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# News from Region 10



## Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions

### A Guide for Local Communities

Natural hazards such as flooding, high wind, drought, and landslides pose major threats to communities across the United States. The National Mitigation Investment Strategy identifies nature-based solutions as a cost-effective approach to keep natural hazards from becoming costly disasters. The promise of nature-based solutions comes from the many benefits they offer and the many partners they can draw to the table.

Nature-based solutions weave natural features and processes into a community's landscape through planning, design, and engineering practices. These practices can be applied to a community's built environment (for example, a stormwater park) or its natural areas (for example, land conservation). While nature-based solutions have many hazard mitigation benefits, they can also help a community meet its social, environmental, and economic goals. Communities across

the country are finding nature-based solutions to be a highly effective way to provide public services that were traditionally met with "gray" infrastructure. Local officials and their partners are using nature-based solutions to improve water quality in Lenexa, Kansas; to reduce flood risks in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; to limit erosion in coastal North Carolina; and to provide neighborhood amenities in Houston, Texas.

FEMA and its federal partners produced the National Mitigation Investment Strategy to increase our nation's resilience to natural hazards. Its purpose is to coordinate the use of federal, state, local, and private resources to help communities survive and thrive in the face of natural disasters.

The purpose of this guide is to help communities identify and engage the staff and resources that can play a role in building resilience with nature-based solutions. Planning and building cost-effective nature-based solutions will require collaboration. Many departments may need to be involved in planning and carrying out the strategies in this guide.

*For more information, please review this [guide for local communities](#) and visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).*

## Preparing Floodplain Administrators for Post-Disaster Responsibilities

Mitch Paine, CFM, FEMA Region 10

Floodplain administrators often wear multiple hats, serving additionally as clerks, building officials, or planners, but they all play crucial floodplain management roles in rebuilding after a disaster. This article will focus on things floodplain administrators can do before any disaster strikes to prepare for post-disaster responsibilities.

Rebuilding homes and businesses is a top priority for most homeowners and business owners after a disaster, whether flooding, earthquakes, or wildfires. The floodplain administrator's primary role is ensuring that all the rebuilding in the special flood hazard area (SFHA) complies with floodplain management regulations, particularly the section of all local floodplain management codes related to substantial damage. Applying this section helps communities and neighborhoods become more resilient from flooding in the future.

### Substantial Damage Responsibilities

"Substantial damage" code provisions require communities to ensure that structures damaged 50% or more of the pre-damage market value meet all floodplain requirements for new construction. The damage is from any source whether flooding, fire, earthquake, or a tree falling on a house. The floodplain administrator is responsible for making substantial damage determinations and ensuring that any permitted reconstruction work complies, which, for substantially damaged buildings,

means elevating to the base flood elevation or the community's freeboard. There are many things that communities can do before a flood event or other natural disaster to prepare for substantial damage responsibilities.



### Pre-Disaster Preparation

There are a couple things a floodplain administrator can do before any disaster happens. First, knowing your Flood Insurance Rate Maps well is key to understanding where substantial damage determinations are going to be important. Remember that substantial damage provisions apply to any type of damage, so while a flood is likely to occur in the SFHA, a structure fire for example can happen anywhere. Having a detailed knowledge of your flood maps will help you catch these kinds of situations.

Second, take time to develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) for managing substantial damage. An SOP should include how the community staff will inspect damage buildings, communicate to the public about permitting requirements, apply those permitting procedures, and allow applicants the ability to appeal substantial damage determinations.

Reach out to your State NFIP Coordinator for help on developing an SOP or attend one of the trainings referenced below for more information.

Third, make your management and elected officials aware of the floodplain management and substantial damage requirements in your ordinance. After a natural disaster, there is often pressure to waive permits and fees to help property owners rebuild faster. While waiving fees may be OK, not requiring floodplain development permits will jeopardize the community's standing in the National Flood Insurance Program. The more prepared your whole community is in the face of natural disasters, the better the community's recovery will be.

### Training Available

The three actions above are some of the key actions that communities should take, but there are more steps and details to preparing for substantial damage. FEMA Region 10, in conjunction with the State NFIP Coordinators, will be holding virtual trainings in October for Oregon, Washington, and Idaho and in early 2021 for Alaska to help communities develop substantial damage SOPs and better understand these responsibilities.

*Look for the training schedule in this newsletter, and on the Northwest Regional Floodplain Management Association (NORFMA) website at [www.norfma.org](http://www.norfma.org).*

### Ask the Help Desk

The Region 10 Service Center is here to help local community officials and stakeholders with technical, training, mitigation, and mapping questions.

Email [RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com](mailto:RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com).

## Featured Reading

### ASFPM Guide, “Actions You Can Take to Protect Flood-Prone Structures”

The ASFPM Nonstructural Flood Proofing Committee recently prepared and released a guide for reducing flood damage and flood risk to homes and businesses containing a crawlspace. This guide provides a step-by-step decision-making process for homeowners and business owners who want to reduce their exposure to flood damage and potentially lower their flood insurance premiums.



While it is advisable to consult with your local floodplain management administrator on regulatory and flood insurance requirements, this guide is intended to provide basic flood risk reduction advice for structures containing a crawlspace.

This guide can be found and downloaded from the ASFPM Nonstructural Flood Proofing Committee webpage [here](#).

## Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC)

### Webinar & Technical Assistance Schedule | 2020

FEMA Region 10 Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Branch is pleased to announce the training and technical support schedule for tribal governments interested in applying for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants as a direct applicant to FEMA.

**The application period opens September 30, 2020 and closes January 29, 2021 at 3 PM Eastern.**

**Webinar Series:** A series of webinars will be offered by FEMA Region 10 staff about BRIC grants. Registration is free but required, and all webinars will be recorded.

1. Introduction to BRIC  
September 30, 10 – 11:30 a.m.  
(all times Pacific)
2. Capability and Capacity Building: Planning Application Development  
October 7, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
3. Capability and Capacity Building: Project Scoping Application  
October 14, 1 – 3:00 p.m.
4. Project Grant Application Development  
October 21, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

5. Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) Basics for Projects  
October 28, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
6. FEMA GO Intro and Basics  
November 4, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

To register, visit STARR’s training site: [j.mp/starronlinetraining](http://j.mp/starronlinetraining).

**Email Helpline:** You can email [FEMA-R10-HMA@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-R10-HMA@fema.dhs.gov) with your questions regarding BRIC; responses within 3 business days.

The Notice of Funding (NOFO), important grant links, webinars and other resources are available here: [FEMA Region 10 BRIC Tribal Webinar Series](#).



### Newsletter Ideas?

Want to spread the word about an upcoming event or recent success story? Let us know what you want to see in future issues! Articles can be up to 500 words and may include pictures.

Email [RXNewsletter@starr-team.com](mailto:RXNewsletter@starr-team.com).

### Online Training

(All times Pacific)

**STARR: NFIP Basics**  
September 10, 10 am  
Online – 1 CEC

**CRS: Preparing an Annual Recertification**  
September 15, 10 am  
Online – 1 CEC

**CRS: Changes to Activity 310 Elevation Certificates**  
September 16, 10 am  
Online – 1 CEC

**BRIC Series: Introduction to Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities Grants**  
September 30, 10 am  
Online – 1 CEC

To register for online courses, visit STARR’s training site: [j.mp/starronlinetraining](http://j.mp/starronlinetraining), or email [RXTraining@starr-team.com](mailto:RXTraining@starr-team.com).