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Strategic Alliance for Risk Reduction
FEMA Region X Service Center
20700 44th Avenue West, Suite 110
Lynnwood, Washington 98036
(425) 329-3699

News from Region X

NFIP Legislation

On July 6, the *Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2012* was signed into law. The law extends the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for five years and makes reforms to the program.

Here are a few of the highlights:

- Premium rate increases due to FIRM changes will be phased in over 5 years (20% per year)
- FEMA outreach will increase to include notice of map changes to properties added to and removed from Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Substantial Improvement threshold for Pre-FIRM structures is reduced to 30%
- Minimum deductibles for NFIP claims changed for Pre- and Post-FIRM structures
- New Technical Mapping Advisory Council is established and will recommend changes to FEMA, including ways to incorporate future conditions modeling into flood analysis and mapping

There are many more changes included in the law. We have posted a copy of the legislation in the Region X Workspace at www.starr-team.com.

New Local Mitigation Planning Handbook

FEMA is in the process of creating a handbook for local communities to use in writing and updating their hazard mitigation plans. A draft of the Local Mitigation Planning Handbook is now available for comment until July 20. If you are interested in providing comments, please email RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com or visit the Region X Workspace at www.starr-team.com to download the draft handbook and comment form.

Building Sciences Helpline

At FEMA Headquarters, the Building Science Branch (BSB) provides technical assistance directly to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) communities. Building Sciences covers new construction and the repair of existing buildings. FEMA retains an active role in developing publications, guidance materials, tools, technical bulletins, and recovery advisories that incorporate the most up-to-date building codes, floodproofing requirements, seismic design standards, and wind design requirements. Additionally, BSB staffs a helpline for specific inquiries related to NFIP requirements, the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), and the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP). For more information and resources, visit www.fema.gov/rebuild/buildingscience. If you need additional information, contact the Building Science Helpline at (866) 927-2104 or FEMA-Buildingsciencehelp@fema.dhs.gov.

Please allow up to 5 business days for a response. Regionally, in addition to your state NFIP Coordinators and Hazard Mitigation Officers, you can also contact a FEMA Region X Floodplain Management Specialist or Building Science Specialist, 425-487-4600, or contact the Region X Help Desk.

Ask the Help Desk!

Need information about a mapping project, mitigation planning, or NFIP regulations? Email your questions to RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com.

RiskMAP
Increasing Resilience Together

Building a RAFT

by Alyssa Lewis, Risk Analysis Branch Intern

This June, I graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning, a program within Huxley College of the Environment. As part of the curriculum students are required to complete a minimum of ten credits of Internship, Senior Thesis, Senior Project, or International Study. I decided the best opportunity to gauge the relevance of my education would be with the 'real world' application during an internship with FEMA Mitigation. I started with the Risk Analysis Branch in March and will stay through the summer of this year.

For the majority of my time at FEMA I have been working alongside Ted Perkins, Regional Engineer, developing the Rapid

Assessment Flooding Tool (RAFT). RAFT is an interactive tool that takes flood forecasts from the Northwest River Forecast Center and relates it to flood frequency data from both FEMA and USGS. RAFT also includes location specific information, such as, surrounding population, number of structures within the floodplain, presence of a levee or dam, and estimated damage costs. This information can help rank different water bodies across Washington State according to potential flood impacts.

The purpose of RAFT is to aid in achieving the Region X Mitigation Division mission: "...to create safer communities by reducing the risks to loss of life and property... [by] enabling individuals to recover more quickly from floods and other disasters and lessen the financial impact of disasters on the nation." Additional goals of RAFT:

- Identify and address any discrepancies within FEMA and other agencies' flood data,
- Draw attention to the communities with the greatest flood risk and offer mitigation strategy assistance,
- Support FEMA's Response Division in addressing community needs during and following flood events,
- Provide timely and efficient information exchange between participating agencies before, during, and after large flood events,
- Reduce resource use within the Mitigation Division by consolidating data in one, common, easily accessible location.


Although RAFT is still in the preliminary stages and only includes data for water bodies within Washington State, we are hoping to add the data for all states within the region (Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska). Initially, the primary user of RAFT will be FEMA, but there is potential for other governmental organizations to reference it in the future. RAFT is a

living document that will need to be maintained and revised in order to keep pace with current forecast information, new flood insurance study results, and changing community characteristics (i.e. population, structures in the flood plain, etc.). Over the course of the summer, I will continue collecting and adding information to the tool as it becomes available. Additional projects are still in the planning phase, but I'm looking forward to staying with the Risk Analysis team and exploring the different mitigation roles in Region X.

NORFMA News

NORFMA is forming a Community Rating System (CRS) Users Group to assist our communities participating in the CRS Program and those wishing to start. The users group will be connected to other groups around the country and have a northwest voice to speak to FEMA & ISO about the program.

This first meeting will look at models for the user group organization, set meeting frequency and location, and roles of participants among other topics. Future meetings are expected to receive CFM credit. For the first meeting, there is free parking, easy access to the freeway, light refreshments and of course a lively interchange of ideas as they organize to meet the needs of a new 2012 CRS Coordinators Manual and other challenges.

RSVP required to Dennis Dixon, ddixon@co.pierce.wa.us. 

CRS Users Group

July 10, 2012
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Pierce County SWM Office
Conference Room 2
Tacoma Mall Plaza
2702 South 42nd Street
Tacoma, WA 98409

Upcoming Events & Training

(All times Pacific)

Elevation Certificates

July 18, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
August 9, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
September 13, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Online* - 2 CECs

Determining Base Flood Elevations

July 19, 10:00 am - 11:00 am
October 11, 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Online* - 1 CEC

NORFMA Idaho Mini-Conference

August 2-3, 2012
Boise, ID
www.norfma.org

MT-1 Form Basics

August 16, 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Online* - 1 CEC

NORFMA 2012 Conference

September 19-21, 2012
Spokane, WA
www.norfma.org

Elevation Certificates for A Zones

October 18, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Online* - 2 CECs

*To register for online courses, visit STARR's training site online at j.mp/starrwebtraining, or email RXTraining@starr-team.com.