



The Floodplain Management Association California, Nevada and Hawaii 2012 Highlights

In 2012, FMA outreach, education and engagement efforts continued to expand while the association embarked on new opportunities to pursue its mission. The Annual Conference in Sacramento, California, brought together record attendance, sponsorship and participation from the region; workshops and luncheons provided excellent networking and educational opportunities; the association participated again in state-level flood risk planning and outreach efforts; and the Board of Directors strategic planning retreat provided new ideas and direction for the association.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2012 Annual Conference was inspired by the high water mark federal agency campaign to increase public awareness of flood risk. It was rich in both technical and policy discussions, drawing attendees from throughout the United States and other countries. The Sacramento-based conference hosted nearly 600 attendees featuring 8 concurrent tracks with over 140 presentations, 12 professional workshops, 9 interactive policy panels and a premier Exhibit Hall providing invaluable networking opportunities.

Conference topics included:

- Flood risk in agricultural areas
- Communicating flood risk: Liability and best legal practices for floodplain managers
- New requirements in FEMA's Community Rating System program
- Coastal flood risk, flood mapping and coastal zone management practices in the West
- The latest on levee safety federal programs and initiatives
- Recommendations for flood risk policy and funding in the Flood Futures Report and the California Water Plan framework
- The International Building code, the FEMA CRS Program and local floodplain management ordinances
- And many others.

The 2012 Conference also featured the first 2-D Modeling Symposium, which hosted interesting presentations and lively discussions on the use of 2-D modeling in floodplain studies. This popular event was chaired by Kathleen Schaefer of FEMA Region IX and organized by a special symposium committee. It also included a pre-symposium modeling challenge that invited modelers to submit their results for several different case studies designed to highlight variability in results. A draft report was produced and forms the basis for future discussions.



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Also at the 2012 Conference, FMA hosted a special session on California environmental regulatory issues affecting floodplain management. This successful dialogue highlighted areas of duplication, conflict or unnecessarily high costs or duration for permitting floodplain management projects. FMA was asked to continue the dialogue at the State level and has contributed to a California state agency effort to align priorities and processes among state agencies to better support environmental goals and objectives while providing for public safety.

WORKSHOPS

FMA offered several well-attended professional workshops including another 2-day Levee Design Short Course that included the Interim Levee Design Criteria, an advanced HEC-RAS course, and a 2-D modeling course.

REGIONAL LUNCHEONS

Regular luncheons in Sacramento and San Diego continued to grow, and plans for luncheons in the Bay Area were initiated. Sacramento luncheon topics included subject areas relating to the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, climate change and hydrologic modeling, agricultural floodplain management, and flood risk communication strategies. In San Diego, topics focused on integrated regional water management, coastal wetlands and lagoon restoration efforts, stormwater management issues and flood preparedness.

SUPPORT TO STATE AND REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

FMA continued its involvement in the development of the 2013 update of the California Water Plan. In addition, FMA co-lead the California Flood Caucus, which focuses on a new flood risk management strategy component of the Water Plan and on input to the early drafts of the California Statewide Flood Future Report which provides a comprehensive statewide flood risk assessment and recommendations. FMA also has been involved in outreach efforts to support the State of California on various programs affecting water and flood risk, and continues to be a key player on several important statewide discussions including regulatory streamlining, infrastructure financing and land use practices.

FMA continued to participate in an advisory role on the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Program, the Statewide Watershed Program, and other efforts.



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STRATEGIC PLANNING

The FMA Board of Directors held a 1.5-day retreat in November of 2012 where strategic outreach and engagement topics were discussed to help plan out activities for the following year. The retreat also included special training in association leadership, fun and interactive team exercises, videos and creative discussions. The retreat also provided the opportunity for the Board to review and discuss documents relating to the incorporation of the association as a 501(c)(4) in the State of California which is planned for 2013. The Board also discussed opportunities for enhancing and aligning internal operations and resources to better serve its members.

Overall, year 2012 marked an important phase in the growth and relevance of the association to the floodplain management profession.