a committee structure. Standing committees include Stormwater, Audit, Floodplain Management, Coastal issues, Legislative, Newsletter, Nominations and Membership, and Education and Certification. Let us know your choices.

We hope to provide a Certified Floodplain Manager exam. The ASFPM and FEMA have jointly developed a certification exam. We can either offer it as is, or edit it for New York. We also need to offer more floodplain management training so that floodplain administrators and consultants in New York are prepared to take and pass the exam.

Other areas of development could include a speakers bureau and display materials for use at other organizations' events.

I'm sensitive to the problems faced by all volunteer organizations. We need active members to be successful. A new member may be intimidated if we

immediately bombard him or her with expectations. I also realize that people are very busy. Every little bit helps.

So please volunteer. This group will only get better with your help. Join a committee that suits your knowledge and interest. Help with events in your area. If you have a skill that we could use, such as web design, writing and editing, graphic arts, desktop publishing, public speaking, display design, marketing, or just plain enthusiasm, please offer some help. Use your particular expertise to help us do better outreach. Help us to coordinate with other professional organizations that you belong to.

I give me a great deal of pride to see NYSFSMA get off the ground. But it's not **MY** association. Please help to make it **YOUR** association.

Bill Nechamen

**Remember!
Renew your Membership!**

**Public Buildings
Must have Flood Insurance**

All public buildings in a Special Flood Hazard Area have been required to carry flood insurance since 1989 under the Stafford Act. There is NO "free bite" of disaster assistance for publicly owned buildings. Only a State may be a self-insurer (and New York is an approved self-insurer). In the event of a Presidential Declaration of Disaster, the public assistance grant program treats all insurable structures that are damaged by flood as though they were insured to the value of the building or carried the maximum amount available (\$500,000), whichever is less. Public assistance is unavailable for up to the maximum insured value of a publicly owned building.

Schoharie County Flood Awareness Initiatives

By Shane Nickle
Schoharie County Planning Board

To intensify a current flood awareness initiative, Schoharie County recently erected 61 "Flood Zone Regulations in Effect" signs near FEMA mapped floodplains throughout the County to encourage the public to ask government officials and realtors about floodplain boundaries and regulations. The County Planning Department and County Emergency Management Office chose sign locations based on a review of the County's floodplains. When appropriate, signs were placed at municipal boundaries or on well-traveled roads close to a floodplain boundary. Shortly after installing the signs, the County Planning and Development Agency received several questions about floodplains and flood damage prevention laws. Residents also asked where copies of Flood Insurance Rate Maps could be viewed.

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) and the Schoharie County Community Action Program provided funding for the signs and installation was provided by the County Department of Public Works and New York Department of Transportation.



This sign, located in the Village of Cobleskill near Cobleskill Creek floodplain, is one of 61 signs posted throughout Schoharie County to increase public awareness of floodplains.

The signs familiarize the public with floodplains, which will aid the County in implementing an early flood warning system with assistance from the New York State Emergency Management Office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and NYDEC. Schoharie County's flood warning system utilizes 911 data and accurate flood plain mapping. A full-scale test of the system will occur in the spring of 2002. Before the test, County Emergency Management and County Planning will produce and distribute educational pamphlets and a video as well as conduct training sessions informing the public of the danger of floods, how the early flood warning system works, and how to mitigate flood damages.

West Kill Flood Mitigation Project

by Rene Van Schaak
Green County Soil and Water Conservation District

The West Kill Stream in the southwest corner of Greene County has a long history as a prime trout stream. A favorite subject of noted fisheries author Art Flick, in more recent years the West Kill has been the unfortunate victim of ravaging flood. While the Catskills have been noted for their violent floods for as long as mankind had inhabited the mountains, more recent events in 1987, 1996 and 1999 have really impacted the stream corridor.

In April 1987, a major spring flood (the same event that collapsed the Thruway Bridge lower in the watershed) resulted in close to two million dollars in damage to public infrastructure. The January 1996 rain on snow event in the Catskills caused an additional two million in damage. Much of the repair work completed after the flood failed as a result of Tropical Storm Floyd in September 1999. In both of the more recent floods, damages were primarily in the form of collapsed bridges and extreme stream bank failure which damaged the adjacent county highway. The Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District has been monitoring the West Kill since 1989, and has seen the stream system quickly deteriorate.

At the present time, long sections of the stream corridor are highly unstable. One of the primary problems is down cutting, or entrenchment of the stream into deep clay layers in the streambed. As the stream down cuts, flood flows no longer access the adjoining floodplain, stream velocities increase significantly and the erosive forces accelerate. In the past two flood events, down cutting of the stream has resulted in geotechnical failures of the streambanks which have in turn resulted in the single access road into the valley being damaged beyond use.

After the Tropical Storm Floyd disaster in September 1999, the District submitted a \$325,000 application to SEMO/FEMA under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to stabilize approximately two miles of stream which is endangering public infrastructure. The project will restore a stable stream morphology and stabilize the streambanks in the project reaches. The project will also provide great secondary benefits by establishing a healthy riparian buffer along the stream, restoring fisheries habitat and eliminating a chronic water quality problem associated with turbidity from the exposed clays.

Project partners include the Town of Lexington, Greene County and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

FEMA has approved the District's project design. Construction is scheduled for summer 2002. The District has been working for over 3 years with a technical advisory committee including NYSDEC, NYCDEP, USFWS and the ACOE. All of these agencies support the project and its goals. The District is excited by the prospect of being able to demonstrate to FEMA that mitigation of riverine flooding problems can be done using methodologies which provide collateral environmental benefits.

Flood Mapping Corner.....
By Scott Braymer, P.E.
NYSDEC Bureau of Flood Protection

the watershed. The FEMA maps provide the regulatory standard for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

This is the first in a continuing series of articles on the Flood Map Modernization Program (MMP) in New York State. NYSDEC has contracted with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) for the restudy of flood hazard areas (FHAs) within the state on a watershed basis. The goal of this process is, at a minimum, to restudy those FHAs that are shown on the current flood maps. Additional flood prone areas may also be studied as requested by each community. Restudy and map issuance is in accordance with the following general process:

- Meetings are held with the communities in the watershed to establish a comprehensive watershed priority list.
- Floodplains within the watershed are studied utilizing improved topographic information, and state-of-the-art hydrologic and hydraulic techniques. Topographic information utilizes LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology, which provides highly accurate vertical ground elevation data of better than 15 centimeters vertical and two meters horizontal.
- FEMA issues Flood Insurance Studies (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for each community within

- Concurrently, New York State issues new “Floodplain Management” maps, which are based on the same analyses, but include different information such as flood inundation contours. The Floodplain Management maps are in color, in both paper and digital media.

Both sets of maps are plotted on an orthophoto base map, which shows features such as individual structures. The new mapping features will provide communities with much a more powerful flood mitigation planning tool.

The following watersheds are currently in the remapping pipeline:

- Schoharie Creek, Schoharie Co.
- Seneca River, Cayuga Co.
- Fall Creek, Tompkins Co.
- Seneca River, Onondaga Co.
- Fishkill Creek, Dutchess Co.
- Ausable and Bocquet Rivers, Essex Co.
- NYC Watershed, Delaware and Greene Co.’s

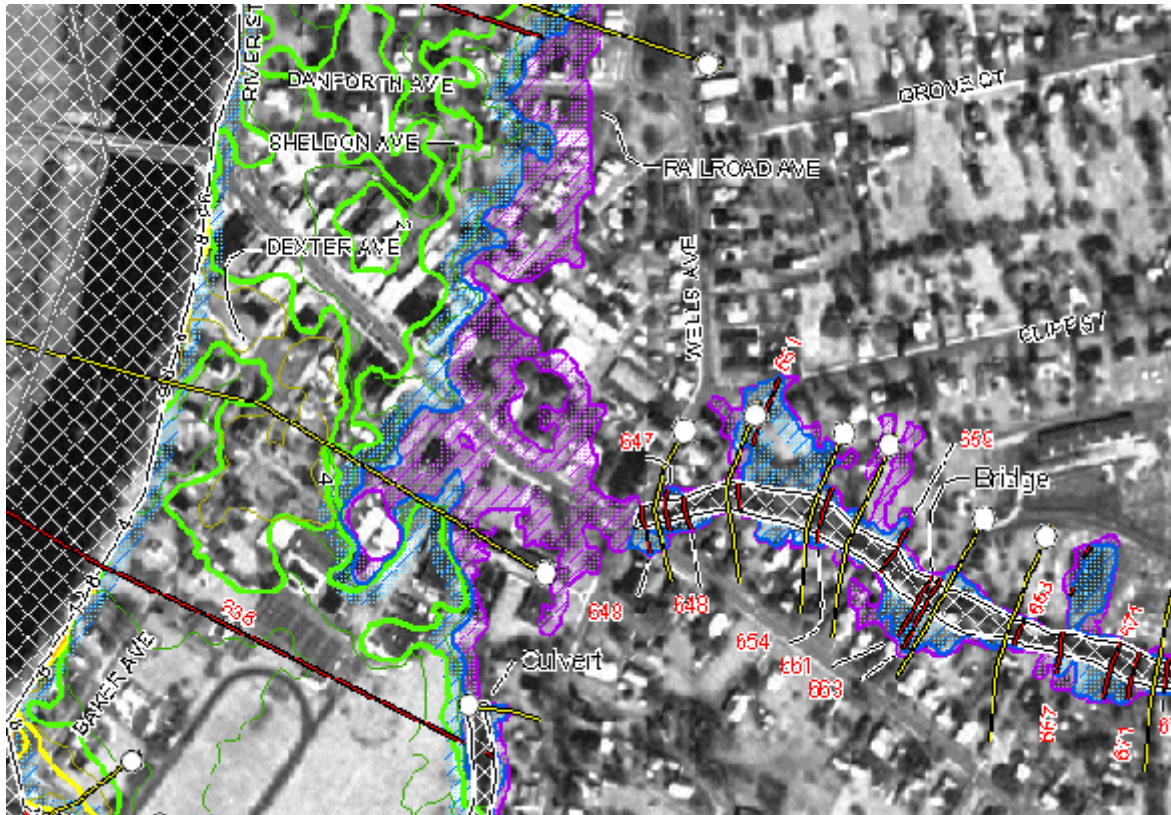
Once work is started, the remapping of an entire watershed takes about three years to complete, as opposed to the five-year cycle that was traditionally expected for remapping an individual community. Schoharie Creek was the first watershed to be included

in the program, and is a prototype for the process.

Preliminary maps for Schoharie County will be issued in March for review and comment by community officials.

Watch for further information on NYS’s Map Modernization Program in future newsletters.

Questions and comments on the MMP can be directed to the author at (518) 402-8145.



Sample Image from New York State Floodplain Management Map
NOTE: Color image shows flood depth contours

NYS DEC Releases Stormwater Design Manual

By Shohreh Karimipour
NYS DEC



New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual

October 2001

Prepared by
Center for Watershed Protection
8301 Main Street
Elliott City, MD 21043

For:
New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12253



George E. Pataki, Governor Eli M. Crotty, Commissioner

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation released the final version of the New York State Stormwater Design Manual in October 2001. This document, which is prepared by the Center for Watershed Protection, provides standards for the design of the Stormwater Management Practices for protecting the waters of the State of New York from the adverse impacts of urban stormwater runoff.

This manual will be a key component of the Phase II State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) general permit for stormwater runoff from construction activities from all sizes of disturbance. This manual is intended to establish specifications and uniform criteria for the practices that are part of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The document is intended primarily for engineers and other professionals who are engaged in the design of stormwater treatment facilities for new developments.

The New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual may be purchased in paper format and CD from the Empire State Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society. This document is also available at DEC's Stormwater Web site. To obtain an order form or download the manual visit: <http://internal/home/dow/bwp/swmanual/swmanual.html>.

Regional Symposia Success in Rochester and Syracuse

Stephanie Harrington, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board

Dave Zorn, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Regional Floodplain and Stormwater Management Symposia were held in the Rochester and Syracuse areas in November. The symposia were coordinated by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) and Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC), who acted as co-hosts with the NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (Association) and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) Regions 7 and 8.

The full-day events promoted widespread awareness of local floodplain and stormwater management issues. Presentations and panel discussions featured speakers from the NYS DEC, NYS Department of State, NYS Canal Corporation, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, planning departments and stormwater coalitions, the National Flood Insurance Program, and several local private companies. Information was provided about local and regional issues and approaches to stormwater and floodplain management, consequences of mismanagement, and regulations at the state and national level.

Two key goals of the symposia were outreach to the municipal level and education about the integral link between floodplain and stormwater management. Based on questions fielded, the Syracuse symposium concluded that more education is needed about municipal requirements under the SPDES Phase II Stormwater Regulations, as well as on how Phase II regulations relate to benefit districts for managing stormwater. The Rochester workshop identified the education of local decision makers as essential because municipal officials are ultimately responsible for making land use decisions.

Both symposia were well attended and well received. The Association is looking to hold additional regional symposia around the state, and will continue seeking assistance from members of the NYS Association of Regional Councils to co-host and organize these events.

2nd National Floodproofing Conference March 25-29, 2002

The full information and registration forms are now available online for the 2nd triennial National Floodproofing Conference "Spring Training" in Tampa, Florida March 25-29, 2002. Go to www.floods.org/Tampa where you will also find quick clicks to the exhibitors information and related activities. Be sure to check this page again for updates over the coming weeks! This 3-day conference will include exhibits, a technical field tour and side training workshops in addition to the regular program, and will showcase the state-of-the-art in programs, floodproofing applications, materials, services, equipment, accessories and techniques to accomplish flood mitigation through floodproofing. Join your peers in Tampa for some SPRING TRAINING and hear how regional, state, local and federal officials and their partners successfully integrate engineering, planning, parks and environmental protection all over the U.S. to prepare for a better, sustainable future. Sponsored by ASFPM, FEMA Region IV, the Corps of Engineers-National Floodproofing Committee and the Florida Department of Community Affairs, it is modeled after the first national floodproofing conference held in February 1999.

ASFPM National Conference Phoenix AZ June 23-28, 2002

Planning is well underway for the Association of State Floodplain Managers' 26th national conference, Breaking the Cycle of Repetitive Flood Loss, at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, June 23-28, 2002. The team is very busy finalizing plans for the program, various events and sponsors, and working to get the full brochure to print by the end of January. Besides the full technical program, various topical training workshops as well as FPM 101 and 201 will be offered on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Technical field tours will be conducted Sunday and Wednesday mornings, with the national Awards Luncheon on Thursday. There are some changes in the traditional schedule pattern, so it is extremely important that you preview the agenda before making your travel plans! Look for information and the full brochure on the ASFPM website at www.floods.org/Phoenix.

Elevation Certificate Training for Surveyors Now Online

Certifying building elevations on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Elevation Certificate just became a lot easier, thanks to a new web-based training module developed for land surveyors, engineers, and architects.

The *Surveyor's Guide to the Elevation Certificate* is a new tutorial available through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) website hosted by FEMA. The NFIP website, <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>, provides information about all aspects of floodplain management and flood insurance.

After accessing the NFIP website, visitors can select "Surveyors" under "Audience Type" to view the tutorial for surveyors. The surveyor's tutorial also can assist the community officials who monitor compliance with the elevation requirements of their communities' floodplain ordinances.

It takes about half an hour to browse through the new tutorial. At the home page of the *Surveyor's Guide to the Elevation Certificate*, visitors view a short introduction to the elevation certificate and then click on three section tabs to move around the site.

- Clicking on the "Elevation Certificate" tab allows visitors to view and download an electronic copy of the EC along with instructions for completing it.

- Clicking on the "Surveyor Video" tab opens a video that briefly describes the process a surveyor follows to establish a building's elevation points.
- Clicking on the "Bldg. Diagrams & Photos" tab displays a series of eight sample building diagrams and representative photos. This section of the tutorial is designed to show surveyors, engineers, and architects where to take the necessary elevation measurements for each building diagram.

Navigation tools at the bottom of each page provide information not only for how to move around within the tutorial and how to use each section most effectively, but also how to e-mail questions or comments directly to elevation certificate specialists at FEMA.

For more information about the new *Surveyor's Guide to the Elevation Certificate* training module, visit <http://nfip.kevric.com/ecsurveyor/>. With questions about completing the elevation certificate, contact FEMA's regional office in New York City or DEC's state NFIP coordinator or your regional DEC floodplain coordinator.

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Calendar

A **Calendar of Stormwater Events** is available on the NYS DEC website at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/calendar.html>.

February 27 - Mar 1, Fifth National Mitigation Banking Conference, Washington, DC, The Terrene Institute, http://www.terrene.org/mitigation_banking.htm, Contact: Terrene Institute at (703) 548-5473 or 1-800-726-4853, terrinst@aol.com.

February 24-27, 2002, Solutions to Coastal Disasters Conference 2002, San Diego, CA. The Association of State Floodplain Managers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Coastal Zone Foundation, the Coastal States Organization, the Association of Coastal Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, www.coastal.ca.gov/cdsolutions/. Contact Mark Mauriello, ASFPM Coastal Committee Chair, 609-292-2662, mmauriel@dep.state.nj.us.

March 25-29, 2002 National Floodproofing Conference II, Tampa, Florida. ASFPM, FEMA Region IV, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-National Floodproofing Committee, State of Florida-Dept. of Community Affairs. Information on the ASFPM website: www.floods.org.

April 25, 2002: Introduction to the National Flood Insurance Program, Albany, NY, NYS DEC, Floodplain Management Section, 625 Broadway, Albany. For code officials, building officials, planners and other people who need to know about floodplain development requirements. Contact Bill Nechamen, 518-402-8146, wsnecham@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

April 25, 2002: National Flood Insurance Workshop for Insurance Agents, Albany, NY, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Contact Melanie Graham, 732-603-3875. (Note: Both April 25 workshops will be at NYS DEC headquarters in Albany. The NFIP intro workshop will be in the morning and the Insurance Agent workshop will be in the afternoon.)

May 13-15, 2002, Coastal Water Resources, New Orleans, LA, The American Water Resources Association, contact AWRA Headquarters at pat@awra.org or phone 540-687-8390.

May 19-22, 2002, National Flood Conference, New Orleans, LA, The Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Flood Insurance Program, Contact Catherine King, 301-918-1471, catherine.king@fema.gov.

June 6-7, 2002, the Humane Metropolis: People and Nature in the 21st Century City, New York City, A Symposium to Celebrate and Continue the Work of William H. Whyte, New York University Law School Auditorium (at Washington Square), Organized by the Ecological Cities Project, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, www.umass.edu/ecologicalcities, Contact ecologicalcities@cas.umass.edu.

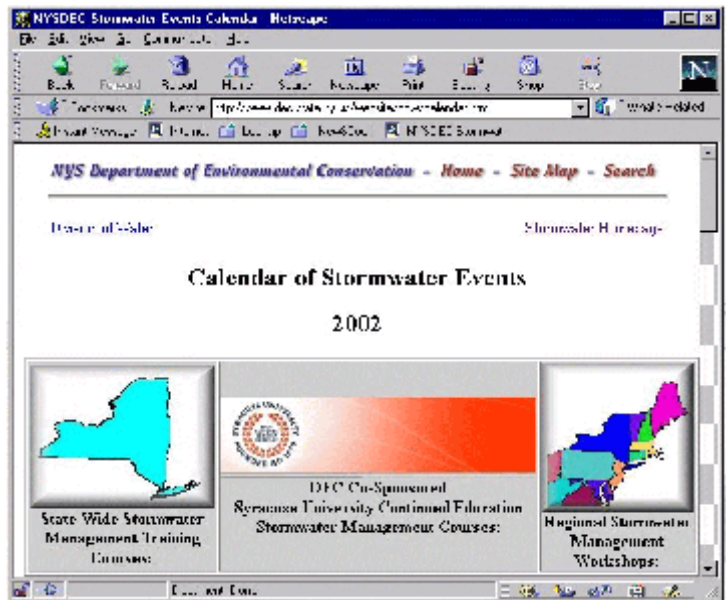
June 23-28, 2002 Breaking the Cycle of Repetitive Flood Loss, Phoenix, AZ, ASFPM's annual national conference, ASFPM, Arizona Floodplain Managers Association, and numerous other partners. The full brochure is available on the ASFPM website: www.floods.org.

August 26-30, 2002, World Congress on Disaster Reduction, Washington, DC, American Society of Civil Engineers, <http://www.asce.org/conferences/disaster2002/>. Contact Walter Hayes, 703-295-6054, whays@asce.org, or Michael Cassaro, macass@aye.net.

September 8-11, 2002, Dam Safety, Tampa, FL, Association of State Dam Safety Officials, 859-257-5140, info@damsafety.org.

October 23-25, 2002, 2002 Applied Geography Conference, Binghamton, NY, including sessions on hazards, environmental issues and related applications and techniques, contact Burrell Montz (NYSFSMA member), 607-777-2615, bmontz@binghamton.edu, or Graham Tobin, 813-974-4932, gtobin@chumal.cas.usf.edu.

May 11-16, 2003 ASFPM's annual national conference, St. Louis, MO. Sponsored by ASFPM, Missouri Floodplain Managers Association and Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management.



B e c o m e a M e m b e r !

of the

***NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF
FLOODPLAIN AND STORMWATER MANAGERS***

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