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News from Region X

Reaching Out to Communities and Stakeholders: A New Monthly Newsletter

In an effort to build a stronger connection between federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, and to provide more opportunities to communicate and collaborate in the risk reduction effort, Region X Risk Analysis Branch is introducing this monthly newsletter to keep communities and stakeholders informed and connected to what's going on throughout Region X. It is our hope that readers will benefit from regular updates on what's going on inside FEMA and around the Region and will collaborate to reduce risk through outreach efforts and training opportunities as they are developed and implemented in the coming months.

What is Risk MAP?

Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) is more than just a new program to provide updated flood maps to communities in Region X. Through partnerships with states, tribes, and local communities Risk MAP is FEMA's new initiative to deliver quality data and assist communities to implement activities that reduce risk to life and property.

A community selected for a Risk MAP project will be asked to partner with federal, state, tribal, and other agencies to tailor a program that works for each individual community. Some projects will involve new detailed flood hazard analysis as part of the program, but the

main goal of Risk MAP is to use all the available data within the watershed to accomplish four objectives:

1. Identify Risk
2. Assess Risk
3. Communicate Risk
4. Mitigate Risk

More than just flood maps

What makes Risk MAP so exciting for communities in Region X is that it's not



just a mapping project with a beginning and an end. Risk MAP is a process, a continuing partnership to help federal, state, tribal, and local community officials, business owners, private citizens and stakeholders make sound floodplain management decisions and take action to reduce risk from floods and other hazards. Through Risk MAP, Region X can now offer new and innovative tools to help communities assess and communicate risk in their areas.

Several communities have already been selected to participate in the first Risk MAP projects and have already begun the partnership to reduce risk. Communities that are interested in learning more about the new tools

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should contact the Risk Analysis Branch for more information. There are many things communities can do and Region X is ready to help you with information and technical assistance.

In the coming months, this newsletter will highlight the various tools and products of the program, and help you find ways to reduce and mitigate flood risk in your community.

flooding risk landward of non-accredited levees more precisely. While the new levee risk modeling guidelines and procedures are being developed, FEMA has put on hold all the Letters of Final Determination (LFDs) for communities with levees not shown as providing protection from the 1-percent annual chance flood event.

Risk MAP Vision:
Deliver quality data that increases public awareness and leads to action that reduces risk to life and property

Update on Levee Policy Change

In March, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate implemented a policy change regarding the mapping process for areas behind non-accredited levees. The intent of the proposed policy change includes evaluating methodologies to assess the

FEMA and related technical experts have formed the Levee Analysis and Mapping Project (LAMP) team, specifically related to communications, stakeholder engagement and technical guidance. The team has been working for the last several months to develop a technical solution and an improved collaborative process for working with communities and levee owners. The internal review process by the Independent Scientific Body (ISB) is complete and comments have been submitted to the LAMP team.

The LAMP team hosted a community roundtable for about 25 community officials on July 26th in Washington D.C. The goal of the roundtable was to obtain feedback from the communities on the feasibility, credibility, and collaborative approach of the potential new levee analysis and mapping methodology. The focus of the roundtable discussion was on the early steps in the process, such as data collection and decision making.

The roundtable will be followed by an online forum and a public review and comment period, both scheduled to begin in August. For more information on the levee policy change and how it affects your community, contact Josha Crowley at the Region X Service Center, josha.crowley@starr-team.com.

New Online Training Opportunities

In an effort to better serve local community officials, Region X is piloting an online "virtual classroom" series of training and discussion groups. Our goal is to cover basic, intermediate and advanced topics in all areas of the Risk MAP process, including mapping, mitigation planning, code enforcement, grants, insurance and more.

These sessions will be more than just another conference call on your busy calendar. Classes will allow for questions and answers and require participation from all that attend. Certified Floodplain Managers (CFM[®]) will be eligible for continuing education credit for their participation.

Classes will begin in September. Dates and time are yet to be determined:

Comparing 44CFR § 60.3 to the International Building Code

Elevation Certificates in the Development Review Process

Overview of HAZUS Earthquake Loss Estimations

Overview of HAZUS Flood Loss Estimations

Preferred Risk Policy Extensions

Preparing Your Data for HAZUS

Processing Letters of Map Change

Regulating Development in A Zones

Reviewing Habitat Assessments

Substantial Damage/Substantial Improvement Determinations

For more information on how to register for a class, or to request training on a specific topic, contact Becca Croft at the Regional Service Center, becca.croft@starr-team.com.

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The State's Role in Risk MAP

Risk MAP is a partnership between federal, state, tribal, local communities and stakeholders. In Region X, we are fortunate to partner with State representatives that are committed to the Risk MAP vision and work hard to provide technical assistance and information to the local communities.

Oregon

In Oregon, FEMA sponsors the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) as the lead on the Oregon Risk MAP project.

DLCD hosts a website (www.oregonriskmap.com) as a resource intended to provide information about FEMA's various activities in Oregon, including floodplain and mapping issues, project status, and links to other agency partners for audiences interested in all aspects of natural hazards.

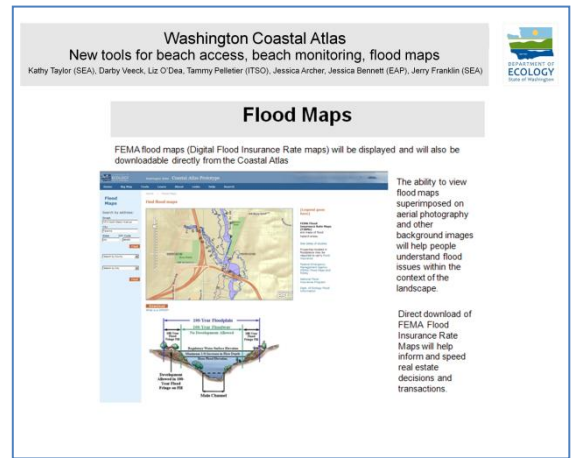
The website details the Risk MAP plan for Oregon, and provides an overview of current mapping projects. It also provides downloads to flood information and data such as Flood Insurance Studies and .KML files for viewing in Google Earth.

For questions about DLCD's work on the Risk MAP project contact the program coordinator, Stephen Lucker, (503) 373-0050, ext. 269, or stephen.lucker@state.or.us.

Washington

In Washington, the Department of Ecology (DOE) serves as the partner in Risk MAP to help carry out the goals of the program.

For flood related information, www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/floods/ is your first stop. There are many links to sources and information for local officials, floodplain residents and other



agencies with an interest in flood safety.

If you're looking for flood *data* in Washington, DOE has GIS data available for many counties available at www.ecy.wa.gov/services/gis/data/flood/flood.htm. Contact Jerry Franklin, Washington's RiskMAP Coordinator, for more details, (360) 407-7470 or Jfra461@ecy.wa.gov.

Idaho

The Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) hosts an online tool to view Flood Hazard Maps throughout the state. You can find it at maps.idwr.idaho.gov/FloodHazard. Here, you'll find both scanned Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and Digital FIRMs, where available.

General floodplain management information for Idaho can be found at www.idwr.idaho.gov/WaterManagement/FloodPlainMgmt. Contact Ryan McDaniel, for questions about Risk MAP in Idaho, (208) 287-4926, or Ryan.McDaniel@IDWR.idaho.gov.



April flooding in Harney County, Oregon

ESA Compliance Deadline Approaching

In September of 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) issued the Biological Opinion for implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in the Puget Sound. FEMA has provided the 122 affected communities in Washington State with three options to demonstrate compliance with the performance standards outlined in the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA). Two of the options take a programmatic approach that includes either adopting an Endangered Species Act (ESA)-compliant model ordinance or completing an associated Biological Opinion Checklist. The model ordinance ensures that communities are in compliance with the Biological Opinion, and the checklist enables communities to demonstrate that their current and proposed ordinances, policies, and written procedures meet or exceed the performance standards of the Biological Opinion.

Communities may instead choose a third option that requires demonstration of compliance on a permit-by-permit basis. Communities that choose this option must require applicants to provide a habitat assessment that determines that the development project will not have an adverse effect or provide concurrence from NMFS that the project is compliant with the ESA.

FEMA has until September 22, 2011, to demonstrate compliance with the Biological Opinion. By this date, communities must also demonstrate

compliance by selecting one of the three options. After September 22nd, FEMA will have implemented all parts of the RPA and will shift to compliance monitoring. If a community has not chosen to adopt the model ordinance or provide a completed Biological Opinion Checklist by the deadline, they will automatically default to demonstrating compliance on a permit-by-permit basis. As part of the next phase of the compliance process, FEMA will place communities into a queue for compliance monitoring visits, with priority given to those communities that have not yet selected a compliance option or have not submitted the required annual reports.

Communities that select Option 1 or 2 may require a change their ordinances or other processes that will take time to enact or approve, and might not be fully compliant by the September 22nd deadline. In this case, communities may submit a compliance package to FEMA that indicates their intent to change these ordinances along with a projected timeline. FEMA will review the compliance package to ensure that all of the performance standards of the Biological Opinion are implemented and fully enforceable before issuing a letter of approval. During the implementation process and before the compliance package approval letter is issued, communities will default to Option 3, permit-by-permit review.

In the following weeks, FEMA will provide further technical assistance and clarifying guidance on implementation to communities. Contact John Graves if you have any questions about the ESA compliance process, (425) 487-4737, or john.graves1@dhs.gov.

Upcoming Events

HAZUS Conference

August 10-12

Jackson Federal Building

Seattle, WA

www.hazus.net

NORFMA 2011 Conference

September 14-16

Lakeway Inn

Bellingham, WA

www.norfma.org

CFM Exam

September 16

Lakeway Inn

Bellingham, WA

www.floods.org

Mary.McGown@idwr.idaho.gov

Coastal Floodplain Management Course - Pilot 2

September 16

Lakeway Inn

Bellingham, WA

www.norfma.org

L273 – Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP

September 19-22

Anchorage, AK

<http://training.fema.gov/EMI/>

CFM Exam

September 23

Anchorage, AK

www.floods.org

taunnie.boothby@alaska.gov

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STARR Online

Please visit us at www.starr-team.com to read more about how STARR supports the Risk MAP vision.

Branch Bio: Floodplain Management and Insurance (FPM&I)

Highlighting the other branches of FEMA Region X's Mitigation Division that also play an important role in Risk MAP

The FPM&I Branch is responsible for the implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Once communities are provided with Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), produced by the Risk Analysis Branch, the FPM&I Branch begins working with the communities so all the legally required steps are taken to join the NFIP, if they are not currently participating, or maintain their standing in the program if they are already participating. Steps that need to be taken to join the NFIP and to maintain good standing in the program include the following:

- Completion of an application package
- Passage of a resolution requesting participation in the program by the governing body
- Public notice in the communities official newspaper of the intent to adopt land-use regulations based on the FIRM
- Adoption of a land-use ordinance that meets, at least, the minimum standards spelled out in 44CFR60 and references the data shown on the FIRM

The FPM&I Branch collaborates with the Risk Analysis Branch in seeking community and public comments on the preliminary FIRM to assure the maps accurately reflect the flood risk to the community before the maps become effective for insurance purposes.

Once a community has joined the NFIP the FPM&I Branch provides technical assistance to the community to assure the local floodplain management ordinance and building codes are properly administered. Technical assistance may take the form of telephone discussions, webinars, personal visits or organized training sessions. Periodically, FPM&I staff make official site visits to communities to assess the status of the communities' administration of the NFIP. These formal site visits are referred to as a Community Assistance Visit (CAV). When conducting a CAV, the FPM&I Branch provides technical assistance and advice to the community on ways to lower rates for flood insurance through regulation.

The FPM&I Branch also provides technical assistance to insurance agents and agencies to help them understand the NFIP and the complexities of the policies and correctly write policies for their clients. Once a FIRM is "effective", federally regulated lenders are obligated to require mortgage holders to purchase flood insurance for any insurable property within the Special Flood Hazard Area. While flood insurance under the umbrella of the NFIP can be sold by any insurance agent, it is more complex than a standard home-owners or business policy. The FPM&I Branch collaborates with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to assure federally regulated lenders are requiring that mortgage holders purchase flood insurance where required by law.

All activities and responsibilities of the FPM&I Branch are directly related to the FIRMs produced by the Risk Analysis Branch and are an important component of Risk MAP.

We want to hear from you!

If you have comments, ideas, suggestions, or questions about this newsletter publication, we would appreciate your feedback. Please contact the Region X Service Center, rxnewsletter@starr-team.com.

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