



NFIP/CRS UPDATE

April / May 2017

2017 *Coordinator's Manual* is Official

In March, the Office of Management and Budget gave its final approval to the 2017 edition of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, signifying its adherence with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The *Coordinator's Manual* is now available for download from the [CRS Resources website](http://www.CRSresources.org) (at www.CRSresources.org) and from www.fema.gov.

As noted in past articles, the new edition incorporates many improvements, clarifications, and minor corrections, but no major changes. Nothing will require substantive changes to a community's CRS program or procedures. This edition has an expiration date of March 31, 2020.

Note that fillable-pdf versions of the Community Certifications (CCs) and the Community Certifications for Environmental and Historic Preservation (CC-EHPs) have not yet been posted on fema.gov, due to a technical error in the digital versions, but they are available as individual fillable-pdf forms on the [CRS Resources website](http://www.CRSresources.org). Also, Appendixes E and F in the *Coordinator's Manual* include the forms as images that can be photocopied and used.



And Remember . . .

- You do not need to alter the way you prepare for your next verification visit. Just get ready as you always do. Your community's coverage under the new edition will be phased in. Your ISO/CRS Specialists will work with you to anticipate any different documentation or other changes that will apply in the future.
- Changes from previous editions are marked with vertical bars [*see bar at right*] in the margins of the pages of the 2017 *Coordinator's Manual*. This will help you spot places that you may want to review, to see if the change affects your community. ≡ ≡ ≡

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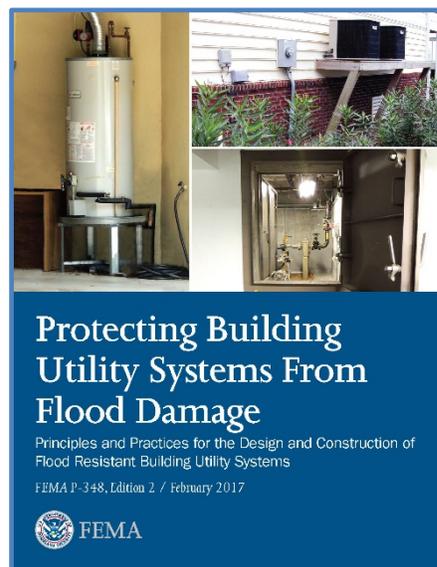
More on Protecting Building Utilities

The Building Science Branch of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released the second edition of *Protecting Building Utility Systems from Flood Damage* (FEMA P-348). Like its predecessor, the updated publication illustrates the design and construction of utility systems that comply with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements for new or substantially improved residential and non-residential structures in floodprone areas.

Geared to local officials, building owners, architects, engineers, builders, contractors, and property managers, the guide can be especially useful when considering upgrades to or replacement of utility systems. It points out ways to meet floodplain management regulations and building codes. Even if NFIP compliance is not required, many building owners find that applying the mitigation measures described in this publication will not only reduce future flood damage, but also facilitate faster recovery after flooding.

The guide addresses mitigation measures for

- **Mechanical equipment and appliances:** heating and cooling equipment and appliances, exhaust systems, duct systems, boilers and water heaters, hydronic piping, and solar energy systems.
- **Electrical systems:** service equipment, feeders, panelboards, switches, fuse boxes, cabinets and control panels, outlets, receptacles, wiring, and emergency power generators.
- **Communications:** telephone, cable, fiber optic, internet, and wi-fi systems.
- **Plumbing:** water supply piping, water treatment systems, sanitary drainage, fixtures, laundry appliances, plumbing vents, septic tanks, fire protection systems, and pumps and equipment for pools and spas.
- **Water supply systems:** wells, water connections, and filtration and treatment systems.
- **Fuel systems:** fuel gas and oil supply pipes, oil tanks, propane tanks, meters, pumps, and gas and oil-fired equipment, and appliances.
- **Conveyances:** elevators, escalators, and lifts.



The guidebook has been updated to reflect the latest versions of the International Code Council codes and building standards. The sections on specific mitigation measures have been expanded. In addition, dozens of illustrations and tables help building owners determine the best mitigation option for a particular building type and condition. An appendix gives helpful information about how property owners can obtain FEMA assistance for flood retrofitting projects.

Download a copy of FEMA P-348 from the [FEMA website](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/3729) (available at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/3729>).

Debbie's Dish . . . on CRS Users Groups

Debbie Cahoon Vascik, CFM

Users Groups Liaison

Under Pressure

Recently I attended the annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) in Kansas City, Missouri. It was my second time to attend a national conference and I'd never been to Kansas City, so my anticipation was high. The meeting did not disappoint. I was impressed with the organization of it all, not to mention the vast array of topics that would appeal to anyone in attendance. I was also glad to see the time and attention given to the CRS, and I participated in the "Lunch with CRS" meeting on Wednesday of that week. When it came time to introduce myself, I said that I was glad to attend the conference and meet so many of the CRS Users Group leaders. It was nice to finally put faces to the names of people I'd been emailing for years. (Whenever people from a CRS Users Group would introduce themselves and I recognized their names, I admit I got a little burst of excitement. "So that's so-and-so!" I thought to myself. I imagine they had a similar reaction when it was my turn. "So that's Debbie?") I thanked the attendees for all that they'd done to put their CRS Users Groups together and to keep the momentum going.

Later on, though, I said something I still regret. I was pointing to the U.S. map of CRS Users Groups displayed on the big screen, and commented that there was a strong concentration of groups in the South and East and even to the West, and I wondered aloud why there was a lack of presence in the northern states. A couple of people offered possible reasons—CRS communities not in close proximity to each other, a lack of resources and time, etc. They were all valid reasons, but I immediately regretted even mentioning it at all, because it may have come across as though I don't understand the amount of effort that goes into maintaining a CRS Users Group.

Believe me, I do. I believe that the experience I have had in different roles allows me to see things from all angles. I have floodplain management experience as a field representative for the State NFIP Coordinator's office, as Floodplain Coordinator and CRS Coordinator for a local community, and as a private consultant helping communities navigate their CRS programs. In each of these roles, I was able to maintain meetings for our CRS Users Group (FAST), but it wasn't always easy. I was busy in my job and had a lot of responsibilities; however, I was driven to make FAST a constant priority. Our meetings were monthly and that was difficult to keep up sometimes . . . trying to find pertinent topics, enthusiastic speakers, and quality content. When we moved to a quarterly meeting schedule, I thought the load would lighten a little. It did, but I still feel a tremendous responsibility to make this CRS Users Group something significant to the communities—to help make the job easier for CRS Coordinators.

So as soon as commented that it would be nice to see more CRS Users Groups in one area of the country, I felt like I was putting pressure on people to add more to their already overflowing plate. That was not my intent (well, maybe it was my intent just a little bit).

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DEBBIE'S DISH (cont.)

At the same time, I want to be a motivator for people who may be thinking of starting a CRS Users Group but are worried about the time and toll it will take on them. Let me just say this – it's worth it. As I've said in many columns in the past, a CRS Users Group doesn't need to be as formal as you might think. It doesn't have to be a four-hour meeting in a conference room with boxed lunches. It can be a one-hour get-together at Starbucks over chai tea lattes. A CRS Users Group doesn't have to span across three or four states or include every CRS community within a 50 mile radius. It can comprise just two or three communities that are close enough to make it easy to meet a few times a year. A meeting doesn't have to feature four speakers from national organizations providing in-depth training on a specific activity. It can be a roundtable discussion of people sharing their frustrations over Elevation Certificates that are not filled out correctly.

But here's the funny thing: while I'm sitting here typing this article, I find myself distracted by thoughts of what the topic could be at the FAST meeting next week. The meeting has been set since last year but somehow it still snuck up on me. I'm wracking my brain to think of a good topic, so people's time won't be wasted and so the meeting will be successful. So maybe a little pressure doesn't hurt, especially if it keeps people from getting too comfortable or lazy and instead pushes them towards success. Like how I feel pressured to come up with a topic and speaker for our next FAST meeting that will blow the minds of the attendees. (Rein it in, Debbie. It's just a meeting.)

I'd like to end this article with another heartfelt THANK YOU to all CRS Users Group leaders who volunteer their time and talent to making their groups successful. You believe in the cause, and your communities are better off because of your drive and dedication. On behalf of them, I thank you, and I hope to meet more of you at next year's conference! ≡≡≡

New ISO/CRS Specialist

The Community Rating System is pleased to announce its newest ISO/CRS Specialist, Constance Lake, CFM, who began her duties with ISO in April.

Lake is based in Casper, Wyoming, and has inherited the vast territory covering northern California, southern Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, northern Nevada, South Dakota, and Utah, as well as Wyoming. She has certification in geographic information systems (GIS) from Casper College, as well as the Certified Floodplain Manager status.

She most recently worked for the Casper Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and before that with the Wyoming State Office of the Bureau of Land Management. She brings a considerable body of past work experience and responsibilities that will make her uniquely suited to our CRS mission.

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

Get CRS Training close to Home

“The Community Rating System” four-day training course (EMI course number L0278) will be offered at two field locations this summer. This is the all-purpose training course for the CRS described on page 10 of this issue.

- Montgomery, Alabama – July 17-20, 2017 (Monday through Thursday), and
- Indianapolis, Indiana – August 22-25, 2017 (Tuesday through Friday).

Anyone interested in enrolling can send an email to NFIPCRS@iso.com to request registration details. ≡ ≡ ≡

Updated CRS Guidance now Available

To keep current with the improvements made in the new, 2017 edition of the *CRS Coordinator’s Manual*, many of the various CRS guidance documents are being updated. Two have recently been posted on the [CRS Resources website](#).

“**CRS Credit for Planning Committees**” is the handout that describes the local committees that serve as the focal point for designing and periodically evaluating programs for public information, flood insurance promotion, and floodplain management planning. To receive CRS credit for these committees, certain criteria of membership, composition, and action must be met; these requirements are explained in the updated handout.

Outreach Projects for Credit under the Community Rating System identifies the key factors in preparing outreach projects that are both effective and creditable under the CRS. For example, the guide explains the creditable four-step process for disseminating appropriate information about flood hazards to the community’s residents and visitors:

- (1) Determine who the audience is;
- (2) Compose the right message for that audience;
- (3) Design a project that will deliver the message;
- and (4) Evaluate the effectiveness of the message and the project.

Numerous illustrations, examples, and scoring demonstrations make this guide essential for communities intent on helping their residents act appropriately in the face of flood hazards. ≡ ≡ ≡



Both of these signs convey creditable messages under CRS topic 1, Know your flood hazard.

Both have messages that tell the audience what to do (or not to do) under CRS topic 3, Protect people from the hazard. They would be credited for having messages under two topics.

An illustration from Outreach Projects for CRS Credit

Success with CRS

This month: A snapshot of the numerous floodplain management and CRS activities being carried out in Coralville, Iowa. For more details, see [Coralville's website](http://www.coralville.org/794/Flood-Information) (available at <http://www.coralville.org/794/Flood-Information>). For more stories, see the Success with CRS website on the Success tab of the [CRS Resources website](#).

Partnerships and Collaboration grow out of CRS Involvement for Coralville, Iowa

The job of figuring out what needed to be done to get Coralville, Iowa, into the Community Rating System fell onto the desk of Beth Rumpza, an intern in Coralville's Engineering Department (and a student at nearby University of Iowa). Rumpza began by reading through the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* and she and James Kessler, Building and Zoning Official, looked at what the city had already done in the way of flood hazard management. The city lies in east-central Iowa, where Clear Creek flows into the Iowa River (both sources of flooding), and has almost 20,000 people.

"The *Coordinator's Manual* was pretty straight-forward," Rumpza says, "easy to follow, and well organized." She saw that Coralville could get credit for some of the things it was already doing, so it was a matter of collecting the information needed to document that.

Partnerships Push Progress

An important component of the CRS participation process for Coralville has been the linkages the community has sought and maintained, both within and outside of the community itself. According to Rumpza, three partnerships have been particularly noteworthy.

- Coralville formed a partnership with the local Board of Realtors,[®] which agreed to keep flood information in each of its member offices. The brochures explain about the availability of flood insurance and also give simple advice on other flood hazard protection techniques.
- The Flood Center at the University of Iowa worked with Coralville to connect the city to the watershed-based maps managed at the University—an array that includes inundation maps, maps for flood warnings, and maps of real-time storm conditions. Now, not only is Coralville able to access this valuable information, but also receives CRS credit for having and using the advanced mapping.
- Coralville was a co-producer of the Johnson County Multi Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. In return, the County helped Coralville with its floodplain management plan (credited under CRS Activity 510) and its flood warning and response (credited under CRS Activity 610).
- The CRS Coordinator's office worked with the city's public relations office to produce a week long social media campaign on flood safety and flood insurance. Working within the city's

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Coralville builds Partnerships (cont.)

existing quarterly magazine and its distribution outlets for mailers, the two offices also generated a brochure about flood safety and flood insurance and a feature spread on those topics for the spring issue of the magazine, along with a section on flood safety for the city’s website. “The CRS and our ISO/CRS Specialist helped us lay these things out so that they would be effective and we would get credit for them,” Rumpza says.

Open Space Preservation

In past years, Coralville had done a lot of work that is creditable under the Open Space Preservation activity of the CRS. The city bought and subsequently demolished 30 structures on properties along the Iowa River. The area was then restored to natural wetlands habitat and converted into a park and detention pond. The seven-acre Iowa River Landing Wetland Park encompasses three distinct types of wetlands: emergent, forested, and wet meadow. There is a two-acre pond, and a viewing tower that serves as an observation point. The park is popular for nature walks, bird watching, and wildlife photography.

In conjunction with the wetlands park, the city continues to add to its Clear Creek Greenbelt—a system of pedestrian and bike trails on both sides of Clear Creek. “The city has been doing a great job of working to restrict future development in the floodplain,” Rumpza says.



One entrance to the Iowa River Landing Wetlands Park. The area encompasses restored wetlands, hiking/biking trails, a detention pond, and landscaped recreation areas.

A Happy Ending

The process of joining the CRS helped Coralville’s elected officials focus on flooding in the community, and how the impacts of flooding could be reduced, Rumpza says. The fact that CRS participation meant getting economic benefits in the form of reductions in flood insurance premiums was an incentive.

“The support provided by the ISO was great and invaluable throughout the entire process,” Rumpza summarizes. In May 2016 Coralville entered the CRS as a Class 7, gaining a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums for its floodplain residents. ≡ ≡ ≡

CRS Connections at ASFPM Conference

Once again the CRS team extends a big “thank you” to all the participants in the CRS discussions that took place at the annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) held in Kansas City April 30—May 5, 2017. The time and effort communities put into the presentations, and the insights they offered, are very much appreciated. Expressions of both local successes and concerns about the CRS are always welcome and always applied to future improvements.



About 40 people participated in the “Lunch with CRS,” held on Wednesday. Several new efforts were discussed, including the new state-based credits, the CRS’s role in helping communities after a disaster, and state and regional maps of CRS communities that are available on the [CRS Resources website](#). There also was discussion about the CRS Users Groups and the CRS’s ongoing need for stories of success (visit the Success with CRS tab on the [CRS Resources website](#) to suggest a community’s name and contact person for story development). Thank you for everyone’s input.

Thank you, also, to all the communities that visited the ISO/CRS one-on-one room for questions, advice, and program discussions! The CRS will offer the “Lunch with CRS” and the one-on-one room again at the 2018 ASFPM conference in Phoenix. ≡ ≡ ≡



Online Resources

At CRSresources.org

Check frequently at the [CRS Resources website](#) 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.

- **2017 CRS Coordinator’s Manual**—As noted in the cover article of this issue, the new edition of the *Coordinator’s Manual* is available under the “Manual” tab of the [CRS Resources website](#).
- **Outreach Projects for Credit under the Community Rating System**, the guidance described on page 5, is available under the 300s tab of the [CRS Resources website](#).
- **“CRS Credit for Planning Committees,”** the updated handout described on page 6, is available under both the 300s tab and the 500s tab of the [CRS Resources website](#).

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Online Resources (cont).

- **Webinar Schedule**—A schedule for 2017 is posted under the Training & Videos tab of the [CRS Resources website](#). This link has registration information. Also, see the webinar schedule below.
- The most recent issue of the *NFIP/CRS Update* newsletter, (February/March 2017), along with all other past issues, can be found under the 100s tab of the [CRS Resources website](#).
- **Success with CRS** is a tab on the [CRS Resources website](#) with short articles about the different ways in which communities have found their own types of success through the CRS. ≡≡≡

Training Opportunities

Webinars

The CRS offers webinars to help communities understand and meet 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 the [CRS Resources website](#). The one-hour webinars listed below are on the calendar, and others will be scheduled. All webinars begin at 1:00 pm EST / 10:00 am PST.

- **Preparing for a Verification Visit** (1 hour and 15 minutes) — June 20, 2017
- **Developing Outreach Projects for Activity 330** — June 21, 2017
- **Changes in the 2017 CRS Coordinator’s Manual** — July 18, 2017
- **CRS Class 4 Prerequisites** — July 19, 2017
- **Preparing an Annual Recertification** — August 15, 2017
- **Flood Warning & Response (Activity 610)** — August 16, 2017
- **Preparing an Annual Recertification** — September 19, 2017
- **Floodplain Management Planning (Activity 510)** — September 20, 2017
- **Introduction to the CRS** — October 17, 2017
- **Developing a CRS Program for Public Information** — October 18, 2017
- **Preparing for a Verification Visit** (1 hour and 15 minutes) — November 14, 2017
- **Working with Repetitive Loss Properties** — November 15, 2017
- **Introduction to the CRS** — December 12, 2017
- **The CRS and Coastal Hazards** — December 13, 2017

If you’d like to have a webinar on the FEMA Elevation Certificate, or a particular CRS activity, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist. For more on the CRS webinars, go to the Training tab of the [CRS Resources website](#). If you have questions about or suggestions for the CRS Webinar Series, contact Becca.Croft@atkinsglobal.com.

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Training Opportunities (cont.)

Workshops and Training related to the CRS

- **The Community Rating System (E0278)** (field-deployed course is designated as L0278)
..... June 26–29, 2017; September 11–14, 2017;
..... March 26–29, 2018; June 25–28 2018

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, groups, or states, pending available funding.

- Attendees of E0278 CRS courses based on previous *Coordinator’s Manuals* may want to repeat this course. Therefore, restrictions on repeat attendance have been waived.
- For continuing education credit for Certified Floodplain Managers, the ASFPM will award CECs earned at the E0278 CRS course.
- No more than two persons per community may attend at one time.

Prerequisite: To enroll in the CRS course, you must be a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM®), or have completed the National Flood Insurance Program course (E0273), or be a full-time floodplain manager with over two years of floodplain management experience.

- **Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP (E0273)**
..... August 21–24, 2017; December 4–7, 2017;
..... May 7–10, 2018; August 27–30, 2018

E0273 is also field deployed periodically. Contact your State NFIP Coordinator for more information [see the [ASFPM’s website](#)].

- **Retrofitting Floodprone Residential Buildings (E0279)** May 14–17, 2018
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts I (E0282)** July 30—August 2, 2018;
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts III (E0284)** July 24–27, 2017;
..... July 23–26, 2018
- **Residential Coastal Construction (E0386)** August 28–31, 2017
..... August 13–16, 2018
- **Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance—
Developing Quality Application Elements (E0212)** April 30—May 3, 2018
- **Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance—
Application Review and Evaluation (E0213)** June 19–20, 2017;
..... June 25–26, 2018
- **Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance—
Project Implementation and Programmatic Closeout (E0214)** June 21–22, 2017
..... June 27–28, 2018
- **Fundamentals of Building Science (E0312)** September 25–28, 2017;
..... September 24–27, 2018

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Training Opportunities (cont.)

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 E0194, E0273, E0278, E0282, E0284, or E0386 (up to 25 points). Graduating from E0279 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 (E0278). 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 welcome page of the [EMI website](#) for specific details. The application to attend can be found at this page on the [EMI website](#), 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

The CRS conducts the field-deployed CRS course (L0278, the same as EMI's E0278) throughout the year, depending on funding availability. 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 the [CRS Resources website](#)). ≡ ≡ ≡

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.

To become a subscriber or to suggest a topic that you would like addressed, contact

NFIP/CRS Update
P.O. Box 501016
Indianapolis, IN 46250-1016
(317) 848-2898 fax: (201) 748-1936 NFIPCRS@iso.com

You can also sign up for the newsletter at the [CRS Resources website](#).