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Strategic Alliance for Risk Reduction
FEMA Region X Service Center
20700 44th Avenue West, Suite 110
Lynnwood, Washington 98036
(425) 329-3699

News from Region X

Approval Received for 2013 CRS Manual

The 2013 *Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator's Manual* has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The manual is available for download on the STARR website.

At its first cycle verification visit after April 1, 2013, each participating CRS community will need to meet the new prerequisites and credit criteria set out in the 2013 manual. No new requirements will take effect until the one-on-one review with the ISO/CRS Specialist and the community at the next cycle visit. As with all verification visits, the ISO/CRS Specialists will work with communities on items needed for credit verification, and to identify additional activities for which the community may not have been receiving credit.

The new manual will affect each CRS community differently. Some will see an increase in credit for their existing activities. For example, there will be more credit for Open Space Preservation. Other communities will see a decrease in credit for certain activities. For example, the credit points provided for Map Information Services are being reduced.

Region X's Role Incorporating RPAs

FEMA Region X worked with the CRS Task Force to incorporate recommendations from Puget Sound Biological Opinion Element 4 of the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative into the CRS program. Significant effort has been expended by FEMA in recent years to modify procedures

within the NFIP Community Rating System Program (CRS) to allow for implementation of certain changes and activities to meet the requirements of the Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs). The RPA related changes to the CRS were part of a comprehensive revision to the CRS driven by the 2008-2013 CRS Strategic Plan.

The CRS Strategic Plan included coordination processes that gathered input from numerous CRS stakeholders, including community floodplain managers, insurance industry stakeholders, academic researchers, other federal agency representatives as well as individuals and organizations with a particular interest in floodplain natural function, which includes some of the interests associated with the stewardship of endangered species habitat. Following numerous forums and the distribution of various draft documents, the content of the new CRS Coordinator's Manual was agreed upon in fall of 2011, with a final sign-off by Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration leadership in spring 2012. This comprehensive effort involved far more changes to the CRS than those related to the RPAs. The CRS is a highly integrated insurance flood risk rating program or "schedule." Changes to any one of the 18 CRS Activities or 80 CRS Activity Elements require a compensating adjustment to other CRS Activities or Elements. Hence, changes within CRS to accommodate the RPAs

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CRS Manual (*cont.*)

needed to be carefully considered, due to the inherent interconnectedness of all CRS Elements.

As with any programmatic materials or procedures that gather information from entities external to a Federal agency, the new CRS Coordinator's Manual had to be reviewed and approved in accordance with regulations

governing The Paperwork Reduction Act (44 USC §3501 et seq.) Adhering to these requirements requires researching, preparing and submitting a lengthy and highly detailed analysis of the impact to the public of the information collected, called an Information Collection Review (ICR) Supporting Statement. The analysis requires statistical projections of burden hours, cost and privacy related data. The resulting Supporting Statement

package of information is sent from a coordinating office in FEMA to a coordinating office in DHS who sends the package to the Office of Management and Budget which has final approval authority.

Between April and August 2012, considerable effort was expended in drafting and finalizing the Supporting Statement materials, which was particularly difficult for the CRS because it is such a comprehensive and complex program.

In September 2012, the ICR package was provided to DHS with a request for an Emergency Processing, due to the urgency associated with the ESA compliance deadlines in the Puget Sound.

Summary of Changes in RPA4

Stormwater Credits: The Stormwater credits have been added to include an incentive for LID techniques. This credit is now a standalone activity (Activity 450).

Open Space Credits: Additional Credits have been provided for open space with bonus credits available for open space that has natural and beneficial functions, is located in areas identified as habitat for listed species, or has been preserved through a restoration plan.

Retaining and Increasing Riparian Functions: The CRS program has always awarded points for this activity. The revised manual changes the rating standards and increases the number of ways to earn the credit such as maintaining a natural shoreline.

Structural mitigation: The weighting forum changed the ratio of points for natural and beneficial functions vs. structural mitigation to incentivize communities to choose activities that provide protection of natural and beneficial functions.

Levee Setbacks: The increase in open space credit and natural and beneficial functions credit will incentivize communities to set levees back and create additional open space.

Relocate pre-FIRM development: The new manual will reduce the points available for mitigation of structures. The increase in credits available for open space, storm water, and bonus multipliers for Repetitive Loss (x2) and Severe Repetitive Loss (x3) mitigation continue to incentivize mitigation of existing structures. Repetitive Loss and Severe Repetitive Loss structures are typically pre-FIRM structures.

Levee Credit: Credit has always been provided if a levee owner can provide certification for a vegetated levee. The credit has been revised to require a maintenance plan and performance of required maintenance. The community must demonstrate that all required permits were received for their maintenance program.

Highlight actions that benefit Salmonids: There are nine activities that provide points for Natural and Beneficial Functions. As an additional incentive the new CRS Coordinators Manual will require a prerequisite number of points obtained in these nine activities for communities to advance to a Class 4 and an additional number of points in these activities to advance to a Class 1.

Buyout Credits: As mentioned above, the credits for buying structures in the floodplain have been reduced, however, additional credits have been introduced for retention of open space and increased watershed master planning especially if the plan has a mechanism to fund recovery projects.

NORFMA News

NORFMA is the 35th ASFPM Chapter

The ASFPM Board approved NORFMA's application for chapter status during the March board meeting, making it the first ASFPM chapter in FEMA Region X.

Ask the Help Desk

Have a question about floodplain management regulations, a mapping project or mitigation planning? The Region X Service Center can research your question and connect you to the resources you need.

We can be reached via email at RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com.

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Featured Training

Biggert Waters NFIP Reform

April 17, 10:00 am

The Biggert-Waters National Flood Insurance Program Reform Act of 2012 (BW-12) resulted in major changes to the NFIP. This session, presented by FEMA Region X, will provide an overview of the changes and what is being done to implement the legislation.

The Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 requires FEMA to take immediate steps to eliminate a variety of existing flood insurance subsidies and calls for a number of changes in how the program operates. The new rates will reflect full flood risk of an insured building and some insurance subsidies and discounts will be phased out and eventually eliminated. Based on various conditions set forth in the law, subsidies and grandfathered rates will be eliminated for most properties in the future.

One CEC for CFMs

Presenter: Mark Riebau, FEMA Region X

MT-1 Basics: A comprehensive Overview of the MT-1 process and Discussion of Common Application Setbacks

April 25, 10:00 am

This webinar is designed to give a broad overview of the MT-1 review process and review procedures that will help applicants submit a completed MT-1 application to facilitate processing by FEMA. Attendees will learn what is required to submit a complete application, including how to fill out the forms and use FEMA's new online LOMC submittal tool. In addition, the course will outline the differences between LOMAs, eLOMAs, LOMR-Fs, and conditional LOMCs. Participants will learn how to submit

more complete LOMC requests that can be processed more quickly and with fewer additional data requests. The community's role with regards to the MT-1 process will also be discussed. This course is designed for State and Local officials, engineers, surveyors, and anyone interested in learning more about the MT-1 process.

One CEC for CFMs

Presenter: Brock Remus, STARR

To register for online courses, visit STARR's training site online at j.mp/starrwebtraining, or email RXTraining@starr-team.com.

Hazus Software Online

Starting in mid-April 2013 Hazus users will be able to download Hazus software and state dataset information online instead of ordering a DVD. Users can visit the Map Service Center (MSC) site (<https://msc.fema.gov>) to download the Hazus software. International users are not eligible to download Hazus software and must continue to request a DVD through the MSC site.

Benefits of the online download

- No waiting for a DVD in the mail
- Choice of downloading Hazus software and/or individual state datasets
- Easy access to customer service

Once the online download option is available on the MSC, FEMA will notify the Hazus community. If users would prefer to receive the Hazus software on a DVD instead of using the online download feature they may do so through the MSC. If you have any questions, please email the Hazus Outreach team at hazus@arcaspicio.com.

Upcoming Events & Training

(All times Pacific)

Reducing the Risks of Nonstructural Earthquake Damage – FEMA E-74

April 9 – Spokane, WA
April 22 – Richland, WA
April 24, Yakima, WA
Lisa.VanHagen@mil.wa.gov

Rapid Visual Screening of Buildings for Potential Seismic Hazards – FEMA 154

April 10 – Spokane, WA
April 23 – Richland, WA
April 25 – Yakima, WA
Lisa.VanHagen@mil.wa.gov

Earthquake Mitigation for Hospitals – FEMA P-767

April 11 – Spokane, WA
Lisa.VanHagen@mil.wa.gov

Elevation Certificates for A Zones

April 11, 10am-12:30pm
Online* – 2 CECs

Biggert Waters NFIP Reform Act of 2012

April 17, 10am
Online* – 1 CEC

NFIP Basics

April 18, 10am
Online* – 1 CEC

Preparing Data for Hazus

April 24, 10am
Online* – 1 CEC

MT-1 Basics

April 25, 10am
Online* – 1 CEC

Washington State Earthquake Scenario Catalog

May 8, 10am
Online* – 1 CEC

Elevation Certificates

May 9, 10am
Online* – 2 CECs

Using DFIRMS and Other Digital Flood Data

May 15, 11am
Online* – 1 CEC

*To register for online courses, visit STARR's training site online at j.mp/starrwebtraining, or email RXTraining@starr-team.com.

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Shoshone County Concludes Watershed Flooding Pilot Project

A yearlong pilot project that examined flood risk in the South Fork Coeur d'Alene Watershed concluded in February with the establishment of a local flood risk management group. The Idaho Silver Jackets coordinated the project and worked with Shoshone County and its seven incorporated cities, the Coeur d'Alene Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission, and the Panhandle Health District to enhance the watershed flood mitigation management plan previously outlined in the County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan. The local working group is comprised of county and municipal elected officials, floodplain administrators and emergency managers that will continue to work together on flood related issues.

Funded by a \$100,000 grant to the Idaho Silver Jackets from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the project identified and prioritized

projects that will be able to reduce flood risk within the watershed. The project also catalogued past studies and plans so that the working group could access all flood related information in one place. The information compiled by the Working Group is an important set in recognizing specific flood related issues in the watershed, and developing solutions to mitigate them.

This cooperation of local, state and federal agencies over the course of the project has set the stage to reduce the impact of flooding in the South Fork Coeur d'Alene watershed. This plan will have no immediate effect on floodplain boundaries of the National Flood Insurance Program, but will over time reduce the effects of flood related damage within the affected area.


The Idaho Silver Jackets is a team of federal and state agencies whose mission is to provide a unified interagency approach to reducing flood risk and minimizing the expenditures for flood response and recovery.

Silver Jackets Team Official in Washington

The Silver Jackets program provides a formal and consistent strategy for an interagency approach to planning and implementing measures to reduce the risks associated with flooding and other natural hazards.

The State of Washington Silver Jackets Core Team Charter establishes and formalizes the expectations for implementation of the Silver Jackets Team for the State of Washington. The charter will be reviewed annually by the core member agencies.

The State of Washington Silver Jackets Team vision statement is: "Serve as a catalyst to increase efficiency and coordination between State and Federal agencies in developing comprehensive and sustainable solutions to flood hazard issues including response, recovery, preparedness, and mitigation."

The signed charter can be viewed online at www.starr-team.com. 

Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Rate Changes

Floodplain managers from around the country have been asking about the impact of Biggert-Waters on future flood insurance rates. Please see the below invitation from FEMA to participate on a conference call, where this issue will be discussed. Regardless of whether you participate on the call, you can always find updated information (FEMA bulletins, etc.) on ASFPM's website at www.floods.org and click the link at the bottom of the page titled "Information Page for Biggert-Waters 2012 NFIP Reform Act Implementation".

You are invited you to call into an intergovernmental stakeholder briefing being conducted by FEMA Flood Insurance and Mitigation staff, to explain the flood insurance rate changes. The briefing call will take place as follows:

Date: April 2, 2012 at 10:30 AM EST
Participant call-in line: 1-800-369-1792
PIN: 2742176

There is a fact sheet and a short slide presentation that can be used during the call.

[Link to fact sheet](#) [Link to slide presentation](#)