

THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for
Floodplain and Stormwater Management

Spring 2009 Newsletter

2009 Annual Conference Recap

Our 2009 IAFSM Annual Conference was held March 11-12 at the brand new I-Hotel in Champaign, Illinois. Over 430 participants attended their choice of over 60 technical presentations covering a wide range of stormwater, wetland and floodplain management topics. There were also 20 exhibitors displaying the latest products and services.

The conference was a great success! More information on the conference, including award winners and photos, can be found inside this newsletter.



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IAFSM's 2009 Achievement Awards

This year was not an easy year to pick our awards recipients. A brief summary of each award winner's accomplishments is included here. For the full stories and accomplishments of each of our award winners, visit our website at www.illinoisfloods.org.

Floodplain Manager of the Year: Greg Thorpe

Greg is a Certified Floodplain Manager from Rock Island County Illinois which was declared a disaster area 4 times in 2008. The water level on their main stream gauge dropped below flood stage for less than 14 days over most of last year. Greg was instrumental in co-coordinating a team did over 300 initial damage assessments, working for 33 hours in a 48 hour period in below freezing weather. Even though Rock Island County has done hundreds of mitigation projects, over 30 Substantial Damage Declarations were made from one flood alone. Greg was also a driving force behind the Countywide mitigation plan which was adopted on January 22nd, 2009. Greg is an indispensable part of a County flood plain management system that was 10 years in the making and is arguably one of the best in the entire nation (not just the state).



Greg Thorpe receives the Floodplain Manager of the Year Award from Stu Richter, IAFSM Chair.

Floodplain Manager of the Year #2: Jersey County (Mike Prough, Cindy Cragmire, Kusumaker Bhusal and Rion Kolosieke)



Stu Richter presents the second Floodplain Manager of the Year award to Mike Prough, Cindy Cragmire and Rion Kolosieke of Jersey County.

Jersey County went from almost being kicked out of the NFIP in 1994 to being the best in the nation 10 years later. Although they have won about every award possible, this year they surpassed even themselves! In 2008, Jersey County fought major battles trying to force compliance on nearly 300 repetitive loss USACE lease cabins, and to get the USACE to accept some responsibility for flood losses on Federal property. Hundreds of inspections were completed on these cabins, public meetings were held with cabin owners, and over 800 emails were sent to the USACE in the summer of 2008. Today, over half of the cabins are being elevated above the flood elevation. Additionally, when the lease cabins were found to be dumping raw sewage directly into the river, the County stepped in to correct this problem with little or no support from the USACE or the State.

Floodplain Manager of the Year: Honorable Mentions

Several local officials did extraordinary work following 2008's flooding and deserve an honorable mention:

Mike Harsted (LaSalle County)
Jim Burger (Putnam County)
Dawn Anderson (Grundy County)
Revonne Butler (Henderson County)
Alan Ninness (Saline County)
Joel Nasser (Watseka)
Gloria Schleef (Iroquois County)

Mike Suttfin (Ottawa)
John Hammond (Woodford County)
Joye Baker (Adams County)
Matt Wahl (Peoria County)
Chad Attkinson (Machesney Park)
Don Pallissard (Kankakee County)
Brian Eber (Rockford)

Outstanding Service Award: Stu Richter

Stu Richter has excelled during his term as IAFSM Chair. He has organized meetings, run board meetings, directed the budget, set up new committees, and eliminated other committees. Although this may seem like standard fare and what is expected of the Chair, Stu took over the office on the same year French and Mary Lu Wetmore moved away. French and Mary Lu had been the organization and administration of IAFSM for nearly 25 years. Suddenly, IAFSM found themselves "kicked out of the nest". We were on our own. It wasn't an easy job for someone to step in and organize volunteer labor to fill this void. Stu did not hesitate and he had done an amazing job. IAFSM is stronger now than we ever have been and much of that is due to Stu Richter's organization and leadership skills.

Stormwater Management Award: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

The Commission has been the lead stormwater and soil erosion coordination agency in the Peoria Area. They have effectively coordinated very complex issues between Federal, State, and local governmental agencies. They developed and marketed a regional erosion and stormwater control ordinance in the early 1990s that is still in use by most governments in the Tri-County Area today. They developed the Mossville Bluffs Watershed Plan which included a program to implement stormwater Best Management Practices on residential properties and includes programs to reduce gully and stream erosion that contributes to pollution of the Illinois River. They also a Regional Stormwater Management Plan that addresses a variety of water related issues and provides reasonable solutions for the urbanized and rural areas of the Tri-County Area.

Stormwater Management Award (Honorable Mention):

Village of Downers Grove

In 2007 the Village prepared a Watershed Infrastructure Improvement Plan to identify and prioritize dozens of stormwater improvement projects to reduce stormwater and flood problems throughout the Village. The total estimated construction cost of the recommended projects was \$340M. Village staff successfully convinced their council and public of the importance of proper stormwater management and the need to improve the Village's stormwater infrastructure to reduce future flood damages. The Village obtained funding and in January 2008 began designing and constructing many of the recommended stormwater improvements. Nine projects were built in 2008, ten are currently being designed or constructed, and six, including three which will cumulatively provide 40 acre-feet of new stormwater storage, are scheduled for design or construction in 2009.



Sally McConkey presents Stu Richter with the Outstanding Service Award.



Matt Wahl accepts the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's award for Stormwater Management.

Mitigation Award: Village of Lisle

The Village of Lisle purchased about 25 single family homes in the floodplain, demolished them, and used the land to build a stormwater basin that provides both detention and compensatory storage for development and redevelopment of properties in downtown Lisle. Creative engineering was needed to deal with the challenges of the floodplain and the close proximity of Illinois Route 53. The basin was designed with a peninsula and interesting shape and includes a great deal of native landscaping. The Village was also awarded an OSLAD grant to add a walking trail, pergola, gazebo, interpretive signs, and a children's play area with a nature theme. The site will include features such as a green roof and possibly pervious concrete.



Mary Lou Kalsted accepts the Village of Lisle's Mitigation award from Ron Davis.

Journalism or Public Education Award: SCARCE

Kay McKeen and SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education) have a mission to "inspire people, through education, to care for and preserve the Earth's natural resources, while working to build sustainable communities." SCARCE educates teachers, students, and the public about watersheds, native plants, and floodplain. She loans watershed models that for use in the classroom and has a grant that allows her to run a workshop for teachers to build a groundwater model and create classroom activities using the model. During the summer she ran bus tours looking at sustainable buildings, naturalized landscaping and best management practices, green roofs, LEED accreditation, etc. She practices what she preaches and planted her backyard with native landscaping to mitigate flooding on her own property. She and her outstanding organization have touched many lives, and they are an excellent example of positive public education. Learn more at www.s-c-a-r-c-e.org



Schoolchildren use one of SCARCE's watershed models and learn about floodplains.



Conference attendees enjoy lunch before the Awards Presentation on Thursday.

Lifetime Achievement Award: Don Vonnahme

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to someone whose actions have changed the floodplain landscape of Illinois. This year's recipient's work can be seen in every corner of the state. For over 40 years, he has worked (and continues to work) to reduce flood losses and improve water quality in this state. His leadership and guidance inspired an entire generation of floodplain managers who followed in his steps. To list all of Don's achievements could fill an entire newsletter. Highlights include:

Don graduated from the University of Illinois with a BS in Civil Engineering and a specialty in hydraulics and hydrology. After serving in the U.S. Army, he worked as a Hydraulic Engineer for the IDOT Division of Water Resources. He was named Deputy Director in 1976 and Director in 1982, a position he held



until he retired in 2003. (The Office of Water Resources was moved from IDOT to IDNR in 1995). He served on a number of commissions and task forces in his career, serving as Chair of many of them including the Illinois State Water Plan Task Force, Illinois Drought Task Force, Decision Making Standard Committee of the Council of Great Lakes Governors and Premiers, Great Lakes Commission, Ohio River Basin Commission, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, Interstate Council on Water Policy, and National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies.



Gary Clark, Director of IDNR-OWR, presents Don Vonnahme with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

He won a number of awards in his career including the Governor's Superior Achievement Award in 1971, the Top 10 Public Works "Leaders of the Year" in 1985 from the American Public Works Association, Excellence in Flood Hazard Management in 1985 from the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Government Professional Development Award in 1987 from the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the Education and Public Service Award in 1988 from Universities Council on Water Resources.

Scholarships to the ASFPM National Conference

IAFSM will once again be offering scholarships for Illinois' local officials to attend the national flood conference. This will be the sixth year that IAFSM has provided scholarships to Illinois local officials. On average, a dozen local officials have taken advantage of the scholarships on an annual basis. This year's national conference is being held on June 7 - 12, 2009 in Orlando, Florida. Information on the conference can be found at the Association of State Floodplain Managers web site: www.floods.org. If you have questions regarding the conference or the scholarships, contact Paul Osman at (217) 782-4428 or paul.osman@illinois.gov. **The application deadline is April 15, 2009.** To apply for the IAFSM scholarships:

1. You must be an active member of IAFSM.
2. Priority will be given to Certified Floodplain Managers.
3. Priority will be given to Community Rating System Communities.
4. Priority will be given to local officials who intend to present a paper at the conference.
5. Priority will be given to first-time scholarship applicants.

6. Scholarships are available to the first 20 applicants.
7. IAFSM will pay early package registration fees of \$535 directly to ASFPM.
8. Transportation, hotels, and per diem must be paid by the scholarship recipient (you can stay at any hotel).
9. Scholarship recipients are expected to attend conference sessions.
10. Scholarship recipients must provide a minimum of 2- 4 hours help at the conference (if needed).
11. All requests must be on city letterhead.
12. Requests must be FAXed to Paul Osman at (217) 785-5014 or emailed to: paul.osman@illinois.gov.

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Are you a Senior Water Resource Engineer?

ASCE recently developed a post-licensure certification process for senior water resource engineers. An academy was created, the certification has been developed and they have been certifying engineers as Diplomate, Water Resource Engineers (D.WRE) for the past 3+ years. The requirements are a Masters Degree in a field related to the water resource engineer's practice or 30 graduate hours, 10 years professional engineering experience in water resource engineering, and licensure as a Professional Engineer.

The application process requires detailed information about the engineer's education, career and licensure. Letters of reference are also required. Kay Whitlock, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., would be pleased to coach Illinois engineers through the process and would author letters of reference, if requested. Applications are accepted year round and are processed semi-annually for regular applicants.

More information and application materials can be found on the web-site www.aawre.org. Engineers with the above requirements but with 25 years of experience can be nominated through an eminence process. IAFSM member who meet the eminent requirement should contact Kay directly for further information: kwhitlock@cbbel.com or 847-823-0500.

Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteers Needed

The Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association is calling for volunteers to participate in a *charrette* in Spring 2009 to help develop specific implementation plans and strategies for the Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie. 2009 will be the centennial year of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago and the **Illinois Chapter of APA** and its allied professional organizations want to create a plan fulfilling Midwin's potential as Chicagoland's greatest open space and to create a legacy for future generations. For more information or to volunteer: <http://www.landvision.com/burnham/burnham-task-force-APA-3.html>

Federal Flood Policy Challenges: Lessons from the 2008 Midwest Flood

-Nicole T. Carter, Congressional Research Service, published February 5, 2009

Floods remain a significant hazard in the United States. Developing and investing in flood-prone areas represents a tradeoff between the location's economic and other benefits and the exposure to a flood hazard. In the United States, flood mitigation, protection, emergency response, and recovery roles and responsibilities are shared. Local governments are responsible for land use and zoning decisions that shape floodplain and coastal development. State and federal programs, policies, and investments influence community and individual decisions on managing flood risk. The federal government constructs some of the nation's dams and levees, offers flood insurance, supports nonstructural risk reduction actions (known as hazard mitigation), and provides emergency response and disaster aid.

In June 2008, a series of storms in several midwestern states caused \$15 billion in damages. The 2008 flooding drew comparisons to the devastating 1993 Midwest flood and raised questions about whether the lessons from the 1993 flood were heeded. In 1993, hundreds of levees throughout much of the basin were breached in the Midwest causing \$30 billion in damages; much of the damage was agricultural and occurred in soaked upland areas. In contrast, the majority of the 2008 damages were concentrated along a few Mississippi River tributaries and in population centers with breached levees. The magnitude of the two floods simply overwhelmed the region's levees and dams, illustrating that some residual risk remains to people and investment behind these protective structures. Since 1993, emergency response and hazard mitigation programs have reduced risks in some Midwest communities; however, the region's flood risk continues to increase as more investments and people are located in flood-prone areas.

Since 1993, Congress, federal agencies, state, and local governments have taken steps aimed at reducing the nation's flood risk; at the same time, climate, population, and investment trends have increased the threat, vulnerability, and consequences of flooding. For example, Congress authorized using federal disaster assistance to cover more of the costs to acquire, relocate or elevate flood-prone homes and businesses. However, broader efforts to adopt a comprehensive flood policy and management strategy have not been pursued. The fundamental direction and approach of the national policies and programs remain largely unchanged since 1993. A comprehensive strategy would require regulation of floodplain use, significant changes to federal programs, and increased investment in flood risk reduction by all levels of government. Although they would reduce flood risk, these changes face significant opposition.

The 2008 Midwest flooding, Hurricane Ike in 2008, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 have renewed interest in the suite of tools available to improve flood resiliency. The issue for Congress is deciding on whether and how to enact and implement feasible and affordable flood policies and programs to reduce flood risk. The challenge is how to structure federal actions and programs so they provide incentives to reduce flood risk without unduly infringing on private property rights or usurping local decision making. Tackling this challenge would require adjustments in the flood insurance program, disaster aid policies and practices, and programs for structural and nonstructural flood risk reduction measures and actions.

Editor's note: The text above represents a summary of the 43-page report. To view the full report visit http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40201_20090205.pdf



Federal Flood Policy Challenges: Lessons from the 2008 Midwest Flood

Nicole T. Carter
Specialist in Natural Resources Policy

February 5, 2009

Congressional Research Service
7-5730
www.crs.gov
R40201

CRS Report for Congress
Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress

Recent Illinois Legislative Activity

-P. Kay Whitlock, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.

The IAFSM Legislative Committee is following a number of activities in the 2009 Illinois General Assembly:

SB 32: Regulation of Reclaimed Water Systems (Garrett, Lake Forest) This amended bill provides that the Illinois Department of Public Health to promulgate regulations for rainwater harvesting collections systems and distribution systems.

SB 1344: Municipalities May Levy Penalties for Hazardous Releases (Dahl, R-Granville) With this legislation, municipalities would be able to impose a penalty against any person or organization that releases a hazardous substance or any other contaminate that injures the public health and safety of the community. Fines may not exceed \$50,000 for the violation and \$10,000 for each day the violation continues.

SB 1489: Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act (Martinez, Chicago) This bill would adopt storm water management rules, including a storm water permit fee. The statewide standards are focused on the use of green infrastructure as the predominant storm water management strategy (i.e., pervious parking lots, grass drainage swales). Requires a stormwater permit fee and state stormwater regulations. Requires the Agency to endeavor to establish new criteria which prioritize the use of green infrastructure in all projects involving storm water management and water efficiency. Also HB 2434.

HR 163 Creates a task force to study local government development standards and processes and their effect on watershed, wetlands, and floodplains. (Cross, Plainfield) 4 House members appointed by Speaker, 4 members of House appointed by minority leader and representatives of: 1 statewide organization representing municipal interests, 1 land conservation entity, & 1 property development entity. Report findings to G.A. by 1/1/10.

HB 1135: Municipal Liability for Flood Damage (Tryon, Crystal Lake) Amends the Illinois Municipal Code. Provides that municipalities shall be liable for damages to real estate within or outside of the corporate boundaries of the municipality damaged by overflow or otherwise damaged by reason of the construction, enlargement or use of any channel, ditch, drain, outlet, or other improvement by the municipality. Provides that, if judgment is rendered against a municipality for damages, then the plaintiff may recover reasonable attorneys' fees. Specifies notice requirements.

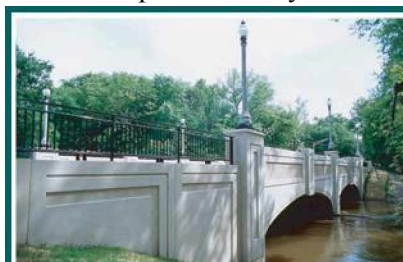
HB 2417 Amends the Property Tax Code (Jakobsson, Champaign) Provides that a municipality may establish a special service area for the purpose of repairing, reconstructing, or maintaining a stormwater-detention facility. Provides that a public hearing with respect to those special service areas must include a determination of whether the stormwater-detention facility is in need of the repair, reconstruction, or maintenance. Provides that certain special service areas for stormwater-detention facilities are not subject to objection-petition requirements.

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EPA Releases "Watershed Central" Web Site and a "Watershed Wiki"

EPA recently posted a new Web site called "Watershed Central" to help watershed organizations and others find key information they need to implement watershed management projects. The primary purpose of the new Watershed Central Web site is to make it easy for organizations to find the information that they need in a timely manner to help protect and restore their water resources. Watershed Central helps users find environmental data, watershed models, nearby local organizations, and guidance documents -- and other information depending on the task at hand. Watershed Central also contains links to watershed technical resources, funding sources, mapping applications and information specific to named watersheds.

The site includes a "Watershed Central Wiki" that users may use to collaborate and share information. We encourage all watershed practitioners to use this new Watershed Wiki to share tools, scientific findings, expertise, and local approaches to watershed management. Watershed Central not only links to EPA Web resources but also links to other valuable funding, guidance and tools on Web sites of state, tribal, and federal partners, universities, and nonprofit organizations. EPA's new site is located at: www.epa.gov/watershedcentral

On April 15, 2009, EPA's Watershed Academy will present a Webcast entitled, "Watershed Central: A New Gateway to Watershed Information. This Webcast will provide an opportunity to learn about the information and tools available on Watershed Central, including the new Watershed Wiki. Please visit their Web site at www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts to learn more about this Webcast; registration will open in early April. Also, at this url you can find archives of 39 past Webcasts on a variety of watershed management topics.

New FEMA Elevation Certificate

FEMA's NFIP Elevation Certificate form and instructions (FEMA Form 81-31) was scheduled to expire on February 28, 2009. FEMA published a memorandum on February 26, 2009 to clarify the continued use of the form and highlight planned changes to the Elevation Certificate. The February 26 memorandum can be found by [clicking here](#) or by searching for document ID W-09008 at www.FEMA.gov.



IAFSM Conference attendees enjoy Exhibit Hall at the new I-Hotel in Champaign. Over 20 exhibitors showcased their latest products and services.



From the Chair

- Jeff Wickenkamp, P.E., CFM, D.WRE

Let me begin by saying that it is an honor to have the opportunity to serve you as Chair of IAFSM. Since the very first IAFSM conference that I attended as a young engineer, I have been impressed by the skills and knowledge that are collectively held by our membership. I look forward to working with all of you as we carry out the mission of IAFSM.

Over the last few years, I have gotten to know many more of you through the planning of the annual conference. I would like to take one last chance to thank the board and all the volunteers who gave their time and effort to make the conferences in Tinley Park and Champaign successful. I confidently say “successful” because we do read your comments, and based on the comments received, the conferences were well regarded. But make no mistake, the Board also pays close attention to your comments on areas that need improvement. We strive to always improve the annual conference experience. Mike Cothard, our new Vice Chair and Conference Committee Chair, started reading your comments just days after the conference ended as he began making plans for next year. I’m confident that Mike will get as much support planning the conference as I did. The board will officially begin the conference planning process at our May 13th meeting.

Speaking of board meetings, did you know that all members are invited to participate in our board meetings? Just look at the website for dates, times and locations. They do move around a bit throughout the year. If you can’t be there, but want to follow along at home, the agendas and minutes from the board meetings are posted on the website.

Speaking of websites, did you notice the new website? It was unveiled just before the conference. Much thanks goes to Loren Wobig for leading the charge on that.

After all the flooding Illinois experienced in 2008, we don’t need long memories to know how important our work is. Yet, as I write this, the Red River has yet to peak in Fargo and I’m embarrassed to say that I once again feel reminded. Godspeed Fargo.

Next IAFSM Board Meeting:

May 13, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Grundy County Government Center,
Morris, Illinois

All members are welcome to attend!



The new IAFSM Board: Stu Richter, Past Chair, Whiteside County; Lillian Prince, Secretary, Engineering Resource Associates; Jeff Wickenkamp, Chair, Hey & Associates; Mike Cothard, Vice Chair, Christopher B. Burke Engineering; Loren Wobig, Treasurer, Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



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Name Your Newsletter Contest Winner!

Did you notice the new name of your newsletter? Congratulations to Ross Noethling of Lake County Planning, Building & Development for his entry in the Name Your Newsletter contest! With 40% of the votes, members selected ***The IAFSM Current*** as your new newsletter name during the Annual Conference. Ross, your \$100 check is in the mail.

Over 45 names were submitted for consideration in this contest. Thanks to all of you for your great ideas, and thanks especially to the authors of the runners-up: Loren Wobig, IDNR (*The Gage*); John Antonoglu, Primera (*The Illinois Current*); and Terry Reuss Fell, FEMA/retired (*Meanderings*).


Thanks also to everyone who filled out the Newsletter Questionnaire. We got a lot of great feedback, and your opinions will be reflected in our future newsletters. Thank you!



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Check out IAFSM's redesigned website: IllinoisFloods.org

IAFSM's website now has more content than ever. Check it out for:

- Information on the Association, including officer contacts and membership forms.
- Conference and workshop notices
- Copies of older newsletters (current newsletters are only available to members)
- Job openings for floodplain and stormwater managers
- The new guide for property owners
- The new Illinois Floodplain Management Desk Reference
- Information on preparing for the Certified Floodplain Manager Exam

2009 Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) Exam Schedule

- Bartlett: 6/19/09 (IDNR office)
- Woodridge: 9/16/09 (V3 office)
- Champaign: 9/16/09 (ISWS office)
- Rosemont: 12/9/09 (CBBEL office)

For more information or to register, please visit
www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html



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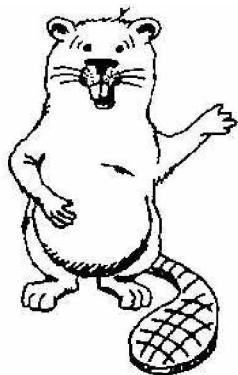


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Floodplain and Stormwater Management

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Spring 2009 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. To advertise in this newsletter (\$100-\$200 per year depending on ad size) contact the association at IAFSM@sbcglobal.net.



IAFSM Officers

Chair – Jeff Wickenkamp, Hey & Associates, Inc., jwickenkamp@heyassoc.com

Vice Chair – Mike Cothard, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, mcothard@cbbel.com

Treasurer – Loren Wobig, IDNR/OWR, loren.wobig@illinois.gov

Secretary – Lillian Prince, Engineering Resource Associates, lprince@eraconsultants.com

Past Chair – Stuart Richter, Whiteside County, srichter@whiteside.org

Executive Secretary – Sarah Harbaugh, IAFSM@sbcglobal.net

Special thanks to J&J Enterprises for our beaver, the mascot of surface water managers.

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

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Please notify us of address corrections or changes

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