



THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Winter 2025 Newsletter

NFIP Aims to Strengthen Urban Community Resilience

-FEMA Outreach Article, November 2024



FEMA



NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM®

FEMA and its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) are conducting outreach in four metro areas, including the Chicagoland area, to raise awareness of the risks posed by urban flooding and to promote the benefits of flood insurance. This outreach involves engaging local government agencies and community organizations to provide them with flood risk information and resources to share with their audiences, ensuring residents and businesses are informed and prepared. The initiative also targets cities including Detroit, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. to highlight the increasing risk of flooding in urban and suburban communities. By focusing on these densely populated urban centers, the NFIP seeks to enhance resilience, provide resources and promote the benefits of flood insurance among residents and business owners.

In cities and suburbs, where day-to-day life presents an endless series of options — from deciding on the best route to avoid traffic to choosing between the countless dining spots that line the streets — protecting against the financial risk of flooding with flood insurance is a clear choice. Flooding is a significant threat to major metropolitan areas because cities often harbor unseen flood risks that can threaten homes and businesses in unexpected ways.

A single storm, shifting weather patterns, impermeable surfaces, small streams and inadequate drainage systems can all transform heavy rainfall into flash floods in a matter of minutes. Many cities are located near bodies of water that put them at risk for riverine, storm surge and other types of flooding. Climate change exacerbates these risks, making it imperative for cities and their residents to take proactive steps to mitigate the physical and financial impacts of flooding.

As residents of the Chicagoland area, the flood of options we face daily ranges from picking a baseball team to choosing where to get pizza. The things that make Chicago special, including its rich history and unique culture and cityscape, provide us with a broad array of options but may also increase the risk of flooding.

While Illinois’ extensive system of rivers, lakes and streams enhances the state’s natural beauty and supports tourism and economic development, it also poses significant flood risks. In 2023 alone, the Chicago metro area experienced two major disaster declarations — one in July and another in September — due to severe storms and flooding. These events caused extensive damage, particularly in Cook County, with more than 1,200 damage reports affecting homes and businesses, amplifying the importance of flood preparedness in our area.

For Chicagoland residents and business owners “flooded” with options, flood insurance is a clear choice. Flood insurance is more than just a policy — it provides peace of mind and security and is a crucial part of protecting the life you’ve built in the heart of the city.

To learn more, visit the NFIP’s Chicago Metropolitan Flooding landing page in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Inside This Issue

NFIP Aims to Strengthen Urban Community Resilience	Page 1	IAFSM Annual Awards	Page 7
From Risk to Resilience	Page 2-3	From the Chair	Page 8
Congrats to the new CFMs!	Page 3	Stormwater Committee Update	Page 8
ASFPM CFM Program is Going GREEN.....	Page 4	CEC Education & Training Opportunities	Page 9
2025 IAFSM Annual Conference.....	Page 5-6	Important Stuff.....	Page 10
Sarah Harbaugh Retirement	Page 6	IAFSM Officers & Committee Chairs.....	Page 11

From Risk to Resilience: Mastering Flood Insurance Together

FEMA has announced a new series of trainings around different insurance topics. The 2025 Flood Insurance Webinar Series, “From Risk to Resilience: Mastering Flood Insurance Together” is a year-long series designed to empower insurance agents, floodplain managers, and community leaders with the knowledge and tools to navigate the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your expertise and strengthen your role in disaster resilience.

You can register for one or all of the trainings at this link: [REGISTER HERE](#)

Jan 16, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Demystifying NFIP Flood Insurance Quotes: Quick start guides, Factors that affect a quote, Learn how to integrate flood insurance quotes into your daily practice.

Jan 23, 2025 | 9:30 AM CT: Special Session: Increased Cost of Compliance: Leveraging the SFIP to Build Resilient Communities: (Format: 1-hour webinar with optional Q&A session to follow) Using ICC as cost share for FEMA mitigation programs; Best practices for local officials.

Feb 20, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Eligibility and Coverage Essentials: Understand who can purchase NFIP flood insurance and what policies cover. Address unique scenarios, including renters and non-SFHA properties.

Mar 20, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC): Helping Clients Rebuild Smarter: Discover how ICC coverage supports smarter rebuilding and compliance.

Apr 17, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Mapping Made Simple: Understand how to use FEMA's Mapping Service Center, FMIX, and elevation certificates.

Apr 24, 2025 | 9:30 AM CT: Special Session: Introduction to Flood Insurance Through the National Flood Insurance Program (Format: 1-hour webinar with optional Q&A session to follow) Overview of NFIP and its three pillars.

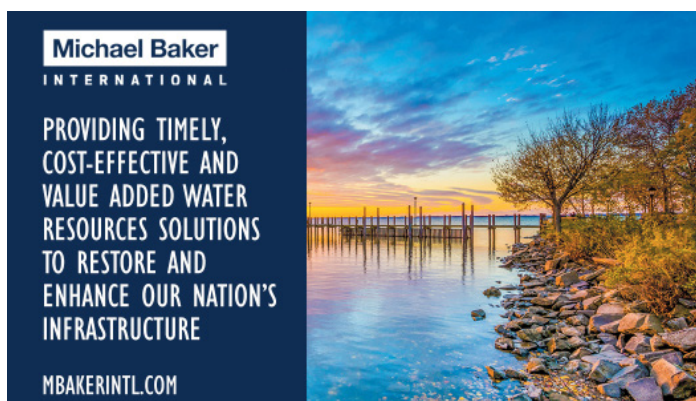
May 15, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Navigating Claims and Supporting Disaster Survivors: Walk through the NFIP claims process and certain disaster assistance letters, Differentiate flood insurance from disaster assistance.

Jun 19, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Elevating Flood Insurance Conversations: Best practices for integrating flood insurance into routine discussions; Overcoming affordability concerns and client objections.

Jun 26, 2025 | 9:30 AM CT: Special Session: Increased Cost of Compliance: Leveraging the SFIP to Build Resilient Communities (Format: 1-hour webinar with optional Q&A session to follow)

Jul 17, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Marketing Flood Insurance Effectively: Strategies for promoting flood insurance to homeowners, renters, and businesses; Discover ways to use NFIP's free marketing materials to increase engagement.

Aug 21, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Building Resilient Communities Through Flood Insurance: Collaborate with floodplain managers to strengthen disaster resilience; Engage underserved communities to expand flood insurance adoption.



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Sep 18, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Writing Policies for Unique Clients: Basics of writing policies for basements, manufactured homes, small businesses, and RCBAPs. A foundational session for new agents.

Oct 16, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Understanding the Claims Process: A look at NFIP claims from filing to resolution. How to assist clients during the process and handle appeals.

Oct 23, 2025 | 9:30 AM CT: Special Session: Introduction to Flood Insurance Through the National Flood Insurance Program (Format: 1-hour webinar with optional Q&A session to follow)

Nov 20, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Flood Insurance for a Changing World: Examine evolving flood risks and the growing need for flood insurance. Prepare clients for future risks and encourage long-term resilience.

Dec 18, 2025 | 12:30 PM CT: Why Flood Insurance Matters: Overcoming misconceptions about flood risk.

Congrats to the new CFMs!

Congrats to Illinois' Certified Floodplain Managers who received their certification in 2024! If you're interested in pursuing certification as a CFM, visit our website here: <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/cfm-certification>

Camden I. Arnold, ISWS-CHAMP

Cameron W. Bencini, Horner & Shifrin

Diana A. Kamysz, HR Green

Edward C. Varga, McHenry County

Emily Eng, Antero Group

Ernesto M. Huaracha, Lake County

Garret R. Cook, Cook Engineering Group

Grace Kurcab, Farnsworth Group

Jack A. Bielak

Jeffrey S. Maczko, Village of Bensenville

Joseph A. Hopson, WSP

Justin S. Chambers, Michael Baker International

Karoline Qasem, Fehr Graham Engineering

Kristin L. Mehl, Village of Roselle

Kyle D. Berry, Christopher B. Burke Engineering

Laura L. Mangrum, Lee County

Marian M. Domanski, Hanson Professional Services

Michael F. Iberkleid Szainrok, RESILIFT

Ogar I. Somo, Village of Niles

Robert M. Yerushalmi, HR Green

Samantha M. Heatherly, DuPage County

Sharene Gould Dulabaum

Zachary T. Schuster, Baxter & Woodman

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ASFPM CFM Program is Going GREEN

Starting with the January 2025 CFM renewal cycle, ASFPM will no longer automatically send paper certificates at renewal. CFMs can easily download an electronic version of their certificate from the ASFPM Portal and can also purchase a paper certificate if desired. Newly-certified CFMs will still receive their first certificate in paper format, free of charge. The Certification Board of Regents (CBOR) is also investigating the potential use of digital badges to highlight your CFM credential on your resume, email signature, and social media platforms like LinkedIn. Stay tuned for more information!

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Get Ready for the 2025 IAFSM Annual Conference: Early Registration Now Open!

Mark your calendar for **March 11–12, 2025**, as the 2025 IAFSM Annual Conference returns to the Tinley Park Convention Center. This premier event brings together professionals and experts in floodplain and stormwater management for two days of learning, collaboration, and networking. Whether you're a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM), a public official, or a professional dedicated to building resilient communities, this conference will equip you with the knowledge and connections to drive positive change in your community and beyond.



Transforming Floodplains for a Sustainable Future

Conference Theme: *Transforming Floodplains for a Sustainable Future*

This year's theme highlights innovative strategies to promote resilience and sustainable approaches to managing floodplains and stormwater while preserving natural resources. Gain actionable ideas and practical solutions for real-world challenges through expert-led sessions, hands-on workshops, and the latest advancements from industry leaders.

Updated Fees for 2025: Investing in a High-Quality Experience

To ensure a seamless and impactful conference experience, registration, exhibitor, and sponsorship fees have been slightly adjusted. These changes reflect rising costs, including venue expenses, speaker fees, and technology upgrades. With your continued support, these investments will maintain the high-quality programming you've come to expect.

Attendee Rates: Register Now!

- Early Bird Registration: \$460 (until February 9, 2025)
- Regular Registration Rate: \$520 (from February 10 through February 23, 2025)
- Final day for registrations or cancellations: February 23, 2025

Exhibitor & Sponsorship Opportunities – Introducing Platinum Level Sponsorship

We are pleased to introduce new Platinum Sponsorship opportunities to further support innovation, learning, and collaboration at the conference. These updates are designed to maximize visibility and engagement for organizations at every level.

Exhibitor Fees:

- Early Bird: \$850 (up from \$800) until February 1, 2025
- Standard Rate: \$950 (from February 2 through February 15, 2025)

Sponsorship Levels:

We've restructured our sponsorship opportunities to ensure better engagement and return on investment for participants and supporters:

- **Platinum Level (\$2,500):**
 - » Premium logo placement on signage and IAFSM slides.
 - » Recognition during keynote sessions and closing remarks with a Platinum Sponsor Spotlight.
 - » Priority booth location in the exhibitor hall.
 - » Dedicated feature in the program with a spotlight story.
- **Gold Level (\$1,500):**
 - » Prominent logo placement during sessions and conference materials.
- **Silver Level (\$1,000):**
 - » Strong visibility in event communications and on-site materials.
- **Bronze Level (\$500):**
 - » Cost-effective recognition with inclusion in key conference communications and signage.

Sponsors and exhibitors play a vital role in creating a successful conference experience. These new opportunities are designed to ensure increased visibility and strategic partnerships. View more details about sponsorship opportunities [here](#) or contact **Sarah Harbaugh, Executive Secretary**, at iafsm@illinoisfloods.org.

Why the Price Increases?

To continue providing the high-quality conference experience you expect, it has become necessary to adjust registration, exhibitor, and sponsorship fees. These increases reflect the rising costs of venue rental, speaker fees, technology, and other essential event logistics. With your support, we are able to maintain the value and impact of the conference, ensuring it remains a top-tier educational experience.

We look forward to welcoming you to the **Tinley Park Convention Center** on **March 11 and 12, 2025** for a conference filled with learning, collaboration, and innovation. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of shaping the future of floodplain and stormwater management in Illinois.

For more information, including registration, sponsorships, and conference details, visit <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/events/iafsm-annual-conference>.

Sarah Harbaugh Retirement - New Executive Secretary Needed!

After many years of dedicated service, our Executive Secretary, Sarah Harbaugh, is retiring at the end of 2025. We are seeking to find and hire her replacement well in advance to ensure a smooth transition and allow for hands-on training directly from Sarah before her retirement.

For more details about the position, please refer to the job description. Feel free to share this opportunity with anyone who might be interested.

For further information, you can contact Sarah Harbaugh at iafsm@illinoisfloods.org or Jenny Loewenstein at jenny.loewenstein@contigoengineering.com.

Thank you for helping us spread the word, and many thanks to Sarah for her excellent and dedicated service to our organization over the years.



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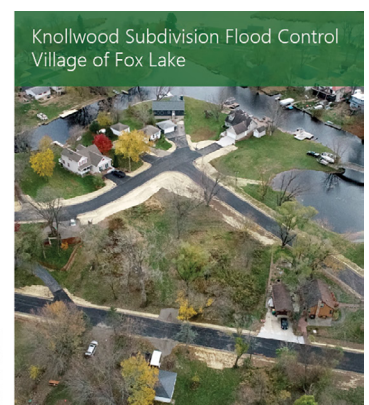
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IAFSM Annual Awards

Awards Season is approaching! Nominate Your Peers and Colleagues for Stormwater and Floodplain Management Awards, for recognition at our 2025 conference in March!

Do you know someone who has made notable contributions to furthering the goals and missions of IAFSM? Nominate them now! All nominations and references are to be submitted online or via email. Nominations are now being accepted for the awards listed below. Nominations for the following categories are due by February 3, 2025. Please visit <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/membership/awards> for more information.

- **Floodplain Manager of the Year:** Recognizes outstanding individual efforts and contributions at the local level in the area of floodplain management.
- **Young Professional of the Year:** Recognizes the achievements of IAFSM professionals and graduate students under the age of 35. It is recommended that nominations describe the nominee's service to the advancement of floodplain and stormwater management. This can include contributions to IAFSM and other professional organizations, technical contributions to the profession, and service to the community. Please include a letter of recommendation if desired.
- **Stormwater Management:** Awarded to an individual or group who have improved stormwater management or reduced urban flood risks through creative engineering, regulatory measures, or other approaches.
- **Mitigation:** 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.
- **Outstanding Service:** Awarded to an IAFSM Officer, a Federal, State, or Local Official, or a consultant who has gone above and beyond normal expectations and duties to promote or encourage IAFSM goals.
- **Journalism or Public Outreach Award:** Given to a 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 outreach and public awareness of floodplain or stormwater management issues.
- **Legislation:** Honors Illinois lawmakers or local officials for their efforts in floodplain issues. The award can also be given to an individual who makes extraordinary efforts to encourage the passage of legislation or to a community that has adopted unique local regulations that promote floodplain management or flood damage reduction.
- **French and Mary Lu Wetmore Award for Lifetime Achievement:** This award is the IAFSM's highest honor. It is reserved for outstanding longtime floodplain managers. These individual's long-term contributions have made a noticeable impact on floodplain and stormwater management efforts in the State of Illinois. This award is not always given on a yearly basis.



From the Chair

-Dallas Alley, CFM, City of Fairview Heights

IAFSM Membership – I continued to be amazed at how quickly a year passes. In growing another year older I find that time appears to increase in speed exponentially as we age. This year has been one filled with activity, and a few floods for good measure. Entering the new year, IAFSM continues to strive to make a difference in floodplain and stormwater management. Our advances are only made possible by the great volunteers who form the executive board and our committee chairs. Because of you, our organization is stronger than ever, and continues to influence positive change in how our stormwater systems and regulatory floodplains are managed.



The end of this year also marks the final stretch of my term as Chair of our great association, which can only mean one thing. During the 2025 Annual IAFSM conference, being held March 11th and 12th in Tinley Park, the association members will elect new leadership and the torch will continue to be passed. I look forward to serving as past chair, where I can heckle from the cheap seats. Kidding aside, I rest easy in the knowledge that IAFSM continues to serve as a premier leader among floodplain and stormwater management associations across the country.

2025 will be a year of transition, not only for our association, but for our entire country. As floodplain and stormwater professionals, we are all responsible for the continued growth of our profession. We serve to protect the public and the land from poor decisions. During a recent trip out west my family was able to spend a day at the Grand Canyon, where I reflected on the amazing power of water and our feeble attempts to harness it. The vastness of the Canyon puts into perspective how powerful water is, and cemented into my mind that fighting the will of water will always (eventually) end in failure. Society should focus on working with water, in lieu of fighting against it.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the annual IAFSM Conference in March and hope that you will join me in New Orleans at the annual ASFPM Conference, May 18th to 22. If you are able to make it to New Orleans for the conference, please be sure to seek out the IAFSM executive board, and if you find me ask me to buy you a beignet or some crawfish.

Happy Holidays to our membership and here's to a prosperous New Year!

Stormwater Committee Update

The IAFSM Stormwater Committee hosted a SRH-2D modeling workshop last fall, which was well attended and a successful workshop. The committee is investigating offering additional stormwater modeling classes for 2025. For more information about the Stormwater Committee, contact Steve Bicking, sbicking@hrgreen.com.

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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:

- IAFSM Annual Conference: March 11 & 12, 2025 Tinley Park Convention Center
- ASFPM Annual Conference May 18-22, 2025 New Orleans, LA

Illinois DNR webinars:

- Will be resumed in February 2025, watch for an email from IDNR for more details

FEMA Webinars

- See the separate article in this newsletter for FEMA webinars

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- Feb 3-6, June 9-12, 2025
- E0278 NFIP Community Rating System – Jan 13-16, 2025

Webinars

- ASFPM: <https://www.floods.org/training-education/online-training/asfpm-webinars/>
- AFPM 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 \(floods.org\)](https://www.floods.org/on-demand-learning/)
- Other training and CEC opportunities can be found on ASFPM's calendar: <http://www.floods.org/n-calendar/calendar.asp?>



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Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

2025 IAFSM Conference

The 2025 Annual Conference will be held March 11-12, 2025 at the Tinley Park Convention Center in Tinley Park, IL. Save the date!

Wanted: Newsletter Ideas & Articles

IAFSM members, this is YOUR newsletter! Email Jennifer Maercklein, editor, at jmaercklein@v3co.com 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 January 8. Join us! All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Sarah Harbaugh for the zoom link.

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 Sarah 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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Winter 2025 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 jmaercklein@v3co.com.

IAFSM OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

CHAIR

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

VICE CHAIR

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

TREASURER

Mary J Richardson, CFM
Illinois State Water Survey
mjr@illinois.edu

SECRETARY

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

PAST CHAIR

Stephen Altman, P.E., CFM
IDNR - OWR
Steve.Altman@illinois.gov

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Sarah Harbaugh
IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org

CONFERENCE

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

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

Ron Davis
IDNR-OWR
Ron.Davis@illinois.gov

NEWSLETTER

Jennifer Maercklein, P.E., CFM
V3 Companies
jmaercklein@v3co.com

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

35W749 Bluff Drive, St. Charles, Illinois 60175

IAFSM@IllinoisFloods.org Phone: 630.443.8145 Fax: 630.443.8198

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