



# THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Spring 2026 Newsletter

## What a Conference; Champaign Delivered!

*-Jenny Loewenstein, PE, CFM, CPESC, Annual Conference Chair*

What an incredible two days in Champaign. The 2026 IAFSM Annual Conference, held at the I Hotel and Conference Center on March 11 and 12, was officially sold out, welcoming more than 550 attendees from across Illinois. The energy, engagement, and sense of community throughout the event made this year's conference one to remember.

We were especially excited to see a record number of Local Officials and Students apply for scholarships, representing schools and communities from across the state. Supporting the next generation of professionals and increasing accessibility to this conference continues to be a priority for IAFSM, and this year's response was truly inspiring.

A conference of this scale is only possible because of the generous support of our sponsors. We extend our sincere thanks to all of our sponsors across the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels for helping keep this event accessible and high-quality. A special thank you to our Platinum Sponsors: **Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., Baxter & Woodman, Inc., and Forerunner.**

### Highlights from the Conference:

- **Plenary Speakers:** We were honored to welcome Thomas Mack (USACE) and Boyce Upholt (Author) as our plenary speakers. We appreciate their time and contributions to this year's conference.
- **Technical Program:** With approximately **50 breakout sessions**, this year's program delivered high-quality, engaging content across a wide range of floodplain and stormwater topics. The positive feedback on the technical depth and relevance of presentations was overwhelming. Presentations will be uploaded to the member portal on a rolling basis. Please log in at <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/login> and navigate to the Events/Past Conferences section to access available materials.
- **Field Trips:** Attendees had the opportunity to participate in two unique field experiences. **The Boneyard Creek tour** provided insight into urban stream restoration and flood mitigation efforts in Champaign, while the **Ven Te Chow Hydrosystems Laboratory tour** offered a behind-the-scenes look at cutting-edge hydraulic research and modeling.
- **Extreme Event Game:** Our interactive, hands-on Extreme Event Game returned, giving participants the chance to step into real-world disaster response roles and collaborate under pressure. It continues to be a favorite and a standout learning experience.
- **Mentorship Program Launch:** This year also marked the official launch of IAFSM's Mentorship Program, a major new initiative aimed at strengthening connections across our professional community. We are excited to see this program grow.

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## Annual Conference Highlights, Continued...

- **40th Anniversary Celebration:** A special highlight of this year's conference was celebrating **IAFSM's 40th Anniversary**. The evening dinner featured live music and even a strolling magician, creating a fun and memorable atmosphere. It was a wonderful opportunity to slow down, connect, and spend more time networking with fellow members.
- **Membership:** As an added benefit, **all conference attendees are now members of IAFSM**, with dues covered for the membership year **May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027**. We are excited to continue engaging with you throughout the year.
- **Networking & Community:** From conversations in the exhibit hall to reconnecting with colleagues and meeting new faces, the sense of community was strong throughout the conference. These connections are what make IAFSM so special.
- **Awards:** Our award winners were recognized at lunch, and are highlighted on the next pages.

**We Want Your Feedback!** If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to complete the Post-Conference Survey: <https://cvent.me/EOOmKg> I personally read through every response, and your feedback directly influences how we shape future conferences. We have made meaningful adjustments in past years based on your input, and we will continue to do so. As you share your thoughts, **we encourage constructive feedback and respect** for the many volunteer hours that go into delivering this conference. **Please submit your responses by May 1, 2026**. Your time and insight are greatly appreciated.

We are already looking forward to next year. Save the Date: Wednesday **March 10 & Thursday March 11, 2027** at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

Thank you again to our attendees, speakers, sponsors, volunteers, and Amanda King (our Executive Secretary) for making this conference such a success. We look forward to seeing you next year.



# City of East St. Louis - Excellence in Mitigation

*This award is given to an individual or community that has encouraged flood hazard reduction through a buyout program, retrofitting, preparation of a mitigation plan, or other similar mitigation efforts.*

East St. Louis is being recognized with the Excellence in Mitigation Award for its determined response to the devastating July 2022 flood and its commitment to long-term solutions that will better protect residents in the future.

Between July 25 and 28, 2022, the Metro East region was hit with intense rainfall, receiving an estimated 7 to 12 inches in a short period of time. The storm overwhelmed local drainage systems and caused severe flooding in neighborhoods near Mary Avenue and Terrace Drive. Homes and vehicles were submerged, more than 50 families were affected, and some residents had to be rescued or evacuated. The city estimated approximately \$10 million in damage from the event.

The flooding created an especially difficult challenge for East St. Louis, a community with limited local resources facing both immediate recovery needs and long-standing infrastructure constraints. The neighborhood, located near Harding Ditch, has long been vulnerable to flooding, and the 2022 storm highlighted the limitations of the area's drainage and pump systems. Contaminated floodwaters also created serious health concerns, ultimately leading to evacuation orders for affected residents.

Despite these challenges, East St. Louis acted quickly to support the community. The city declared a local state of emergency, provided short-term assistance, helped coordinate temporary shelter, and worked with partners such as the Red Cross to support emergency response, cleanup, and health services. At the same time, city leaders continued working through the complex state and federal disaster assistance process needed to secure additional recovery support.

Rather than simply rebuilding in place, East St. Louis pursued a forward-looking mitigation strategy aimed at reducing future flood risk. In 2024, the State approved \$2.6 million to buy out 39 flood-damaged homes in the Mary Avenue and Terrace Drive area. This important step reflects a strong commitment to protecting residents from repeated flood losses and advancing a safer, more resilient future for the community.

The City's perseverance through a difficult recovery, combined with its focus on meaningful long-term mitigation, demonstrates exactly the kind of leadership this award is meant to honor. East St. Louis' recognition for Excellence in Mitigation reflects both the seriousness of the challenges it faced and the strength of its commitment to building back smarter and safer.



*On behalf of the City of East St. Louis, Sharnique Lowery, Jason Blackmon, and Derrick Burns accept the Excellence in Mitigation Award from Dallas Alley and Sharon Østerby.*



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# Anne Wilford, Kane County – Floodplain Manager of the Year

*This award recognizes outstanding individual efforts and contributions at the local level. The award honors an individual responsible for the development of a distinguished local program or activity, or someone who struggles to implement flood hazard reduction at the local level in the absence of sophisticated programs and support.*

Anne Wilford, Stormwater Manager for Kane County’s Environmental and Water Resources Department, is recognized as Floodplain Manager of the Year for her outstanding leadership, technical expertise, and commitment to public service. Over the past decade, Anne has played a central role in advancing Kane County’s stormwater permitting and floodplain management efforts, helping to protect residents, guide responsible development, and strengthen community resilience.

In her role, Anne oversees stormwater permitting for development throughout Kane County and leads the County’s floodplain management program. She works closely with homeowners to help them better understand flood risks, provides educational resources for real estate professionals and attorneys, reviews zoning petitions to support responsible development, and offers ongoing floodplain and stormwater training to County staff and Kane County’s 25 certified communities.

Anne’s leadership was especially evident during her first major flood event as County Floodplain Manager in 2017. She helped conduct damage assessments across multiple townships, documented high water marks, and met directly with affected residents to explain important floodplain regulations and best practices before, during, and after flooding. Those efforts not only provided critical guidance during a difficult time, but also helped build trust between residents and local government.

She was also instrumental in the 2019 update to the Kane County Stormwater Ordinance, helping to preserve the County’s strong standards for freeboard and floodplain regulation. Under her leadership, the update introduced important new measures to encourage thoughtful development, reduce impervious surfaces, expand infiltration practices, and strengthen coordination between neighboring communities on stormwater impacts.

Anne continues to lead innovative projects that improve public awareness and safety. She is currently spearheading a flood awareness signage initiative in partnership with Baxter & Woodman to expand flood safety education across Kane County, particularly in areas vulnerable to road overtopping and neighborhood flooding. In addition, the County received a ComEd Solar Smart Community grant to pilot a solar-powered flood warning sign that can alert the public to roadway flooding risks while also collecting valuable flood data.

Her work also extends to agricultural and emerging development challenges. Anne has collaborated with consultants, County agricultural planners, and local farmers to explore Watershed Benefit Measures for agricultural development, while also addressing complex permitting issues related to solar projects, erosion and soil health protection, and residential structure elevations. She works closely with certified communities to resolve challenging permitting questions and help residents direct development away from flood hazard areas.



*Anne Wilford accepts the Floodplain Manager of the Year award from Dallas and Sharon Osterby.*



An advertisement for Hanson Inc. The top part has a blue background with the text "Innovative engineering for a better planet." in white and green. Below that, in a dark blue box, is the text "Progress requires more than experience. You need a trusted adviser who looks out for you and anticipates your needs. At Hanson, we're dedicated to bringing you innovative solutions and building a stronger world." Below this is a green bar with the text "Offices nationwide, including Chicago, Springfield, Peoria, St. Louis and Indianapolis". At the bottom is the Hanson logo and the website "HANSON-INC.COM". The right side of the ad features three images: a colorful abstract graphic, a large concrete bridge over water, and a construction site with large pipes.

As Co-Chair of the Kane County Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, Anne led the most recent comprehensive update to the County's multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Working with 27 communities, local officials, residents, stakeholders, and consultants, she helped guide a major planning effort focused on mitigation strategies, vulnerabilities, critical assets, and climate resiliency for nine natural hazards affecting Kane County.

Anne's dedication to continuous improvement is reflected in every aspect of her work. In 2025, she received a scholarship from the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management to attend the Association of State Floodplain Managers National Conference, further strengthening her commitment to education, professional involvement, and bringing best practices back to Kane County.

With more than 30 years of experience in water resources across both the public and private sectors, along with 12 years of teaching college courses in municipal, environmental, and water resources engineering, Anne brings exceptional knowledge, leadership, and passion to her role. Her recognition as Floodplain Manager of the Year is a well-deserved tribute to her lasting impact on Kane County and the communities she serves.



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# Village of Franklin Park - Stormwater Management Award

*Awarded to a floodplain manager, an individual, a group of individuals, a consultant, or an agency who improved stormwater management or reduced urban flood risks through creative engineering, regulatory measures, or other approaches. The award can also be considered for someone who struggles to implement flood hazard reduction at the local level in the absence of sophisticated programs and support.*

Franklin Park is one of the most heavily paved communities in the region, with about 60 percent impervious surface area. This level of development has contributed to flooding and sewer overflows during storms. In response, the Village partnered with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to convert previously paved areas at select intersections along Pacific Avenue into landscaped rain gardens. These rain gardens help capture and absorb stormwater, reducing runoff to the sewer system and easing peak storm flows.

The improvements have already helped reduce flooding while also delivering other community benefits. Enhanced visibility and pedestrian safety make the area more inviting, while native plantings provide habitat for bees and butterflies and add beauty to the streetscape.

In addition, the Village redeveloped a former downtown parking lot into a public plaza and green space. By replacing impervious pavement with pervious artificial turf, underground infiltration trenches, and landscaped areas, the project helps stormwater soak into the ground and be released more slowly into the system. This not only reduces ponding and flooding but also creates an attractive new gathering space for the community.

## Village of Franklin Park

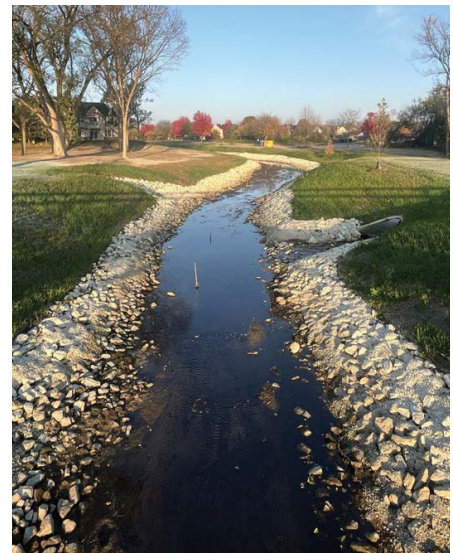
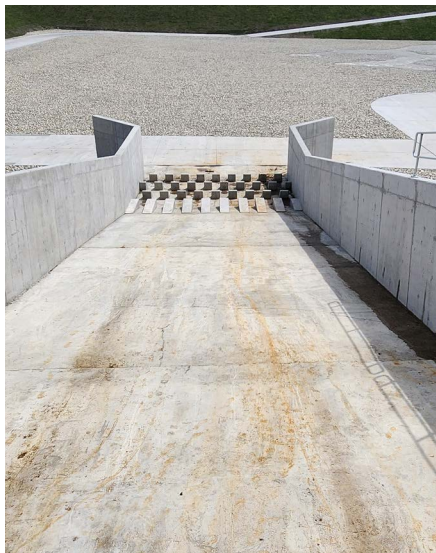
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## Pacific Avenue Rain Gardens



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# Joel Scata, Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) - Journalism or Public Education Award

*This award is generally given to media outlet that has produced floodplain or stormwater management special features during the year. The award can include individuals or agencies who have contributed to public awareness of floodplain or stormwater management issues.*

Joel Scata is being recognized for his outstanding efforts to raise awareness of floodplain management and the growing water-related impacts of climate change through his writing, research, and policy leadership. Based in NRDC's Chicago office, Joel focuses on preparing the United States for water-related climate challenges, including federal flood policy reform and adaptation to sea-level rise.

Since joining NRDC in 2014, Joel has helped bring important floodplain management issues to a broader audience through thoughtful analysis and public education. His work has highlighted the need for stronger policies, better risk communication, and more informed decision-making to help communities become safer and more resilient in the face of increasing flood risks.

Joel's body of published work reflects both the depth of his expertise and his commitment to elevating these issues in legal, policy, and public discussions. His recent article, *Buyer Beware: Sea Level Rise and Real Estate Disclosure*, published in the *George Washington Journal of Energy and Environmental Law* in 2025, examines the importance of disclosure in helping property owners and buyers understand future flood risks. In *A Rising Tide Lifts All Damage Costs: The Need for a Federal Flood Protection Standard*, published in *Natural Resources & the Environment* in 2020, he explored the importance of stronger national standards to reduce flood damage. His 2019 article, *Changing the National Flood Insurance Program for a Changing Climate*, published in *Environmental Law Reporter News & Analysis*, addressed the need to modernize federal flood insurance policy to reflect a changing climate. That same year, his article *The Uncertain Flood Zone in Shelterforce* helped communicate flood risk challenges to a wider audience, while his co-authored report, *Breaking the Cycle of "Flood-Rebuild-Repeat"*, published through the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School, examined local and state strategies to improve substantial damage and improvement standards within the National Flood Insurance Program.

Before beginning his work at NRDC, Joel served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mali, where he worked to conserve land threatened by desertification. He holds a bachelor's degree from Connecticut College and a dual JD from American University Washington College of Law and Monash University Law School.

Through his journalism, scholarship, and policy work, Joel Scata has made a meaningful contribution to increasing public understanding of floodplain management and advancing conversations about how communities can better prepare for future flood risks. His efforts have helped shine a light on some of the most pressing water policy challenges of our time.

*Joel Scata, NRDC*



An advertisement for Hey and Associates, Inc. The top part features the company name in a green serif font, with the tagline "Engineering, Ecology and Landscape Architecture" in a smaller green sans-serif font below it. The middle part is a photograph of a wooden boardwalk or bridge crossing a shallow, rocky stream in a natural setting. The bottom part has a green background with the text "Celebrating 50 Years" on the left and "heyassoc.com" on the right in white.

## Jesse Tinch – Young Professional of the Year

*This award is to recognize the professional contributions of younger members. The IAFSM Young Professionals Committee established the IAFSM Young Member of the Year Award for the first time in 2024.*

Jesse Tinch, a civil engineer with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (IDNR/OWR) Downstate Regulatory Program, has been named Young Professional of the Year in recognition of his dedication and impact in the field of water resources management. Since joining the program in 2016, Jesse has played a key role in reviewing hundreds of permit applications, helping to ensure responsible construction and protect floodplains and public waters across the state.

Jesse's commitment to thoughtful, effective regulation has contributed to safer, more resilient communities throughout Illinois. He is known not only for his technical expertise, but also for his collaborative approach and respect for the broader regulatory process.

In accepting this honor, Jesse emphasizes that his work is part of a collective effort. He extends his sincere appreciation to his colleagues—past and present—whose support, guidance, and shared knowledge have helped shape his career. He is especially grateful to his coworkers and leadership team for their mentorship and willingness to provide insight over the years.

Jesse's recognition as Young Professional of the Year reflects both his individual accomplishments and the strong team environment that continues to support his success.



*Jesse Tinch receives the Young Professional of the Year award from Dallas and Sharon Østerby.*

## IAFSM Student Scholarship Recipients

IAFSM awarded scholarships to several Illinois college students to allow them to attend our conference at no cost. Recognized here and photographed with Alana Rosenbaum (Young Professionals Chair) Sharon Osterby (IAFSM Chair) are Michael Sansone, Illinois Institute of Technology; Isabella Grows, University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign; Haribansha Timalsina, University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign; Audrey Wallander, University of Wisconsin - Madison; Zach Barwoc, University of Illinois - Chicago; and Sierra Snowden, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.



## Illinois State Water Survey, CHAMP Group – Outstanding Service Award

*Awarded to an IAFSM officer, a Federal, State, or Local Official, Agency or a consultant who has gone above and beyond normal expectations and duties to promote or encourage IAFSM goals. This award may also be given to an agency that has inspired floodplain management efforts or implemented unique programs that encourage flood reduction.*



The Illinois State Water Survey's Coordinated Hazard Assessment and Mapping Program (CHAMP) has provided exceptional service to communities across Illinois and has been an invaluable partner in advancing floodplain management, hazard mitigation, and community resilience. As a program of the Illinois State Water Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, CHAMP works in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Office of Water Resources and serves as Illinois' Cooperating Technical Partner with FEMA.

Through the expertise of Certified Floodplain Managers, Professional Engineers, and GIS professionals, CHAMP has helped communities better understand local flood hazards, identify high-risk areas, and make informed decisions to reduce losses from natural hazards. Their work has strengthened local capacity through flood hazard mapping, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, risk assessments, hazard mitigation planning, and direct technical support.

Since 2004, CHAMP has produced updated digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps for nearly all Illinois counties, along with the regulatory flood hazard studies that support them. The program has also played a key role in reviewing Letters of Map Revision and Conditional Letters of Map Revision, helping communities navigate map changes tied to development and flood control improvements.

In addition to mapping, CHAMP has developed and maintained critical statewide resources that support planners, floodplain managers, and mitigation officials. These include the Structures at Flood Risk database, which inventories structures and their flood exposure; the Illinois Buyouts Database, which documents properties mitigated through acquisition; and coordination with IDNR-OWR's Flood Surveillance program to build an inventory of Illinois flood models and flood inundation mapping.

CHAMP has also been a strong partner in local and regional hazard mitigation planning, working with counties, regional planning commissions, and University of Illinois Extension to provide risk assessments, social vulnerability analyses, and mitigation strategy development. Their support of FEMA due process, including preliminary and post-preliminary map processing, map revisions, and public engagement, has been vital to helping communities move projects forward effectively and transparently.

Looking ahead, CHAMP continues to demonstrate leadership through its work toward the Illinois Integrated Water Information Center, a long-term initiative aimed at unifying Illinois water data and equipping communities with the tools needed for informed, data-driven decision-making.

Through its technical excellence, statewide impact, and commitment to public service, the Illinois State Water Survey's CHAMP program is highly deserving of recognition for its outstanding service to IAFSM

# Federal Preemption of Local and State Regulations Executive Order and SBA Rule

~from IDNR Office of Water Resources "The Flood Record", March 2026

On January 23, 2026, President Trump issued an executive order (EO 14377) directing the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to issue regulations for disaster rebuilding that preempt state and local permitting processes and replace those processes with a federal self-certification approach.

On January 29, 2026, the SBA published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) that implements EO 14377 and allows the federal government to preempt state and local requirements that "delay" disaster recovery projects funded by SBA's Disaster Loan Program. This rule is effective immediately and applies to disaster loans approved nationwide on or after January 1, 2025. The public comment period for this interim final rule closed on March 2, 2026.

Although EO 14377 was framed around rebuilding after the 2025 California wildfires, the SBA rule is not limited to California and could affect communities across the country. The EO also directs FEMA to take similar action, although we have not yet seen a FEMA rule proposed.

There are a few items of note in the text of the rule. First, the rule states: "Any State or Local Requirement shall be preempted where it is the but-for cause of a delay in conducting Disaster-Related Activities that lasts more than sixty (60) days following the date of the borrower's, or any contractor, subcontractor, or agent of such borrower's, submission of all applicable complete applications or requests for approval to the applicable State or local authorities to proceed with Disaster-Related Activities." (Section 123.803). Taken on its face, this could have the effect that both state and local regulations are preempted to allow homeowners and builders to begin construction if needing a permit decision is the "but-for" cause in the delay of a project.

Next, the rule at Section 123.805 includes a self-certification process where the builder may self-certify compliance with all applicable state and local rules and regulations under penalty of significant criminal, civil, and administrative sanctions, including fines, imprisonment, treble damages, and federal debarment. The process of who will enforce this provision and how this enforcement will be implemented is not entirely clear.

Additionally, the rule prohibits state and local government enforcement from issuing stop-work orders, penalties, or enforcement actions against the SBA disaster loan recipient, any contractor, or subcontractor representing the recipient.

The rule has potential consequences for floodplain management. Given the number of issues and concerns regarding this rule we will send updates as they become available – especially if FEMA issues a rule to implement the EO.

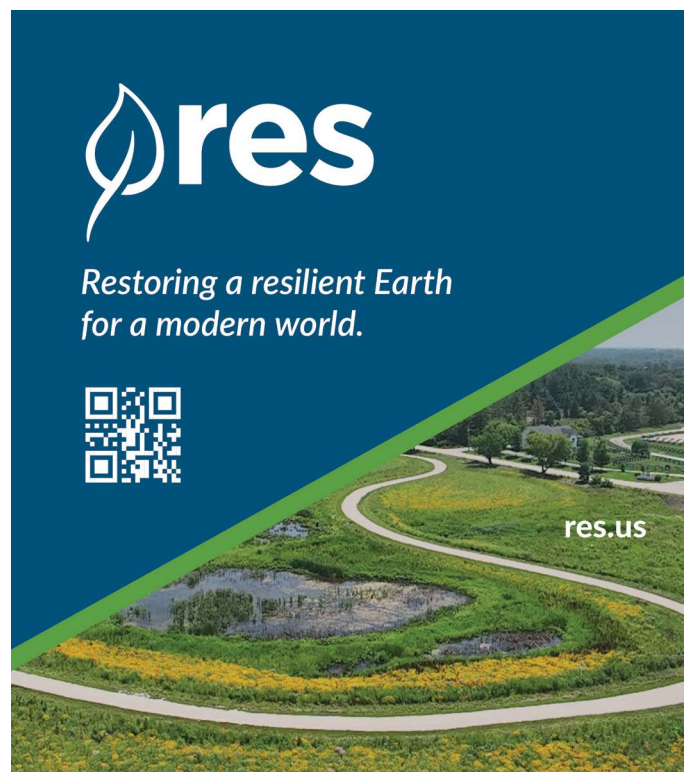


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# NFIP Code Blue

~Chad Berginnis, CFM, published by ASFPM March 13, 2026

A Code Blue is a high-priority hospital alert signifying a patient is experiencing a life-threatening medical emergency that requires immediate resuscitation. Unfortunately, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is currently experiencing its own Code Blue.

We began to see the warning signs last summer and fall; even though Congress obligated funding, we did not see FY2025 Notice of Funding Opportunities for three key programs. Then, the Project Management Contract for the RiskMAP program was not renewed, signaling a deeper operational breakdown.

This pattern of negligent behavior has continued through the winter. As of [the beginning of March], FEMA cancelled the contract to administer the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) and has stopped processing new and existing applications for the program—a move that directly impacts over 1,500 communities and millions of policyholders.

Meanwhile, the contracts for Letter of Map Change (MT-1 and MT-2) that were to expire in April were extended, but possibly without funding! And we still have zero visibility on whether FY2025 funding that Congress appropriated will be made available for flood mapping through the Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) program or for flood mitigation through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program.

Whether through negligence or incompetence, the NFIP is in critical condition. [Click here to read more.](#)



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# From the Chair: Navigating What Comes Next

~Sharon Østerby, Chair, IAFSM

Following this year's conference, I've been reflecting not just on the conversations we had, but on the broader direction floodplain and stormwater management is heading. Keeping pace has become increasingly challenging, as our work continues to be shaped by a rapidly changing federal landscape and legislative activities at the state level.

At the federal level, we are seeing signals of shifts, particularly related to FEMA programs and the future of the Community Rating System (CRS). While many details are still evolving, these changes may reshape the frameworks that have guided this work. There is still uncertainty, but what remains constant is the importance of thoughtful, well-documented, and locally driven efforts.

At the state level, legislative and policy developments related to wetlands and natural resource protection are also gaining attention. These efforts reflect a broader recognition of the role natural systems play in reducing risk and improving resilience. As these efforts continue to develop, they may influence how projects are designed, reviewed, and implemented across Illinois.

Taken together, these dynamics do not point to a single change, but rather to a more complex and evolving landscape for our work.

For IAFSM members, this means continuing to do what this group does best: staying informed, asking questions, and working together. It also means recognizing that adaptability will be just as important as technical expertise. Whether it is navigating updates to CRS, understanding new regulatory considerations, or advancing projects in a changing funding environment, our ability to collaborate and share knowledge will be critical.

This is where IAFSM plays an important role.

Our organization exists to support you through training, resources, and a network of professionals who are willing to share their experiences and insights. As these changes continue to take shape, IAFSM will remain a place to learn, discuss, and work through what they mean in practice.

If there is one takeaway from both the conference and the broader conversations happening right now, it is this: while the details may still be developing, the direction is clear. Our work is becoming more interconnected, more visible, and more important than ever.

The path forward may not be fully defined yet, but it is one we are well-equipped to navigate together.

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## IAFSM Grant Funding Available: Mitigation Signs

The Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management is partnering with communities across the state to develop and install interpretive signs that highlight local flood mitigation projects. These signs aim to educate residents about successful efforts to reduce flood risk and build resilience. Public engagement and education are essential for generating support for floodplain and stormwater management initiatives. By showcasing real-world examples, the interpretive signs will serve as a powerful tool to increase awareness and understanding of floodplain and stormwater issues. If your community has completed a mitigation project in the past, or will complete one this year, please fill out the following form so we can add you to the list of communities interested in a sign! <https://forms.gle/NsbnZi4AAoHR5Bzg9>. For questions, contact Camden Arnold at [mitigation@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:mitigation@illinoisfloods.org).



## 2026 ASFPM National Conference in Milwaukee

IAFSM is excited to support the 2026 National ASFPM Conference alongside WAFSCM in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from May 31 – June 4, 2026. This will be a milestone event, celebrating ASFPM's 50th anniversary and bringing together nearly 2,000 participants for a week of learning, networking, and professional growth.

IAFSM will be supporting the conference by providing volunteers to assist with various roles. To encourage participation, IAFSM will be expanding its scholarship opportunities, **offering up to \$2,000 in reimbursements** for conference expenses such as registration and lodging for those who **volunteer at least 12 hours**.

If you're interested in learning more about volunteering please provide your name to IAFSM using this simple form: <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/events>.

*Note: as of 4/6/26, volunteer spots have been filled. Thanks for your participation!*

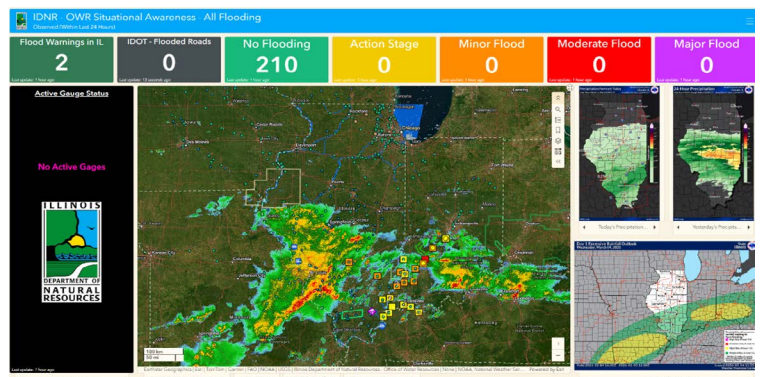
For more information about the conference itself, or to register, visit: <https://www.floods.org/conference/>

## Welcome to DNR's New Downstate Floodplain Coordinator

IDNR has introduced the newest person to join the DNR's Office of Water Resources floodplain management team – **Steve Keenan**. Steve joins DNR from Sangamon County where he worked for the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. In that role he was a land use planner who, among other duties, served as the floodplain administrator for the county. Steve is working in the Springfield office where he will split his time between floodplain management issues and managing the DNR's buyout program. If you have a question about either topic please reach out to Steve at [Steve.Keenan@illinois.gov](mailto:Steve.Keenan@illinois.gov)

## 2026 Spring Flooding Outlook and Resources

While much of the state is at some stage of drought there is always a risk of flooding, especially with the storms we get in the Spring and Summer. DNR's flood surveillance team has developed a dashboard that combines resources from different monitoring networks, including NOAA, and USGS, for your use to monitor potential flood risks. The [IDNR-OWR Situational Awareness dashboard](#) is a quick reference tool that provides a range of information in one site.



## Rapid Assistance Flood Team (RAFT) Volunteers

March certainly lived up to the old saying that it “comes in like a lion”, making it the perfect time to kick off our RAFT Volunteer Drive! Scan the QR code below or click here to complete the short application to become a RAFT volunteer. By joining, you’ll receive notifications for upcoming RAFT trainings and deployments. Learn more about the IAFSM RAFT program here: [https://go.illinois.edu/IAFSM\\_RAFT](https://go.illinois.edu/IAFSM_RAFT) or contact [floodplain@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:floodplain@illinoisfloods.org)



## CFM Exam Prep Slated for May 5

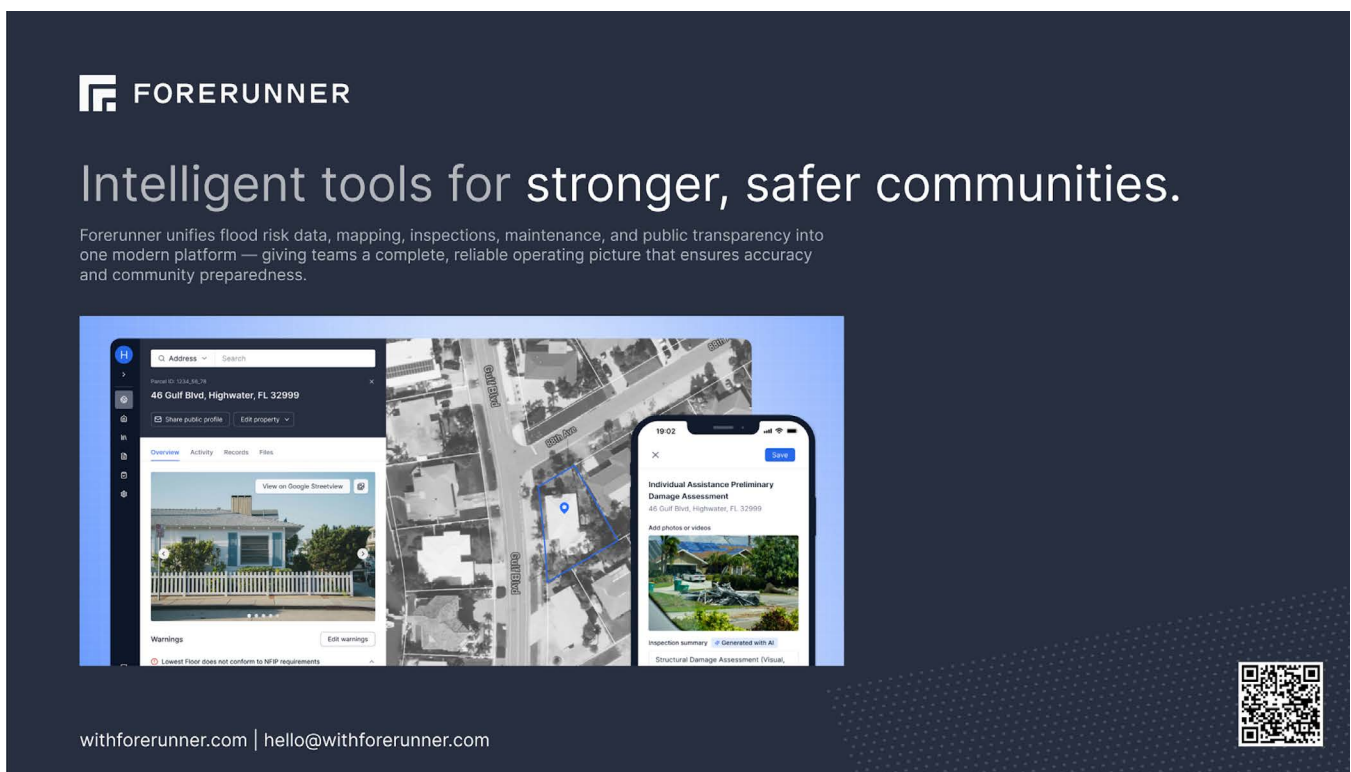
Interested in becoming a Certified Floodplain Manager, but aren’t sure where to start?

Join ASFPM on May 5 for their quarterly CFM exam prep to gain the knowledge and insights you need to take the exam with confidence. During the two-hour virtual workshop, you’ll get advice on how to prepare for the exam, learn about the types of questions you can expect to see, and receive tips on maintaining your certification.

The results speak for themselves: Since this exam prep initiative started in 2023, people who attend either the live or on-demand course and take the exam within 6-8 weeks have up to a 25% higher pass rate!

[Click here](#) to learn more and register. This course is provided at no cost.

For other training materials, contact Greg Thorpe, certification chair, at [certification@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:certification@illinoisfloods.org).



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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.

## **IAFSM/ASFPM Sponsored Training Opportunities:**

- ASFPM Annual Conference May 31-June 4, 2026 Milwaukee, WI. Refer to the separate article for a funding/volunteer opportunity.

## **Illinois DNR Webinars:**

IDNR plans to hold these monthly webinars throughout the year , generally on the third Tuesday of the month. They are scheduling the summer series now so if there is a topic you would like to see included please reach out. Registration is required but you can register up to the time of the webinar. Webinars provide hour of CEC for CFMs.

- [Permitting Agricultural and Accessory Structures in the Floodplain](#): Tues, 4/21/26, 10:00am-11:00am
- [Permitting Grading and Non-Structural Development in the Floodplain](#): Tues, 5/19/26, 10:00am-11:00am
- [Using and Reviewing Elevation Certificates – Advanced](#): Tues, 6/16/26, 10:00am-11:00am

## **FEMA Webinars**

FEMA Webinars are on hold pending funding for the time being.

## **Additional Training Opportunities:**

EMI provides a wide range of training opportunities and upcoming training. EMI courses are free for local and state government employees. Learn more at the EMI website: <http://training.fema.gov/emicourses/>

EMI Courses are on hold pending funding for the time being.

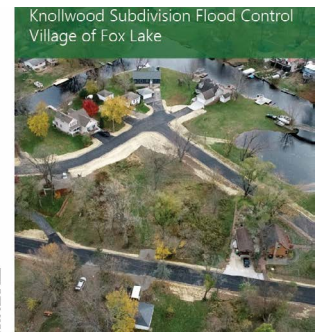
## **Webinars**

- ASFPM – <https://www.floods.org/training-education/online-training/asfpm-webinars/>
- ASFPM is offering additional at home training. For information, see the link below: <https://floods.redvector.com/>
- Also...ASFPM has [On Demand Learning](#) seminars that would be of interest to current and future CFM's.

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# IAFSM Stormwater Modeling Training

The Stormwater Committee is investigating a number of training opportunities for the Fall and Winter. More information will be available in the Summer. Training in ICM One, ORD Drainage and HEC-HMS are currently being vetted for both in-person and virtual classes. Training offered last year included HEC-RAS, FEQ and SRH-2D. Stay tuned for details.



# Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

## 2026 National Conference (Milwaukee) & 2027 Annual IAFSM Conference

IAFSM is supporting the 2026 National Conference in Milwaukee, May 31 – June 4, with expanded scholarship opportunities and reimbursements for those who volunteer. The 2027 Annual IAFSM Conference will be March 10-11, 2027 in Tinley Park, Illinois. Save the dates!

## Wanted: Newsletter Ideas & Articles

IAFSM members, this is YOUR newsletter! Email Jennifer Maercklein, editor, at [newsletter@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:newsletter@illinoisfloods.org) 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: <http://www.illinoisfloods.org/committees.html>.

## Borrow our Water Table

IAFSM has five 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 currently keeps tables in Fallfield, Champaign, Bartlett, Woodridge, and Swansea. Contact Amanda King at [IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org) to make arrangements.

## Next Board Meeting

The next IAFSM Board Meeting will be held via Zoom on May 13 at 10am. Join us! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Amanda King for the zoom link if required: [IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org).

## Jobmart

Visit our Jobmart at [illinoisfloods.org/jobmart.html](http://illinoisfloods.org/jobmart.html). Jobmart is a free service to members of IAFSM. To post an open position, please sign into our website and complete the job listing form. If you have any questions please contact Amanda at [IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org).

## CFM Exams

Exams are online and can be taken in your home or office (monitored by an online proctor) or at a testing center; there are many testing centers in Illinois. For information, visit [www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html](http://www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html). For training materials, contact Greg Thorpe: [certification@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:certification@illinoisfloods.org)



*Sarah Wenzel brought the IAFSM water table to St. Thomas Middle School's Science Palooza event in Peoria Heights and demonstrated to students and parents how different surfaces can affect water runoff in an interactive exhibit.*



# THE IAFSM CURRENT

*Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management*

Spring 2026 Newsletter

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 [newsletter@illinoisfloods.org](mailto:newsletter@illinoisfloods.org).

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For current Job Postings and CEC Training Opportunities, visit our website at [illinoisfloods.org](http://illinoisfloods.org)