



NFIP/CRS UPDATE

May / June 2015

Nominations Open for Award for Excellence

Nominations are being sought for the next CRS Award for Excellence, which recognizes an individual who has provided leadership in raising awareness about the dangers of flooding, implementing floodplain management programs that reduce flood damage, and promoting the purchase of flood insurance through the CRS and the National Flood Insurance Program.

A nominee could be a local government official, insurance agent, business professional, real estate professional, floodplain manager, or other local leader. He or she should

- Be actively involved in a CRS community and knowledgeable about the risk of local flooding;
- Be active in promoting the use of flood insurance to help households prepare for the possibility of flood damage;
- Be active in encouraging community leaders to improve local safety and resilience to flooding and other disasters; and
- Have noteworthy achievements in the area of alerting residents and businesses to potential flood dangers and promoting the purchase of flood insurance.

Nomination forms for the CRS Award for Excellence can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/17014>. The deadline for nominations and applications is **July 31, 2015**. ≡ ≡ ≡

Searching for Success Stories

The CRS continues to collect examples of ways in which communities have benefited from being CRS participants and/or undertaking CRS activities.

Did you find a way—via the CRS—to minimize flood damage, build partnerships, enhance your community resilience, or improve habitat? If so, we would like to hear about it. You do not have to write anything. A CRS staff person can collect the information from you by phone or email, and write a description of what your community did. You will be able to review and correct the writeup yourself.

If you have an experience to share, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist or send an email to NFIPCRS@iso.com [put “story” in the subject line].

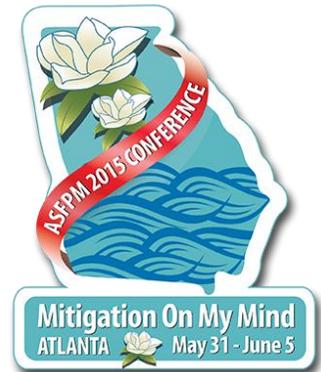
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CRS Connections at ASFPM Conference

The annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), held in Atlanta, Georgia, from May 31 to June 5, 2015. was punctuated by information sharing and discussion about the CRS—both formal and informal. Some highlights are below.

- Two concurrent sessions focused on the CRS—“Local Perspectives,” and “National Perspectives.” In his presentation at the latter session, Bill Lesser of FIMA highlighted three “shared ambitions” for all CRS partners going forward: (1) CRS growth, (2) demonstrating the effectiveness of the CRS, and (3) sharing a spirit of mutual helpfulness. For demonstrating CRS effectiveness, FIMA hopes that communities will share their CRS success stories (see box on the front page).
- The workshop “CRS Outreach Projects and FloodSmart: How Communities Can Expand Their CRS Public Information Efforts and Make Use of FloodSmart Tools,” held on Monday afternoon, again was a lively and informative experience. Members of the FloodSmart and CRS teams shared ideas, lessons learned, online tools, and local examples to help communities update their public information efforts based on the approaches recommended under CRS Activity 330 (Outreach Projects) and the new Activity 370 (Flood Insurance Promotion). CFM participants earned 3.5 CECs.
- Fifteen communities engaged in one-on-one appointments offered by CRS experts from Insurance Services Office, Inc., (ISO) during the conference week. ISO met with these folks on FEMA’s behalf, so that they could get answers to their specific questions and discuss their choice of issues. Among the topics addressed were preparing for a cycle visit, BCEGS ratings, earning class improvements, meeting Class 4 prerequisites, applying to the CRS, and others. The CRS and ISO plan to use this appointment format again next year, as a convenient way for communities to learn more about the program and get individualized attention.
- “Lunch with CRS” on Wednesday was attended by about 30 people. The bring-your-own lunch gave folks the chance to put faces with names and also provided CRS Users Groups from around the country with a forum within which to interact. The CRS team hopes to have future lunch meetings with Users Groups, State NFIP Coordinators, and FEMA Regional Coordinators.



The CRS and the ASFPM are looking ahead to the next conference, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 19–24, 2016. Ideas for future CRS-related panels, presentations, or other options for next year’s meeting are welcome. Please forward them to NFIPCRS@iso.com. ≡ ≡

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CRS Training this Summer

The all-purpose training course for the Community Rating System, “Introduction to the CRS,” (also known as E278) is being offered twice this summer at the Emergency Management Institute. The first class is filled, but seats are available in the session to be held August 31—September 3, 2015.

The course describes the activities through which a community can earn credit points under the CRS, how a community applies to the program, how to modify an application to improve a community classification, and more. The materials covered assume a familiarity with floodplain management and with the National Flood Insurance Program.

For prerequisites and other details, see “Training Opportunities” on page 6, or <http://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>.

DEBBIE'S DISH ON CRS USERS GROUPS

Debbie Cahoon Vascik, CFM
Users Groups Liaison

How to Work a PPI . . . and Make a PPI Work for You

Communities around the nation are working to develop their Program for Public Information (PPI) for CRS Activity 330 (Outreach Projects). And, although it is clearly a worthwhile and beneficial process to convey critical messages to the public and, even though the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* lists the PPI process in a step-by-step method, the PPI encompasses so many parts that it is a little intimidating to try to cover it all to meet the needs of your community while getting the most credit possible. With that in mind, I turned to Luz Locke, the CRS Coordinator for the City of Pasadena, Texas, and the creator of the first model PPI (posted at www.CRSresources.org/files/300/pasadena/pasadena_ppi_12-5-12_annotated.pdf).

I've known Luz for years and she has always been a dedicated and passionate professional, especially when it comes to helping her citizens. I knew she'd be the perfect person to interview on all things PPI related. Luz and her staff followed the PPI steps methodically, and they meticulously analyzed every potential target area, priority topic, and message. But I wanted to know more, so I asked her for some tips.

When it comes to inviting stakeholders to be on the PPI committee, is it better to have a small number so the meeting is more manageable or a larger group to increase the number of ideas?

The number of members is not the most important thing—it's how the members can best contribute. At the beginning, invite people from the community who already know you and who you also already know to have good leadership qualities (the type that helps with constructive criticism). Explain on the phone the reason you need their help (i.e., the goals of the project), and set a date (lunch time and at a central site). At the meeting, have a few items ready such as a sign-in sheet, camera, and someone to write the minutes. Go over the goals and concept of the PPI and ask the members for their input about areas in need, target audiences, messages, materials, events, and presentations.

I used to (and still do) attend meetings of different community groups around such as businesses, environmental groups, Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Business, insurance companies, etc. I am constantly talking to them and offering help for their events. In turn, they helped me as well.

What kinds of things can a community do in its PPI if money is tight in the budget?

Use other groups' events, meetings already established, and make your own PowerPoint presentations, fliers, tri-folds, etc. Pasadena had to do that since we didn't have money at the beginning. If you don't have help during events, invite high school students to help you since they need volunteer hours. I worked with the local schools and the boy and girl scouts. Ask if other entities can donate money or help with copies of fliers or a coloring book you put together. FloodSmart, your state floodplain management association, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can supply materials you can use as give-aways. If you can get some money, purchase small items on which you can write a brief message, like a hotline number or your contact information.

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DEBBIE’S DISH(cont.)

Coordinate messages with other departments in your city that have to do outreach for their programs such as stormwater, fire prevention, emergency management, general safety, the animal shelter, the nature center, the health department, or code enforcement. Partner with your parks department to occupy a booth at a local event with your fliers and outreach materials and, in turn, you can help them to distribute their literature, too. Most important, work with your community’s public information office on the outreach and public media they already use. Meet people, help people, interact as much as possible, and you will have many doors opened for you.

Has your community seen any positive outcomes from having the PPI?

Yes! Not only great participation in the outreach from stakeholders, but the public knows more about the CRS, they know their flood risk, and they understand how to be ready for the flood. We see this during meetings and events.

Do you have any advice to share with communities just starting this PPI process?

Get your community assessment, write a standard email you will send to different contacts that can inform you on events in your area, attend community meetings, make a presentation on the PPI at the city council meeting and get support from the council members, contact your parks department and other departments to see what events you can tag along on for your outreach, and contact the public relations department, who can help find you committee members.

Get up earlier in the morning with your camera, turn on the TV, and capture the commercials from insurance companies, FloodSmart, environmental organizations, and programs on conservation of natural features. Leave your flyers for the public to pick up at various places such as the library, city hall, the convention center, Chamber of Commerce, businesses, and other locations citizens patronize.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help—there is always somebody who can give you knowledge, time, money, an opportunity to present, etc. Be creative, ask questions, help, and you will be helped. There is nothing impossible to achieve if everyone works together.

I couldn’t have said it better myself. THANK YOU, Luz, for all of your advice on preparing a PPI. She made it sound so easy and, after reading her answers, suddenly the PPI doesn’t seem so overwhelming after all. ≡ ≡ ≡

Don’t Forget about Courtesy Reviews

The *CRS Coordinator’s Manual* encourages “courtesy reviews” of plans and other documents that communities would like to be considered for CRS credit (Section 214.b). Materials may be submitted at any time, regardless of when a community’s next cycle visit is, for the ISO/CRS Specialist to review. The ISO/CRS Specialist, in many instances, will forward the materials to Technical Reviewers for comments and recommendations. Communities are encouraged to take advantage of this approach.

Ask for a courtesy review at any time, but in advance of your request for credit so there won’t be any delay in getting the points you deserve.



Online Resources

At FloodSmart.gov

Remember that the CRS pages of the FloodSmart website [https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/crs/community_rating_system.jsp] are the place to go for people new to the CRS, elected officials, newly hired CRS Coordinators, and the public. It is designed for those who don't need the full technical details posted elsewhere.



At CRSresources.org

Check frequently at www.CRSresources.org to see what's been added in the way of CRS materials. All documents referred to in the *Coordinator's Manual* are posted here as soon as they are available. If you cannot find a piece of information or document, please notify your ISO/CRS Specialist or NFIPCRS@iso.com. Here are some recent additions to the website.

- **Webinar Schedule**—A schedule for the rest of calendar year 2015 is posted under the Training & Videos tab at www.CRSresources.org/training. This link also has registration information. Also see the webinar schedule on the next page.
- The most recent issue of the *NFIP/CRS Update* newsletter, in case you missed it (March/April 2015), along with all other past issues, can be found at www.CRSresources.org/100-2. ≡ ≡ ≡

New Regional CRS Coordinators

There have been a few changes in the CRS Coordinator positions at the FEMA Regional Offices. The list below brings their contact information up to date.

Region I	Chris Markesich	(617) 832-4712	Christopher.Markesich@fema.dhs.gov
Region II	Crystal Tramunti, CFM	(212) 680-3625	Crystal.Tramunti@fema.dhs.gov
Region III	Mari Radford, CFM	(215) 931-2880	Mari.Radford@fema.dhs.gov
Region IV	Janice Mitchell	(770) 220-5441	Janice.Mitchell@fema.dhs.gov
Region V	John Devine, CFM	(312) 408-5567	John.Devine@fema.dhs.gov
Region VI	Mark Lujan, CFM, ANFI	(940) 383-7327	Mark.Lujan@fema.dhs.gov
Region VII	Andy Megrail, CFM	(816) 283-7982	Andy.Megrail@fema.dhs.gov
Region VIII	Barbara Fitzpatrick	(303) 235-4715	Barbara.Fitzpatrick@fema.dhs.gov
Region IX	Patricia Rippe	(510) 627-7015	Patricia.Rippe@fema.dhs.gov
Region X	Michael Riedy, CFM	(425) 487-4654	Michael.Riedy@fema.dhs.gov
Emergency Management Institute	Robert Perry	(301) 447-1351	Robert.Perry@fema.dhs.gov

New ISO/CRS Specialist

The Community Rating System is pleased to announce the latest addition to its team, Brandon “Craig” Carpenter, CFM, who began his duties with ISO in mid April.

Carpenter, who is relocating to Florida, most recently worked as the Stormwater Division Manager for the City of Austell, Georgia, where he was the lead inspector for all floodplain, stormwater, water quality, erosion and sedimentation, and building activities. He was also the MS4 inspector and the CRS Coordinator. Carpenter has been working on a degree in Business Management, with a specialty in information systems, and has additional experience as a local floodplain administrator as well as in code compliance, planning review, and complaint resolution.

The entire CRS team welcomes you, Craig. ≡≡≡

Training Opportunities

Webinars

The CRS offers webinars to help communities with their CRS requirements. Many will be recorded, so they can be accessed later. Registration is free, but required, as space is limited. Some courses provide continuing education credits for Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs). See www.CRSresources.org/training. The following one-hour topical webinars are on the calendar, and others can be scheduled. All webinars begin at 1:00 pm EST / 10:00 am PST.

- **Introduction to the CRS**— July 21, 2015; September 15, 2015; October 20, 2015; December 15, 2015
- **Drainage System Maintenance (Activity 540)**— October 21, 2015
- **Preparing an Impact Adjustment Map**— July 22, 2015
- **Preparing an Annual Recertification**— August 18, 2015; August 19, 2015; September 16, 2015
- **Preparing for a Verification Visit**— November 17, 2015; January 16, 2016
- **Outreach Projects (Activity 330)**— December 16, 2015
- **Floodplain Management Planning (Activity 510)**— November 18, 2015; January 20, 2016

Some of the other webinars anticipated include **CRS Credit for Mapping and Regulations (the 400 Series)**; **CRS Credit for Flood Damage Reduction (the 500 Series)**; and **CRS and Climate Change**. If you'd like to have a webinar on the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*, the FEMA Elevation Certificate, or any other activity, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist.

For more on the CRS webinars, go to www.CRSresources.org/training. If you have questions about or suggestions for the CRS Webinar Series, contact Becca.Croft@atkinglobal.com.

Recorded Webinars

“RiskMAP and CRS Synergy” is a recorded webinar introducing the CRS and FEMA’s RiskMAP and showing how communities can use both to improve floodplain management. Class materials and the Q&A are available for download at http://www.starr-team.com/starr/Training_Materials/Risk_MAP-CRS_Synergy. The recorded webinar can be accessed at <http://j.mp/starr-recorded-training> [click on “Recorded Sessions” under the “Training” tab].

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Training Opportunities (cont.)

- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts III (E284)**August 24–27, 2015
.....August 29—September 1, 2016
- **Residential Coastal Construction (E386)** August 31—September 3, 2015
.....August 22–25, 2016

CRS communities can receive CRS credit points after their staff members complete certain training sessions. Under Section 432.o, regulations administration (RA) of the *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 up to five points under Activity 360 (Flood Protection Assistance).

About the Emergency Management Institute

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI), in Emmitsburg, Maryland, offers training on topics related to floodplain management, mitigation, and construction, including the basic CRS course (E278). These are oriented to local building, zoning, planning, and engineering officials. Tuition is free for state and local government officials, travel stipends are available, and on-campus lodging is free. Free transportation is provided from the airport to the campus and back to the airport. The only out-of-pocket expense is a meal ticket—all-you-can-eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Go to the EMI website for specific details at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/NETC_Welcome_Package.pdf. The application to attend can be found at <http://training.fema.gov/Apply/>, or call EMI at 1-800-238-3358 or (301) 447-1035. Signed applications should be submitted through the state's Emergency Management Training Officer.

Bring the CRS to Your Home Town

In 2015 the CRS expects to conduct the field-deployed CRS course (L278, the same as the Emergency Management Institute's E278, but tailored to local conditions), depending on funding availability. The 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* and increased interest by non-CRS communities are generating a growing demand for CRS training. A state, CRS Users Group, or organization that would like to host a course or discuss CRS training opportunities should contact its FEMA Regional CRS Coordinator (see www.CRSresources.org/100). ≡ ≡ ≡

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 other interested persons. 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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