

Save the date for
20th Annual
OFMA
Conference

Tulsa,
Oklahoma

September
20-22, 2010

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The B.F.E.*

*Base Flood Elevation

OKLAHOMA FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

Volume 16— Spring 2010

May 2010

TO ALL OF MY CO-WORKERS AND FRIENDS IN FEMA—BY CARLTON R. WATTS

It is time to say goodbye. I have decided, after 43 years of federal service—20 years with the Air Force and 23 years with FEMA—that it is time to retire and pursue other interests. I now find myself at a crossroads in life. As much as I enjoy my job in dealing with the citizens and community leaders, I feel it is now time to move on. My date of departure is May 31, 2010.

I would like to say thank you to everyone that I have worked with these many years. Some of you I have worked with on a daily basis, others now and then. All of you have had an impact on my life. I have enjoyed my time in serving the people of this nation in the various positions that I have held.

A little history of my career: I started in the old Disaster Assistance Programs (DAP), drifted to the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Program (CSEP), from there moved into the Earthquake and Dam Safety, finally floating over to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

I have served under seven FEMA Administrators/Directors and six or seven Regional Directors, depending on how you count the Acting

Directors. As in all things, some leadership has been beneficial for FEMA and some has not.

I will be moving to Oklahoma where I have 40-acres to take care of. I will become more active in the Gold Wing Road Riders Association and plan on taking many road trips with my life companion, my wife. If you wish you may keep up with our travels on our web site: www.geckoriders.com. I also hope to continue singing God's grace and salvation message by establishing a new Southern Gospel Quartet. You may see the current quartet that I sing with by going to www.youtube.com and search for ASBURY FOUR.

If there is one piece of advice I would pass on to everybody it is that FEMA is not the end all to everything. That old cliché, "Take time to smell the roses" is so very true. To do our jobs in an efficient manner, we need to be well rounded individuals. We need a life outside of FEMA. Do not misunderstand me: FEMA has been very good to me. She has put a roof over my head, food on my table, and clothes on my back. However, she can also be a very hard mistress if you get caught up in the immediacy



Mr. Carlton R. Watts
Natural Hazards Program Specialist
FEMA Region VI

of the moment. When the moment gets stressful, take time to breathe and try to think about life after FEMA. Then go make the best decision that you can with the information that you have and move on. Remember, decisions we make in normal day-to-day operations are not life or death. Decisions made on less than perfect information can always be corrected when better information becomes available, as long as we admit that we made an incorrect decision and correct it.

If you wish to stay in contact with me, my email address will be carlton.watts@gmail.com, and my mailing address will be PO Box 775, Wewoka, OK 74884. And in all things: Dance like nobody is watching, love like your heart cannot be broken, and laugh/sing like nobody is listening.



"Our new Flood Model had its debut at the Association of County Commissioners meeting in March 2010. This is a great hands-on demonstration that illustrates how everything that is done (or not done) can have an impact on the floodplain."

Ellen Stevens, CFM

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR—BY DR. ELLEN STEVENS, PE, CFM

May is Flood Awareness Month...

Floodplain management will get center stage in Oklahoma City this month during the ASFPM Annual National Conference. Here at OFMA, we have made it our goal to take advantage of every opportunity to promote floodplain management and flood safety awareness.

One very important function is manning the OFMA exhibit, answering questions and handing out information. Over the past year, we have been on the road at several events, including:

—Association of County Commissioners, July 2009

—Governor's Water Conference, November 2009

—Water Day at the Capitol, February 2010

Our new Flood Model had its debut at the Association of County Commissioners meeting in March 2010. This is a great hands-on demonstration that illustrates how everything that is done (or not done) can have an impact on the floodplain.

OFMA has also promoted flooding awareness through presentations to other groups including the Oklahoma Municipal League and National Weather Service. At

the state capitol, we present food and flood information to legislators and their staffs at our annual Legislative Reception, held this year in March 2010.

One of our most visible efforts is the Turn Around Don't Drown calendar contest, which reaches school children throughout the state and, through them, their families. The printed calendars with the children's drawings are extremely popular and we typically distribute about 6,000 a year through schools, organizations, and the effort of individuals, again getting out the message about flood safety.

All this takes a lot of volunteer effort. Since I don't have all the names, I won't mention any names - but OFMA owes a big thanks to everyone who has taken a turn manning the booth, made a trip somewhere to deliver calendars, or given a presentation.

Is it paying off? I believe so. When the weather reporters on the TV station that I watch are forecasting heavy rains, they almost always warn viewers not to drive into high water. I have even heard them on occasion say the exact phrase "Turn Around don't Drown!"

So please step up and help us spread the word - for Flood Awareness Month and the rest of the year as well!

UPDATE ON SB 1838 —AMY BRANDLEY, CFM, OFMA SECRETARY

Senate Bill 1838, authored by Senator Anthony Sykes and Representative Danny Morgan, as written, seeks to remove authority of Floodplain Boards to establish floodplain permit fees. The bill would strike number 4 of Section 1604 Title 82 of the State Statutes. The bill passed the Senate unanimously. Minority Leader Morgan has advanced the bill in the House while declaring that he wanted to work on changing the language in the bill. The House passed the bill with a vote of 74 to 24, striking the title and enacting clause in order to send the bill to conference committee for changes. As of the writing of this

article (May 6, 2010), Leader Morgan said that he was undecided on how they want that language to change. I have requested appointments with him and Senator Sykes but after numerous calls and emails, neither seem interested in meeting with OFMA.

There seem to be three paths this bill could take: 1) Morgan and Sykes could allow it to die in committee, 2) They could change the language to allow floodplain managers to charge fees but under some limitations, or 3) it

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could pass as written.

OFMA has offered to Leader Morgan and Senator Sykes three changes in the language that we thought would solve some of the problems that have come up with the charging of fees, particularly with the oil and gas industry:

1. A maximum of \$25 fee shall be charged for a floodplain permit for sites located in Flood Zone X.
2. Floodplain permit fees shall only be collected if the Floodplain Administrator is accredited with the state.

3. All floodplain permit fees shall remain in the floodplain management program.

Let's look at what each point attempts to address.

Item 1 refers to a permit required to determine if a property is located in a floodplain, not an actual floodplain permit. McLain County is an example of a county with no overall building permit system in place, but a desire to ensure that any new development could be checked for being in the floodplain. This type of permit could have a

maximum fee of \$25. Item 2 would help encourage a Floodplain Administrator to make sound decisions based on floodplain management training. Item 3 ensures that fees are not being used to enhance other programs, such as fees going to a county road fund to help repair roads damaged by oil field trucks.

OFMA will keep our membership updated with any news on SB1838. Please be ready to contact your legislators if necessary! We need to have a strong voice in this very important matter.

RISK MAP IS COMING TO OFMA—BY RONALD C. WANHANEN, P. E., FEMA REGION VI

FEMA Region VI introduced Risk MAP at the Spring Conference of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association. Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) is a new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program that builds on the strength of Map Modernization. It will help communities nationwide assess flood risks, and encourage mitigation planning to avoid or minimize damage in the face of future disasters. The Risk MAP Program combines quality engineering and state-of-the-art flood hazard data to assist communities with planning and prevention strategies using the most current information. Strategic planning translates into lives protected and dollars saved.

THE RISK MAP VISION

Through collaboration with State, Local, and Tribal entities, Risk MAP will focus on products and services beyond the traditional Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM), which is primarily used to calculate flood insurance premiums and communicate flood risk. FEMA will advise offi-

cially how to effectively communicate risk to citizens and create corresponding mitigation plans that work. Relying on disaster recovery and assistance after a disaster hits is not the answer. The vision for Risk MAP is to proactively deliver quality data - before a disaster occurs - that increases public awareness of the risk associated with flooding and leads to action that reduces risk and impacts to life and property.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

The Risk MAP Multi-Year Plan (<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3587>) outlines the goals, objectives and strategies for Risk MAP:

- Assess Nation's flood risk and use this information to increase public awareness of risk.
- Increase public awareness of risk from natural hazards and establish a baseline of local knowledge and understanding of risk management concepts.
- Ensure 80 percent of the Nation's flood hazards are current - the analysis and special flood haz-

ard areas are new, have been updated, or have been deemed valid.

- Provide updated flood hazard data for 100 percent of the populated coastal areas in the Nation.

- Evaluate levee status information to ensure the appropriate flood hazards are depicted on Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps for counties with levees, including those impacted by expiring Provisionally Accredited Levee (PAL) status.

- Continue to meet statutory requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program through assessing, on a watershed basis, the need to revise and update all floodplain areas and flood risk zones identified, delineated, or established.

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Through more proactive engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders having unique issues and concerns, both at a national and local project level, FEMA will more effectively communicate risk and show how it can be reduced. Fully implemented, Risk MAP will create a more informed public that is empowered to take action to reduce its flood risk. Importantly, this Risk MAP framework and data can be used to reduce vulnerability from other natural disasters that may impact a community. If you have questions on anything covered in the Risk MAP Plenary session at the Spring OFMA Workshop, please contact Ron Wanhanen at the Region. FEMA would like to continue to engage with the local floodplain managers

and utilize their knowledge to best tailor Risk MAP for the State of Oklahoma.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Keep an eye out for further information and updates on Risk MAP. This newsletter will continue to cover this topic as FEMA Region VI prepares to roll out Risk MAP projects in 2010 and beyond. Meanwhile, for additional details about Risk MAP, visit <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ffmm.shtm>. For additional resources and Regional outreach materials, visit <http://www.rampp-team.com/index.htm>.

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OFMA 2010 LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION—BY DR. ELLEN STEVENS, PE, CFM, OFMA CHAIR

This year's legislative reception, held March 9 at the State Capitol, was a big success. OFMA members greeted legislators and their staff members and handed out over 100 letters describing OFMA legislative priorities. Attendees also had a chance to have some fun with the Floodplain Managers Jeopardy Game, of course putting the answer in the form of a question. While clearly the big draw was the great food from Jamil's, OFMA members made valuable contacts and got to speak one-on-one with many legislators, putting a human face on the message of promoting and expanding NFIP participation and flood safety.

A number of elected officials attended, including Attorney General Drew Edmondson, Senators Tom Ivester and Ron Justice, and Representatives Gus Blackwell, David Dank, John Enns, Terry Harrison, Pam Peterson, Phil Richardson, Todd Russ, Seneca Scott, Purcy Walker, and Cory Williams.

A number of volunteers deserve recognition for their efforts in making this a successful event. OFMA members who participated in the event, inviting elected officials and greeting them and their staff members included Kacie Braddy, Gavin Brady,

Amy Brandley, Dan Cary, Michael Kimbro, Dale Lasley, Leslie Lewis, Melissa Palma, Carolyn Schultz, Ellen Stevens, Anna Waggoner, Kent Wilkins, and Clark Williams. Several OWRB staff members also participated - Julie Cunningham, Josh McClintock, and Mike Melton. OFMA Legislative Committee Chair Ana Stagg made arrangements for the room and did the invitations, and Carolyn Schultz made arrangements for the catering. Leslie Lewis and her ODOT colleagues demonstrated the Floodplain Managers Jeopardy Game and Tom Leatherbee prepared material for the hand-outs.

Legislative Reception Photo Gallery

(from Left to Right, top to bottom): Dale Lasley (Region 4 OFMA Rep) and Representative Phil Richardson ; Representative John Enns and Clark Williams (OFMA Past Chair); Oklahoma Attorney General and Governor Candidate Drew Edmondson and Carolyn Schultz (OFMA Treasurer, Ellen Stevens (OFMA Chair), Gavin Brady (OFMA NFIP Coordinator), and Representative Skye McNiel ; Anna Waggoner (City of Yukon) and Carl Watts (FEMA Region VI).



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH—BY DEE ROBISON, CFM, EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

OFMA's Education and Outreach Committee has greatly expanded our outreach efforts. Last year, OFMA partnered with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). We completed a stand-alone video that teaches the basics of the hydrologic cycle and the dangers of driving through floodwaters. This eight minute video not only highlights OFMA's Turn Around Don't Drown Poster Contest but also is posted on the OSDE internal website. The training video met several PASS Objectives (required topics teachers need to cover in class each school year). Please take the time to check it out on our website.

After the tragic drowning of a woman in Pryor last May, I contacted the State Department of Public Safety. In my letter I cited the recent tragedy, providing flood safety rules and flood dynamics on the dangers of driving through floodwaters, and a sample question for the state written driver exam. I further requested that this information be added to the Oklahoma Driver Training Manual. It was perfect timing. Internally, the DPS had been discussing the problem and trying to come up with a solution. Oklahoma is now the first state in the nation to have flood safety rules and flood dynamics published in the Driver Training Manual and has added a test question on the State Driver's Exam.

Speaking of timing, when I initially contacted the OSDE I met Randy McClarren, Director of Transportation, Student Transfer Services. After seeing the Turn Around Don't Drown video, Randy suggested OFMA develop a training module on the dangers of driving through floodwaters for school bus drivers in the state of Oklahoma. Using a presenta-

tion initially prepared by Steve Waters from Maricopa County Arizona, the committee altered the presentation to focus on school bus flood safety and turned it into a video. This second video presentation is being narrated and produced professionally and will be completed shortly. This video covers the physics of floodwaters, alerts bus drivers to the Hidden Dangers of driving through floodwaters, and to Turn Around Don't Drown.

We would like to extend our special thanks to Impact Marketing & Advertising and Irving Productions for their



generous donation of time and expertise in the production of the Turn Around Don't Drown video and the Bus Driver Training video.

The OSDE was so impressed with the quality of the Turn Around Don't Drown Video and associated lesson plans the Education and Outreach Committee provided, they asked if we could provide educational activities for the middle schools and high schools. The committee is presently working on a project that will give middle school students the opportunity to Design Away Floods in a community. The idea behind the training is to develop a city, maximizing the livable space while minimizing the resulting runoff. It is intended to

be a fun activity which meets PASS Objectives and challenges the students who use Lego blocks as buildings, roads, detention ponds, etc. The committee is proposing a video contest in which schools that participate will submit a video presentation by the students explaining their reasoning behind their decisions used when designing their community to eliminate or reduce flooding. This project will be available for use by middle schools starting in August of this year.

The Design Away Floods activity will be expanded to the high school level in August 2011. High school students will learn about the effect of development on runoff and how to minimize the Adverse Impact when designing their communities. The committee is developing advanced lesson plans for the high school level math and science curriculum at this time.

OFMA purchased the 3D floodplain model that visually illustrates the effects of development on stream flow. Using the model you can measure the stream flows from undeveloped land as well as developed land. The user can experiment with levees or detention ponds to mitigate the effects of increased impervious areas. There is a multitude of experiments that can be performed with the model, and we are just beginning to explore the possibilities.

OFMA is presently working with NOAA to distribute TADD signs for dangerous low water crossings and frequently flooded roads across the State. NOAA has agreed to furnish the signs if we can insure they are placed at these crossings. We have presently identified over 50 of these crossings where there have been

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Water issues discussed included the ongoing update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP). Major components of the Water Plan, which will be completed in 2011 and presented to the Legislature in 2012, include numerous ongoing technical studies of state water supplies, infrastructure, and issues as well as a water policy development effort strengthened through unprecedented public participation.

2010 OKLAHOMA WATER APPRECIATION DAY—FEBRUARY 9, 2010

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) hosted the fifth annual Oklahoma Water Appreciation Day on February 9, 2010, at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City. "Water Appreciation Day presents a unique opportunity for groups to demonstrate the importance of Oklahoma's water resources as well as provide information on their water management, conservation, and educational programs for state legislators and other government officials," says Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director. "This annual celebration of Oklahoma's diverse water resources not only focuses the attention of our state leaders on pressing water issues but serves to recognize those who strive to protect our most precious natural resource."

Water issues discussed included the ongoing update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP). Major components of the Water Plan, which will be completed in 2011 and presented to the Legislature in 2012, include numerous ongoing technical studies of state water supplies, infrastructure, and issues as well as a water policy development effort strengthened through unprecedented public participation. Additionally, it was noted that OWRB's water and wastewater financing programs collectively exceeded the



\$2 billion mark late last year. Helping to reach that milestone was the state's participation in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program, a cooperative effort between the OWRB, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that leveraged federal stimulus dollars with funding from the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan programs.

The event was attended by numerous dignitaries, state agencies, and organizations. Ellen Stevens, Chair, and Amy Brandley, Secretary, were in attendance representing OFMA.

SMITH ROBERTS BALDISCHWILDER (SRB) RECOGNIZED BY OFMA

On February 25, 2010, Dr. Ellen Stevens—OFMA Chair, presented a plaque to SRB on behalf of OFMA members. Recognition was given in appreciation of their outstanding, continued support of OFMA including conference room space for monthly board meetings and financial support of the Annual Conference.

In the picture from left to right: Mr. Gavin Brady, Mr. Mat Smith (SRB) and Dr. Ellen Stevens.



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rescues or drowning. The first signs received will be placed at these locations. In conjunction with Flood Awareness Month and to raise public awareness, a multidimensional media event was held on May 6th, 2010 in Pryor at the location where the most recent flood fatality occurred

when a woman drowned attempting to drive through a flooded road on May 2, 2009. NOAA has ordered more signs to hit the rest of these high hazard crossings. We hope to see these erected over the course of the summer.

To better serve our membership, OFMA website is changing in June 2010. Please visit us at www.okflood.org to check out our new look.

ANNUAL ACCREDITATION—BY GAVIN BRADY, CFM, NFIP COORDINATOR

The 2010 accreditation year is near its end. Those official Floodplain Administrators attending a Floodplain Management 101 or an OFMA Advanced Floodplain Management workshop this 09-10 year will be accredited 7/1/2010 through 6/30/2011. As in the past, all CFMs in good standing are also considered to be accredited. Floodplain Management 101 continues to focus on introductory issues that might cross the desk of a new FPA. Most individuals who are designated as the local administrator in participating communities do not choose this title. Most accept an introductory position as a building inspector, city engineer, city clerk, or emergency manager and then are given the added responsibility of administering their community's floodplain management program.

FPM 101 is designed for the new Floodplain Administrator and as such, focuses on the basics: history of the NFIP, the 1980 Oklahoma Floodplain Management Act, and permitting development in the floodplain. The OWRB began conducting the FPM 101

workshop in about 1990 (before accreditation) as part of the Spring Flood Campaign with the Governor declaring "Flood Insurance/Awareness Months." The workshops were scheduled throughout the state and normally received good attendance. The issue we were facing was that the same people were attending year after year and we weren't seeing any new faces. We had communities with hundreds of flood insurance policies, unpermitted floodplain development with a history of flooding, and the floodplain administrator having never attended a workshop. As the OWRB performed CAV's throughout the State, it became apparent the NFIP in Oklahoma would be better served with required annual training and accreditation. As we entered the new millennium, the OWRB's Ken Morris (State Coordinator at the time) began the process of amending the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Act to require mandatory training and accreditation. Mr. Morris' desire was to have every participating community designate a Floodplain Administrator and have

that person be accredited on an annual basis. There was resistance from the Municipal League in the beginning. However, Mr. Morris, OWRB, and OFMA eventually convinced the legislative leadership that these changes were a good thing and were needed in Oklahoma.

With accreditation now a requirement, the OWRB realized that more opportunities in training were needed and asked for assistance from OFMA. Without hesitation, OFMA volunteered to conduct the "Advanced" modules in the training program. The OWRB is very thankful that OFMA has stepped in and taken the advanced workshops to a new level while continuing to add different subjects that floodplain administrators need to do their job. Furthermore, the OFMA workshops give CFMs more options to obtain their required credits for annual renewal.

For more information about the OWRB accreditation program and the OFMA CFM program, please contact Cathy Poage with OWRB in the Woodward Office at 580-256-1014.

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WWW.OKFLOOD.ORG

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