

FLOOD & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT UPDATE

August 4, 2006



Make Your Reservations For San Antonio Now

NAFSMA members and colleagues are urged to make their hotel reservations for NAFSMA's upcoming 2006 Annual Meeting in San Antonio as soon as possible. The cutoff date to receive NAFSMA's special group rate of \$99 per night at Omni's La Mansion Del Rio Hotel in downtown San Antonio is next **Friday, August 11, 2006**. **Please call the hotel at 210-518-1000 or 800-292-7300 to make reservations.**

This year's Annual Meeting will be held on September 6-8 on the beautiful Riverwalk in downtown San Antonio. "Future Water Resources Policies in a Post-Katrina World" is the theme of this year's meeting. NAFSMA is very pleased that Major General Don T. Riley, Director of Civil Works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) John Paul Woodley, Jr.; and the Honorable David Maurstad, Director of Mitigation for FEMA; will all be participating in this year's sessions.

Critical issues such as the impacts on recent Supreme Court decisions on water resource agencies, the recent report on the feasibility of numeric effluent limitations on stormwater permits released by a California Stormwater Panel, levee certification, FEMA's map modernization program, and the pending Water Resources Development Act passed last month by the Senate, will all be discussed at the San Antonio meeting. Successful comprehensive local projects will also be shared with meeting participants.

NAFSMA's Annual Meeting will provide a unique opportunity for information exchange and in-depth discussion between local agencies and their federal partners. We urge you to take advantage of this opportunity that will help shape your agency's water resources activities for years to come.

This year's special evening event, which is hosted by the Michael Baker Corporation will be a dinner at the Knibbe Ranch. Dust off your boots and prepare for an evening of fun and opportunity for informal discussions with colleagues.

A copy of the registration form and agenda are available at www.nafsma.org. Please feel free to call Susan Gilson in the National Office at 202-218-4133 if you have any questions.



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NAFSMA Launches Excellence in Communication Awards Program

August 16 Deadline for Submissions Fast Approaching

NAFSMA's New Excellence in Communication Awards will recognize the public service and outreach work by municipal and private agencies in educating the public about the protection of lives, property and economic activity from the adverse impacts of storm and floodwaters. Awards will be given in two categories: public awareness of flooding and flood prevention and improving water quality.

NAFSMA will also present two additional awards; the Exceptional Merit award will recognize agencies with a service population of fewer than 250,000 or a private firm with fewer than 20 employees, and the President's Award will be given to an agency for exceptional performance in both judged topical categories.

A submission may include broadcast television, cable television, public service announcements, radio, Web pages, printed materials, pamphlets, advertisements and/or outdoor advertising. Media has to have been aired, published, printed or displayed in the period between July 1, 2005 and July 1, 2006.

Eligibility for the Excellence in Communication Award is open to all public entities and private firms. Entry costs for NAFSMA members will be waived. For non-NAFSMA members and private firms, a fee of \$100 will be charged for each category submission.

Entries should be sent to Ken Ericson at ericsonk@carmengroup.com, via fax to (202) 478-1734 or by mail to NAFSMA Awards; 1301 K St. NW, Eighth Floor East, Washington, D.C. 20005.

If you have any questions, please contact Ken Ericson at ericsonk@carmengroup.com. Submissions must be postmarked by August 16, 2006. Nominees will be notified about the award decision in September and the award ceremony will take place later in the fall to honor the winners.

Senate Approves Long-Awaited Water Resources Development Act

Coming just about a year after the House completed its action on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) the bill that authorizes the activities and projects of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Senate approved its version of the bill on July 19, 2006. While some of the Corps reform provisions were debated on the floor and faced a roll call vote, the overall bill was approved by Senators on a voice vote.

Conference committee discussions have begun at the staff level. Among the key issues that will need to be addressed in conference are peer review, the Coastal Louisiana Project (which was approved by the House before Hurricane Katrina), and national levee safety issues, since the Senate bill includes such a program and the House bill does not. It is important to note that the House bill was approved last summer, prior to the Hurricanes that hit the Gulf area early last fall.

Mid-Course Adjustment Leads to Changes in FEMA's Map Mod Program

The course of Flood Map Modernization (Map Mod) should be adjusted to better meet the needs of map users by focusing more closely on communities at greatest flood risk, FEMA concluded following a mid-course review of the initiative. As a result of this adjustment, FEMA will provide additional engineering data and will increase the number of miles of delineation that are compliant with the floodplain boundary standard to the communities most at risk for flooding.

FEMA conducted the mid-course evaluation 2 years into Map Mod, taking into account experience to date, input from Congress and Federal agencies, stakeholder feedback, adoption of the Floodplain Boundary Standard (which addresses the difference between the ground elevation and the flood elevation of a given area), and requests for engineering updates submitted by States in their annual State business plans.

This course adjustment constitutes a change from the original primary focus of Map Mod, which called for producing digital flood maps for 100 percent of the Nation within a 5-year period. The original plan for Map Mod called for converting all flood maps from paper to digital format, updating roughly 20 percent of map panels with new flood risk information, and adding 13,700 completely new digital map panels to cover communities that previously were not mapped.

FEMA remains committed to the original vision, but the immediate goal of providing digital maps for the entire country will be delayed in favor of focusing on the areas of highest risk.

FEMA estimates that three quarters of all mapped stream and coastal miles will meet the new standard. Under original Map Mod plans, just 57 percent of coastal and stream miles and only 32 percent of the population would have met the Floodplain Boundary Standard.

The mid-course adjustment also will free additional funds for engineering analysis. Because the revised focus will free funds for engineering studies, it also will increase the percentage of mapped streams and coastal miles with new, updated, or validated engineering analyses, as well as the percentage of population covered by maps with new or revised engineering information.

As a result of the adjustment, 92 percent of the Nation's population will be covered by digital maps. An estimated 65 percent of the Nation's continental land mass will be covered by digital maps by the end of Map Mod, rather than the 100 percent originally sought. Much of the land that will not be mapped, however, is more sparsely populated.

To accomplish this, FEMA is changing the way it prioritizes funding beginning in 2006, analyzing flood risk at the census block group level rather than at the county level. Census block groups are the smallest geographic units for which the U.S. Census Bureau develops data and will allow FEMA to focus more specifically on the areas that are more populated and do not meet the Floodplain Boundary Standard.

The mid-course adjustment recognizes that the necessary quantity of new flood data and mapping far exceeds the scope originally envisioned. FEMA believes that delaying completion of digital mapping and increasing the amount of money available for engineering analysis will best meet the needs of the Nation.

More information about the mid-course adjustment can be found on FEMA's Web site at the following link: http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/mm_mca.shtm

The Source for this article is Doug Plasencia, Map Mod (602) 798-7552