

# The BFE\*

\* BASE FLOOD ELEVATION

## 2024 Annual Conference Update

*Brandon Claborn PE, CFM - OFMA Conference Co-Chair*

The 2024 conference at the Choctaw Casino, Tulsa, was a resounding success. Thanks to everyone who worked hard to make it happen; the OFMA Board, speakers, sponsors, and attendees all play a crucial role in having a successful conference. The educational content was valuable, and everyone enjoyed the networking opportunities. This conference set a record with 290 attendees!

The conference began with an opening ceremony presentation by the Choctaw Nation Color Guard and a warm welcome from our OFMA Chair, Carrie J. Evenson. Michael Kimbro gave an update on the OFMA History Initiative he has been working on with Ken Morris. Zack Henson, our Keynote Speaker, gave a back-by-popular-demand presentation on the City of Stillwater Watershed Management Program. Jonathan Phillips reported on the yearly highlights and future priorities of the Oklahoma NFIP Program. Grant Moore and I shared some background on AI and ChatGPT, Not Just for Your Kids Homework, followed by fun examples and serious applications in our industry. The morning plenary session finished with Darrin Dutton and Shari Anglin sharing What's New in FEMA Floodplain Training and Assessing Your Training Needs.



Zack Henson, Keynote Speaker

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## Letter from the Chair

Jesse Beck EI, CFM | Chair |  
Assistant City Engineer and GIS Manager | City of Ponca City

### A message from OFMA's Chair

Jesse Beck is the Assistant City Engineer and GIS Manager for the City of Ponca City. He is also the City's CRS coordinator and recently successfully defended the City's status as a CRS Class 5 Community. Jesse started school at the University of Missouri-Rolla in Civil Engineering but completed a degree in Geology and Geophysics – the first in a series of interesting life choices. Fifteen years of working in the environmental realm exposed him to GIS work, which he fell in love with, and he finally took a full time job managing Ponca City's GIS. When the Assistant City Engineer job later became available, he saw a chance to set an old wrong to right and at age 41 relearned how to factor a polynomial and passed the FE exam.

His day-to-day work includes designing and managing road and drainage construction projects, reviewing proposed developments, addressing floodplain inquiries, seeing to the varied demands of the CRS, maintaining the City's GIS, and discovering ways to integrate new data and share the system with City users.

Writing these letters is harder than you might guess. Looking back over past chairs' letters for inspiration, I notice a common theme: Hope. Hope and excitement about the year ahead, about the organization, and about our own contribution to both. You've been hearing about some upcoming changes to OFMA. Additional members, additional subjects, changes to the bylaws and the constitution. Some people have expressed concern that we could suffer mission drift; that expanding the organization dilutes the core reasons we first formed. I don't think that's true.

OFMA is like a living, breathing organism. And just like the organism writing this letter, it is composed of smaller parts that are born, grow, and move on. I turn 50 this year. Young to some of you, but not long ago all of us thought it was impossibly old. It's an age when we start to think about legacy, and how our contributions to society will be remembered after we're done crafting them. One of my first jobs with the City was to archive old project files. I scanned and documented hundreds of street projects, projects of concrete and steel; projects meant to stand the test of time. And many of them already torn out and replaced by newer concrete and steel, no doubt designed by people who also thought their legacy was secure, at least at this one intersection.

OFMA sits at a time where legacy is important, too. The decisions we make today will have lasting consequences. Not permanent, because nothing is truly permanent, but important nonetheless. We have outgrown meeting locations like Quartz Mountain and smaller casinos, but we're not yet big enough to fill the bigger venues. The cost for everything has skyrocketed. Volunteers are harder to come by today, and every year another of our tasks becomes a for-hire job.

But the thing I love most about OFMA is the dedication of its members. We always pull together. Three years ago, I believe, we had our vendor social out in a park. At the end of the evening, without anyone asking, all of us joined together and made a project of loading the dozens of tables and hundreds of chairs back into the truck. That sense of community and of ownership is exactly why I love OFMA and is exactly what I hope to continue during my brief time as Chair.

Welcome to a new year. This year may be exciting, or daunting, with changes in Federal policies. But the dedication, resourcefulness, and energy of OFMA's members ensure that we continue to assist one another to protect the people from the water, and protect the water from the people throughout Oklahoma.

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Monday afternoon included eleven different presentations in three tracts on topics including Using ArcGIS Hub and Dashboards for Flood Response Management, Watershed Flood Control Structure Easement Mapping Projects, and City of Norman's Blue Neighborhoods Initiative. Stream Protection and Beyond, BRIC by BRIC - Building a funding application for the Muscogee Nation, Funding Stormwater Quality Projects and Nature Based Solutions, El Reno's Drainage Master Plan, A Multi-year Drainage Improvement Master Plan, Where Greens Meet Streams, Failing Storm Drain Pipes, Planning Tool for Climate Hazards v2.0, and New NWS Services in Oklahoma.

Monday evening included a gathering for new OFMA members sponsored by Freese & Nichols, followed by the always-popular Monday Night Vendor Social. Meshek sponsored games and bowling at the District, and OFMA sponsored the food.

Tuesday began early with OFMA Committee meetings, followed by Regional Representatives Meetings and an update from OEM's Director, Annie Vest.

Our 2024-2025 Regional Representatives are:

- Region 1 — Mike Kimbro PE, CFM, ODOT
- Region 2 — Patrick Wilson PE, CFM, City of Broken Arrow
- Region 3 — Dennis Yochum, LeFlore County
- Region 4 — Johnny Barron PE, CFM, City of Altus
- Region 5 — Travis Small PE, CFM, City of Stillwater

Finishing out our morning, we continued with our education sessions with six different presentations highlighting successful Flood Mitigation Tools to understand Flood Risk, Feasibility of Nature Based Solutions, PFAs Occurrence and Sampling Approaches in Urban Oklahoma, and Effects of Hydrology Vegetation, and Aeration on Emerging Contaminant Removal from Secondarily Treated Wastewater Effluent in Treatment Wetland Mesocosms.

After our business lunch in the Grand Theater, we continued with our breakout sessions covering Hydrologic Modeling: HEC-HMS Power Course, DEQ Who, Guiding to Becoming a Phase II MS4, and the

Intersection Between Floodplain Management and Dam Safety. Many attendees also participated in Minute-to-Win-It games before the evening banquet.

Tuesday evening was our annual awards banquet, which I was honored to emcee. The awards given by OFMA are critical to the growth and recognition of our members and others providing leadership and support to issues critical to our success. Here's a list of those recognized at the banquet:

#### Calendar Contest Winners

1st Place – Tia Snyder, Covington Douglas  
2nd Place – Addabelle Kendall, Catalayah Elementary  
3rd Place – Eden Davis, Tulsa Adventist Academy  
Honorable Mention – Dania Al Qanbar, Will Rogers Elementary

#### Scholarship Winners

Jace Williams – Elgin High School

#### Silver Scoop Award

Bobby Howard - Muscogee (Creek) Nation

#### Special Recognition Award

Carrie Evenson PhD, PE, CFM

#### Outstanding Recognition Award

Alan Dennis PE, CFM – Garver  
Zack Henson CPSWQ, CFM – City of Stillwater  
Carolyn Schultz, CFM – USACE (Retired)  
Dr. Jason Vogel PE – University of Oklahoma  
Dennis Yochum – LeFlore County



2025 TADD Calendar Winner, Tia Snyder

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**Stormwater Innovator Award**

Michelle Chao – City of Norman; Michele Loudenback – City of Norman

**J. Gavin Brady Floodplain Manager of the Year Award**

Seth Barkhimer – City of Shawnee

**W. Kenneth Morris Honorary Lifetime Member Award**

Brandon Claborn PE, CFM – Meshek & Associates

**Leatherbee Robison Education Outreach Award 2024 – Annie Vest CFM, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management**

**Chairman's Award**

2024 – Morgan Lozoya PE, CFM- Meshek & Associates

**Charles Don Ellison Award**

Yohanes Sugeng PE, CFM – Oklahoma Water Resources Board

**Public Official of the Year**

Christi Gillespie – City of Broken Arrow, Vice Mayor

**J. Gavin Brady Floodplain Manager of the Year Award**

Seth Barkhimer – City of Shawnee

**W. Kenneth Morris Honorary Lifetime Member Award**

Brandon Claborn PE, CFM – Meshek & Associates

**R.D Flanagan Gold Project Award**

City of Norman – Blue Neighborhood Program; Platinum Project Award, and City of Norman Vineyards Detention Facility Restoration

**Leatherbee Robison Education Outreach Award 2024 – Annie Vest CFM, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management**

**Chairman's Award**

2024 – Morgan Lozoya PE, CFM- Meshek & Associates

**Charles Don Ellison Award**

Yohanes Sugeng PE, CFM – Oklahoma Water Resources Board

**Public Official of the Year**

Christi Gillespie – City of Broken Arrow, Vice Mayor

Wednesday began with an engaging presentation by William Lehman, USACE followed High Risk Properties in Oklahoma, Sharing what FEMA Knows, and Building on the Foundation of Phase 2 of Oklahoma's First State Flood Plan.

Thanks again to all who participated. We look forward to seeing you in Midwest City in 2025.



Public Official of the Year, Christi Gillespie



**1st Quarter 2025 Virtual Brown Bag  
FEMA Region 6, Risk MAP Webinar  
Hosted by Dustin Busse and Raymond Mejia**



Register for this free webinar with Eventbrite . Feel free to share this information and the registration [link](#) ([FEMA Region 6 Virtual Brown Bag \(VBB\) Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)) with other interested stakeholders. Please note that one Continuing Education Credit hour will be available for Certified Floodplain Managers. 0.1 Credit Hour is also available for Professional Engineers.

**February 25, 2025 –Flood after Fire Lessons Learned: A case study with Shawn Penman and Associates**



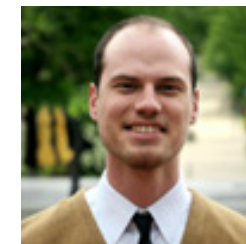
Dr. Shawn Penman is a GIS Specialist/Programmer and RGIS Clearinghouse Manager at the Earth Data Analysis Center at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Penman has 20 years of GIS experience and is a certified GIS Professional (GISP) and a Flood Plain Manager (CFM). Dr. Pen-

man received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of New Mexico in 2002. Her project experience includes GIS applications for floodplain and hazard mapping, Emergency Management, Wildland fire mapping, and interactive web mapping. Dr. Penman has taught GIS in the UNM Geography department as well as for the NMSU NM EDGE Program. She is the Coordinator for the New Mexico Cooperating Technical Partner program and currently serves as Secretary for the New Mexico Floodplain Managers Association. In 2023, she received the New Mexico Geographic Information Council (NMGIC) Green Chile Award for Outstanding Service and in 2024 she received the Grant Pinkerton Service Award from the New Mexico Floodplain Managers Association (NMFMA). Her superpower is finding information on the internet.



Matthew Dudley is the Director of Surface Water for ESP Associates, Inc. in Raleigh, NC. He has over 22 years of experience in the water resources industry following graduation with a BS in Biological Systems Engineering from Virginia Tech. Mr. Dudley

has spent the majority of his career supporting FEMA flood studies across the nation, particularly within Regions 4 and 6. Most recently, Matt has led project teams performing two-dimensional base-level engineering for watersheds across New Mexico as part of both the NM CTP and Compass PTS contracts. Mr. Dudley is a certified floodplain manager, licensed professional engineer, and proud father of two boys.



Ian Harmon is a Water Resources Specialist at ESP Associates, Inc, supporting the Raleigh, North Carolina office, while currently based in Fort Collins, Colorado. He has 3 years of experience since earning a MS in Civil and Environmental Engineering from

the University of Missouri - Columbia. He has worked on and lead technical production for a variety of flood studies in both North Carolina and New Mexico.

**2025 SAVE THE DATES**

**Spring Technical  
Workshop**

**April 3, 2025**

River Spirit Casino Resort,  
Tulsa, OK

**Stormwater Quality  
Technical Workshop**

**July 17, 2024**

Gaillardia Country Club  
5300 Gaillardia Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73142

**Annual Conference**

**September 21-24, 2025**

Reed Conference Center  
5750 Will Rogers Rd.  
Midwest City, OK 73110

**March 25, 2025 –Ethan Guyer and The NFHL and the Flood Hazard and Risk Data Viewer**



Ethan is a GIS Specialist for the Compass JV. He has 2 years of experience in flood plain mapping and community outreach, with a background in environmental science. He enjoys being able to share his skills in GIS to help others identify risk with the use of spatial data. (MA).



**FEMA Region 6 Makes Community Flood Risk Information More Accessible by Releasing Estimated BFE Viewer in Spanish and English**

FEMA Region 6 released its updated Estimated Base Flood Elevation (BFE) Viewer (estBFE) resource. For the first time, this resource shares information in both English and Spanish. This new tool will better serve Spanish-speaking floodplain management officials by offering clearer instructions and easier navigation in a language they understand.

The estBFE Viewer is an interactive online tool that provides Base Level Engineering (BLE) datasets, photographs, maps and reports. It allows users to visualize and download flood risk data specific to their communities. By using the estBFE Viewer, local officials, developers and property owners can determine if they reside in high-risk areas. They can also find effective methods to safeguard their valuable investments.

FEMA Region 6 aims to bridge knowledge gaps in communities by making the BLE data accessible on the estBFE Viewer. With the updated resources, both Spanish and English-speaking officials can assess their flood risk and make informed decisions about how to mitigate their risks.

Across the five Region 6 states, more than 50% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, with more than 35% speaking a language other than English at home. These communities are often more vulnerable to flood hazards due to historic inequities.

FEMA Region 6 is dedicated to improving accessibility to flood risk data, especially in communities lacking data or relying on outdated flood maps. The team will continue to update and translate BLE resources, allowing more communities to take advantage of this free and user-friendly data. Additionally, these resources will guide local officials in incorporating this data into future community planning endeavors.

You can view the English and Spanish versions of the “Using the Region 6 estBFE Viewer” factsheet on the FEMA Region 6 BLE Resource Library.

To learn more, reach out to Region 6’s Communications and Outreach Coordinator Dustin Busse at [Dustin.Busse@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Dustin.Busse@fema.dhs.gov).



**OKLAHOMA**  
Water Resources Board

**Real Estate Agent Training Opportunity**

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board is planning on hosting a course for Real Estate Agents that covers the basics of Floodplain Management and the National Flood Insurance Program, Guide to Risks & Liabilities Involved with Dams and the Well Drilling & Pump Installation Program. If you are interested in attending this 3-hour course, please fill out the survey. Once we have gathered our results, we will contact you with additional details for the course. 3 CECs will be awarded at the end of participation. Please click the link to take our [survey](#) and sign up.

Please contact Cheyenne Reynolds [Cheyenne.Reynolds@owrb.ok.gov](mailto:Cheyenne.Reynolds@owrb.ok.gov) if you have questions.



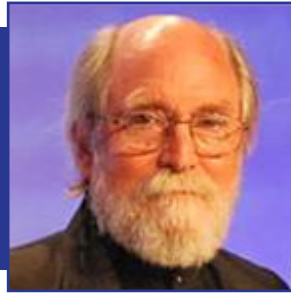
- Dams and Dam Failures
- Dam Safety History and OWRB Missions
- Hazard Creep
- Hazard Reclassification
- Dam Ownership and Real Estate
- Case Studies



- Rules & Regulations
- Domestic vs. Minor Public Water Systems
- Pollution Sources
- Abandoned Wells
- Well Testing (ODEQ)
- Data & Maps (OWRB)



- Residential Property Condition Disclosure Form
- What is a Floodplain
- What is a Flood Zone
- What resources are available to determine if a residential structure is located in a Floodplain



**OFMA DRT Corner**

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

The OFMA Disaster Response Team (DRT) and the Drone Support Team (DST) are always looking for volunteers. If anyone is interested, please contact me.

Remember, if your community has not pre-signed for disaster response, please contact Bill Smith, DRT Coordinator, or Tom Leatherbee, DRT Assistant Coordinator, for a community signup sheet. It will require a council or county commissioner board action to prepare and return the required letter of authorization to request the OFMA DRT/DST to come to your community so – be prepared.

It looks like the rainy season has passed, though some communities are getting very intense and short rainfall events that are still causing flooding. This is not always true floodplain flooding, as in most cases it is stormwater flooding outside the designated SFHA. Some communities have adopted stormwater programs and require a stormwater permit for any development in the watershed. This helps to mitigate localize stormwater flooding that can also cause an increase downstream in the floodplains.

So, your community might consider a stormwater program. I have created one for the City of Wagoner. Every development permit goes through me for review to ensure that there is no significant change in stormwater. For some projects, on-site stormwater detention is required, and there are a number of ways to do that in a yard. For another project, if there is not a significant increase, we issue the permit. We are also doing a city-wide evaluation of street and driveway culverts, and when improvements are needed, and funding is available, we will increase the culvert and ditch sizing to try and accommodate the 1% storm. Sometimes, we can, and sometimes, we have to accept a lower-frequency storm design, but it is better than current conditions.

So look at your stormwater flooding outside the SFHA as it may be a bigger issue that you may think.

We will likely have fall storms so prepare for them with ditch and culvert clearing of debris and sediment. Then plan ahead for winter cleaning of all stormwater facilities before next spring.

Be safe out there – Plan Ahead

Bill Smith, DRT Coordinator

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