Region 4
Annual Status Report

DEL SCHWALLS, P.E., CFM – ASFPM REGION 4 DIRECTOR
Introduction

ASFPM Region 4 includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. All but Kentucky and Tennessee have both coastal and inland flood hazards. Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and North Carolina have Enhanced State Mitigation Plans, providing additional Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding after a federal disaster declaration. Almost 30% of all ASFPM members and over 2,400 CFMs reside in Region 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certified Floodplain Managers in Region 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL - 133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report provides a snapshot of some of the floodplain management activities within Region 4, and is intended to be used as a resource by ASFPM members, federal and state agencies, local governments, and other flood-related stakeholders in the Region. This report would not be possible without the invaluable input and contributions from the following floodplain and emergency management professionals.

Conn Cole, CFM | State Floodplain Manager, FL Division of Emergency Management
Kristabel Moore, CFM | Deputy State Floodplain Manager, FL Division of Emergency Management
Haydn Blaize | Program Manager, GA Department of Natural Resources
Jack Krolikowski, CFM | Deputy Manager, GA Emergency Management Agency
Geni Jo Brawner | State Hazard Mitigation Officer, KY Emergency Management
Alex J. VanPelt | State Floodplain Coordinator, KY Division of Water
Steve Garrett, CFM | State NFIP Coordinator, NC Department of Public Safety
Amy J. Miller, CFM | State NFIP Coordinator, TN Emergency Management Agency
Doug Worden | State Hazard Mitigation Manager, TN Emergency Management Agency
Tara Coggins, CFM | ASFPM Chap. District 3 Director | Floodplain Administrator, Lamar County, MS
Del Schwalls, PE, CFM | ASFPM Region 4 Director | President, Schwalls Consulting LLC

It should also be noted that there are eight ASFPM Chapters in Region 4, and while their accomplishments are not presented in this report, these chapters are vital partners in floodplain management and hazard mitigation in the Region.

Alabama Association of Floodplain Managers – AAFM
Florida Floodplain Managers Association – FFMA
Georgia Association of Floodplain Management – GAFM
Kentucky Association of Mitigation Managers – KAMM
Association of Floodplain Managers of Mississippi – AFMM
North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers – NCAFPM
South Carolina Association for Hazard Mitigation – SCAHM
Tennessee Association of Floodplain Management – TN AFPM
Stacey Ricks, CFM | State NFIP Coordinator, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency

In addition, it is with a very heavy heart that I say goodbye to our friend Stacey Ricks, State NFIP Coordinator with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Stacey started with MEMA in 2006, earning his CFM later that year, and became the State NFIP Coordinator in 2011.

In our industry, Stacey was one of the best. He trained State Coordinators, local elected officials, Congressional staff, floodplain managers, and a host of others on the rules, regulations, and policies of the NFIP. His expertise led Mississippi to be deemed an Advanced First Tiered State by FEMA, and in 2020 he received the Best State Compliance Officer Award from the NFIP. As a member of ASFPM, Stacey was currently serving as Co-Chair of the Floodplain Regulations Committee and previously served as Secretary of the ASFPM Board of Directors. And as I write this report, he is currently our ASFPM Chair-Elect, having won the 2022 election for ASFPM Chair.

To say Stacey was full of smiles and laughter is an understatement. For those of us who had the privilege of knowing him, he was a bright spot in the world and a very good friend. He loved everyone and always lived life to the fullest! There was never a dull moment with Stacey around, and his humor was contagious. He always had a way of seeing the brighter side of things and making people feel at ease.

When it came to business, Stacey was right there for anything you needed. His servant’s heart was always in full effect, and it took him next door and across the country to help those colleagues in need. He was passionate about the work we do in floodplain management and the citizens he served. Actually, one of my earliest memories of Stacey was arguing over floodplain management policies one evening at the ASFPM 2015 National Conference in Atlanta – I believe he won, LOL.

He was always seeking ways to improve our process and programs, and challenging those around him to raise the bar for the betterment of all.

I still can’t imagine ASFPM 2022 without his smiles and his Mississippi State apparel filling the halls. You will be sorely missed my friend, but your legacy of service and friendship will endure.

— Del Schwalls
Key Accomplishments

Florida

- 1,408 requests for General Technical Assistance completed
- 108 CAVs conducted in the panhandle and east coast regional areas
- 90 approved ordinances adopted by communities, including CRS communities scheduled to Cycle, with intentions of meeting the 2021 Class 8 Prerequisite
- Website overhaul, along with new and updated guidance
- Gained 7 team members in the State Office
- Rebranding: Florida Division of Emergency Management’s Office of Floodplain Management (OFM)

Georgia

- Managed three open disasters and annual grant applications
- Issued Letters of Final Determination in 16 communities
- Completed Base Level Engineering (BLE) Studies in 6 HUC-8 watersheds and posted results on Georgia DNR’s BLE Viewer and Dashboard
- Delivered in person training “Managing Floodplain Development in Georgia” to 35 local floodplain administrators throughout the State, hosted by the city of Byron from March 15-18, 2022
- Continued to host a Public Virtual Open House experience that mirrored the informational stations and flow of a traditional in-person open house, attracting over 3,500 visits and one-on-one appointments with property owners in the Upper Oconee and Withlacoochee/Little River watersheds

Kentucky

- In July/Aug 2021, KY Emergency Management partnered with KAMM to conduct a series of four Nature Based Solutions trainings in partnership with the EPA, the Nature Conservancy, KY Energy and Environment Cabinet, and the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration

North Carolina

- Through coordination with the FEMA Region IV Regional Grants Team, it was determined that the CAP-SSSE grants for FY 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 were still open; NC successfully closed all five of these CAP-SSSE grants, and plans to close the FY 2020 grant soon to get caught up
- Held the first L-273 course since February 2020

Tennessee

- Responding to and recovering from over ten disaster declarations in two years, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic – great teamwork by all groups!
- Closed all but one of the old Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants, with PDM2019 still open
In the process of closing all old Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants, with most pre-2019 grants completed or officially closed

Monthly webinars on NFIP topics, averaging 60 attendees per session, with videos provided on the TN AFPM YouTube channel for future reference

Certified Floodplain Surveyor course held in March 2022: 14 out of 22 surveyors passed the two-part examination

Challenges

Florida
- Staffing limitations, which led to the other challenges listed below
- Closing CAVs
- Reverting back to virtual meetings during COVID spikes, resulting in lower engagement and participation than historic numbers
- Patterns of procedural concerns with communities: record retention, non-structural development, SI/SD

Georgia
- Slow review times on FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants
- Inaccessibility of NFIP policy and claims data
- Offering a combination of virtual and in-house options for interventions, such as CAVs, PDCC meetings, and Open Houses, to facilitate stakeholders who have not yet returned to full normalcy following the COVID-19 outbreak
- Responding satisfactorily to queries related to Risk Rating 2.0, particularly from property owners who previously had preferred risk policies and are now seeing increased premiums

Kentucky
- Numerous disasters in the last few years, including December 2021 tornadoes

North Carolina
- Adjusting to CAP-SSSE transformation and administrative changes
- Shifted to a more permanent teleworking schedule, that provides flexibility which benefits morale, but also presents challenges with staff collaboration

Tennessee
- Loss of organizational knowledge through high number of retiring or departing experienced staff, and training new staff
- Extremely understaffed, with only 1 designated person to accomplish general technical assistance for all NFIP participating communities
- Due to the numerous disaster declarations, all Recovery programs are overloaded, while already running the programs with very small staffing, likely the smallest in the region, with
an HMA program being run by only 4 grant staff, and only 4 staff performing all program planning

- Extremely busy Public Assistance program, in that the Recovery Division and PA staff are juggling numerous regular disaster declarations, while adding COVID-19 disaster projects to the workload
- The lack of education and training on the NFIP of elected officials, insurance agents, surveyors, engineers, and real estate agents, for the various compliance components of each respective profession
- Communities are not fulfilling their Substantial Damage determination responsibilities after a disaster with documentation and outreach

**Priorities**

**Florida**

- Prioritizing CAV closures, working with communities to implement internal policies/procedures to cut down on unintentional non-compliance from staff turnover
- Special projects such as new guidance, updating State products (Quick Guide, Post-Disaster Toolkit, Performance Measures), accessible training options (on-demand, virtual)
- Bridging the gaps between Emergency Management and Floodplain Management, Building Officials and Floodplain Administrators
- Re-engaging with communities on CAV closures

**Georgia**

- Begin update to State Hazard Mitigation Strategy
- Continue to advance ongoing Flood Risk Mapping Assessment and Planning projects through to post preliminary processing in 7 HUC-8 watersheds
- Host Resilience Meetings (virtual and in-person) and work with approximately 40 communities to have compliant ordinances when new FIRMs are scheduled to become effective in 2022
- Continue BLE studies in 20 HUC-8 watersheds and host BLE workshops for community officials
- Coordinate with FEMA and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) to host in-person L-273 training in Kingsland

**Kentucky**

- Focused on the response to the December 2021 tornadoes
- Working on submitting mitigation grants from the last years’ worth of disasters
- Updating state regulations (401 KAR 4:060) to include some higher regulatory standards in FY 2022; will likely require ordinance updates for all 350+ communities in the Commonwealth to comply with new state requirements
North Carolina

- Develop a strategic plan for NFIP Program to establish goals and priorities

Tennessee

- Achieving “Enhanced” status for the State Mitigation Plan, during renewal process in late 2023
- Identifying ways to streamline and simplify the grant application and review process, due to prevalence of remote working
- Updating the website, including implementing the newly purchased Civics EM Grants system (database) for many of the Grant programs
- Significantly updated the Mitigation Grant and Planning website to provide more grant information for all users, and streamline the processes, especially the grant application process for local governments going forward
- Closing open CAVs, including 45 that need to be closed with various levels of violations
- 5-year NFIP plan to coordinate CAVs, CACs, and trainings to encompass all 402 communities
- Rewriting the statewide model flood damage prevention regulations
- Meeting regularly with FEMA Region IV representatives to work on outstanding CAV issues and meet with communities
- Requesting discretionary funds for a contractual engineer to review stream encroachments
- Requesting a grant for the 5-year NFIP plan for coordinating education and outreach

Recommended Actions

Florida

- Outreach to Emergency Management officials
- Trainings on post-disaster responsibilities
- Continue ASFPFM’s engagement with federal legislation, outreach, and navigating NFIP programmatic changes, and funneling info to the states

Georgia

- Continued advocacy for improvement to/for Information Sharing Access Agreements
- Visibility on the development of the Safeguarding Tomorrow through On-going Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act developments
- Continue efforts to integrate virtual training options to complement traditional in-person trainings
- Supporting continued outreach by FEMA & State to insurance agencies, as agents throughout the State are still requiring elevation certificates from prospective home buyers, even though this is not mandatory under Risk Rating 2.0

Kentucky

- ASFPFM to update their “Guide for Higher Standards in Floodplain Management” with revised examples of ordinance language from the past 10 years
North Carolina

- Support coordination and partnerships between NC, the National Society of Professional Surveyors, and other states to expand the Certified Floodplain Surveyor (CFS) into a nationally trademarked training/certification program, in order to provide floodplain-management-focused training to land surveyors.

Tennessee

- Continue to push for expanded state capacity for floodplain management programs, as each state needs more than 1 designated person to accomplish general technical assistance for NFIP participating communities.
- Until state capacity for floodplain management is expanded, facilitate support for understaffed state floodplain management programs, including Tennessee’s.
- Targeted outreach, developed by ASFPM, to governors and elected officials on NFIP minimum standards, Risk Rating 2.0, and impacts of potential violations.
- ASFPM initiative for state legislation requiring a minimum amount (e.g., 10%) of floodplain administrators in each state to be CFMs, or mandatory floodplain management training through legislation, including documented standards of practice to increase accountability.