



THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Summer 2025 Newsletter

Floodplain Development Requirements for State Owned Properties

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is filing a permanent rule to replace the Emergency Rule (effective January 30, 2025) to implement the new State requirements for development activity on state owned property. This rule, “Floodplain Development Requirements for State Owned Properties” – 17 Ill. Adm. Code 3710 (Part 3701), requires all development activity in the floodplain on state owned property be managed and permitted in compliance with NFIP standards. The rule includes some higher standards such as a one-foot freeboard requirement for new, substantially improved, or substantially damaged buildings.



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

Additionally, critical facilities that are new, substantially improved, or substantially damaged must elevate the lowest floor, including basements, or be structurally dry floodproofed to the 0.2% annual chance flood elevation (when delineated on the FIRM) or three feet above the BFE, whichever is greater. Critical facilities are defined as police or firefighting buildings, corrections facilities, hazardous materials storage units (chemicals, petrochemicals, hazardous or toxic substances), nursing homes, hospitals, health care facilities, assisted living facilities, residential educational facilities, retirement care facilities, critical utility sites (telephone switching stations or electrical transformers), and facilities used to store critical records. Roads and bridges are not defined as critical facilities for purposes of this rule.

While this rule applies to development on state owned property there may be implications for local communities. One example we have seen under the emergency rule involves local access to state roads and highways. If a local developer is using any portion of state owned property as part of their development project they must work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to apply for the Part 3710 permit. Because the rule only applies to state agencies, the application for this work must include IDOT – even if they are not otherwise involved in the development project. The application for a Part 3710 permit can be made using the existing permit application form found on the DNR website at: [Permit Program](#)

The final rule will replace the emergency rule before the emergency rule expires so there will not be a break in the NFIP requirements for development activity on state owned property. If you have questions about this rule please reach out to Erin Conley at erin.c.conley@illinois.gov.

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Stepping Up Together: New Tools and Trainings to Meet the Moment

~Chad Berginnis, CFM, ASFPM Director, excerpted from ASFPM News & Views, June 16, 2025

For those of you who have been paying attention to the tortured path that FEMA is walking these days, one takeaway is becoming increasingly clear: states and communities must prepare for a future where FEMA — and likely the federal government as a whole — plays a much smaller role both before and after a disaster. We are already seeing this in the hazard mitigation space with the cessation of BRIC funding and the President's refusal (so far) to approve new disaster declarations for HMGP.

So, the key question is: What can states and communities do today to help make up for the shortfall of resources at the federal level? I am excited to unveil 3 concrete actions ASFPM is taking to support our members and help fill the emerging gaps.

1. Free member access to ASCE 24-24
2. More frequent state mentoring calls
3. New in-person training for state NFIP coordinators

For more information, [read here](#).

Without a doubt, these are challenging times. Federal uncertainty can feel like the ground is shifting beneath our feet. But at the end of the day, I am incredibly proud that ASFPM can help be part of the solution going forward. Together we will work to help determine how states and communities can become better equipped to handle a world with increased flood risk and decreased federal support. After all, building better state and local capacity has been part of our DNA for nearly 50 years.

If there's something you're tackling in your state or community that you need help with or a resource you wish existed, please reach out: chad@floods.org.

IAFSM Support for Mitigation Funding

In April 2025, FEMA terminated its Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program. IAFSM has joined with ASFPM and other organizations to ask lawmakers to prioritize hazard mitigation funding programs such as BRIC. You can read the joint letter to lawmakers on our website under the News tab.

If you would like to add your voice, check out the "Mitigation Matters!" campaign on ASFPM's website: [Current Campaigns](#).

2025 IAFSM Annual Conference Feedback Summary

IAFSM sincerely thanks all who participated in the 2025 Annual Conference and shared feedback through the post-event survey. The following summary highlights key insights from attendee responses to help shape and improve future conferences.

Coordinating the annual conference is a major undertaking, and the Vice Chair continues to lead that effort with dedication and excellence. We're encouraged to see that the event remains a meaningful and valuable experience for Certified Floodplain Managers and professionals across the industry. Volunteers to help with the event are always welcome.

Enhancing the Conference Experience

Attendees shared a wide range of ideas for enhancing the conference experience, and we are reviewing these suggestions to determine what can be implemented or refined for the 2026 event, which will feature special activities in celebration of IAFSM's 40th anniversary. Networking emerged as a top priority, with strong interest in expanding organized opportunities to connect. Respondents appreciated the Monday night event (which was a new event in 2025) and suggested additional activities to encourage new interactions.

First-time attendees and long-time participants alike commented on the value of the conference as a hub for learning, collaboration, and professional development in floodplain and stormwater management.

Field trips received overwhelming praise and were repeatedly mentioned as a highlight. Many encouraged their continuation, especially when they demonstrate built projects and design implementation.

Attendees also expressed interest in more hands-on workshops and discussion-based sessions. Several noted that informal, small-group or panel formats were refreshing and effective. Other recurring suggestions included wider range of food and drink, especially to avoid shortages; streamlining the door prize giveaways; modifying breakout sessions to allow more time or fewer sessions; and better room seating for comfort and accessibility.

Mobile App and Conference Booklet

Feedback on the mobile app was mixed. We plan to continue offering the mobile app and are exploring improvements so attendees get greater value from its use. The printed booklet received overwhelmingly positive feedback with 90% of respondents indicating they want IAFSM to continue providing the paper booklet in future years.

Value for the Cost

IAFSM is committed to pricing the annual conference at break-even cost, and survey feedback confirmed that this year's event provided strong value. Out of more than 130 responses, over 90% said the event was worth the cost. As IAFSM members, we recognize and value the conference's affordability and are committed to maintaining that balance. We appreciate attendees' understanding that inflation, particularly since the pandemic, has made price adjustments necessary. **We also extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors.** Their financial support plays a vital role in keeping registration fees low; without their generous contributions, the cost of attendance would be significantly higher.

Favorite Presentations

Votes for favorite presentation were widely distributed, reflecting the depth and variety of the program. The presentation with the most votes was:

AI in the AEC Industry: Overview and Use Cases, Greg Wolterstorff, P.E., V3 Companies

Greg's presentation explored how artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry. Attendees learned practical ways AI is being deployed in reporting, design workflows, and project communication. Greg also shared real-world use cases currently being developed at V3 and other leading firms.

With the following presentation coming in a close second:

Addressing Flooding Disparities in Black Communities: The Crisis in Greater East St. Louis, Darnell Tingle, United Congregations of Metro East

This impactful session focused on systemic inequities, aging infrastructure, and chronic flooding in historically marginalized areas of the Greater East St. Louis region. Darnell provided both a policy and grassroots perspective, advocating for environmental justice and highlighting community-driven solutions aimed at building long-term resilience.

IAFSM deeply values your feedback and is already working to implement improvements for next year. Thank you for your participation, engagement, and dedication to advancing floodplain and stormwater management across Illinois.

If you'd like to join a committee, serve as a session moderator, or get involved with next year's conference, please contact us at iafsm@illinoisfloods.org. If you already indicated your interest in getting involved through the survey we will be reaching out to you.

From the Chair: Greetings and Gratitude

~Sharon Østerby, CFM, Chair, Lake County SMC

It is an honor to write my first letter as Chair of the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve this community of dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to make our communities safer, more resilient, and better prepared for the challenges ahead.

In May, I had the privilege of attending the Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) annual conference in New Orleans. It was an energizing experience—one that reminded me of the power of shared knowledge, innovation, and collaboration. From discussions on equity in floodplain management to cutting-edge approaches in modeling and mitigation, the conference reaffirmed that while our challenges are evolving, so too are our tools, partnerships, and collective resolve.

Being surrounded by practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and community advocates from across the country underscored the importance of the work we do here in Illinois. Our state is no stranger to the risks posed by flooding and stormwater, but I believe we are also uniquely positioned to lead through strong planning, science-based decisions, and inclusive engagement.

As I begin my term, I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Dallas Alley, our outgoing Chair, and Steve Altman, our outgoing Past Chair. Each has served on the IAFSM Executive Board for 10 years. Their leadership, dedication, and service have left an incredible legacy—one that I'm honored to help carry forward.

I would also like to express sincere appreciation to Mary Richardson, who is retiring after four years of service as IAFSM's Secretary and Treasurer. Mary has been a cornerstone of our organization, providing stability, organization, and an ever-reliable presence behind the scenes. We wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement and thank her for her dedication and support.

As Chair, I look forward to building on the strong foundation set by past leadership and supporting efforts that expand our reach, strengthen our technical capacity, and continue to make IAFSM a resource for professionals at every stage of their careers. Whether you are new to the field or a seasoned expert, I encourage you to stay engaged, share your experiences, and help shape the future of our profession.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me. I'm excited for what lies ahead and proud to serve alongside all of you.



IAFSM Board and Committee Chairs at the 2025 annual conference

HEC-RAS Introductory Course Co-hosted by IAFSM and EWRI!

Save the date! This two-day ASCE seminar offers hands-on training for professionals new to HEC-RAS software, focusing on steady flow hydraulic modeling for open channels, culverts, and bridges. Participants will learn to develop models, interpret results, and understand both steady and unsteady flow principles through practical examples and expert instruction. The course is ideal for engineers and water resource planners with basic floodplain hydrology knowledge seeking to build foundational modeling skills.

Dates: September 30 and October 1

Time: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM (Doors open at 8:00 AM)

Location: CBBEL Chicago Office; 625 W. Adams St., Suite 1775, Chicago, IL 60661

Cost: \$895

Attendee Limit: 30

Registration opens July 15, 2025

EWRI Contact: Gary Gifford ggifford@hwlochner.com

IAFSM Contact: Steve Bicking sbicking@hrgreen.com

HEC-RAS 2D Modeling with Pipe Networks: Virtual Workshop

Don't miss this one-day virtual workshop hosted by the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (IAFSM)! Led by Chris Hanstad, PE, CFM, of the Illinois State Water Survey, this session introduces the latest in HEC-RAS 2D hydraulic modeling, including the new Pipe Network capabilities that integrate urban stormwater features for better analysis of surface and subsurface drainage systems.

Date: August 28, 8:00 - 5:00

Registration Deadline: August 25, 2025 or until full

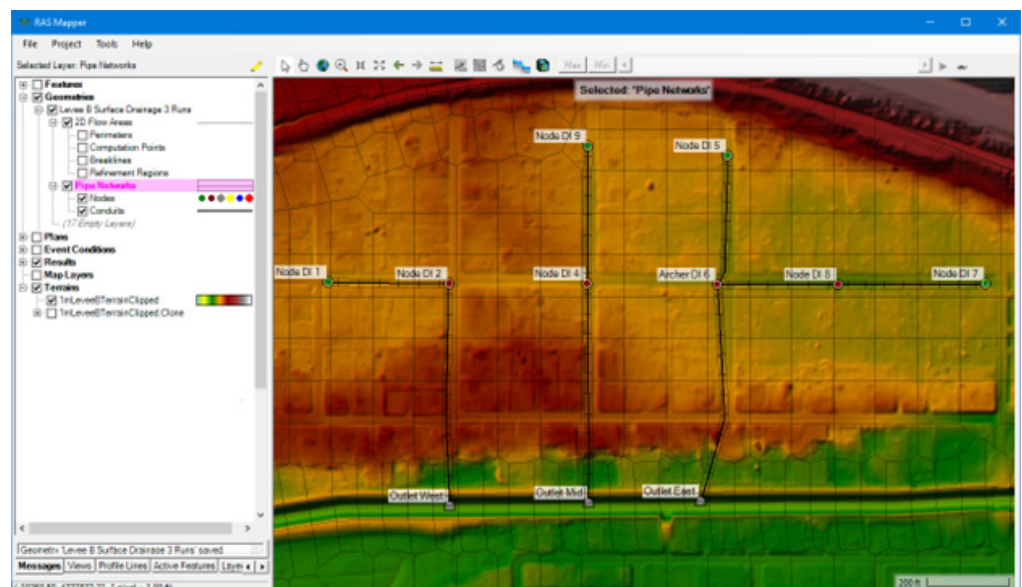
Format: Virtual (link provided prior to event)

Fees: \$75 (Student/Public Sector) | \$100 (Private Sector)

PDHs/CECs will be provided.
Spots are limited, register today!

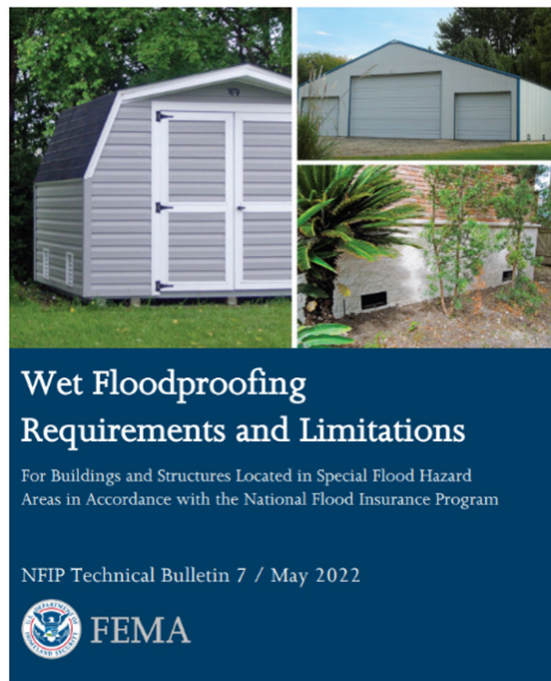
[Register here](#)

Questions? Contact Amanda King at iafsm@illinoisfloods.org.



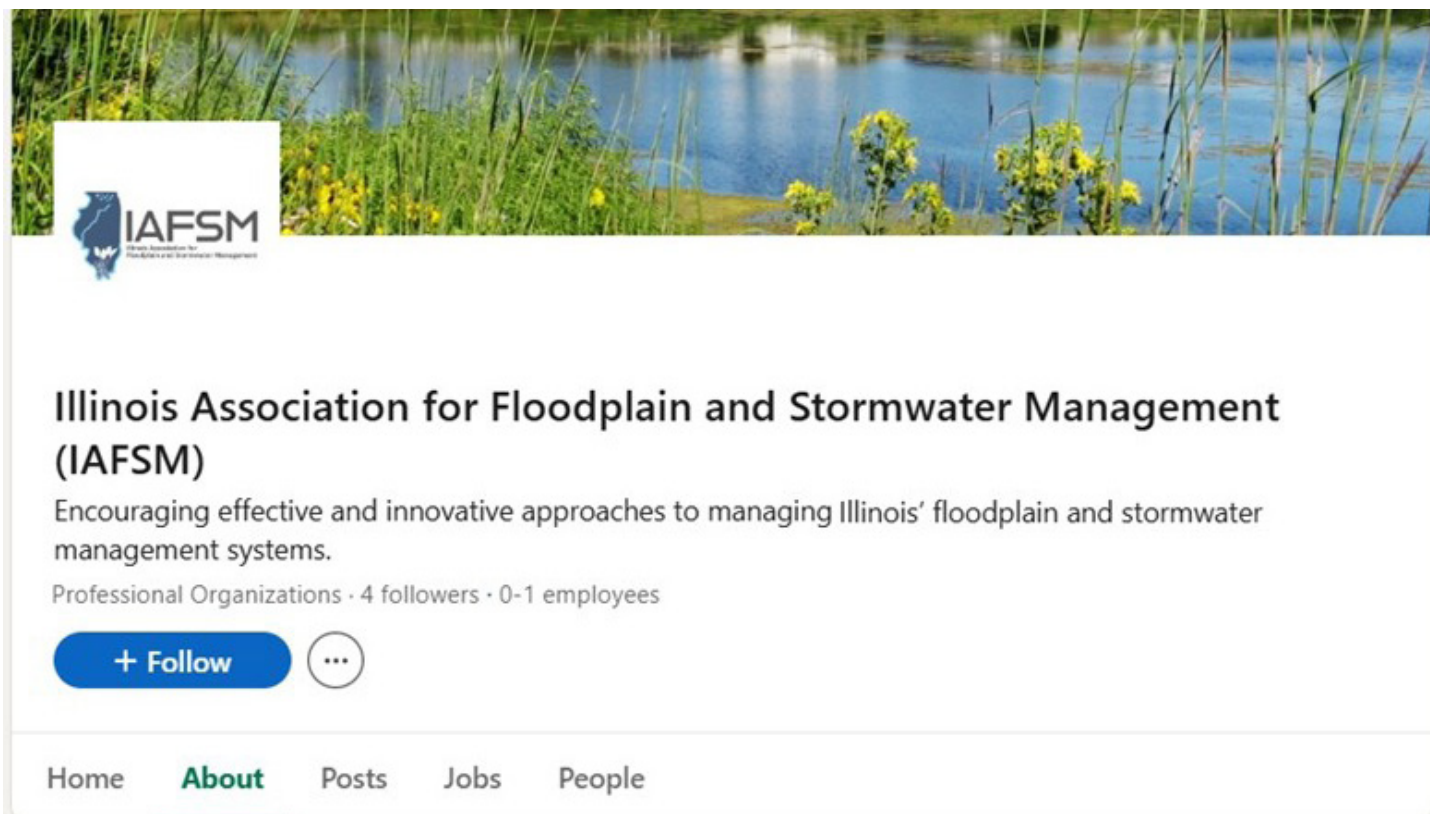
FEMA Technical Bulletins and Guidance

Finding new Technical Bulletins online can be difficult, especially newly issued versions. It is easiest to go to FEMA's [National Flood Insurance Technical Bulletins | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-technical-bulletins) webpage, which provides the links to all of the technical bulletins. These documents are an excellent resource to help both you and the applicant ensure a compliant building is constructed. Non-compliant buildings can cost the owner thousands of dollars every year in higher flood insurance premiums. In addition to these Technical Bulletins, FEMA also issued additional guidance for agricultural and accessory structures: [Floodplain Management Requirements for Agricultural Structures and Accessory Structures \(fema.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management-requirements-for-agricultural-structures). These two pages are important to have bookmarked for easy reference.



Follow Us On Our New LinkedIn Profile

IAFSM is refreshing our presence on LinkedIn. You may have joined our “group” page in the past, but now we have a “company” page where we plan to share announcements about upcoming trainings, conferences, board meetings, and other opportunities to learn, network and connect. Click here to follow our new page on LinkedIn! IAFSM is not currently recognized as a keyword by LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/illinoisfloodsorg/>. Note, you must search the full name to find our page.



Young Professionals Update: TRIVIA WIN!



IAFSM Young Professionals took home a \$20 gift card for their trivia win at their networking event at the Fulton Market trivia night in Chicago! Watch the newsletter for future young professionals' events!

CEC Education & Training Opportunities

Looking for training opportunities? FEMA training is currently paused; ASFPM is exploring opportunities to expand its training programs. Additional opportunities are listed below. If you are looking for credits, be sure to review the material and confirm they meet the appropriate requirements.

IAFSM/ASFPM Sponsored Training Opportunities:

- See separate articles regarding HEC-RAS introductory and 2D courses

Webinars

- ASFPM webinars – <https://www.floods.org/training-education/online-training/asfpm-webinars/>
- ASFPM On Demand Learning seminars [On-Demand Learning \(floods.org\)](https://www.floods.org/training-education/online-training/asfpm-webinars/)
- Additional at-home training courses: <https://floods.redvector.com/>

CRS

- CRS training is still available at <https://crsresources.org/training/>

Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

2026 IAFSM Conference (Springfield) & National Conference (Milwaukee)

The 2026 Annual Conference will be held March 10-11, 2026, at Wyndham Springfield City Centre in downtown Springfield. IAFSM is co-hosting the 2026 National Conference in Milwaukee, May 31 – June 4, with expanded scholarship opportunities and reimbursements for those who volunteer. Save the dates!

Wanted: Newsletter Ideas & Articles

IAFSM members, this is YOUR newsletter! Email Jennifer Maercklein, editor, at 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 Summerfield, Champaign, Bartlett, Woodridge, and Swansea. Contact Sarah Harbaugh at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org to make arrangements.

Next Board Meeting

The next IAFSM Board Meeting will be held via zoom on July 9. Join us! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Amanda King for the zoom link: IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org.

Jobmart

Visit our Jobmart at 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.

CFM Exams

Beginning in 2023, exams are only offered online. Online exams can be taken in your home (monitored by an online proctor) or at a testing center; there are many testing centers throughout Illinois. For information, visit www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html.



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.



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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 newsletter@illinoisfloods.org.

IAFSM OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

CHAIR

Sharon Østerby, CFM
Lake Co Stormwater Mgmt Comm.
SOsterby@lakecountyil.gov

VICE CHAIR

Jenny Loewenstein, P.E., CFM
Contigo Engineering
Jenny.loewenstein@contigoengineering.com

TREASURER

Joe Kratzer, P.E.
MWRD
KratzerJ@mwrld.org

SECRETARY

Sarah Wenzel, P.E., CFM
Baxter & Woodman
swenzel@baxterwoodman.com

PAST CHAIR

Dallas Alley, CFM
City of Fairview Heights
Alley@cofh.org

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Sarah Harbaugh
Amanda King
IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org

CONFERENCE

Jenny Loewenstein, P.E., CFM
Contigo Engineering
Jenny.loewenstein@contigoengineering.com

BOARD NOMINATIONS

Mark Hoskins, P.E., CFM
IDNR-OWR
Mark.Hoskins@illinois.gov

AWARDS

Sarah Hunn, P.E.
DuPage County
Stormwater Management
Sarah.Hunn@dupageco.org

CERTIFICATION

Gregory Thorpe, CFM
Rock Island County
Gthorpe@co.rock-island.il.us

COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM

Julie Lomax, CFM, P.E.
Village of Downers Grove
JLomax@downers.us

EDUCATION OUTREACH

Diane Bouckaert, P.E., CFM
Manhard Consulting Ltd
dbouckaert@manhard.com

FLOODPLAIN CHAIR

Dawn Cosentino, P.E., CFM, CPESC
Illinois State Water Survey
dawncos@illinois.edu

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL

Ajay Jain, P.E., CFM
H.R. Green
ajain@hrgreen.com

LEGISLATIVE

Kay Whitlock, P.E., D.WRE
Christopher B. Burke Eng., Ltd.
kwhitlock@cbbel.com

MITIGATION

Camden Arnold, CFM
Illinois State Water Survey
mitigation@illinoisfloods.org

NEWSLETTER

Jennifer Maercklein, P.E., CFM
V3 Companies
newsletter@illinoisfloods.org

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Steve Bicking, P.E., D. WRE, CFM
HR Green
sbicking@hrgreen.com

WETLANDS

Tom Kehoe
Christopher B. Burke Eng., Ltd.
tkehoe@cbbel.com

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Alana Rosenbaum, P.E., CFM
Baxter & Woodman
ARosenbaum@baxterwoodman.com

YOUTH OUTREACH

Brian Chaille, P.E., CFM
Illinois State Water Survey
bchaille@illinois.edu

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR FLOODPLAIN & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

IAFSM@IllinoisFloods.org PO Box 72, Metropolis, IL 62960 Phone: 630-443-8145

For current Job Postings and CEC Training Opportunities, visit our website at illinoisfloods.org