



NFIP/CRS UPDATE

January 2013

An Enhanced Approach to Outreach Projects

Over the past several years, the City of Pasadena, Texas, carried out a variety of educational and public outreach projects with input and support from numerous partners. The program got so large by the end of 2011 that the staff decided to review all past activities and develop a broader and coordinated outreach effort.

Pasadena’s staff participated in FAST (Floodplain Awareness Success in Texas), the CRS Users Group for the Houston area. At the FAST meetings, they got a heads up about the changes being proposed for the new *CRS Coordinator’s Manual*, including the new Program for Public Information (PPI).

The timing was convenient for Pasadena. As an active participant in the CRS, the City decided to develop its overall, coordinated outreach effort by following the draft PPI guidelines. This would benefit both the City and the CRS, which was looking for communities to field test the new approach.

Led by Luz Locke, CRS Coordinator, and Daya Dayananda, Assistant Director of Public Works, the City organized a PPI Committee of people they had been working with over the years on public information activities. The Committee members (three City employees and representatives from six stakeholder organizations) include

- Pasadena Independent School District’s Director of Community Relations,
- A local insurance company,
- The President of the North Pasadena Business Association,
- The Director of Education at the Armand Bayou Nature Center,
- A local real estate broker/ Director of the Hispanic Business Association,
- Pasadena Citizens’ Advisory Council (an organization of residents and industries),
- The City’s Communication Specialist,
- Public Works/Emergency Operations Center (a CFM[®]), and
- The CRS and MS4 Coordinator, Environmental Services Coordinator (a CFM[®]).

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New Approach to Outreach Projects (cont.)

The work done to date was converted to the format of a PPI document, which describes the process that was followed and the assessment the City conducted of its flood problems and flood insurance coverage. Six target audiences for public outreach were identified:

- Target audience #1—The entire City of Pasadena (the assessment showed that everyone is subject to flooding)
- Target audience #2—Repetitive loss areas
- Target audience #3—Spanish speakers (52% of Pasadena’s population is listed by the U.S. Census as being of “Hispanic or Latino origin”)
- Target audience #4—Landscapers
- Target audience #5—Builders
- Target audience #6—Real estate, lending, and insurance companies.

The PPI document includes a table with an inventory of 31 public information efforts already underway in the area—newsletters, festivals, displays at the Nature Center, handouts, press releases, and the annual Trash Bash (a “festival” to clean the bayous).

The committee picked 15 annual projects and 4 flood response projects to pursue during 2013. These were presented on three pages of spreadsheet, one of which is shown in the box.

Outreach Projects (OP)						
Target Audience	Message(s) (See Table 4)	Outcome (See Table 4)	Project(s)	Assignment	Schedule	Stakeholder
1. All properties in the City	A - F, H, I	A - F, H, I	OP 1. <i>Pasadena Now</i> articles	City Communication Office	One article in each newsletter on a message	N/A (City is sponsor)
			OP 2. Facebook and Twitter messages	City Communication Office	One message sent out monthly on a new topic	
			OP 3. Handouts on the messages	City Communication Office	Distribute to various City offices for display	
			OP 4. Handouts on the messages	City Communication Office	Distribute to various stakeholder locations for their displays and handouts	Armand Bayou Nature Center Chamber of Commerce Insurance agencies
			OP 5. Booths at city-wide festivals	February Business Expo	Chamber of Commerce	
				March Trash Bash	Galveston Bay Foundation	
				May Strawberry Festival	San Jacinto Day Foundation	
				June Hurricane Workshop	SER LEPC	
				October Neighborhood network convention		
			Fall Festival (November)	Armand Bayou Nature Center		
	Map inquiry service	City Engineering	Year-round as part of regular service			
	City, Flood Control District, and LEPC websites	City Communication Office	Year-round as part of regular service			
	B. You need flood insurance I. Everyone can get flood insurance	B, I	OP 6. Insurance agents	Insurance agencies	Discussions with clients as they happen	Insurance agencies
	F. Only rain goes down the drain	F	OP 7. Presentations on protecting the waterways	Armand Bayou Nature Center Galveston Bay Foundation	Include as part of all presentations (one each month to different groups)	Armand Bayou Nature Center Galveston Bay Foundation
			OP 8. Storm drain stenciling	City Public Works Adopt a Waterway program		Year-round
H. Protect your house	H	OP 9. Guidebook	City Environmental Svcs Coordinator	At displays and provided at all meetings		

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New Approach to Outreach Projects (cont.)

The projects are geared toward getting people to change their behavior, so they are fashioned to convey specific messages that can prompt action. The Committee selected nine priority messages for the community (designated by letters in the table), each with an appropriate expected outcome:

- A Know your risk of flooding.
- B You need flood insurance.
- C Turn around, don't drown.
- D Keep your waterway clean.
- E All construction projects must meet flood protection and water quality rules.
- F Only rain goes down the drain.
- G Know the flood protection construction rules.
- H You can protect your house from flooding.
- I Everyone in the City can buy flood insurance.

The CRS staff has made an annotated version of Pasadena's PPI document. It shows where certain credit criteria appear and offers hints to other communities that are interested in establishing a Program for Public Information and obtaining CRS credit for it under the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*. The annotated version is available at the temporary web page, www.crs2012.org/activity-information/300-public-information-activities.

Soon there will be a second example of an actual community PPI document posted on the CRS web page. It will be a multi-jurisdictional PPI prepared by a county, two of its cities, and local stakeholders.

Next *Manual*, Next Website

Work continues on finalizing the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, which will be an update of the April 2012 draft that communities have been able to access through the temporary "Manual update" website (www.CRS2012.org) since last spring. The draft is undergoing review by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act. It is hoped that clearance will be reached in February. When the *Coordinator's Manual* is final, and an implementation date is known, all CRS communities will be notified, and provided with information for accessing the final version.

Remember that, at their next cycle verification visit after the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* goes into effect, CRS communities will be scored under the new *Coordinator's Manual*. As with all verification visits, the ISO/CRS Specialists will work with communities to identify additional activities eligible for CRS credit that the community might not have previously received.

A wealth of CRS-related material is being assembled for a more comprehensive web page, to replace www.CRS2012.org. It is planned that the page will migrate to the FEMA.gov site in the future. In addition, a special section of the FloodSmart website (www.FloodSmart.gov/) will be devoted to CRS information and updates of interest to a wider audience.

DEBBIE'S DISH on CRS Users Groups

Debbie Cahoon, CFM
Users Groups Liaison

A Recipe for CRS Success

It's great to report that the number of CRS Users Groups around the country has jumped from 17 to 22! The next time you see this column, I'm confident that it will even higher. Meanwhile, here is a rundown of the number of groups per FEMA region.

Region I— None yet. Anyone?	Region VI—6 groups (3 in Louisiana, 1 in Texas 1 in Arkansas, 1 in Oklahoma,)
Region II— Same as Region I. Volunteers?	Region VII—1 group (Kansas/Missouri)
Region III—3 groups (2 in Virginia, 1 in Delaware)	Region VIII—1 group (Colorado)
Region IV—8 groups (7 in Florida, 1 in Mississippi)	Region IX—1 group (California)
Region V— 1 group (Illinois)	Region X— 1 group (Washington)

What makes a good Users Group? Just one or two CRS coordinators who are willing to meet monthly? That's a start. How about a convenient place to meet and topics to discuss? Yep, all that too. Do you need a drive to excel for the benefit of others and yourself? That certainly helps. What is the recipe for making a successful CRS Users Group and keeping it going?

- One or more seasoned CRS Coordinators
- A handful of other CRS Coordinators or similar community staff, willing to learn more
- Two cups of enthusiasm (eagerness can be used as a substitute)
- One cup of a competitive edge (if a neighboring community gets a better CRS score, then you'll push yourself to get a better score, too)
- One cup of new ideas and willingness to share them with others in a safe environment
- A dash of help from your ISO/CRS Specialist, FEMA, the state, yours truly, etc.
- Garnish with common goals that all communities can stand behind—that is, protecting property, saving lives, and protecting floodplain resources.

Mix all the ingredients together. You'll get a Users Group that is tailor-made to the needs of the communities involved, and that thrives on helping its members progress within the CRS.

The bottom line is that a CRS Users Group is as successful as those in the group make it. Meeting regularly, discussing CRS activities, sharing tips on how to get the most credit, banding together to improve floodplain management programs, brainstorming on new methods of outreach—all of these make up the foundation to a good Users Group. Who's up next in the kitchen?

Until next time!

New Elevation Certificate and Floodproofing Certificate Ready

The revised Elevation Certificate and Floodproofing Certificate used by communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget, with a new expiration date of July 31, 2015.

The Elevation Certificate is available as a fillable WORD file and as a fillable pdf file at www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1383. Instructions can be downloaded at the same site.

The Floodproofing Certificate is available as a pdf and can be downloaded from www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1600.

Communities may continue to use the older forms (originally set to expire March 31, 2012) until July 31, 2013. After that, only the new forms will be accepted. If you have any questions, please contact your FEMA Regional Office or ISO/CRS Specialist.

Training Opportunities

Let the CRS come to You

During 2012, the CRS expects to conduct several sessions of the field-deployed CRS course (L278, the same as the Emergency Management Institute's E278, but tailored to local conditions). Any state, CRS Users Group, or organization that would like to host a course in its area should contact its FEMA Regional CRS Coordinator about requesting one for 2014.

More Help for CRS Communities

Don't forget that the CRS offers webinars and workshops to help communities with their elevation certificate and other requirements. If you are interested in having a webinar on the FEMA Elevation Certificate or any other activity, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist.

Workshops and Training on the CRS

— The Community Rating System (E278) (field-deployed course is L278)

This is the all-purpose training course for the CRS. It is taught at both the Emergency Management Institute (see below) and at sites throughout the country at the request of interested communities or states. Note that this course now uses the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* (in draft form), which will become effective in 2013.

Prerequisite: To enroll in the CRS course, you must be a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM[®]), or have completed the National Flood Insurance Program course listed below (E273), or be a full-time floodplain manager with more than three years of experience specifically related to floodplain management.

Del City, Oklahoma (FEMA Region VI) April 29—May 2, 2013
Contact Bill Robison at (918) 596-9475 or brobison@cityoftulsa.org.

Emergency Management Institute (Emmitsburg, Maryland) April 1–4, 2013
..... May 13–16, 2013; July 29—August 2, 2013

Contact your state emergency management training office, EMI at (800) 238-3358 or (301) 447-1035, or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp>.

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Training Opportunities (cont.)

Other Courses at the Emergency Management Institute

Besides the basic CRS course, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers training on many related topics, including floodplain management, mitigation, and construction. These are oriented to local building, zoning, planning, and engineering officials. Tuition is free for state and local government officials and travel stipends are available. Call the training office of your state emergency management agency, see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp>, or call EMI at 1-800-238-3358 or (301) 447-1035.

- **HAZUS-MH for Flood (E172)** May 13–16, 2013
- **HAZUS-MH for Floodplain Managers (E176)** March 18–21, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E194)** August 26–29, 2013
- **Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP (E273)** March 11–14 2013
..... April 29—May 2, 2013
..... June 24–27, 2013
..... September 9–12, 2013

E273 is also field deployed periodically. Contact your State NFIP Coordinator for more information. Find your State Coordinator at <http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuID=274>.

- **Retrofitting Floodprone Residential Buildings (E279)** May 6–9, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II (E282)** March 25–28, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts III (E284)** July 8–11, 2013
- **Residential Coastal Construction (E386)** August 5–8, 2013

CRS communities can receive CRS credit points after their staff members complete certain training sessions. Under Section 431.n, Staffing (STF) of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, five points are provided for each member of a community's floodplain permit staff who graduates from courses E194, E273, E278, E282, E284, or E386 (up to 25 points). Graduating from E279 is worth five points under Activity 360 (Flood Protection Assistance).

Statement of Purpose

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is a publication of the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. It provides local officials and others interested in the CRS with news they can use.

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is produced in alternate months. It is distributed electronically, at no cost, to local and state officials, consultants, and others who want to be on the mailing list. Communities are encouraged to copy and/or circulate the *Update* and to reprint its articles in their own local, state, or regional newsletters. No special permission is needed.

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