

THE IAFSM CURRENT

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

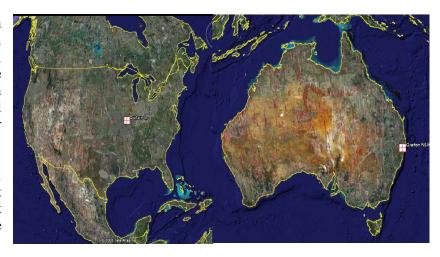
Summer 2010 Newsletter

A Tale of Two Graftons

~Ian Dinham, Tweed Shire Council, New South Wales Australia, and Paul Osman, IDNR

Grafton, Illinois and Grafton, New South Wales Australia are quite different places on opposite sides of the world. However, despite their separation in miles, they share much more than just their name. Both Graftons have a similar history, are situated on "Mighty" rivers, and both face the regular menace of major flooding.

These two cities illustrate how we can deal with the risk of flooding in quite different ways to suit the needs of different communities whilst still pursuing the same goal of protecting life and property.





Grafton, Illinois is situated at the confluence of the "Mighty Mississippi" River and the Illinois River. Just downstream of Grafton is the confluence of the Missouri River. As such, a flood on any of these three major rivers can trigger damage in Grafton. People in Grafton, Illinois live with an annual threat of major floods.

Grafton, New South Wales is situated on the "Mighty Clarence" River. The Clarence is the largest coastal watershed in New South Wales, with a total of 24 tributaries before it reaches the sea at Yamba. Residents of Grafton, NSW also live with the constant threat and danger of major floods in any year.



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History

Grafton, Illinois was purchased from the Kickapoo Indians in 1817 and settled by five Army soldiers in 1832. Lumbering, boat manufacturing, and fishing industries began to flourish. However, the stone quarries in the city's high limestone bluffs were the richest and most extensive of Grafton's resources. By 1850, stone from Grafton was building bridges and buildings just downstream in St. Louis.

At almost the same time, on the other side of the world, a similar history was taking place in Grafton, New South Wales. An escaped convict, Richard Craig, "discovered" Grafton, New South Wales in 1831 (although the local Aborigines had lived in the area for about 40,000 years before that). Richard Craig was given a "pardon" to reap the cedar harvest just waiting in the area. By 1851, Governor Fitzroy officially named the town "Grafton" after his grandfather, the Duke of Grafton.

However, both towns have struggled throughout their histories because of their flood-prone locations. In the past century alone, both Grafton, Illinois and Grafton, NSW have had 15 floods over 24 feet.

Floodplain Management Strategies

Grafton, Illinois' flood mitigation plan was based on necessity after widespread devastation from the 1993 flood. Many structures in town were substantially damaged. A heated city debate resulted in the decision to "move the town" rather than continue to fight the floods and rebuild. A voluntary buyout was instigated.

One hundred and twenty residents of Grafton signed up for the buyout. The total cost was \$110 million. Much of Grafton is now located on the bluff 300 feet above the Mississippi River. Just two years later (1995) the value of buyouts was proven when a similar flood event occurred and damages were minimal. In 2008, Grafton again had major flooding. For the first time ever, Grafton did not even make the news for a major flood!

Grafton, New South Wales relies heavily on flood levee protection. About 70% of the people in Grafton, NSW live behind the flood levee. These levees were built over about a thirty-year period following the floods of the 1950's, and this was the accepted response to flooding during those years.

Soon after, the Clarence River County Council (CRCC) was born and quickly became the largest flood mitigation authority in Australia with up to 100 staff members and a fleet of equipment.

Apart from levee construction, the CRCC built over 234km of large flood mitigation drains and 500 floodgates. Draining floodwaters away after each flood was considered just as important to rural areas as keeping floodwaters out of the towns.

In 2007, a new floodplain management plan was adopted for Grafton and surrounding areas, based on the NSW Floodplain Development Manual. Nowadays it makes sense to avoid building on high risk areas in the first place.

Community Attitudes

Grafton, Illinois has changed. A rough-and-tumble old river town has been transformed into a tourist destination. A beautiful open bicycle trail now runs through town. Wineries and gourmet restaurants have replaced old riverfront bars. A popular marina and commercial shopping center sit in the middle of town. On weekends, it is hard to find a place to park in Grafton. As a whole, residents of Grafton have benefited both personally and economically from the flood mitigation projects.

In Grafton, NSW, the majority of people feel comfortable and secure with the levee system in place. Very few people consider the likelihood of levee failure or overtopping. In 2001, about 10,000 people living behind the levee were given evacuation notices, however, only 300 people responded to the call to evacuate.

Since 2001, very proactive community awareness programs have been implemented. Community awareness has become a major component of the Grafton, NSW flood program. However, drought conditions in Australia have spared the Clarence from recent flooding, and the effectiveness of the new public education and outreach programs are yet to be seriously tested.

Where to From Here?

The open space in Grafton, Illinois' floodplains are there to stay. Program rules require that buyout lots remain open in perpetuity. They can never be redeveloped. Very few flood-prone lots remain available in Grafton for development. Floodplain management rules require that all new structures be elevated above the 100-year flood protection level.

In Grafton, NSW, a Floodplain Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with the NSW State Government flood-prone land policy.

The plan contains a range of recommendations which will be implemented over time including:

- Structural measures such as voluntary house raising, levee improvements and consideration of flood free access routes;
- Land use strategies identifying high-risk areas to avoid inappropriate development;
- Evacuation planning including trigger points, sequence of evacuation, route capacities and time lines;
- Public education and community awareness.

Conclusion

So, which Grafton is the smarter when it comes to floodplain management?

In Grafton, Illinois, the 2008 flood on the Mississippi River was largely a non- event. When media crews descended upon Grafton looking for the "death and destruction" stories they always got in Grafton, they only found flooded open space and relaxed residents.

In Grafton, NWS, construction of the flood levee system has saved millions of dollars in flood damage over the past 30 to 40 years, and possibly some lives. Moving the town is not a practical solution due to the extent of development and large population. As such, public education and improved flood warning are the key components of the future floodplain management strategy for Grafton, NSW.

Therefore, the winner is both communities! The floodplain management strategies in both Graftons have been successful, but



Before and After photos of the same location in Grafton, Illinois.





Before and After photos of the same location in Grafton, New South Wales.

each in their own way. These two examples demonstrate that it is important to consider "horses for courses" as every town and floodplain will have its own characteristics which require different solutions. Local involvement, community planning, and flood awareness are the keys to reducing flood losses on either side of the world.

Changes Coming for NPDES Stormwater Program

~Bob Murdock, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

There are a number of Federal government activities under way that will eventually result in changes to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program requirements. Thus, any professional who is involved with stormwater regulations and compliance will want to follow these developments as they evolve.



The first is that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating a national rulemaking process to establish a program to reduce stormwater discharges from new development and redevelopment and to make other regulatory improvements to strengthen its stormwater program. EPA has issued a Federal Register Notice seeking stakeholder input to help EPA shape a program to reduce stormwater impacts. Input was also captured during a series of public listening sessions and through written comments. EPA will now look at comments and use thing information to work on the following preliminary regulatory considerations:

- Expand the area subject to federal stormwater regulations;
- Establish specific requirements to control stormwater discharges from new development and redevelopment;
- Develop a single set of consistent stormwater requirements for all municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s);
- Require MS4s to address stormwater discharges in areas of existing development through retrofitting the sewer system or drainage area with improved stormwater control measures;
- Explore specific stormwater provisions to protect sensitive areas.

Please see the website http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/rulemaking.cfm for more information.

The second major change to stormwater regulation comes in the area of construction erosion control. The EPA has now developed their Final Rules for limiting pollution from construction site runoff. The federal rules will be phased in over time. Monitoring and testing of site discharges will now be required for certain rainfall events and for sites exceeding certain size requirements. More information on this federal regulation can be found at http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/guide/construction/. It is not clear when the State of Illinois will implement these new requirements within the ILR10 and ILR40 permits. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

Legislative Update – SB2556

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

On May 4, 2010, SB2556 passed both houses of the Illinois General Assembly. You may recall the articles in the spring newsletter regarding this bill, which was described as "essentially redefining the 100-year floodplain, saying there are none." IAFSM members are disappointed by this action but we know that we made an appropriate effort to inform and educate the sponsors of the bill about our technical concerns. At this time, the bill has not been signed by the Governor. We hope to have sufficient time to evaluate the legislation in the version that passed so that we can best anticipate and prepare for negative outcomes in the event that the Governor should sign it into law. If you'd like to review the bill, visit www.ilga.gov and then insert 'SB2556' in the search by number box on the left side of your screen.



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From the Chair

-Jeff Wickenkamp, Hey & Associates

Happy Summer everyone! I'd like to welcome our newest board member Andrew Braun who is now our Youth Outreach Chair. I am excited about Andrew's enthusiasm and I know he's going to do a great job. Look for his message about the Youth Outreach Committee in this newsletter.

In early March, NBC Nightly News ran a story on FEMA floodplain mapping and flood insurance as part of their "Fleecing of America" series. (The story is still available on the web). The gist of the program was that ever since Katrina, FEMA has gone about remapping floodplains to require more people to pay flood insurance to help make the National Flood Insurance Program solvent. The story was complete with a citizen saying "I've lived here for 40 years and the map just can't be right." Web comments about the story include "I am in a newly mapped area, and if my house floods we are all in a world of hurt." Unfortunately the dangers, resultant damages and oftentimes unexpected nature of flooding seem to be impossible to understand for the many people who have never witnessed it. In the wake of this news story, ASFPM wrote a response letter that is posted on our website at www.illinoisfloods.org. ASFPM warned NBC about the dangers of sending a message that it is okay to ignore the risks of flooding.

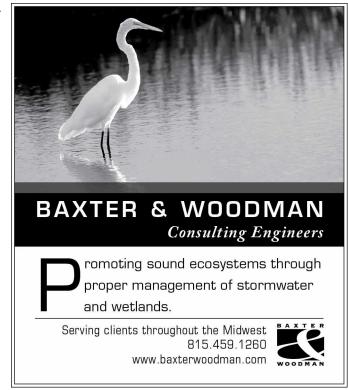
Just a few weeks later, New England experienced record flooding with news coverage full of people saying "I've never seen it this bad." The event was hailed as the worst flooding in New England in 200 years. Connecticut asked for federal disaster assistance because two-week rainfall totals ranged from 9 to 18 inches. I remember thinking that many people who were flooded were probably well outside the floodplain, so it must have indeed been surprising. While I didn't look closely at the rainfall or river stage numbers, I made a mental note that New England just experienced a once-in-a-lifetime kind of event.

I didn't give the NBC news program or the New England flooding much more thought until last week when I watched an episode of The American Experience titled *The Hurricane of '38*. This program tells the story (previously unknown to me) about a hurricane that unexpectedly hit Long Island and traveled up into Connecticut, dumping 10 to 17 inches of rain. One of the compelling aspects of the story is that on the morning of the hurricane, the weather was particularly calm and beautiful and many people made plans to spend a sunny

Sunday afternoon outdoors. The hurricane resulted in 600 deaths and the loss of 8,000 homes, many of which were a result of flooding. I was definitely surprised by this since 1938 was 72 years ago - far less than 200 years. In the news about the 2010 flooding, I found just one mention of the hurricane, reportedly made by a FEMA representative touring Stonington, Connecticut, who stated that "This was the worst flooding since '38."

Conclusions: humans' memories are very short compared to infrequent weather events, and sunny weather makes it nearly impossible to imagine floodwaters racing 3-feet deep down your street.

Watch *The Hurricane of '38* if you have a chance; it's an amazing story. It should almost be required viewing. But what do hurricanes have to do with Illinois? You remember Hurricane Ike, right? That was the storm that was responsible for dumping 6 inches of rain across half of Illinois and contributed towards the nearly 10 inch rainfall totals in Chicago in September 2008.





IAFSM's University Grant Program

Last year, IAFSM awarded grants to three universities to help sponsor innovative university-based, research related, stormwater projects to support continued research in the fields of stormwater and floodplain management. You may have seen exhibits and project updates presented by students during our annual conference in March. A summary of the grant projects is listed below, and detailed progress reports can be found on our website at www.illinoisfloods.org

Illinois Institute of Technology – Stormwater BMP Demonstration Park

IIT was awarded \$5,000 for a Stormwater Best Management Practice Demonstration Park. The purpose of this project is to complete the preliminary design for a stormwater best management practice demonstration park on the IIT Main Campus in Chicago. As a research resource the park can be used to help understand the near-term and long-term performance characteristics of a variety of stormwater best management practices in an urban setting. Examples of controls that could be part of the

demonstration park include rain gardens, vegetated swales, various types of porous pavement, commercial separator systems, and innovative approaches such as superabsorbent polymers.

Northwestern University - Aeration Channel Along the North Shore Channel

Northwestern University was awarded \$3,000 for a design study for an Aeration Channel Along the North Shore Channel. The project is a capstone design study aimed at improving quality in the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's North Shore Canal along McCormick Boulevard to the Wilmette Locks. The goal is to use side stream aeration or other technologies and develop a design to improve water quality in the drainage canal. Grant money will be applied towards laboratory and field data gathering. Data will be used by student teams to design a variety of methods and appurtenance systems to examine the degree of control of storm and runoff quality.

University of Illinois – Green Roof Monitoring

The University of Illinois was awarded \$6,130 for a Green Roof Monitoring project. The project objective is to use data from a field laboratory on a campus building with a green roof to provide guidance for stormwater managers to better quantify the stormwater benefits of green roofs. The University had already installed instruments on the green roof and an adjacent conventional roof, allowing students to compare the sustainable building practices effects conventional construction. While green roofs, and other best management practices, have been qualitatively shown to reduce runoff and capture particle associated contaminants (PACs), little has been done to quantify their performance for rigorous design.



Youth Outreach Committee Looking for Members and Contacts

~Andrew Braun, Peoria County

The IAFSM Youth Outreach Committee is seeking active professionals and contacts to establish partnerships and opportunities between local universities and colleges and IAFSM. The Youth Outreach Committee would like to build upon the past success of IAFSM-funded projects and presentations made by schools such as Northwestern University, University of Illinois, and Illinois Institute of Technology.

Potential exists for additional scholarship and grant opportunities for students and professors to conduct research projects, attend and present at our Annual Conference, and develop interest and participation in IAFSM events. By establishing contacts within universities and colleges, IAFSM can build lasting relationships to benefit all stakeholders.

Your participation and/or input would be greatly appreciated so IAFSM may extend its program to additional schools and students. If you have contacts in the field of education who are directly involved with water resources, planning, engineering, or a related field, please contact Andrew Braun, Youth (309)495-5189 Outreach Chair. at abraun@peoriacounty.org. Please also contact Andrew for more information about this committee or to share ideas and participate as a committee member.

Technical Users Group – Mitigation

-Terry Reuss Fell

The Mitigation Committee would like to serve as a conduit for helping IAFSM members with technical and program tips for using HAZUS, BCA and egrant software. The new "Technical Users Group -Mitigation" (TUG-Mit) would like to assemble a list of those interested in participating. Jared Owen with IEMA has agreed to reach out to the Regional HAZUS users group to determine how we might best coordinate with that group. We will assemble the list of interested TUG-Mit participants and let you know how the group will communicate in the future. If you are interested, contact Terry Reuss Fell terryfell@sbcglobal.net.









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CRS Committee Updates

~ Mary Lou Kalsted, Village of Lisle

The CRS Committee is sponsoring another meeting of the new CRS Coordinators Users Group. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 21, 2010, at the Village of Lisle, from 11:00 to 1:00. If anyone who is not yet on the group's list is interested in attending, please contact Mary Lou Kalsted, CRS Committee Chair, at (630) 271-4107 or mkalsted@villageoflisle.org.

The CRS Committee also has a page of useful CRS resources on the IAFSM website.

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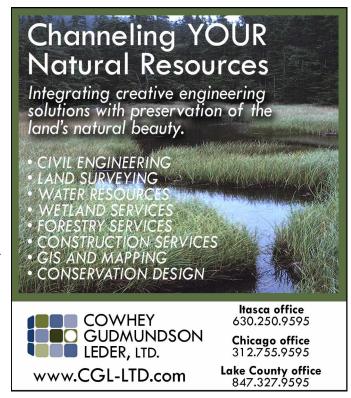
In March 2010, the IAFSM Board voted to waive the 2010-2011 membership fee for municipal and county government employees and those who are retired or currently unemployed.

Please help us get the word out and encourage your colleagues to join IAFSM by forwarding the link to our membership page: http://illinoisfloods.org/membership.html. There are many stormwater and floodplain managers in Illinois that are not members of IAFSM, but they should be! Our goal is to have 1,000 members by June of this year. New members are signing up on a regular basis, and several have written notes of thanks:

- "Please, express my appreciation to the Board for waiving the membership fee for those of us who are unemployed during these difficult times. I am deeply grateful. My membership in IAFSM is very likely to assist in changing my employment status."
- "As an unemployed person, I really appreciate the Board extending this courtesy to those of us that are without work (please thank them for me). I am hopeful that things will turn around soon."
- "I have been active in a number of professional organizations in my (long, long) career. I am more proud of the caliber of the IAFSM Board than any other. This Board dedicates their efforts to the benefit of the membership the entire membership. I never see any other priority get in the way of the needs of the membership. The decision to waive dues for unemployed members is one more example of that dedication and it's really cool."

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

Thanks to those members who have already spread the word and encouraged others to join. Keep it up!



Looking for a Father's Day Gift? Forget the Necktie - Buy an IAFSM Shirt!

Did you see the IAFSM Board Members modeling our great new shirts during the Annual Conference in March? Shirts are for sale on our website at http://illinoisfloods.org/iafsm shirts.html. Polo shirts and T-shirts are available in a variety of styles with prices ranging from \$10 - \$20.

Show your support of IAFSM! These make great belated Mother's Day, Father's Day, Flag Day, Birthday, and Just Because gifts. Buy one for yourself and buy one for all your friends!



Newsletter Ideas and Articles Needed

~Jennifer Maercklein, V3 Companies of Illinois

IAFSM members, this is YOUR newsletter! What types of articles would you like to read about in The IAFSM Current? 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'd welcome your written contributions as well. Email the editor with a brief abstract of your article and we'll consider it for future publication.

Newsletter Publication Deadlines

- September 24 Fall Newsletter article deadline
- December 17 Winter Newsletter article deadline

CEC / Training Opportunities

Floodplain Management 101 Seminar

is received

IAFSM is planning a one-day floodplain management seminar at the beginning of September, prior to the two scheduled CFM exams that will be conducted in September. The class location is tentatively scheduled for Champaign. Watch your inbox and check our website for details.

Introductory FEQ Unsteady Flow Short Course

IASFM is planning on sponsoring an introductory FEQ short course this fall, depending on interest. The FEQ hydraulic model is a computer program accepted by FEMA, and is the regulatory model used and

COMMUNITY RESOURCES • BUILDINGS • CONSTRUCTION TRANSPORTATION • WATER/WASTEWATER • TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES • RENEWABLE ENERGY required for floodplain modeling in DuPage County. It is a comprehensive unsteady-flow model capable of simulating a broad range of urban drainage conditions. This 4-day class will discuss the concepts and theory behind the model and present examples of practical applications. Professional Development Hours and Continuing Education Credit certificates will be provided (about 30 PDH). If interested, please contact Erik Gil by email at egil@cbbel.com, or by phone at 847-823-0500. The course will only be offered if sufficient interest



More Ways to Stay in Touch!

-Lillian Prince, Engineering Resource Associates

As a reminder, IAFSM has two new ways to stay in touch with members:



IAFSM now has an official Group on LinkedIn.com. At this time, membership in the Group is limited to current and past IAFSM members. All official IAFSM communication will continue to come via email, but our LinkedIn Group provides a way for committee members to communicate with each other (if preferred over email). The LinkedIn group also provides another way to network and stay in touch with other members; for example, a subgroup has been set up for users of HEC-RAS Unsteady Flow, and a second subgroup has been set up for the CRS committee. Other committees are also establishing subgroups to serve as another point of contact for getting involved. We hope that the online community will grow and function as a user's group to facilitate the communication of ideas on many facets of stormwater and floodplain management. Type IAFSM into the group search box on LinkedIn to find us, or click the hyperlink on our homepage at www.illinoisfloods.org.

We have a new Committee page on our website. Visit www.illinoisfloods.org/committees.html to learn more about what each committee is up to, check meeting dates, and get involved!

2010 Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) Exam Schedule

• Bartlett: **Summer 2010, date TBD** (IDNR office)

Champaign: 9/8/10 (ISWS office)Woodridge: 9/15/10 (V3 office)

• Rosemont: **December 2010, date TBD** (CBBEL office)

As a reminder, IAFSM began using the National Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Exam in January 2010. The National Exam includes questions on coastal floodplain requirements that were not previously included on the Illinois exam, and excludes Illinois-specific questions. The Illinois Floodplain Management Desk Reference found on our website is a valuable tool for floodplain managers in Illinois, but it is not a comprehensive study guide for the new National Exam.

Visit www.illinoisfloods.org/certification.html for registration and info.

Next Board Meeting

The next IAFSM Board Meeting will be on Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center at 950 North 27th Road in Ottawa. There will also be a Board Meeting in September, prior to publication of the Fall Newsletter. Watch the website for the time and place of the September Board Meeting.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. This is a great way to get more involved in the organization! See you there!

Johnart

Visit our Jobmart at illinoisfloods.org/jobmart.html. Current openings include: Openings at FEMA (ongoing), and Treatment Plant Operator II at MWRDGC (6/11/10 application deadline). Jobmart is a free service to members of IAFSM. If you would like to post a position, send complete information to IAFSM@sbcglobal.net.



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Summer 2010 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.



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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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