

The BFE*

* BASE FLOOD ELEVATION

2022 Spring Technical Update

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This year's OFMA Spring Technical was held at the River Spirit Casino Resort on April 14, 2022. A special thank you to Vice Chair Lincoln Irvine and those who helped make this year's workshop a success. We heard from speakers on the State Flood Plan, Flood Buyouts, Rural FPAs, Federal and State Policy Updates, and MORE! With an attendance of 158, we are so glad to be back in person together!





Words from the Chair

Ellen Stevens PhD, PE, CFM | OFMA Chair

Greetings OFMA members and BFE readers,

We just passed Earth Day, April 22. Let's all try and do something – even if it's a little thing – to keep our planet a better place for ourselves and future generations. Personally, I've been trying to reduce waste, especially paper products, and recycling what I can. Also, trying to walk when I can and combine car trips to reduce using gas and generating emissions. (Also good for the wallet!) If everyone is just a little mindful of their personal impact, perhaps we can slow the progression of more severe storms and catastrophic natural disasters.

I want to thank everyone who attended and also those who helped out with moderating, speaking, or finding speakers, registration, signage, programs, etc., for our Spring Workshop. I hope everyone who attended found it worthwhile. If there was an aspect of the workshop that you particularly liked – or if you have suggestions to improve future workshops – please feel free to pass them on to me, Lincoln, or any other board member. Our contact information is on the website.

Our next event is the Stormwater Technical Workshop, July 20, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the NCED conference center in Norman. Registration and agenda details will be furnished when they are complete.

Don't forget that OFMA exists to serve the membership. If you have any ideas or suggestions, I would love to hear from you.

2022 SAVE THE DATES

2022 Stormwater Quality Technical Workshop

July 20, 2022

NCED Conference Center & Hotel
2801 E State Highway 9
Norman, OK 73071

2022 OFMA Annual Conference

September 18-22, 2022

Choctaw Casino Resort
4216 South Highway 69/75
Durant, OK 74701

Tulsa Rises to the Top as a Leader in Flood Risk Reduction

Tulsa, Oklahoma has just become the Community Rating System's (CRS's) second Class 1 community in the nation, joining Roseville, California.

The Arkansas River winds its way through Tulsa, which experienced flooding nearly every year. In the 1970s and 1980s, Tulsa was ranked number one nationally in the number of federally-declared disasters (nine in 15 years). In an attempt to stop the constant rebuilding after each flood, the city purchased 400 flood-prone properties, and turned the area into Green Space. That worked for a bit, until 1984, when the Memorial Day flood resulted in 14 fatalities, injured 288 and flooded approximately 7,000 buildings. This devastating flood was a wake-up call to take action and set things in motion for city leaders.

Since then, Tulsa has stood out as a leader in risk reduction. As a model community it has spent decades developing state-of-the-art stormwater management goals including drainage system maintenance and floodplain development priorities. These actions help to reduce risk from future flooding and to save lives.

On April 1, 2022, Tulsa officially achieved a Class 1 rating, which means residents will be eligible for a 45% discount on their National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) insurance premiums.

Tulsa serves as an example to other communities across the nation that planning, outreach, education, stormwater management, and hazard risk reduction not only saves lives, but offers great incentives for residents to buy and maintain flood insurance.

Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum said, "For us, the insurance premium improvement is a nice added benefit. But we've been focused on this as a community for decades because it's a public safety issue. And as a city government, there's nothing we do that's more important than public safety."



The photograph is a view of a flooded city park. Benches, signs, and trash bins can be seen on grassy areas and the floodwaters in the low areas in the background. There are no buildings and no evidence of damage.

Originally published National Flood Insurance Program February/March 2022, Community Rating System Newsletter

May In-Person Training Events

OKLAHOMA Water Resources Board

▶ **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT 101**

▶ **OFMA ADVANCED**

MAY 11, 2022
CHICKASHA, OK
CANADIAN VALLEY TECH CTR

May In-Person Training
OFMA Advanced / 101 Training
May 11, 2022 at 8:30 am
Canadian Valley Tech Center
1401 W Michigan Ave
Chickasha, OK

June In-Person Training
FPM 101 Workshop
June 14, 2022
OWRB
3800 N Classen Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Register for both at owrb.ok.gov



OFMA Gets Input from Rural Floodplain Administrators

Johnny Barron PE, CFM | City of Altus

Rural floodplain management looks different than urban floodplain management for the following reasons:

1. Building permits are not issued in rural counties or small cities and without the framework of building codes and permits, the Floodplain Administrator (FPA) is likely the only official reviewing and permitting construction of a new structure.
2. Small governments have less funds and officials typically have multiple assignments where the FPA is also the Emergency Management Director.
3. The general public in rural areas can generally be less supportive of permitting attempts by the local government.

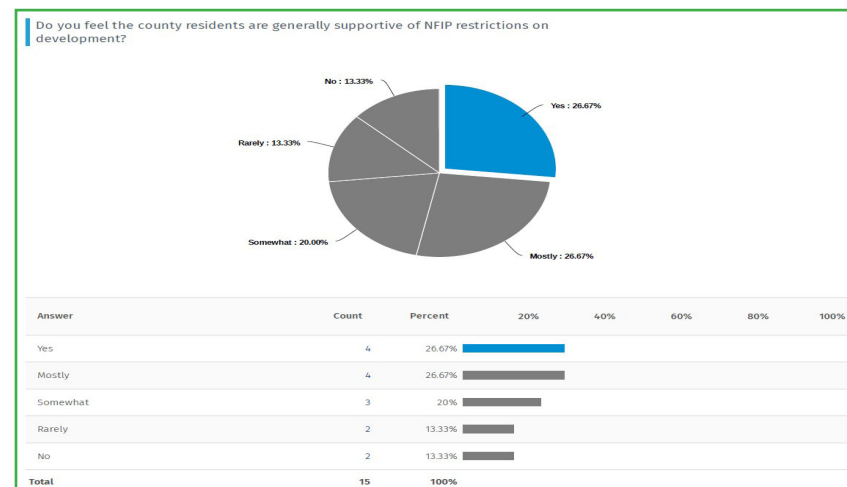
A couple of months ago, OFMA emailed a survey to the persons on record as being Floodplain Administrators for county governments in Oklahoma. The focus of the survey was to solicit data to help OFMA better understand the needs and challenges of rural floodplain management.

Twenty-one surveys were completed. Six of the respondents reported that the county they worked for issues building permits. Fifteen respondents worked for counties that do not issue building permits. While we would like to have had more respondents, we are satisfied with the response, which represents about 20% of rural counties.

One third of rural FPAs reported that they had been working as FPA for less than one year. Another 1/4 reported that they had been working as FPA for more than 5 years.

We learned that the process for issuing addresses for new buildings differs from county to county. In some counties, addresses are issued by the Tax Assessor, 911 Center, County Clerk, or other departments. Only six of the rural FPAs reported that they are consulted at the time a new address is assigned.

The remainder of FPAs finds out about new buildings later on. The source for information about new construction varies from county officials, rural water/utility companies, or the local postmaster.



Sixty-four percent of FPAs reported that they have access to aerial photography for most or all of their county and all reported that they were aware of other floodplain data available to them, including Base Level Engineering, ODOT Bridge Designs, and private engineering studies.

Twenty-six percent of respondents felt that the general public did not support floodplain management efforts, but 74% felt that the public was somewhat or mostly supportive.

(Continued on page 5)

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Sixty percent of respondents stated that their most significant obstacle was keeping up with new construction in the county.

When asked how OFMA can support rural FPAs, 2/3 asked for more training.

OFMA is working on a tool kit for rural FPAs. Stay tuned for more training opportunities.

In the meantime, if you need help, the following persons may be able to help.

OWRB NFIP State Coordinator – Aaron Milligan, CFM, is the NFIP State Coordinator. It is his job to support FPAs. When you succeed, he succeeds. He is motivated to provide assistance. He has a team of full-time employees who work with him. For more information, go to owrb.ok.gov/floodplain.

OFMA Regional Representative – The State is divided into five regions, and each region has an assigned regional representative who is a voting member of the OFMA Board of Directors. Your representative can serve as a point of access for the considerable resources that OFMA has developed. Consider him or her your mentor. Your representative can point you toward subject matter experts within OFMA if he or she does not have the answer you need. To find out who your regional representative is, go to okflood.org.

Neighboring FPAs – if you are new to your job, you might reach out to FPAs in neighboring counties or cities. While these are busy people, you might find they can be very helpful.

Save the Date for the Annual Stormwater Quality Technical Workshop!

OFMA, in conjunction with the Central Oklahoma Stormwater Alliance (COSWA) and the Green Country Stormwater Alliance (GCSA), is hosting the Third Annual Stormwater Quality Technical Workshop on Wednesday, July 20th, 2022, at the NCED Conference Center & Hotel, 2801 E State Highway 9, Norman, OK 73071.

The workshop will include presentations on municipal stormwater management, green infrastructure, inspections and enforcement, and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and runs from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Representatives from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, the Indian Nations Council of Government, and the Oklahoma Water Survey will be in attendance.

If you are looking for stormwater training for your inspectors or other city officials, this is a perfect opportunity to get them to a local workshop focused on stormwater quality.

Registration is \$100 per person and will be open soon.

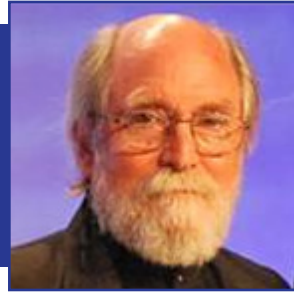
Lunch and snacks will be provided.

If you have an interesting topic to present or want to recommend a speaker, please contact

Morgan Lozoya at mlozoya@meshekengr.com

Check out www.okflood.org for more information.





OFMA DRT Corner

Rev. W. B. "Bill" Smith, PE, CFM | OFMA DRT Coordinator

Don't Step on My Territory!!

For some time now, I have been sharing my opinions on Disaster Response, especially relating to the role of the Emergency Managers and the Floodplain Administrators when disaster strikes a community or a state. I want to take this article to a level of understanding and cooperation as I hear stories of conflicts between these two roles throughout the United States.

When a disaster strikes a community, one of the first responders to the site of the damage is the Emergency Manager (EM). That individual has the responsibility to assess the damage in that location and, perhaps, many others with the goal of assessment and estimating the damage costs. This information is provided to the Governor of the State for the purpose of issuing a State Declaration if the damage meets the state requirement and/or requesting a Federal Declaration (again if the damage meets the threshold). Once that assessment is completed, the EM will continue with efforts of response and recovery and possible mitigation efforts. This disaster could be within or outside the Special Flood Hazard Area or both.

If a disaster strikes a community, one of the second responders to the site of the disaster, is the Floodplain Administrator (FPA). That individual has the responsibility to assess the same damage with the goal of determining if the damage to the structures reaches the level of "Substantially Damaged" or not, and if the damaged structures are compliant or not, and then issue floodplain development permits if 1) the structure is not substantially damaged, 2) the structure is substantially damaged, but compliant, or 3) the structure is substantial damage and not compliant for reconstruction or modification.

The role of these two individuals assisting our communities is not a territorial battle – it is two different perspectives of the same disaster. The EM and the FPA are on the same team in the community – assisting the citizens in need. Sometimes the EM and the FPA are the same individuals, and when that occurs, the EM needs to "turn his hat around" and assess the same damage from the perspective of the FPA. That EM/FPA may have to "turn their hat around" a number of times during a disaster. The FPA can assist the EM with evacuation route information and about temporary housing outside the 500-year floodplain if FEMA temporary housing is required, etc.

Our OFMA DRT has worked hand-in-hand with the OEM and Emergency Managers on many disasters since 2008 and will continue to do so as we have cooperative respect for each other's duties and responsibilities. We learned it was much easier to play nice, than dispute. That's the way it should be. Be safe out there this spring. The rains and storms are a-comin'!

Just another 2 cents of my opinion!!

Capitol Rumbblings

Tom Leatherbee CEC, MCP, CFM | Insurance and Regulatory Affairs Chair



With spring having arrived and government operations largely back to normal, there have been a number of legislative and policy developments of interest to floodplain management and stormwater professionals.

On the state level, the Oklahoma Legislative session has progressed to its second half. At the time of writing, HB3819, which creates the Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Matching Fund Act, has passed the Senate and is headed to a conference committee. The bill, by Representative Sims and Senator Rader, seeks to provide matching funds for federal grants to help small communities access mitigation funding.

OFMA held its annual Legislative Reception at the State Capitol on April 5th. The reception was very well attended by Senators, Representatives, and legislative staff and featured great conversation and great food from Jamil's. At the request of several legislators, OFMA will be creating additional constituent assistance resources and distributing them to member offices. OFMA also participated in Water Appreciation Day at the Capitol on April 18th, taking the opportunity to network with legislators, state agency staff, and representatives from other water-related agencies and interest groups.

On the federal side, OFMA responded to a FEMA Request for Information seeking comments about potential changes to NFIP land use and development regulations. OFMA has also worked to share information with the membership about emerging federal funding opportunities, including those contained in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The combination of new US Treasury rules allowing the use of some ARPA funds for local match and multiple new and enhanced resilience and mitigation programs from the IIJA means that state and local governments may have significant opportunities to leverage federal funding in the coming years.

As always, please contact me at tomleatherbee@gmail.com with any legislative, policy, or insurance concerns.



Funding Acknowledgment

Funds to produce The BFE come in part from the National Flood Insurance Program and State Support Services Element of the Community Assistance Program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association publishes the BFE, Inc. Information and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors. Items for publication and other editorial matters should be directed to:

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