Region IV
Annual Status Report

DARYLE L FONTENOT, PE, CFM, REGION IV DIRECTOR
Introduction

This Region IV Annual Report has been developed by soliciting information from the State NFIP Coordinators and State Hazard Mitigation officers for the eight states in FEMA Region IV (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee). This report will highlight the success and challenges from each state for the past year. Also, each state has been asked to provide areas where ASPFM can possibly aid and guidance along with help locating resources that could assist in getting needs addressed.

This report will outline by individual states the success, challenges documented from each state along with identifying areas where ASPFM can help.

Alabama

Key Accomplishments

- Delivered in-person training for FEMA’s L-273 Class “Managing Floodplain Development Through the NFIP” to 22 local floodplain administrators from throughout the State, in Montgomery in January 2024.
- Delivered three (3) Elevation Certificate Workshops to over 100 participants in three cities around the State.
- Delivered two (2) 1-day Substantial Damage Estimator (SDE) Workshops utilizing FEMA Region 4’s SDE instructor to 43 participants at one location in Spanish Fort and one in Birmingham.
- Assessed and validated at the Proficient Tier under the FEMA Community Assistance Program State Support Service Element (CAP-SSSE) Tiered State Framework (TSF) as a result of conducting an Off-Cycle TSF assessment.
- Coordinated with multiple agencies and the Governor’s Office to develop a framework and executive order to establish a State Property Floodplain Management Program for the State.
- Working with the new Floodplain Administrator for State Property to assist in a statewide facility assessment for NFIP compliance of existing floodplain development on State owned and managed properties. OWR provided GIS mapping and a database of existing buildings located in the 100-year floodplain to use for the assessment.
- Finalized an update of the State Model Floodplain Development Ordinances for NFIP communities located in non-coastal riverine areas and in coastal areas as directed by and coordinated with FEMA to develop. A Guidebook was developed to assist the local officials with understanding how to implement new provisions included in the ordinance.
- Continued coordination and collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Mobile and Nashville Districts to build a framework for the newly reconstituted Alabama Silver Jackets Team and to identify viable flood risk reduction projects to undertake.
- Coordinated with the USACE Nashville District to disseminate information to 30 communities located in North Alabama regarding availability of funding for projects from Section 206 of the 1960 Flood Control Act (PL 86-645), as amended.
Coordinated with the USACE Mobile District to disseminate information and meet with communities regarding availability of funding from the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2020 Section 165 for small and disadvantaged communities.

Issued Community Self-Assessment Surveys to 40 communities as a screening tool to determine compliance issues with local NFIP programs and the need for a more in-depth program evaluation or for assistance and training. Also, following up on 65 previous self-assessments.

Restarted the Floodplain Management Lunch and Learn Webinars that are conducted monthly and provide targeted training to assist local floodplain administrators in performing their duties.

Worked on development of a workshop for Floodplain Management Strategies for Rural and Under-served Communities that will be delivered at three (3) different trainings in May and June.

The Alabama Floodplain Management Program staff fully support and are involved with the Alabama Association of Floodplain Managers as members of the Board of Directors and by providing technical presentations at the annual workshops (2) and conference.

Alabama’s Risk MAP Coordinator selected along with 14 other State CTP representatives to participate in FEMA’s Cooperating Technical Partner Symposium in Arlington, VA.

New FIRMs became effective for eight (8) communities in three (3) counties in the Lower Coosa watershed. Floodplain Management Program staff worked with community FPAs to ensure that all participating NFIP communities had compliant floodplain development ordinances by the FIRM Effective Date.

Issued Letters of Final Determination (LFD) for three (3) communities from two (2) counties in the Lower Tallapoosa watershed. The remaining eighteen (18) communities from eight (8) counties in the Lower Tallapoosa watershed will have LFDs issued in late 2024 to early 2025.

There are currently five (5) watershed studies with Preliminary Maps at some stage of the post-preliminary process for over 80 communities in 27 counties in the Pickwick Lake, Guntersville Lake, Upper Black Warrior, Lower Coosa, and Lower Tallapoosa watersheds.

Completed Base Level Engineering (BLE) Studies in ten (10) HUC8 watersheds that included 9,800 stream miles and posted results on Alabamaflood.com mapping website.

There are currently BLE studies ongoing on more than 12,850 stream miles in twenty (20) watersheds with over 2,300 stream miles in three (3) watersheds planned for FY2024 funding.

Discovery Meetings have been planned for three (3) new watersheds that will utilize a new, innovative Discovery Meeting process to improve community engagement.

Alabama’s Floodplain Management Program providing oversight to a Safe Dams Pilot Project that was funded through appropriations from the Alabama Legislature. The Pilot includes work in three (3) counties to conduct selected dam surveys, a dam breach inundation zone mapping, development of an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) template specific to Alabama, EAPs for three (3) dams, and a statewide dam inventory update.

Challenges

- Completing the administrative work required to satisfy the reporting and data requirements of the Community Assistance Program State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE).
- Preparing the detailed documentation required for submitting grant applications and the quarterly reports for the CAP-SSSE grant.
- Identifying and hiring additional qualified staff needed to take on the new responsibilities to meet the TSF performance measures to stay at the Provisional Tier level.
**Priorities**

- Continue to advance ongoing Flood Risk Mapping Assessment and Planning projects through to post preliminary processing in the current watershed studies and develop innovative ways to engage more communities in the Risk MAP process.
- Continue to advance the BLE studies in the existing watersheds and deliver the results to the Alabama Flood Risk Map website to be used by local officials for approximate BFEs in permitting.
- Continue to develop training opportunities for local floodplain administrators with development of new workshops and guidance materials and by coordinating with FEMA and other agencies to offer classes/workshops.
- Work with the USACE, FEMA, and other federal agencies to prepare guidance materials and targeted training to help NFIP communities prepare for flood risk reduction/mitigation projects. Also, plan to assist NFIP communities by conducting flood risk vulnerability assessments and providing other mitigation tools to assist them with the flood mitigation grant application process.

**Assistance Needed from ASFPM**

- Work with FEMA to address the reduction in flood insurance policies (30% reduction in Alabama since 2020) and develop an outreach campaign to help reverse the trend.
- Work with FEMA and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) to update the three Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts to help local floodplain administrators increase in their knowledge and understanding of floodplain management concepts.

**Georgia**

**Key Accomplishments**

No information was provided by the State of Georgia in time to be included in this report.

**Florida**

**Key Accomplishments**

FDEM finished their first cycle of CAVS for all 468 NFIP communities and is working on closing up reports for a few of those. Hurricane Idalia put blue sky work on pause while we helped the affected communities, but we are now focusing on more trainings and admin plans to help the local FPAs!
Kentucky

Key Accomplishments
For KYEM, they are continuing to work on their expedited acquisitions from the July 2022 flooding, DR4663, as well as the other 15 disasters.

Mississippi

Key Accomplishments
Mississippi continues to assist local floodplain managers in the state by providing technical assistance, community assistance visits and community assistance contacts. The state maintained its Advance State status based on the Tiered State Framework. New floodplain management staff have been hired and are being trained to work in various areas of the State.

The Mississippi State Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved for the next five years. Mitigation Planning staff are working on updating two jurisdictional plans for review and approval.

There are 17 open disasters the Mitigation Grants Specialist are working. These projects include saferooms, drainage projects, acquisition projects, elevation projects, and individual saferoom projects. We are working to close two disasters this fiscal year.

North Carolina

Key Accomplishments
North Carolina updated the Uniform Floodplain Management Policy for state-owned properties. The previous version dates back to July 1990. The new policy should reduce the exposure of state-owned properties to flood risk in the future.

North Carolina updates Uniform Floodplain Management Policy for state-owned properties.

Executive Order 266 directed NC Department of Administration, in consultation with NCDEQ, NCDOT, NCEM, NCORR, etc. to update the Uniform Floodplain Management Policy (E.O. 123, 1990) for state-owned properties.

- Establish processes and criteria for determining whether a proposed state construction project is subject to the Policy;
- Establish a process for determining whether construction is proposed in a floodplain or other area with flood risk, including coastal or inland flood risk, and the degree of risk presented;
- Implement measures to reduce construction in a floodplain to the greatest extent feasible;
- Set reasonably protective and cost-effective flood resilience standards for proposed construction within and outside of a floodplain, based upon flood risk over the lifetime of the construction; and
- Provide standards, options, and considerations for including nature-based infrastructure to reduce flood risk.
Highlights

• No new development or substantial improvement is permitted within the floodplain except as follows:
  • All development within the Minimal Flood Hazard Area.
  • The development of buildings and structures within the Special Flood Hazard Area or Moderate Flood Hazard Area that are Functionally Dependent Facilities. This includes appurtenances and infrastructure servicing such facilities.
  • Site development within the Special Flood Hazard Area or Moderate Flood Hazard Area that provides either recreational or scenic access to water bodies or shoreline areas, or that needs to be within a flood zone for its purpose, such as site development that provides a flood mitigation benefit.
  • The development of agricultural structures.
  • Development in the Special Flood Hazard Area or Moderate Flood Hazard Area that is approved by the Floodplain Development Waiver Committee.

• A Floodplain Development Permit shall be required in conformance with the provisions of this Policy prior to the commencement of any development activities within the following areas:
  • Special Flood Hazard Areas determined in accordance with the provisions of Article 3, Section B of this Policy.
  • Moderate Flood Hazard Areas determined in accordance with the provisions of Article 3, Section B of this Policy.
  • Minimal Flood Hazard Areas determined in accordance with the provisions of Article 3, Section B of this Policy when any of the following conditions apply:
    • The proposed development activity is located on a site known to flood. Flooding in the Minimal Flood Hazard Area may be from any source and is not limited to riverine or coastal flooding.
    • The proposed development activity is a structure located within the Sea Level Rise Inundation Area.
    • The estimated total project cost exceeds 25 million dollars.

“Regulatory Flood Protection Elevation” means:

• In “Special Flood Hazard Areas” where Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) have been determined, this elevation shall be the BFE plus:
  • Two (2) feet freeboard in non-coastal counties.
  • Four (4) feet freeboard in coastal counties.
  • Eight (8) feet freeboard in coastal counties where development activity is also located in the sea level rise inundation area.

• In “Special Flood Hazard Areas” where no BFE has been established, this elevation shall be at least:
  • Two (2) feet above the highest adjacent grade in non-coastal counties.
  • Four (4) feet above the highest adjacent grade in coastal counties

• In “Moderate Flood Hazard Areas” where 500-year Flood Elevations have been determined, this elevation shall be the least stringent of the following:
  • Two (2) feet above the highest adjacent BFE
  • The 500-year Flood Elevation.
• In “Moderate Flood Hazard Areas” where no 500-year Flood Elevation has been established, this elevation shall be the least stringent of the following:
  • Two (2) feet above the highest adjacent BFE.
  • Two (2) feet above the highest adjacent grade.
• In “Minimal Flood Hazard Areas”, this elevation shall be:
  • One (1) foot above the high-water mark when the proposed development activity is located on a site known to flood. Flooding in the Minimal Flood Hazard Area may be from any source and is not limited to riverine or coastal flooding.
  • One (1) foot above the theoretical high-water line when in the Sea Level Rise Inundation Area.

Final Policy issued January 25, 2024
• NC DOA, SCO has established a transition period, through February 1, 2025, during which both policies can be used.
• https://ncadmin.nc.gov/divisions/state-construction-office

South Carolina

Key Accomplishments

SCDNR Flood mitigation Program were able to accomplish the following:
• Improvements to the SC Flood IMPACT website.
  o Addition of the Mitigation Planning Tool where information regarding our inundation library and demographic information for local government access.
  o Additional funding has been secured to add additional resources.
• Maintained Advanced Floodplain Management State status.
• Received funding to purchase a Mobile Outreach Unit to allow us to bring our resources directly to the local communities. This should allow for the Flood Mitigation Program to address some of the communities’ hurdles to attending training, meetings and getting the word out to the citizens.
• The last county-wide map went effective.
• Nine watershed studies are underway.

SCEMD successfully completed the 2023 South Carolina State Hazard Mitigation Plan in August. In addition, Mitigation closed legacy PDM grants, received awards for BRIC FY2021, BRIC FY2022, and several HMGP Grants. Last year, the mitigation team submitted 25 applications for HMGP 4677 Hurricane Ian and submitted 25 applications for BRIC FY2023. In conjunction with local, state, and federal partners, conducted several workshops and courses geared toward hazard mitigation planning and management. SCEMD spearheaded the creation of the South Carolina Mitigation Partnership Program focusing on providing local communities with expertise by partnering with local, state, federal, and non-government entities.
Tennessee

Key Accomplishments

The State of Tennessee lost their NFIP Coordinator Amy Miller in October 2023) and have appointed Jeremy Holley as the new NFIP Coordinator for the state.

No information was provided by the State of Tennessee in time to be included in this report.