Mapping and Engineering Standards Committee

2026 ANNUAL STATUS REPORT

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Introduction

The primary mission of the Mapping and Engineering Standards Committee is to provide policy guidance and support for floodplain mapping and engineering issues aiming to reduce future losses, costs and human suffering caused by flooding. Historically, this committee has had major impacts on FEMA's Flood Mapping Program, requirements for map modernization, Risk MAP and the National Flood Mapping Program, and addressing technical issues related to flood hazards such as levees and dams.

A subcommittee of Mapping and Engineering Standards focuses on the Cooperating Technical Partner program. This subcommittee is co-chaired by Joanna Rohlf with the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Manuel Razo with the Texas Water Development Board. The goal is to help identify mechanisms to measure successes and share best practices among mapping partners.

Key Accomplishments

The Mapping and Engineering Standards (M&ES) Committee continued to support the National Flood Mapping Program during a year of transition and uncertainty for FEMA and the broader federal flood mapping program. Several long-standing coordination forums, including FEMA Operating Partners meetings and the Technical Mapping Advisory Council, were not convened in 2025, and FEMA did not issue an annual update to the *Guidelines and Standards*. These changes limited some of the traditional avenues for technical collaboration between FEMA and external partners.

In response, the M&ES Committee focused on maintaining communication and technical coordination across the flood mapping community, particularly among Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs) and other practitioners involved in FEMA's mapping program.

The CTP subcommittee facilitated the exchange of information through the following webinars:

- Future Conditions Flood Mapping 2025 Update – January 7, 2025
- HEC-RAS 2025 – June 3, 2025
- Hydrology – Learning the Basics – August 27, 2025
- National Weather Service Flood Inundation Mapping – November 20, 2025
- A Perspective from Several CTPs – February 18, 2026

Recordings of past CTP webinars are available online through the Flood Science Center Archived Events.

In late 2025, the committee also began expanding opportunities for peer exchange among Cooperating Technical Partners through the launch of regular CTP conversations focused on emerging technical and programmatic challenges. These discussions will continue in 2026.

In addition, the committee began laying the groundwork for re-establishing the Flood Mapping Coalition, a multi-stakeholder group that brings together local governments, water resource agencies, GIS professionals, insurers, lenders, and other partners to advocate for sustained federal investment in flood mapping. Initial outreach and coalition-building efforts began in 2025, with the coalition formally restarting in 2026.

Challenges

- Cancellation of TMAC and FEMA Operating Partners meetings has significantly reduced opportunities for technical collaboration, stakeholder feedback, and coordinated problem-solving with FEMA Headquarters.
- Significant delays in reimbursements have caused many CTPs to stop work resulting in delays in critical map updates.
- No FY25 Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) grants were awarded, creating uncertainty for communities and mapping partners that rely on these funds to support flood mapping activities. The absence of this funding has stalled the initiation of new mapping projects and, in some cases, has affected staffing capacity at CTP organizations, including reductions in staff dedicated to flood mapping work.
- Uncertainty surrounding federal funding programs and timelines has made it difficult for communities and mapping partners to plan, prioritize, and commit resources for future flood mapping projects.
- Staff turnover across federal, state, and local agencies has contributed to the loss of institutional knowledge, inconsistent interpretation of program requirements, and reduced capacity within the flood mapping community.
- Reduced external communication from FEMA and fewer federal staff participating in technical meetings and conferences have limited opportunities for information sharing and coordination across the program.
- Limited updates on FEMA's Future of Flood Risk Data (FFRD) initiative have made it difficult for mapping partners to understand the long-term direction of the

National Flood Mapping Program and prepare for potential programmatic changes.

- The proliferation of flood hazard information developed by non-FEMA sources, including other federal agencies and the private sector, continue to expand the choices available to end users but also contribute to confusion about the appropriate source of data for specific applications. Paywalls and proprietary systems raise concerns about data governance and data equity for all communities and agency users. This phenomenon is increasing as new capabilities in flood modeling and mapping are being realized through technological improvements like generative artificial intelligence.

Priorities

- Advocate for sustained and increased federal investment in the National Flood Mapping Program. Reliable flood risk data is essential for community resilience, and the committee will support efforts to communicate the value of flood mapping to federal decision-makers.
- Support the Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) community. Provide opportunities for peer collaboration, information sharing, and technical coordination among CTPs navigating funding uncertainty and program changes.
- Strengthen coordination across the broader flood mapping community. Encourage collaboration among local governments, state agencies, water resource organizations, and technical professionals involved in flood mapping.
- Provide technical leadership on emerging flood mapping practices. Continue advancing discussion on technical issues such as generative artificial intelligence, 2D floodways, and evolving floodway concepts that may inform future standards and best practices.
- Monitor and provide input on the evolution of FEMA's flood risk data initiatives, including the Future of Flood Risk Data (FFRD), when opportunities for engagement arise.

Recommended Actions

- Support flood mapping funding advocacy efforts. Coordinate with ASFPM leadership and partners to support the reestablishment of the Flood Mapping Coalition and communicate the importance of sustained federal funding for flood mapping.

- Facilitate regular engagement among CTPs. Organize and host periodic conversations and outreach with the CTP subcommittee and broader CTP community to discuss technical challenges, program changes, and lessons learned.
- Develop and host webinars on topics relevant to CTPs and flood mapping practitioners to support information exchange and capacity building across the community.
- Monitor federal policy and program developments related to flood mapping, including appropriations, FEMA policy changes, and updates related to flood risk data initiatives. Coordinate with other ASFPM committees to provide technical input when appropriate.
- Plan and facilitate committee activities at the ASFPM annual conference, including the committee meeting, CTP subcommittee meeting, and related networking opportunities.
- Conduct regular committee coordination calls to track priorities, share updates, and advance committee initiatives.
- Maintain communication channels with committee members, including updates to the ASFPM committee webpage and other communication platforms.
- Maintain awareness of emergent flood modeling and mapping practices and products and share updates with committee members to foster discussion and advocacy for proper use and integration of the latest technology.