



THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Winter 2026 Newsletter

Join Us at IAFSM's 40th Annual Conference!

The Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (IAFSM) is turning **40**, and we're celebrating with our biggest event of the year! Join professionals from across Illinois as we come together to share knowledge, swap ideas, and tackle today's challenges in floodplain and stormwater management.

 **Where: iHotel & Illinois Conference Center, Champaign, IL**

 **When: Wednesday, March 11 – Thursday, March 12, 2026**

Get ready for:

- *Engaging presentations* from experts across the state
- *Daily Field Trips* to see implemented floodplain and stormwater solutions
- *NFIP 101 Course* for local officials (or anyone) new to the field or those who want to brush up on their skills
- *Extreme Event Game* that is fast paced, intense game to teach about natural disaster responses
- *Networking opportunities* to connect with peers and leaders in the field
- *Special Celebration* to honor our 40th Anniversary

Important Items:

- **Early Bird pricing ends January 15, 2026** – save your spot and your budget! ([Register Here](#))
- **Online Registration closes February 27, 2026** – don't miss out.
- **Sponsorships** will be received until February 23, 2026 – secure your visibility at the conference. ([Sponsorship Flyer](#)) ([Become a Sponsor](#))
- **Exhibitor spots** available until February 23, 2026, or until filled – showcase your company to professionals across Illinois. Space is limited. ([Exhibitor Flyer](#)) ([Become an Exhibitor](#))



Scholarships & Student Discounts

- If you're employed by a **local government**, you may qualify for one of **10 IAFSM scholarships** to attend. If you're eligible, don't forget to [apply for a scholarship!](#)
- **Student Scholarships** are available for full, two-day registration. [Apply for a Student Scholarship!](#) Application closes February 8, 2026.

Come learn, connect, and celebrate 40 years of advancing floodplain and stormwater management in Illinois. For more information, such as the conference schedule or to find the link to register, visit: <https://www.illinoisfloods.org/events/iafsm-annual-conference>.

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FEMA's Archived Flood Data Site is Live

Looking for FEMA regulatory floodplain models? FEMA's Archived Flood Data website went live on November 7, 2025. The FEMA Archived Flood Data is FEMA's primary means of disseminating administrative and technical NFIP data that are not available through self-service methods such as Mapping Information Platform (MIP) or Map Service Center (MSC). This website allows users to make online requests to the FEMA Engineering Library for technical and administrative data. The Archived Flood Data application provides requesters with the additional benefits of tracking requests, faster filing speed, active support from the engineering library staff and virtual guided walkthrough. It can be accessed at: <https://hazards.fema.gov/flood-maps/archived-flood-data/home> Visit the FAQ page for more information: <https://hazards.fema.gov/flood-maps/archived-flood-data/resources>.



Major Rollback to Federal Wetlands Protections Proposed

-Excerpt from ASFPM News & Views, 12/15/25

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a new proposed rule in November that would drastically narrow the definition of “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) — the cornerstone for determining which wetlands and waterways receive Clean Water Act (CWA) protections. The proposal goes beyond the limitations required under the Supreme Court’s 2023 Sackett v. EPA decision and would significantly scale back federal protections for wetlands and streams nationwide. For more information on what the proposal is attempting to do and why floodplain managers are concerned, [read here](#).

From Chaos to Control: New Guide Helps Emergency Managers Lead Smart Flood Recovery

-From ASFPM News & Views, 12/15/25

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) are pleased to announce the release of An Emergency Manager’s Quick Guide to Floodplain Management. This comprehensive guide was developed to equip state and local emergency managers with the essential knowledge and tools to navigate the complex landscape of floodplain management, particularly after a flood event when mitigation measures to prevent future flood losses are critical. [Read more.](#)



From the Chair: CFM Credentials, Legislative Committee Announcement

-Sharon Østerby, CFM, Lake County SMC

Happy New Year! Last year brought many challenges, and I deeply appreciate how our community stepped up to support one another. As we move into 2026, I look forward to continuing that spirit of collaboration, sharing knowledge, and lifting each other up within our community. Together, we can navigate challenges, celebrate successes, and keep strengthening our professional network.

As we begin 2026, we're especially excited for the upcoming Annual Conference in March, which marks the 40th anniversary of promoting sound floodplain and stormwater management, advancing professional knowledge, and serving communities across Illinois. Held at the University of Illinois in Champaign, the conference is a great opportunity to honor our history, connect with colleagues, and look ahead to the future.

CFM Credentials: Now Digital and Easy to Share

Your CFM certification just got a digital upgrade! This new digital badge lets you display your credential in your email signature, on LinkedIn, or anywhere you highlight your professional achievements. Each credential includes a verification link for employers and clients.

All Certified Floodplain Managers should have received their credential in November. An email was sent to the address you provided when renewing your CFM, so check your inbox for a message from Flood Credentials (credentials@floods.org). If you don't see it, simply reach out to louie@floods.org for assistance.



Legislative Committee Announcement

I'm pleased to announce that Tony Comerio, a Legislative Committee member since 2017, has been appointed Chair. With his extensive experience in floodplain policy and government relations, Tony is well-positioned to lead the committee, and we greatly appreciate his willingness to take on this important role.

A special thank you goes to **Kay Whitlock**, the outgoing Chair, for her many years of dedicated service. Kay's leadership has been instrumental in guiding the committee, building strong relationships with policymakers, and ensuring IAFSM's voice is heard on key issues. Kay has been actively involved with IAFSM since its early years and was the recipient of the French Wetmore Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2018. **Thank you Kay!**

I look forward to seeing you in March to celebrate our 40th Annual Conference, connect with colleagues, and honor this milestone in IAFSM's history. Let's continue collaborating, learning from one another, and strengthening our community throughout the year.

Cheers!

New! IAFSM Mentoring Program

IAFSM is launching a new formal mentoring program to connect seasoned stormwater and floodplain managers with those who are newer to the field or seeking to grow professionally. The conference will host an informational session about this new program and the first meeting of mentors and mentees. Spots are limited; prospective mentors and mentees are highly encouraged to apply to the program before the conference. Mentor-mentee pairings will be finalized on a rolling basis beginning in late February. Applications to participate as a mentor or mentee will open later this month. Watch your email and the IAFSM website for the online application link.

IAFSM Webinar Series with Dr. Julie Nucci: Improving Communications

Following her outstanding and highly rated plenary presentation at the 2024 IAFSM Conference (“Above the Flood: A Homeowner’s Experience Elevating the First House in the National Register of Historic Places in New York State”), **Dr. Julie Nucci** will lead a new two-part webinar series designed to help engineers and other STEM professionals communicate more clearly, confidently, and effectively.

Webinar 1: January 21, 12:00–1:30pm

The Curse of Knowing: Why STEM Professionals Struggle to Be Understood (and How to Fix It)

This session explores how technical professionals can bridge the knowledge gap with their audiences. Participants will learn how to simplify complex concepts, create meaningful connections, and use storytelling to enhance engagement.

Key Takeaways:

- Communicate with clarity by focusing on audience needs
- Leverage stories and emotion to build connection
- Share your professional journey in a relatable way



Webinar 2: February 4, 12:00–1:30pm

Save the Audience, Save Yourself: The Science of Better Conference Presentations

This session focuses on building effective presentations and slide decks. Dr. Nucci will cover strategies for structuring your talk, designing supportive visuals, and delivering your message with confidence.

Key Takeaways:

- You(!) not the slides, are the presentation
- Thoughtful preparation matters: great talks are built, not improvised
- Use design choices that reinforce, rather than compete with, your message

Pricing:

Single Webinar Price:

- Government/Non-Profit: **\$30**
- Consultants: **\$6**

Two-Webinar Bundle (Discounted):

- Government: **\$50** (instead of \$60)
- Consultants: **\$100** (instead of \$120)

Professional Development: 3 PDHs available. No CFM CECs provided.

Registration link: We encourage members and colleagues to join us for this engaging and practical series.
<https://www.illinoisfloods.org/meetings/register/options/2047>

About the Speaker: Dr. Nucci holds degrees from RPI, Harvard, and Cornell. Her background spans research, teaching, and science communication, and her recent experience navigating the home-elevation process gives her a unique perspective on the intersection between technical expertise and real-world communication challenges.

SRH-2D Follow-on Training Courses for IDOT's Complex Waterway Pre-Qualification

IAFSM is pleased to announce that we will be providing follow-on classes to the SRH-2D class that was offered in the Fall of 2024 by IAFSM. The classes are 2DHM-A course (Jan 26-28) and then the 2DHM-B course (Feb 2-4). These classes, in conjunction with SRH-2D, are some of the criteria that are needed for individuals/companies to be prequalified with IDOT for Hydraulic Reports (Waterways: Complex).

2DHM-A Course Description:

This course, ***2DHM-A SRH-2D Model Data Files, Diagnostics and Verifying 2D Model Results***, is a follow-on live web training to Two-Dimensional Hydraulic Modeling of Rivers at Highway Encroachments (2DHM), a 3-day virtual training course. This follow-on course is designed to introduce participants to the various data files utilized for SRH-2D input, as well as the files generated by SRH-Pre and the output files produced by SRH-2D. Attendees will gain familiarity with the different file formats, understand their specific uses, and learn how to interpret the various diagnostic messages provided by SRH-2D through the Surface-water Modeling System (SMS). Developed by Aquaveo, SMS functions as a graphical pre- and post-processor for numerous 2D modeling engines. Additionally, participants will discover how to effectively employ monitor lines within SRH-2D and leverage their output to verify model convergence.

The course material is delivered through a series of three live Zoom sessions, supplemented by two independent, hands-on exercises assigned between sessions. The sessions are structured as follows: Session 1: Introduction, Data Flow in SRH-2D, and Output Files and Diagnostics; Session 2: Monitor Lines/Continuity; and Session 3: Summary and Review. As part of the course, participants will receive a set of independent study exercise data files along with a comprehensive training manual.

Participants are also expected to complete two independent exercises outside of the live Zoom sessions—one after Session 1 and before Session 2, and another after Session 2 and before Session 3.

2DHM-B Course Description:

This course, **2DHM-B SRH-2D Model Terrain Development with Various Data Sources**, is a follow-on live web training to Two-Dimensional Hydraulic Modeling of Rivers at Highway Encroachments (2DHM), a 3-day virtual training course. This course is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to process and effectively utilize LiDAR and other elevation data formats when defining the geometry for 2D hydraulic models. All of this is done using the Surface-water Modeling System (SMS), a graphical pre- and post-processor from Aquaveo that supports various 2D modeling engines. Attendees will gain proficiency in identifying potential issues within elevation data. They'll also explore various methods for modifying geometry for simulations and learn how to use the software to import data from diverse sources, merge datasets, and export data in formats compatible with other standard GIS and CAD software.

The course material is delivered through three live Zoom sessions, supplemented by two independent, hands-on exercises completed between sessions. The sessions are structured as follows: Session 1: Introduction, Working with Topographic Data, Bathymetric Data and Channel Creation; Session 2: Combining and Exporting Data, Incorporating Terrain into a Mesh; and Session 3: Summary and Review. As part of the course, participants will receive a set of independent study exercise data files along with a comprehensive training manual.

Participants are also expected to complete two independent exercises outside of the live Zoom sessions—one after Session 1 and before Session 2, and another after Session 2 and before Session 3.

Date, Cost, Etc:

- Dates: 2DHM-A course (Jan 26-28) and then the 2DHM-B course (Feb 2-4)
- Cost: \$275 per class, PDHs will be offered
- Time: 11am to 2pm Central Time
- Location: Virtual via Zoom
- Attendee Minimum Limit 10 and Maximum Limit 30
- Registration opens November 15, 2025

IAFSM Contact:

Steve Bicking at sbicking@hrgreen.com

CEC Education & Training Opportunities

Looking for training opportunities? 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 article regarding SRH-2D courses for IDOT pre-qualification
- See separate article about webinars to improve communication
- ASFPM added three on-demand courses covering **mutual aid, wetlands, and professional ethics for floodplain managers**. Explore what's new with ASFPM training and how you can earn CECs at your own pace: [read more](#).
- 2026 IAFSM Conference, March 11-12, 2026, Champaign

IDNR Illinois Floodplain Management Webinars

The Illinois DNR monthly webinar series discusses different floodplain management topics each month. Please share this information with your building inspectors, permit staff, engineers, and public work staff. Use the links below to register and add to your calendar.

- [The Elevation Certificate for the Floodplain Administrator](#): Tues 1/20/26, 10 – 11 am
- [Substantial Improvement and Substantial Damage Determination Process](#): Tues 2/10/26, 10 – 11 am
- [Community Rating System \(CRS\) Basics](#): Tues 3/17/26, 10 – 11 am
- [NFIP 101- Day Long Virtual Training](#): Wed 2/18/26, 9:00am-2:30pm

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/>
- Live (virtual) trainings: <https://crsresources.org/training/>

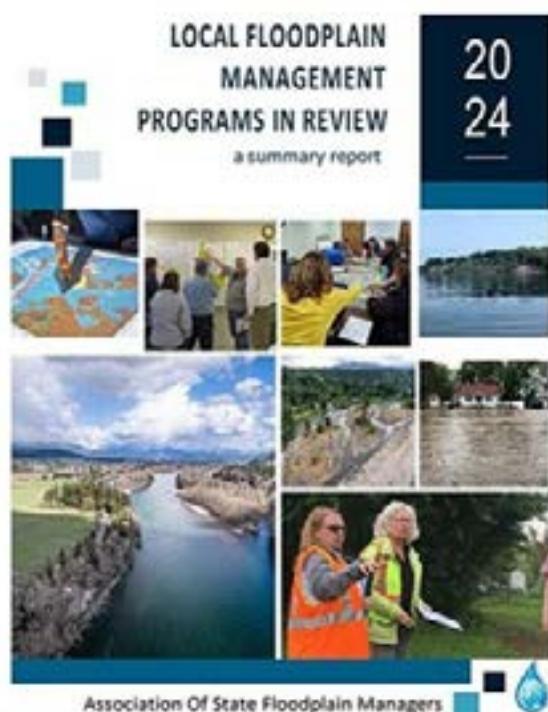
Floodplain Management by the Numbers: New ASFPM Report Highlights Local Realities

-From ASFPM News & Views, 11/15/25

ASFPM has released Local Floodplain Management Programs in Review 2024, a comprehensive look at the state of local programs. Conducted with the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, the report offers a snapshot of who the nation's floodplain managers are, how they spend their time on the job, and what obstacles they face in the day-to-day implementation of their local floodplain management programs.

The report also includes a number of demographic questions related to job title, experience, education, certifications, and salary. As a follow-up to the 2016 report, much of this report provides a comparative analysis between the two editions, offering insight into what has changed and what has not.

[Read more](#)



Important Stuff We Tell You in Every Newsletter...

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

The 2026 Annual Conference will be held March 11-12, 2026, at the I Hotel in Champaign. 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 Fallfield, Champaign, Bartlett, Woodridge, and Swansea. Contact Amanda King at IAFSM@illinoisfloods.org to make arrangements.

Next Board Meeting

The next Board Meetings will be January 14, 10am on Zoom, and March 12 at the Conference. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Amanda King for the zoom link if required: 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 only offered online. Online exams can be taken in your home or office (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. Tomas 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.

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