



THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Summer 2026 Newsletter

What the FEMA Review Council Report Gets Right — and Wrong — About Flood Risk Management

~Excerpted from ASFPM News & Views from May 18, 2026 and June 12, 2026

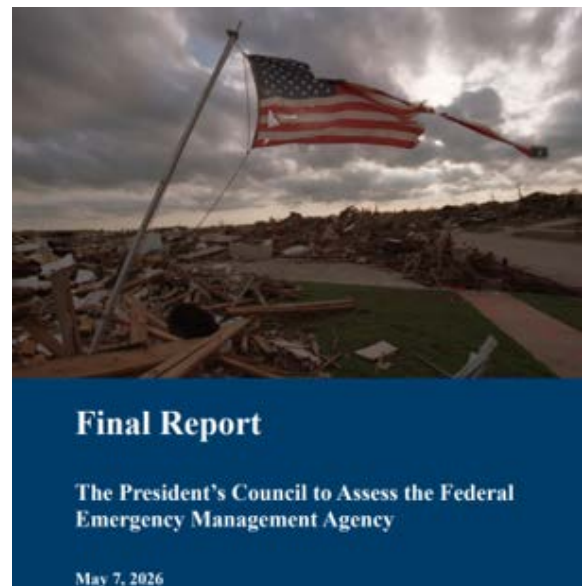
The Trump Administration's FEMA Review Council concluded its work on May 7 with the release of a sweeping 75-page [Final Report](#) that could significantly reshape the future of federal disaster policy, the National Flood Insurance Program and the relationship between FEMA and state, local and tribal governments.

Many of the major themes for FEMA reform that were reported in the media following the Council's earlier public hearings remain prominent in the final report; however, some have been modified or dropped completely, reflecting the significant pushback the Council received from the public and various sectors beginning in March 2025.

While the report contains several constructive recommendations, ASFPM is deeply concerned that some of the proposals reflect a misunderstanding of how floodplain management, hazard mitigation, and the NFIP function in practice.

Several themes consistently emerge throughout the report, including:

- **Moving substantially more disaster and emergency management costs and responsibilities to the state, local, tribal, and territorial governments (SLTTs).** The report calls for shifting greater responsibility to SLTTs with FEMA serving more as a support role through grant-type funding, and focusing primarily on immediate response and recovery while reducing the agency's involvement in long-term recovery efforts. A strong theme is to wrap up federal involvement as quickly as possible.
- **Reducing FEMA staffing and operational footprint.** The report criticizes what it describes as FEMA's "bloated" staffing and recommends cutting costs through downsizing. However, the final version of the report has dropped the call for draconian 50% staffing cuts and dispersing large numbers of staff away from FEMA headquarters to FEMA regions, and instead calls for a study of needed staffing.



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What the FEMA Review Council Report Gets Right — and Wrong — About Flood Risk Management, Continued...

- **Raising disaster declaration thresholds.** The Council recommends increasing the impact damage-cost thresholds for Presidential disaster declarations so as to substantially reduce the numbers of declared disasters where FEMA and other federal agencies would be called on to respond.
- **Accelerating the allocation and distribution of federal disaster funds.** The report proposes streamlining federal disaster assistance by relying more heavily on direct grants that are based on first-line, less generous formulas to state and local governments, who would then disperse the funds directly to victims and communities. The final draft also recommends using somewhat more generous federal cost-shares than basic levels to help incentivize mitigation.
- **Shifting the execution of training to the states while tasking FEMA primarily with curriculum development.** By incentivizing the development of training resources at the SLTT level, the Council aims to address what it considers “a lack of a national standard for incident response and recovery.”

On June 8, ASFPM submitted a 9-page comment letter to FEMA, stating that it supports efforts to improve FEMA's effectiveness, reduce disaster losses, strengthen resilience, and ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources. At the same time, the association emphasized that meaningful reform must be grounded in how these programs operate in practice and informed by the experience of the professionals who implement them every day. Among its recommendations, ASFPM urged policymakers to focus on:

- Completing the nation's flood hazard mapping needs;
- Modernizing NFIP minimum standards;
- Addressing NFIP legacy debt;
- Strengthening flood insurance affordability and participation;
- Preserving the state-led nature of hazard mitigation programs;
- Building state capability through dedicated capacity programs;
- Authorizing CAP-SSSE and Cooperating Technical Partners;
- Establishing a hazard mitigation capability program modeled after CAP-SSSE;
- Improving mitigation project delivery through streamlined processes and adequate staffing; and
- Ensuring FEMA maintains and supports the workforce and technical expertise necessary to fulfill its mission.

To read ASFPM's analysis of the report, including a detailed look at the more concerning recommendations, [visit ASFPM's website](#). To read the full comment letter, [click here](#).



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From the Chair: Connecting, Learning, and Leading at ASFPM

-Sharon Østerby, CFM, Lake County SMC, IAFSM Chair

The ASFPM Conference in Milwaukee marked the Association's 50th anniversary and was centered around the theme, The Fresh Coast Legacy: 50 Years of Floodplain Management. It was great to see so many IAFSM members in attendance and actively participating throughout the week.

Connecting. The conference was another opportunity to connect with colleagues and friends, exchange ideas, and learn how others are addressing challenges in their communities. Lunches, informal conversations, and sponsored social events provided valuable opportunities to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones.

Learning. With ongoing changes affecting federal programs and funding, many discussions focused on what those changes may mean for local mitigation efforts and the communities we serve. I appreciated the perspectives shared by former federal officials and subject matter experts, which helped provide valuable context and insight into the evolving landscape of floodplain and stormwater management.

Leading. Leadership takes many forms, and IAFSM members were actively engaged throughout the conference by presenting technical sessions, participating in committee meetings, volunteering, and sharing their expertise with others. IAFSM also sponsored eight local officials from across Illinois to attend the conference. Investing in the education of local officials is one of the most important ways we can support effective floodplain and stormwater management and help communities access the tools, technical resources, and knowledge needed to address local challenges.

I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming IAFSM events and continuing the work that brings us together as floodplain and stormwater professionals.





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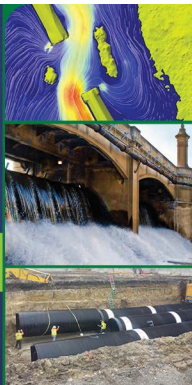
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ASFPM National Conference Feedback from IAFSM Members

We asked some of the ASFPM National Conference attendees what they found most valuable about the conference, and what their favorite thing was. Here is what they had to say. If this piques your interest, save the date: the 2027 ASFPM conference will be May 23-27 in Pittsburgh!

"Presentations about combining arts, learning, and recreation with stormwater management and a survey of locations was the most valuable thing I took from the conference. It struck me as a positive opportunity to develop grass roots enthusiasm for a project and for a facility for long-term use and maintenance. Park and school property for stormwater management have seemed to me to be more about paying for construction improvements at those agencies, more than opportunities."

The national reach of the conference brings fresh ideas of how to approach problems and develop solutions. The statewide conference usually has an interesting presenter or two from outside the area, but the ideas or solutions seem less applicable to northeastern Illinois. This conference included a good mix of topics from nearby Wisconsin and many other locations that were presented in a way that either the problem, the approach, the system, or the solution seemed more relatable than I expected."

-Chris Tomich, Village of Morton Grove, IAFSM Member and Local Official Scholarship Recipient

"The conference was interesting. I went to a several presentations regarding the 2025 flood in Milwaukee. On my way home, I stopped at Menomonee Valley Community Park and Hart Park which are flood control parks along the Menomonee River, which were both discussed in presentations at the conference."

-Mick Cosme, MWRD, IAFSM Member

"I was unable to attend the IAFSM conference this year since it was booked full by the time I went to register (I was too late). What a wonderful coincidence then that I applied for and was chosen as a scholarship awardee for this year's 50th ASFPM national conference. I have a lot of good things to say about the conference including the exposure to a more national perspective. The most valuable thing I gained from attending was a higher level of understanding of technical & emerging topics and how they can be applied to my community. My favorite part of the conference, in a word, was "Milwaukee". The whole vibe that the WAFSCM chapter was able to create using Wisconsin/ Milwaukee heritage/ culture was great! There was a lot of obvious work and effort given and it was much appreciated. A list of things that come to mind are: The Baird Center (excellent venue), The Ope! 5k, local project tours, the Welcome Fest w/ running sausages, local restaurants, excellent accommodations (hotel), cheese, cheese curds, sausages, kraut, polka."

-Jamey Bullard, Village of Morton, IAFSM Member and Local Official Scholarship Recipient

"The most valuable thing I learned from this conference was that state, local officials and private industry all seem to be moving beyond just the 100 year BFE and are now designing critical infrastructure for several feet of freeboard above the federal regulatory floodplain. My favorite part of the conference was the Polka band on Tuesday morning."

-Peter Monko, MWRD, IAFSM Member and Local Official Scholarship Recipient



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ASFPM National Conference Feedback from IAFSM Members, Continued...

We asked some of the ASFPM National Conference attendees what they found most valuable about the conference, and what their favorite thing was. Here is what they had to say. If this piques your interest, save the date: the 2027 ASFPM conference will be May 23-27 in Pittsburgh!

"The most valuable thing I got from the ASFPM conference was meeting floodplain managers, exhibitors, and regulators from different parts of the country, learning about their projects and innovation, and meeting young professionals and knowing the future of floodplain management is in very good hands. My favorite part of the conference was being at the IAFSM booth, showing off our river table which was very popular (thanks to Sarah Hunn for dropping it off all the way to Milwaukee and Dallas Alley for pulling it all together!), and meeting new people."

-Ajay Jain, HR Green, IAFSM Member

"The ASFPM Conference was a great experience and an opportunity to learn from professionals from all around the country. I gained valuable insights that will help strengthen my work and understanding of floodplain management. Thank you to IAFSM for awarding me the scholarship to attend. I sincerely appreciate the support and the chance to participate."

-Jeff Koza, Village of Western Springs, IAFSM Member and Local Official Scholarship Recipient

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Updates from IAFSM: Conference Presentations, Membership Dues

1. **Presentations** from the 2026 Annual IAFSM Conference are now available online (<https://www.illinoisfloods.org/events/past-conferences/2026-annual-conference>). To access them, you will need to sign in to the website. Additional presentations are still being received, so please check back for updates.
2. **Membership Dues** have been sent via email to anyone who did not attend the 2026 Annual IAFSM Conference in Champaign. (If you attended the conference, your annual dues were included in the conference fee and your membership has been renewed.) If you have any questions or issues accessing your invoice, please let Amanda King know (iafsm@illinoisfloods.org OR executivesecretary@illinoisfloods.org).

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/ASFPD Sponsored Training Opportunities:

- IAFSM Annual Conference March 10-11, 2027, Tinley Park
- ASFPD Annual Conference May 23-27, 2027, Pittsburgh, PA

Illinois DNR Webinars:

- [Resolving Floodplain Violations](#): Tuesday, July 21, 10:00-11:00am
- [IDNR Flood Hazard Mitigation Program](#): Tuesday, August 25, 10:00-11:00am
- [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\) Basics](#): Tuesday, September 15, 10:00-11:00am
- [NFIP 101 virtual class](#): Sept 29, 9am – 3pm.
- [Local Floodplain Permitting](#): Tuesday, October 20, 10:00-11:00am
- [Substantial Improvement Explained](#): Tuesday, November 17, 10:00-11:00am
- [Substantial Damage Plan for Local Communities](#): Tuesday, December 15, 10:00-11:00am

FEMA Webinars

<https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/events>

- July 1, and Sept 23, 2026 – Procurement Under Grants Training 10-11 am CDT

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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/>

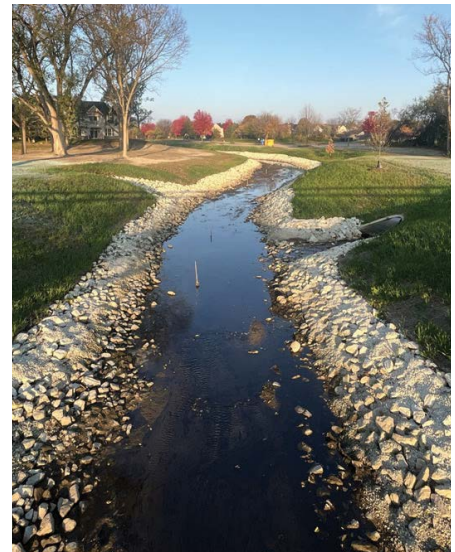
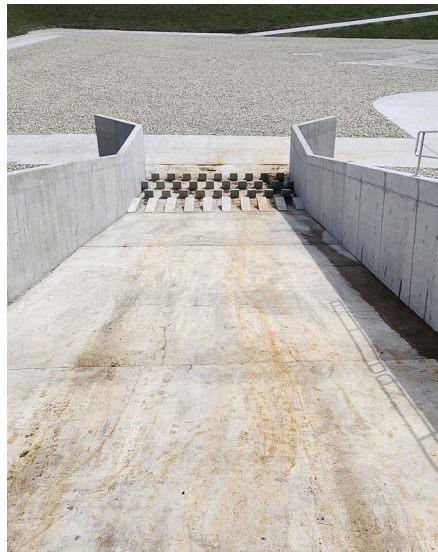
- E0273: Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP – Aug 24-27, or Nov 2-5, 2026

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. Check it out at On-Demand Learning (floods.org)
- Other training and CEC opportunities can be found on ASFPM's calendar: <https://www.floods.org/training-center/training-events/> IAFSM Stormwater Modeling Training

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.



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FEMA 273 Course: Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP: free course for local officials offered at DuPage County

FEMA's L273 Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) will be offered on September 21 through September 24, 2026, at the DuPage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (OHSEM) located at 418 North County Farm Rd. Wheaton, IL 60187. The purpose of this four-day course is to prepare a community official to understand and perform the roles and responsibilities as their local Floodplain Administrator. The course focuses on the NFIP and concepts of floodplain management, flood maps and studies, ordinance administration, and the relationship between floodplain management and flood insurance.

Participants must be available to attend the full four (4) day course and seats are limited.

For registration information, contact Amanda King, IAFSM Executive Secretary, at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org.

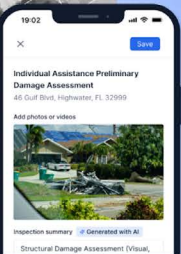
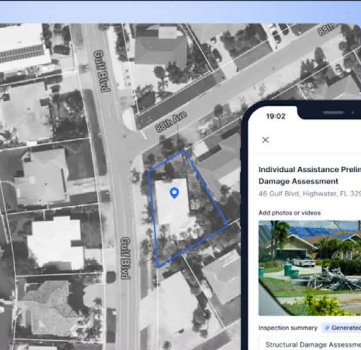
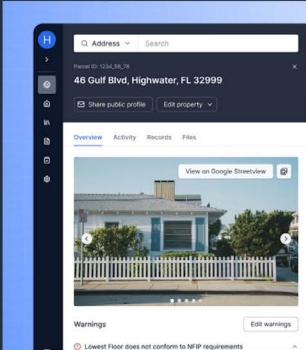
FAQs:

- **Do I have to attend the entire 4 days?** Yes, and class is from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm every day.
- **Do I have to pay for the course?** No, but the participant is responsible for their own travel, accommodations, and food.
- **How do I register?** Contact Amanda King at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org for registration details. Registration is done through the FEMA National Disaster and Emergency Management University (NDEMU) online portal. If you have questions about the portal or process, contact Michelle Staff, IDNR, at Michelle.Staff@illinois.gov. The online registration portal can be a bit confusing. The most common mistake occurs when the application asks for the applicant's supervisor's name and email address. Although the field requests their supervisor's information, the registration instructions direct applicants to enter Michelle Staff's name and email address instead. This often causes confusion. Applicants must enter her information as "supervisor" because she is responsible for approving registrations in the electric system. If they enter their actual supervisor's information, their registration will not be routed to Michelle for approval. As a result, applicants may not be successfully registered.
- **What is the registration deadline?** We have a maximum of 30 seats available for this course. Once we reach capacity, registration will close.

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Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

2027 Annual IAFSM Conference

The 2027 Annual IAFSM Conference will be March 10-11, 2027 in Tinley Park, Illinois. Save the date! <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/events/iafsm-annual-conference>

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 Fallfield, Champaign, Bartlett, Woodridge, and Swansea. Contact Amanda King at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org to make arrangements.

Next Board Meeting

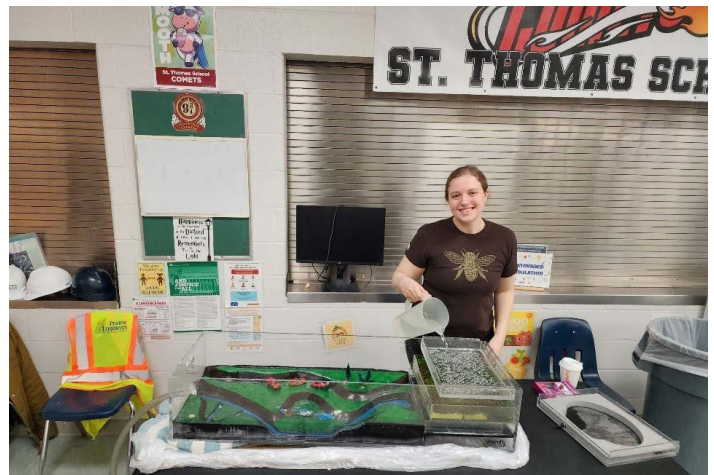
The next IAFSM Board Meeting will be held via Zoom on July 8 at 10am. Join us! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Amanda King for the zoom link: IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org.

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

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. For training materials, contact Greg Thorpe: certification@illinoisfloods.org



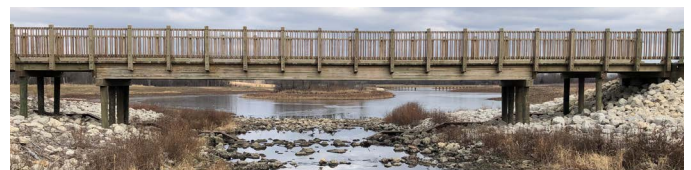
Sarah Wenzel brought the IAFSM water table to St. Thomas Middle School's Science Palooza event in Peoria Heights and demonstrated to students and parents how different surfaces can affect water runoff in an interactive exhibit.



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Summer 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.

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