

2026  
ANNUAL  
MEETING  
JULY 13–16  
ANNAPOLIS • MARYLAND  
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# Grounded in Mission: Leading Through Complexity

2026 NAFSMA Annual Meeting | July 13–16, 2026 | Annapolis, Maryland  
Graduate Hotel Annapolis

Preliminary Agenda — Times and sessions subject to change

## Monday, July 13, 2026

1:00 – 4:00 PM **Registration** *Atrium*

## Tuesday, July 14, 2026

7:00 AM – 4:00 PM **Registration** *Atrium*

8:00 – 8:15 AM **Welcome** *Regatta Ballroom*

8:15 – 8:45 AM **Welcome by Maryland Secretary of the Environment-Serena Coleman McIlwain** *Regatta Ballroom*

8:45 – 9:30 AM **Opening Plenary** *Regatta Ballroom*

Alex Sheen is the founder of because I said I would, a social movement and nonprofit built on the power of commitment. A five-time TEDx speaker, author, and internationally recognized humanitarian, Alex has distributed more than 15 million Promise Cards to 178 countries. Drawing on his own experience navigating profound personal loss, Alex explores what it means to keep your word when life is hardest. For water resource professionals leading agencies through uncertainty and change, his message is both timely and grounding: the commitments we make to our communities and our teams are what hold us together.

9:30 – 10:00 AM **FEMA Update — Priorities, Programs, and the Path Forward** *Regatta Ballroom*

Hear directly from FEMA leadership (Invited) on the agency's current priorities, program updates, and what's ahead for flood mapping, mitigation grants, and the National Flood Insurance Program.

10:00 – 10:15 AM **Break**

10:15 – 10:45 AM **NOAA Update: Weather Data, Forecasting, and Flood Risk** *Regatta Ballroom*

Dr. David Novak, National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will provide an update on NOAA's programs and priorities related to weather forecasting, flood risk data, and the tools and technical resources available to support local flood and stormwater management agencies. Dr. Novak's presentation will address current efforts to improve flood forecasting, the status of rainfall frequency data updates including NOAA Atlas 15, and how NWS is working to strengthen partnerships with local agencies on the front lines of flood response.

**10:45 – 11:30 AM Rethinking Flood Insurance: The Future of the NFIP, Privatization, and New Tools for Resilience** *Regatta Ballroom*

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As federal flood insurance programs face mounting pressure and private markets expand, this session examines what's ahead for the NFIP, the growing role of private insurance and parametric products, and what these shifts mean for local agencies and the communities we serve. Jackie Higgins, Swiss Re, addresses the future of NFIP reauthorization, privatization trends, and how tools like parametric insurance can strengthen resilience where traditional coverage falls short. Adam Nayak, PhD candidate at Columbia University, draws on his research to examine how changing storm patterns are reshaping the flood insurance market and what policy adaptations and financial tools better reflect today's risk realities.

- Jackie Higgins, Swiss Re
- Adam Nayak, Columbia University

**12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch** *Regatta Ballroom*

**1:30 – 2:00 PM Building the Diversion: How Fargo-Moorhead Rethought Funding, Real Estate, and Delivery** *Regatta Ballroom*

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The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project forced its local sponsors to rethink how large federal partnership projects get built. Facing billions in cost-share obligations and thousands of acres of real estate acquisition across two states, the Diversion Authority developed innovative approaches to both challenges. John Shockley, Attorney at Law, Ohnstad Twichell, PC will share what worked, what didn't, and what the Fargo-Moorhead experience reveals about the pressure points where large civil works projects stall.

**2:00 – 3:00 PM Beyond Federal Dollars: Panel Discussion Innovative Funding Approaches for Flood Risk Projects** *Regatta Ballroom*

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As federal budgets tighten, local agencies are developing creative strategies to advance critical projects without waiting for traditional appropriations. This panel brings together practitioners with federal and private sector experience to share what's working and where opportunities lie.

Travis Rayfield, formerly Commander of the USACE Kansas City District and now with HDR, will offer a practitioner's perspective on tools like CWIFP, alternative delivery authorities under Sections 203 and 204, and locally-led approaches that stretch federal investment further.

The discussion will be moderated by Ashlee Grace, Deputy Director of Development Services at the Mile High Flood District, who brings 15 years of strategic and urban planning experience and a ground-level view of how local agencies piece together funding to get projects built.

**3:00 – 3:15 PM Break**

**3:15 – 4:00 PM Protecting Your Agency: Litigation Preparedness and Regulatory Updates in a Changing Legal Landscape** *Regatta Ballroom*

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Flood and stormwater agencies face growing legal exposure before, during, and after major storm events. This panel brings together legal experts to address how agencies can reduce liability through proactive preparation and what to expect in the aftermath of a significant flood event. A separate discussion covers recent regulatory changes reshaping the legal landscape for water resource managers, from permitting requirements to federal program obligations. Practical, actionable guidance for agency leaders navigating both the courtroom and the regulatory environment.

- Scott Shapiro, Downey Brand
- Karin Jacoby, Husch Blackwell
- Molly Lawrence, VanNess Feldman

**4:15 – 5:00 PM Innovation in the Public Sector** *Regatta Ballroom*

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Flood and stormwater agencies are being asked to do more with less. NAFSMA responded by forming its Innovation Workgroup, a member-driven effort to identify promising tools, technologies, and practices. This session offers a first look at the workgroup's progress, the themes emerging from member input, and the role NAFSMA can play in accelerating innovative approaches across the field.

**6:00 – 10:00 PM NAFSMA Annual Meeting Welcome Dinner-Naval Academy Club**

**Wednesday, July 15, 2026**

**7:30 – 8:30 AM Peer Collaboration Breakfast — All Attendees Invited** *Atrium*

Some of the most valuable conversations at the Annual Meeting happen when peers sit down together to share what is working, what is not, and what keeps them up at night. Choose the topic that matters most to your agency, join a small group of peers facing similar challenges, and engage in a facilitated conversation designed to surface practical insights and real solutions.

**9:00 – 10:00 AM Keynote: Accelerating USACE Projects — A New Federal-State-Local Partnership Model** *Regatta Ballroom*

Florida and the Department of the Army reached a landmark agreement to accelerate Everglades restoration, one of the most ambitious federal-state partnerships in the history of water resources. Drew Bartlett, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District and Major General Jason Kelly, former Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division offer an inside look at how this agreement came together, what it means for project delivery, and what it could signal for the future of federal-state-local collaboration on water resource projects nationwide.

**10:15 – 11:00 AM USACE Update: Ryan Fisher, Acting Director of Civil Works, USACE**

Ryan Fisher oversees the full scope of the Corps' Civil Works program, from flood risk management and navigation to ecosystem restoration and emergency response. In this session, Fisher will share the Corps' current priorities and offer an insider perspective on how federal water resources policy is taking shape in 2026.

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Leading Through Complexity: Case Studies from Across the U.S.** *Regatta Ballroom*

- *Mike Davis, Director, Charlotte Stormwater Program — Managing pressure from rapid growth, shifting weather patterns, and an evolving regulatory environment through asset management and updated NOAA Atlas 15 precipitation data.*
- *Todd Bernardy, California Department of Water Resources — Developing a methodology for quantifying benefits and cost savings when non-federal sponsors implement portions of authorized projects ahead of USACE design and construction.*

**12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch** *Regatta Ballroom*

**1:30 – 2:45 PM Built for What's Coming: Tools for Extreme Weather** *Regatta Ballroom*

*Extreme weather is arriving faster, more intensely, and in places we did not plan for. This session asks a direct question: what do we actually need? Practitioners and technology providers will examine real-time storm modeling, sensor networks, and flood warning systems to help member agencies decide where to invest, what to trust, and what gaps remain.*

*Case studies will feature North Carolina's state-led FIMAN program, integrating stream gages, inundation mapping, and public alerts into a single coordinated network, and Mile High Flood District's work upgrading its warning infrastructure for more intense and unpredictable Front Range storms.*

*This session will be convened by Erin Cavazos of the San Antonio River Authority, who is leading regional efforts to build and connect flood warning systems that serve one of the most flood-vulnerable metros in the country.*

**2:45 – 3:00 PM Break**

**3:00 – 4:00 PM Lessons from Washington State: 2025 Flood Response and Recovery**

Washington State experienced significant flooding in 2025, testing the preparedness, coordination, and response capabilities of agencies at every level. This panel brings together representatives from Brandon Smith, Deputy Director from Pierce County, Michelle Clark, Executive Director King County, and Jonathon Loos, Flood Policy Lead from the State of Washington to reflect on what happened, what worked, and what needs to change.

**4:00 – 4:30 PM The Human Side of Infrastructure: Why Good Clients Build Better Projects**

David Skuodas, Education and Outreach Director, Mile High Flood District. Infrastructure design and construction projects are a team sport, and public agencies set the tone through their role as the project client. This session focuses on three client behaviors that consistently separate successful projects from painful ones: building professional trust, paying fairly and on time, and managing risk equitably.

**Thursday, July 16, 2026**

**7:30 – 8:30 AM Peer Collaboration — All Attendees Invited** *Atrium*

**8:30 – 8:45 AM NAFSMA Business Meeting** *Regatta Ballroom*

**8:45 – 9:15 AM NAFSMA Awards Presentation** *Regatta Ballroom*

**9:15 – 9:45 AM EPA Update: Stormwater Permitting, Water Quality, and Funding Opportunities** *Regatta Ballroom*

Caitlin McHale (Invited) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shares the latest on EPA priorities, programs, and regulatory developments affecting flood and stormwater management agencies. This session covers updates on stormwater permitting, water quality standards, and funding opportunities, with time for direct dialogue on the issues most relevant to member agencies.

**9:45 – 10:30 AM Ahead of the Storm: Real-World Approaches to Funding and Delivering Stormwater Infrastructure** *Regatta Ballroom*

Storms are intensifying, rainfall patterns are shifting, and the infrastructure built to protect communities is increasingly being tested beyond its original design. This panel brings together practitioners with real-world experience finding innovative ways to fund, design, and build flood and stormwater infrastructure in a changing environment.

**10:30 – 11:30 AM DC Insights: The Legislative and Regulatory Landscape** *Regatta Ballroom*

Federal advocates offer a candid briefing from Washington on the legislative and regulatory landscape shaping flood and stormwater policy. This session covers the latest on WRDA 2026, FY26 appropriations, NFIP reauthorization, and the evolving priorities of USACE, FEMA, and EPA, with practical insight on what it all means for member agencies.

- *Kyle Gilster, Office Managing Partner of Washington, DC, Husch Blackwell*
- *Geoff Bowman, Vice President, Van Scoyoc Associates*
- *Julie Minerva, Carpi & Clay Government Relations*

**11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Earning Community Confidence** *Regatta Ballroom*

Public trust in flood and stormwater agencies is hard-won and easily lost. This panel brings together agency leaders, a public opinion researcher strategist to share what works when communicating risk, building credibility, and engaging communities before, during, and after flood events.

Panelists include:

- **Andrew Trelease, General Manager, Clark County Regional Flood Control District**, who will share how his agency uses animation and creative storytelling to make flood risk information both engaging and accessible to the public.
- **Paul Hitlin, Senior Research Manager, Partnership for Public Service**, who will offer research-based insights on public trust and how agencies can strengthen their credibility with the communities they serve.

This panel will be moderated by **Laura Kroeger, Executive Director, Mile High Flood District**, who brings firsthand experience incorporating innovative communication strategies that connect with diverse communities across the Denver metro.

**12:30 PM Meeting Wrap Up**



**NAFSMA THANKS OUR SPONSORS FOR THE 2026 ANNUAL FLOOD AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT MEETING**