

RAFT to the Rescue

IAFSM's Rapid Assistance Flood Team (RAFT) helps Watseka after Major Flooding

~Mike Sutfin, City of Ottawa

"What I saw that day in Watseka was devastating. So many people displaced from their homes, yet at the same time I saw a community that wasn't willing to falter. A community that came together to help each other despite everything they had been through. I was honored to be on the ground with Watseka Mayor Harwood and see firsthand the work the Rapid Assistance Flood Team does in emergency situations in quickly accessing the damage and providing immediate aid to our citizens." ~Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti

Floodplain managers know the most effective time to make major changes to a community's risk exposure is immediately after a flood disaster. This is done thru strict enforcement of the substantial damage regulations (the 50% rule). Although damage assessments are typically the most difficult job local floodplain managers face, they result in the most effective risk reduction.

Despite being blessed with some of the best floodplain managers in the entire nation, Illinois' floodplain managers often feel overwhelmed following a flood. The purpose of creating the IAFSM Rapid Assistance Flood Team (RAFT) is to use the pool of talent in IAFSM and assist communities impacted by flooding or other natural disasters.



On July 30, 2015, IAFSM's new Rapid Assistance Flood Team (RAFT) received its first request for assistance. Watseka Building Official Thom Webster was dealing with a severe flood event and hundreds of damage assessments needed to be done. As a new floodplain manager, Thom was overwhelmed. The RAFT team was offered, and Watseka Mayor Bob Harwood eagerly agreed to this gesture of help.

IAFSM Floodplain Management Chairman Mike Sutfin quickly organized volunteers from Peoria County, City of Ottawa, Illinois State Water Survey, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Two days later, the RAFT team assembled at the Watseka City Hall. The City of Watseka expertly organized the flood damaged areas into 5 separate districts with maps identifying flooded areas (28 acres) and street locations of buildings with previous damage. The city also collected county tax information showing property values.

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Three separate RAFT teams were assigned work areas. Each team was led by a RAFT member with damage assessment experience. A city official accompanied each team. The city had also previously notified citizens via radio and newspaper that IAFSM's RAFT would be in the area on that day.

During the course of the day, RAFT members did flood damage assessments for nearly 120 buildings. After the surveys were completed, members then assembled at city hall again and logged nearly 25 substantial damage reports into FEMA's Substantial Damage Estimator (SDE) software. The surveys with photo documentation were given to Watseka at the end of the day.



RAFT member Aaron Thomas said, "meeting IAFSM friends in Watseka and getting so much work done in just a few hours left me with a great feeling of pride and accomplishment. It was also nice to meet new friends in Watseka and help them get thru this difficult flood event."

In its first deployment, RAFT has effectively promoted the main objectives of the IAFSM which is to: 1) Promote the common interest in floodplain and storm water management, 2) Enhance cooperation among various local, state, and federal agencies and 3) Encourage effective and innovative approaches to managing the State's floodplain and storm water management systems.

Most importantly, IASFM created a lasting bond with the City of Watseka. "The City knew that damage assessment needed to be done, quickly, accurately and in a professional manner and RAFT helped us accomplish that need" said Mayor Robert Harwood. This initial RAFT deployment proved to be a very successful project.

Q & A on IAFSM's Rapid Assistance Flood Team (RAFT)

Q: What is the RAFT?

A: RAFT is the Rapid Assistance Flood Team. Members of the RAFT are all active in the IAFSM. Members are all Certified Floodplain Managers. They represent local, state and federal government, the private sector, and other professional disciplines. RAFT members are all volunteers and have agreed to assist other communities in times of need.







Q: What is the purpose of **RAFT**?

A: Often, local floodplain managers will be overwhelmed following a flood. Illinois is blessed with some of the best floodplain managers in the entire nation. The IAFSM has coordinated a program to provide these experts free-of-charge to local officials following a flood.

Q: Who can volunteer with RAFT?

A: RAFT volunteers must be pre-approved by IAFSM Floodplain Management Committee. They must be Certified Floodplain Managers and have the experience and training completed to assist the host community. Volunteers provide their own vehicle and equipment. RAFT volunteers must sign liability waiver forms annually. To volunteer and join RAFT, contact IAFSM Floodplain Management Chair Mike Sutfin for pre-approval and training.

Q: Will RAFT assistance cost my community?

A: There is no charge to the community. RAFT members volunteer their time. Per diem and travel costs will be reimbursed directly to the RAFT volunteer by IAFSM at the State of Illinois travel rates.

Q: How does a community request RAFT assistance?

A: Local officials who need help with post flood damage assessments can request RAFT members through Mike Sutfin, the IAFSM Floodplain Management Chair. A formal request letter must be sent to the IAFSM Floodplain Management Chairman. This letter also serves as a release of liability. A sample request letter is provided in the RAFT packet, which can be obtained from Mike Sutfin.

Q: How long can I expect RAFT volunteers to help?

A: IAFSM estimates that in most cases, RAFT volunteers can complete damage assessments in a day. Therefore, RAFT volunteers will travel on a work-day basis. No overnight lodging is assumed. However, if there is overnight lodging request, expenses will be a responsibility of the host community.

Flood Regulations Not a Taking

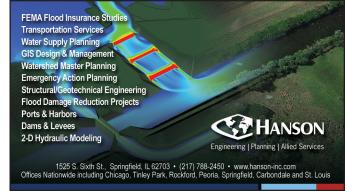
~Excerpt from jimschwab.com, August 16, 2015 blog post

In a ruling on August 12, the South Carolina Supreme Court, in Columbia Venture v. Richland County, did the nation a great favor.... Columbia Venture, a joint venture firm led by Burroughs & Chapin, a developer based in the Myrtle Beach area, sued over Richland County's application of floodplain regulations based on an expansion of the floodway and regulatory floodplain by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) while the firm was acquiring the property from an area farmer about a decade ago.

Among other points, Columbia Venture alleged that the county's regulations prohibiting development in the floodway as newly defined by FEMA constituted a flood easement across its property without compensation. Both the trial court referee and the state high court disagreed, noting that any financial losses experienced by Columbia Venture were outweighed by "the important public purposes of mitigating the social and economic costs of flooding" served by the county's ordinances,

which also "further the important federal purposes" of reducing flood losses. Moreover, all county taxpayers and residents benefited "by reducing the County's potential liability incurred in emergency response, rescue, evacuation, and other actions taken during a flood."

For the full blog post discussing the case, and links to other media coverage, visit <u>http://www.jimschwab.com/</u><u>Hablarbooks/2015/08/16/flood-regulations-not-a-taking/</u>. We hope to have Jim speak at our 2016 annual conference, so stay tuned for more!



State of Illinois Model Stormwater Ordinance

~Emily Poynter Jenkins, ISWS, and Brian Eber, IDNR

In June 2015, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (IDNR/OWR) published the Urban Flooding Awareness Act Report. The report found that precipitation has increased by 10% in the last century with extreme precipitation events increased by as much as 40%. At the same time, urban areas of the state saw an increase in developed land cover of 79%. Further findings showed that nearly 95% of all flood claims were located within urban areas and approximately 90% of those were located outside of the floodplain. The report made it clear that combating urban flood damages requires a coordinated approach from state and local governments.

A common thread developed while compiling the report: there is a need for improved local stormwater management decision-making. As a first step in this process, the Federal Emergency Mangement Agency (FEMA), IDNR/OWR, and

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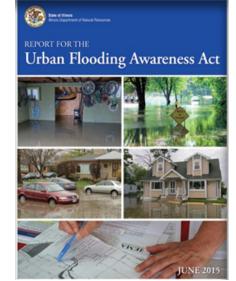
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Modeling

Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) have collaborated to develop a model stormwater ordinance. A committee of stormwater management experts from the public and private sector determined specific recommendations and regulations to include in the ordinance. The ordinance then underwent a thorough review process. The model stormwater ordinance applies recommendations from the Urban Flood Awareness Act report. A critical component in that report is the effort for local governmental entities to adopt sound, comprehensive stormwater management ordinances that reflect best practices such as:

- 1.Incorporate green infrastructure into municipal and county development regulations by modifying regulations that restrict use of green infrastructure and add regulations to encourage use of green infrastructure in capital improvement projects when possible.
- 2.Incorporate stormwater infiltration, evapotranspiration and storage into new development and redevelopment wherever possible.
- 3.Incentivize developers and property owners to dedicate property for increased open space in developing areas, and current open space should be protected to allow for evapotranspiration, infiltration and stormwater storage.

The model stormwater management ordinance should be a valuable resource for counties and municipalities to use when drafting or revising their own stormwater runoff requirements. Illinois's urbanizing jurisdictions will find this model ordinance helpful in supplementing their existing codes; the model also provides jurisdictions a new stormwater management ordinance that can stand-alone. This model stormwater management ordinance provides basic content coupled with commentary on how to adjust to minimum requirements. Each local jurisdiction should review the components and tailor their ordinances in accordance with local conditions and development activities.

The model ordinance is available now for local officials. Very soon you will be able to download a copy of this model ordinance from the IDNR/OWR website or from www.illinoisfloods.org If there are any questions or comments regarding this model stormwater management ordinance please contact the IDNR/OWR.



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New Definition of "Waters of the United States" includes Floodplain Connection

~Tom Slowinski, V3 Companies

On August 28, 2015, the new Clean Water Rule went into effect. The Rule redefines the scope of "waters of the United States", including wetlands, protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The rule does not change the activities regulated by the Corps of Engineers, but does define the waters or wetlands where the activities are regulated.

The final Rule defines "waters of the United States" to include eight categories of jurisdictional waters. Two of these categories, "all **adjacent** waters" and **"floodplain waters**/ **wetlands**", are related to wetlands or waters located within the 100-year floodplain, and as such, it may be beneficial for Floodplain Managers to have some familiarity with the Rule.

Wetlands or waters **adjacent** to traditional navigable waters and interstate waters are jurisdictional based upon their hydrological and ecological connections to, and interactions with, those waters or their tributaries. (The rule also more precisely defines "tributaries"). "Adjacent" means bordering, contiguous or neighboring. To determine adjacency, the final rule has identified three circumstances under which waters would be "neighboring". Waters, including wetlands, are "neighboring" and therefore jurisdictional if they meet one of these circumstances:

- Located in whole or in part within 100 feet of traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, or a tributary.
- Located in whole or in part in the **100-year floodplain** and that are within 1,500 feet of traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, or a tributary ("floodplain waters").
- Located in whole or in part within 1,500 feet of traditional navigable waters, the territorial seas, or within 1,500 feet of the ordinary high water mark of the Great Lakes.

Floodplain waters/wetlands are also a jurisdictional category of waters, defined as:

- All waters, including wetlands and ponds, not considered **adjacent** waters, identified within the 100-year floodplain of traditional navigable waters or interstate waters, where they are determined on a case-by-case basis to have a significant nexus to a traditional navigable water or interstate water. (This does not include the floodplain of tributaries to traditional navigable waters or interstate waters.)
- All waters, including wetlands and ponds, not considered **adjacent** waters, located within 4,000 feet of the high tide line or ordinary water mark of traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, impoundments of waters of the US, or a jurisdictional tributary, where they are determined on a case-by case basis to have a significant nexus to a traditional navigable water or interstate water.

The new Rule also defines areas that do not qualify as "waters of the US". Many areas are listed. Stormwater control features constructed to convey, treat, or store stormwater that are created in dry land, are specifically identified in the list of areas that do not qualify as "waters of the US".





New FIRMs Coming in DuPage County

~Shauna Urlacher, P.E., CFM, V3 Companies ~Shelly Fuller, CFM, ISWS

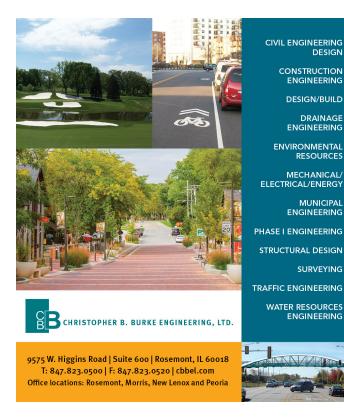
The DuPage County Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are currently being updated as part of a nationwide FEMA Risk MAP initiative. Preliminary floodplain maps were released on June 3, 2015, and presented to the public at an Open House on July 29, 2015. Included in the map revision are new study areas and effective data that already appear on the FIRM as well as effective data being brought into the digital format for the first time. The Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS), a FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP), is integrating data for multi-county communities into the FIRM, the FIRM Database, and the Flood Insurance Study (FIS). In addition, they are incorporating new studies and Letters of Map Revision (LOMR). DuPage County (DPC), also a FEMA CTP, managed the new studies and prepared the updates. The new studies are located within the East Branch DuPage River, Salt Creek, and Sawmill Creek watersheds and portions of the West Branch DuPage River watershed.

The 30-day comment period on the preliminary maps began on July 29 and ended August 28th. These comments include non-technical issues related to the mapping/FIS and do not require additional data for resolution. ISWS and DPC are dividing the comments based on their scope of work and each will develop resolutions for FEMA's approval in the next few months. Communities can expect comment acknowledgement letters in October, which will be followed by letters indicating the approved resolutions to each community.

The next step in the process will be the 90-day appeal period. Appeals are technical challenges to the FIRM and require data on the part of the appellant. The following 4 items are appealable:

- 1.New or revised Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) & base flood depths
- 2.New or revised Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) boundaries
- 3. Changes in SFHA zone designation
- 4.New or revised regulatory floodway boundaries

The Notice for the 90 day appeal period will be published in the Federal Register in the middle to late November. A FEMA Guidance Document for appeals will also be sent to communities just prior to the start of the appeal period.



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FEQ and PVSTATS Modeling Class

DuPage County and USGS are seeking to determine interest from stormwater professionals in future seminars and short courses to cover the use of FEQ (USGS dynamic hydraulic model) and PVSTATS (DuPage County base-flood statistics program) for floodplain determination. These methods are used in the preliminary maps issued by FEMA on June 3, 2015 for DuPage County.

Please contact Erik Gil at <u>egil@cbbel.com</u> to express interest in attending a seminar or short course, or for more information about the course content.

From the Chair

~ E. Stuart Richter, CFM, WCPZA

It seems like I just finished my first "From the Chair", and now another is due. As yet I am unable to go on with my idea in the last newsletter, that of having "guest" (or is it ghost) writers, but it will happen.

I think back to my first tour of duty as IAFSM Chair and the goals I had at that time. One of them was to create relationships with other organizations. I wanted to pique their interest in IAFSM's goal of reducing flood losses. I wanted to especially reach out to the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). I had hoped to do this through the creation of a new chair on our board, the Inter-Organizational Chair. We have had good people take on that job which has turned out to be more complicated than first expected.

There has recently been some light at the end of the tunnel as far as APA is concerned. Over the past number of months I have been following and encouraging APA as they've created an APA Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery Interest Group. It has officially been accepted by APA as a subset and Officers have been elected. I follow the group on LinkedIn though I am not a member of APA.

Our goal should continue to be strengthening relationships between IAFSM and the Illinois Chapters of APA (ILAPA) and ASLA (ILASLA). We would like to someday see cross presentations between these organizations where each can get credits for such presentations. I sincerely hope that this can be accomplished and that each group can learn from the others, which would grow our common goals of providing people with safe and rewarding environments.

Our board has taken this to heart and we will work towards this goal over the next few years. From what I have seen recently, there may be a bond growing between APA and ASFPM. This could in turn help us in reaching our own goal at the state level. We already have one of our own, Rich Roths, working behind the scenes and the future looks brighter.

This is short and that is good. I will leave you with this: The biggest problem people my age have with computers is the "ID Ten T" problem. That is, "ID10T". ~Stu

Minnesota's New Buffer Law Protects Drinking Water

Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton's new landmark buffer initiative was recently signed into law, designating an estimated 110,000 acres of land for water quality buffer strips statewide. The law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers of up to 50 feet along rivers, streams, and ditches that will help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment in order to protect drinking water and meet water quality standards. The new law provides flexibility and financial support for landowners to install and maintain buffers, and boost compliance with buffer laws across Minnesota. For more information, visit Minnesota's web site and read the fact sheet.

Speakers, Vendors, Exhibitors, and Tours Wanted for 2016 Conference

The IAFSM Annual Conference will be Wednesday and Thursday, March 9-10, 2016 at the Tinley Park Convention Center in Tinley Park, Illinois.

Call for Speakers

IAFSM invites speakers from municipal, public and private sectors to present information on floodplain and stormwater management topics. Our conference theme is "Partners in Planning". Preference will be given to presentations that highlight collaboration and partnership themes, especially pertaining to cross-discipline or cross-agency planning examples.

Once again, IAFSM intends for the 2016 Annual Conference to provide more focused/in-depth education and training in the principle committee disciplines of IAFSM including *Floodplain Management, Stormwater Management, Mitigation, Wetlands, CRS, and Legislation.* To that end, a portion of the 2016 Conference Breakout Sessions will be dedicated to specific core topics developed by IAFSM Technical Committee might dedicate an entire session to training or issues on a specific kind of BMP measure. Remaining Conference Breakout Sessions will be dedicated to topics completely based on presentation abstracts submitted by the membership as part of this call for speakers.

The deadline is October 31, 2015. Presenters will be notified of their acceptance or denial by December 19, 2015. Email abstracts or questions to Glenn Heistand, Conference Chair, at <u>heistand@illinois.edu</u>.

Vendors and Exhibitors Invited

IAFSM invites vendors and others to exhibit at the 2016 Annual Conference. Register early! On or before February 1, the fee for exhibitors is \$750. Between February 1-12, the fee is \$850.

Tours / Field Trips Wanted

Does your community have a floodplain, stormwater, mitigation, or wetland project in the vicinity of the conference hotel that you would like to show to other floodplain managers? IAFSM is considering offering Technical Field Tours again, if enough tour sites are submitted to make up a tour. Please submit nominations for potential tour sites.

For More Information

For more information, view the complete Call for Speakers on our website at <u>http://tinyurl.com/qxgpcga</u> or contact Glenn Heistand, Conference Chair, at <u>heistand@illinois.edu</u>, or Sarah Harbaugh, Executive Secretary, at <u>iafsm@illinoisfloods.org</u>.





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CEC Education & Training Opportunities

Looking for training opportunities? The following opportunities are coming up in the next few months. If you are looking for credits, be sure to review the material and confirm they meet the appropriate requirements.

XP-SWMM Seminar

IAFSM is hosting a 2-day XP-SWMM seminar, taught by Anthony Kuch from XP Solutions on October 13-14, 2015 in Woodridge, IL. This seminar reached full capacity in less than 2 weeks! Therefore, the registration is currently closed.

We have started a waiting list for this seminar and we may provide another XP-SWMM seminar over the winter, if we have enough interest. Please contact Shauna Urlacher, Stormwater Management Committee Chair, at <u>surlacher@v3co.com</u>, if you are interested in attending the second offering of this seminar and you are not currently on the waiting list.

Illinois River Conference

The Illinois River: A Watershed Parnership, October 27 – 29, 2015, Peoria, IL, Pere Marquette Hotel Conference presentations that will interest Water Resources professionals include the Urban Flood Awareness Act, Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, Watershed Planning, and Watershed Partner Café.

EMI Training Opportunities:

Did you know that FEMA offers tuition-free courses on floodplain management? Did you know eligible individuals taking courses at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland are reimbursed for travel costs and housing on campus is of no charge? If you are a state, local or tribal government representative, recognized volunteer organization representative, an active emergency management organization representative, or represent state or local fire organizations, you are eligible. The only cost to eligible individuals is the price of an on-campus meal ticket (\$125.20 for 5-days), and, of course, your time. Below is a partial list of upcoming FEMA Floodplain Management Courses. Learn more at the EMI website. http://training.fema.gov/EMI

- o Managing Floodplain Development thru the NFIP November 16-19
- o Hazus-MH for Floodplain Mangers, December 14-17
- o Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts, April 11-14, 2016

Webinars/ Online:

- STARR/FEMA, <u>atkinsglobalna.webex.com</u> and search by title, free-registration required
 - o Substantial Damage Estimator 2.1, October 14
 - o CRS Webinar Series: Drainage System Maintenance, October 21
 - o CRS Webinar Series: Preparing for a Verification Visit, November 17
 - o CRS Webinar Series: Floodplain Management Planning, November 18
 - o CRS Webinar Series: Introduction to CRS, December 15
 - o CRS Webinar Series: Developing Outreach Projects, December 16
- Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), Developing and Implementing Dam Removal Projects, September 24
- Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), Finding that Base Flood Elevation (BFE)! October 6

Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

Save the Dates! 2016 IAFSM Conference and National Conference

The 2016 Annual Conference will return to Tinley Park and be held Wednesday and Thursday, March 9 and 10, 2016, at the Tinley Park Convention Center. The 2016 National Conference will be held in our region next year, on June 19 - 24 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Wanted: Newsletter Ideas and Articles

IAFSM members, this is YOUR newsletter! Email Jennifer Maercklein, editor, at <u>jmaercklein@v3co.com</u> if there are topics that you'd like us to cover. You don't need to write the article - we just want your ideas! If you're gifted with a pen and would like to provide content, we welcome your written contributions as well.

Get Involved with IAFSM!

IAFSM Committee Chairs welcome your help and involvement. See the list of chairs on the last page of this newsletter, or visit the committee webpage to learn more about volunteer opportunities. <u>http://www.illinoisfloods.org/committees.html</u>

Borrow our Water Table

IAFSM has two Watershed Tabletop Models available for all members to check out (free of charge) and bring to Public Works Open Houses, Scout meetings, 4-H meetings, school classrooms, etc. This offers a great opportunity to educate about the dangers and impact of unplanned development and human activity in the floodplain. IAFSM keeps one in Springfield and the other in northeast Illinois. Contact Sarah at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org to make arrangements.

Next Board Meeting

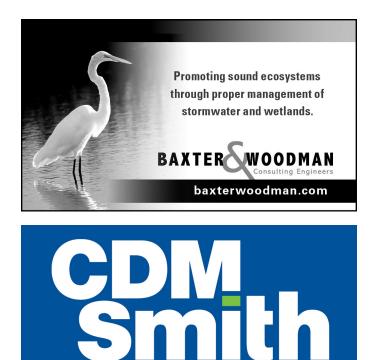
The next IAFSM Board Meeting will be held on November 18 at 9:00 a.m. at V3 Companies, 7325 Janes Ave, Woodridge. This is our big meeting to plan the annual conference and we need your help! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend Board meetings. See you there!

<u>Jobmart</u>

Visit our Jobmart at <u>http://www.illinoisfloods.org/jobmart.html</u>. Jobmart is a free service to members of IAFSM. If you would like to post a position, send complete information to <u>IAFSM@sbcglobal.net</u>.

2015 CFM Exam Schedule

To view 2015 exam dates and register, visit <u>www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html</u>.



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The IAFSM Newsletter is published quarterly for members of the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management. Information and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of all members. Items for publication and other editorial matters should be directed to the editor at <u>jmaercklein@v3co.com</u>.

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