



Montana Department
of Natural Resources
and Conservation

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Serving Montana's Communities
Since 1974



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Sun River – photo by Mark Boesch

HIGHGROUND

December 2013

This newsletter and other state floodplain management activities are funded, in part, through grants from FEMA.

Who's Who in the Helena DNRC Floodplain Program?



From Left to Right standing: Aspen Bowler, Laurence Siroky, John Connors' Shadow, John Connors and Steve Story

From Left to Right kneeling: Bri Shipman, Traci Sears, Mary Guokas, Tiffany Lyden

Who Does What?

Laurence Siroky – Laurence oversees and supervises all the activities in the Floodplain Program as well as that of the Dam Safety Program and the Montana Board of Water Well Contractors. Steadfastly, he's been commandeering an updated state floodplain model ordinance. Official title: Water Operations Bureau Chief

Steve Story – Steve manages and supervises the engineering and mapping portions of the state's floodplain management program, including oversight with the state Regional Engineers and Regional Engineering Specialists in the State. Steve serves as the Unit Leader for the Floodplain Technical Group of the floodplain program. Official Title: State Floodplain Engineer

Traci Sears – Traci manages and supervises the National Flood

Insurance Program in the State of Montana and supervises training and outreach for floodplain management as the Community Unit Leader of the floodplain program. She is also the "go to" resource for local floodplain administrators and others with questions the NFIP in Montana. Official Title: NFIP Coordinator for the State of Montana

Bri Shipman – Bri coordinates and conducts floodplain training sessions across the state for local floodplain administrators, realtors and others. She coordinates activities with the Silver Jackets program and has written training modules. Official Title: Montana Floodplain Training Coordinator

Tiffany Lyden – Tiffany works diligently and part-time with the outreach efforts and ordinance update coordination with communities that are in the process of getting updated Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

continued...

continued from page 1 - Who's Who in the Helena DNRC Floodplain Program?

Official Title: Montana floodplain Ordinance Specialist

Mary Guokas – On a part-time basis Mary conducts outreach efforts across the state to the general public, youth and decision makers such as county officials across the state. She also works on the floodplain website and shares publications. Official Title: Floodplain Outreach Specialist

Aspen Bowler – Aspen keeps machines running, files in order, supplies ordered and smiles on the faces of all in the Water Operations Bureau: Dam Safety, Floodplains, Board of Water Well Contractors. Official Title: Administrative Assistant

John Connors – John covers a 9-county region in SW Montana, John is the Water Resources Regional Engineer in Helena. Like the other five RE/RE Specialists in the state, John works with DNRC dams and dam safety, water rights and floodplains. The other Regional Engineers across the state are Marvin Cross, Sam Johnson, Larry Schock and Sterling Sundeim. Marc Pitman doubles as a Regional Manager and Regional Engineer in Kalispell.

Changes in Local Floodplain Administrators

Carbon County

Brent Moore, with CTA completes floodplain management work for the county and can be reached at 406.896.6283 or brentm@ctagroup.com

Town of Ennis

Jonathan Weaver with Great West Engineering has been contracted by the town to conduct their floodplain management activities. Jonathan can be reached at 406.449.8627 or jweaver@greatwesteng.com

City of Helena

Jon Pallister is now working as the Chief Building Inspector with floodplain administrator duties. He may be reached at 447.8438 or jopallister@helenamt.gov. Congratulations go to Brandt Salo who retired this past year.

Town of Phillipsburg

Mayor-elect, Craig Sorenson will be serving as the new local Floodplain Administrator for the Town beginning in January, 2014. He can be contacted through the Town's office

at 406.859.3821. Our thanks to Anne Filmore who served the Town of Phillipsburg as mayor for a number of years. She was Mayor when a new RiskMAP project was initiated in Granite County.

Lake County

The county is in the process of hiring a new planning director. Joel Nelson left his position in early December to work in the private sector. LaDana Hintz is serving as the interim local floodplain administrator and can be reached at lhintz@lakemt.gov or 406.883.7235.

Montana Silver Jackets Annual Meeting Recap

By Bri Shipman, DNRC
Floodplain Training Coordinator



Silver Jackets information including committee membership, committee work plans, meeting summaries and additional resource material is available on the MT DNRC Floodplain Program website: http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/silver_jackets.asp

For more information about the Montana Silver Jackets, visit the website or contact the MT DNRC Floodplain Program, 406-444-0862 or bshipman@mt.gov

The Montana Silver Jackets Charter recently held their annual committee meetings in Helena, November 6th and 7th, 2013. The Silver Jackets is collaboration between USACE-Omaha and Seattle Districts, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and FEMA Region VIII. The Silver Jackets is an innovative program that provides an opportunity to consistently bring together multiple state, federal and sometimes tribal and local agencies to learn from one another and apply their knowledge to reduce flood risk. State agencies, including those of the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and State NFIP Coordinator, come together with the Federal family of agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in a common forum to address the state's flood risk management priorities.

The vision statement of the Montana Silver Jackets charter reads:

Charter members share a vision of strengthened partnerships whereby public and private organizations and individuals work together efficiently and effectively to manage and reduce flood risk and protect the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains in Montana.

The committee meetings served as an opportunity to highlight projects undertaken over the course of the last year, to identify future areas of focus and serve as a platform for existing committee members to discuss current efforts and strategies, including building team membership.

The Montana Silver Jackets team is comprised of three committees:

1. Planning, Mitigation and Outreach
2. Mapping
3. Regulatory and Permitting

The committee meetings were well attended and topics of discussion included:

- Overview of Montana and national Silver Jackets projects
- Education and outreach efforts including the Montana Flood Awareness Campaign
- Mitigation
- High Watermark Sign Initiative
- Floodplain management planning
- Higher resolution elevation data acquisition state-wide plan
- MT System Wide Improvement Framework community plan development progress
- Levee discussion – existing levee programs and issues; levee inventories; certification and inspection; additional funding and new provisions
- Draft model floodplain ordinance and review period
-and more



Nov. 6, 2013 Helena, Montana Participants of Silver Jacket Meeting, Mapping Committee

Standing (left to right): Dana Burns (City of Glendive Public Works), Jeff Ryan (MT DEQ), Mary Jo Gehmert (Dawson County DES Coordinator), Colleen Horihan (US Army Corps of Engineers-Omaha), Randy Behm (US Army Corps of Engineers-Omaha), Karen Newlon (Natural Heritage Program), Steve Story (MT DNRC), Gina Loss (National Weather Service), Traci Sears (MT DNRC), Lance Clampett (US Geological Survey), Bri Shipman (MT DNRC). **Sitting:** Adam Gartner (Dawson County Commissioner), Tiffany Lyden (MT DNRC), Kathy Chase (US Geological Survey), Lynda Saul (MT DEQ) and Mary Guokas (not pictured). Attendees to other Nov. 6/7 Committee Meetings of Silver Jackets not pictured: Kent Atwood (MT DES), Jim Darling (MT FWP), Beau Downing (MT FWP), Peter McCarthy (USGS) and Todd Tillinger (USACE).

Floodplain Mapping Update

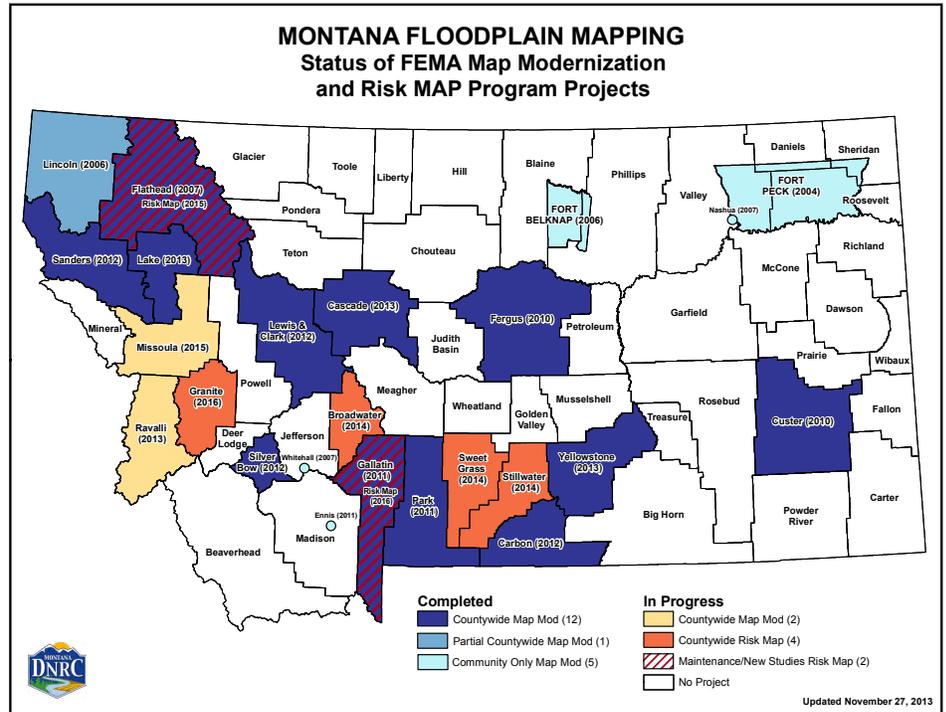
By Tiffany Lyden, DNRC
Floodplain Ordinance Specialist

Fall was a busy season for floodplain mapping efforts around Montana. Here's a brief overview.

Completed – Yellowstone County recently completed a multi-year Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) conversion project which converted their existing paper floodplain maps into digital format and incorporated new floodplain studies on portions of the Yellowstone River, Cove and Fivemile Creeks. Yellowstone County, the City of Billings and the City of Laurel all recently updated their floodplain regulations to incorporate the new maps and studies, which went into effect for regulatory and insurance purposes on November 6, 2013.

Almost Completed – DFIRM Conversion projects in Ravalli and Broadwater Counties are nearing completion. Both counties have completed their comment and appeal periods and are awaiting issuance of final DFIRM maps for their communities. Both projects involved conversion of existing paper maps to digital. For Ravalli County, new floodplain studies on portions of Eightmile and Threemile Creeks were also incorporated and existing floodplains were redelineated using updated topography (LiDAR). In Broadwater County, a new floodplain study on a portion of the Missouri River was incorporated. The two counties, along with the Town of Darby and the Cities of Hamilton and Townsend, will need to update their local floodplain regulations to incorporate the new maps and studies when they go into effect.

Preliminary Maps Being Reviewed – Preliminary DFIRM maps have been issued for Missoula County. The project involved conversion of existing paper maps to digital format, incorporation of some new floodplain studies and redelineation of existing floodplains with updated information and topography. Missoula



County and the City of Missoula are currently in the official comment and appeal period for their preliminary maps and new floodplain studies, until January 21st. The preliminary maps and studies will be revised as needed based on review of submitted comments and appeals before final maps and studies will be generated.

Getting Ready for Preliminary Maps – Three counties, Sweet Grass, Stillwater and Flathead, are just about ready to receive preliminary DFIRM maps. In Sweet Grass and Stillwater Counties, the mapping projects involved the conversion of existing paper maps to digital format along with a new floodplain study for the Yellowstone River. Flathead County's project involved new floodplain studies on portions of Ashley, Cow, Stillwater, Swan, Whitefish and West Spring Creeks and the incorporation of updated topography (LiDAR) to redelineate existing mapped floodplains. Updated DFIRM panels will be issued for affected map panels. Public meetings are being planned in all three counties in early 2014 to initiate and encourage public review,

in cooperation with their respective communities, including Big Timber, Columbus, Kalispell and Whitefish.

Studies Underway – Technical and engineering work is underway for a county-wide DFIRM conversion project for Granite County, involving conversion of their paper maps to digital along with new floodplain studies on Camp, Frost, Flint and Lower Willow Creeks. An updated floodplain study is underway in Gallatin County on Bozeman Creek and some of its tributaries to replace an outdated study.

What's Next – Our DNRC Floodplain Program staff continues to solicit funding from FEMA to get new floodplain mapping and studies completed in Montana. With limited federal funding we are looking at creative ways to stretch dollars and get projects funded in the future, including combinations of state dollars, local contributions, grants, partnerships and other sources to fund new floodplain studies and maps for stream reaches that local communities have identified as priority areas.

Floodplain Administrators (FPAs) and Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Professionals: Bridging Shared Responsibilities Between Different Professions



ASSOCIATION OF
Montana
FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS



DES Professionals

Disaster Emergency Services, or DES professionals stand ready in Montana to handle disasters or emergencies. All of Montana's 56 counties have designated a person to serve as the key contact whether they are termed the DES (Disaster and Emergency Services) Coordinator or the lead in the OEM (Office of Emergency Management). Additionally, there are seven Indian Nations DES Coordinators and six military coordinators. For the sake of standardization, this article will use DES but it includes all offices handling disasters regardless of the acronym. These folks typically bear many responsibilities, as most local DES Coordinators are ½ or even ¼ time with many other collateral duties. Typically, DES offices respond to all disasters, both man-made and natural, ranging from floods to hazardous material spills. Flooding is still the most common and most expensive type of disaster in the nation and the largest source of Federal Disaster Assistance in Montana.

Montana DES is the coordinating agency for many local DES offices and is housed with the Department of Military Affairs. There are also six District Representatives in the state that work with county DES offices in their jurisdictional area. To find out the DES coordinator in for your area, check out the MT DES Directory at this link: http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/disaster/mt_des_directory.pdf

Floodplain Administrators

Montana now has 134 NFIP participating counties, municipalities and tribes. There are about 143 local

floodplain administrators or floodplain managers in Montana - the terms are synonymous. A few communities have designated two people to serve in this challenging role. In smaller communities the local floodplain administrator may also be the DES Coordinator, Sanitarian, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Mayor, Director of Public Works, Planner, Road Supervisor and other position. Some Montana communities contract with a licensed professional engineer to conduct floodplain management duties. In the rural south central portion of the state, one planner serves as the floodplain administrator for three counties and two municipalities. In larger Montana communities such as Missoula County, the floodplain administrator has one position but many parcels of land and numerous and complicated permit applications to manage. Regardless, floodplain administrators serve important duties in challenging roles throughout the state of Montana.

Floodplain administrators work to lessen flooding hardships by managing and enforcing local floodplain regulations through the floodplain permitting process. They also handle floodplain outreach and training in their communities. Twelve local floodplain administrators manage their communities' involvement in a flood insurance discount program, which is known as FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). Along those lines, they also store and share community Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), conduct flood hazard outreach, research potential floodplain violations and serve as a listening ear and problem solver to the public. A list of Montana's Floodplain Administrators is here: http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/contacts/communities_floodplain_administrators.pdf

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continued from page 5 - FPAs and DES Professionals Shared Responsibilities

Working Together

Collaboration at the local level between DES and floodplain administrators takes many forms in the state. Floodplain Administrators may serve as the subject matter expert in the area of flood hazards during disaster preparedness planning and training. They share their knowledge of flood hazards from FIRMS, Flood Insurance Studies and local knowledge of their community. DES professionals may initiate and maintain a local hazard mitigation plan that may be used to gain points in FEMA's flood insurance discount program officially known as the Community Rating System (CRS). They also develop and maintain an inventory of critical facilities and their relation to flood hazard areas. An annual flood awareness day in East Helena for 6th graders involves Paul Spengler who is both DES Coordinator and Floodplain Administrator for Lewis and Clark County. The East Helena Volunteer Fire Department also participates.

It's easy to think of collaboration at the state level and think Kent Atwood. Kent Atwood is the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) and worked with over 70 sub grantee Counties, towns and Tribes to apply for over \$7.5 million of federal funds

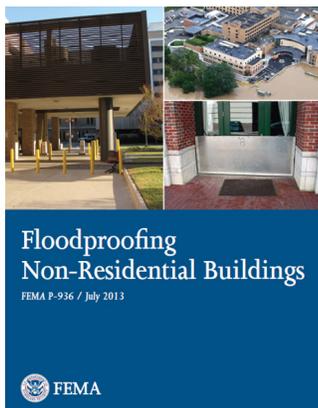
through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) after the 2011 Floods. Kent's also been a featured speaker at AMFM conferences for many years. He also visits and trains FPAs in Montana. The website, "Letsmitigatemontana.com" <http://letsmitigatemontana.com> showcases some of the mitigation work Kent and local jurisdictions have accomplished in the state.

Collaboration at the state level is occurring in a number of formats. The blossoming Silver Jackets program in Montana brings together many agencies including Montana DES and Montana Floodplain Program to work in support of each other to fight flooding risks and hazards.

Traci Sears, the State NFIP Coordinator has initiated flood hazard information presentations at the meeting of Montana's Association of DES Coordinators. She role models collaboration and encourages people to work together at local, state and national levels.

In Montana, Floodplain and DES professionals are bridging shared responsibilities to reduce flooding hazards and hardships for folks in Montana through outreach, training and collaboration.

NEW Publication from FEMA, Floodproofing



FEMA has produced a 2013 publication, *Floodproofing for Non-Residential Buildings*. It's not yet available in hardcopy, but you may check it out online at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/9a50c534fc5895799321dcdd4b6083e7/P-936_8-20-13_508r.pdf

Detailed information regarding wet and dry floodproofing is covered in this comprehensive document, including guidelines for floodproofing

historic structures and national policies for federal entities in floodplains. Municipalities can glean information on how to satisfy NFIP requirements by using building codes.

Disputing Flood Zones

Since questions frequently surface about disputing flood zones, a dated but accurate article that appeared in FEMA's eWatermark newsletter in September of 2012 can be accessed here: http://www.nfipiservice.com/watermark/Disputing_Flood.html



National Flood Insurance Program Reform (BW-12)



As parts of BW-12 are implemented and news stories surface regarding the difficulties of balancing premium rates with making the NFIP financially sound for the country as a whole, you may wonder where to turn for information. The fact remains that FEMA and Montana's Floodplain Management Program work within the existing parameters of the NFIP even while members of Congress are considering changes to BW-12. Changes won't occur until Congress takes action.

The Montana Floodplain program will continue to provide additional

information on BW-12, as it becomes available. If you wish to keep abreast of the issue in Congress, the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) website contains useful information and is found here: http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuID=651#BW-12_Implementation

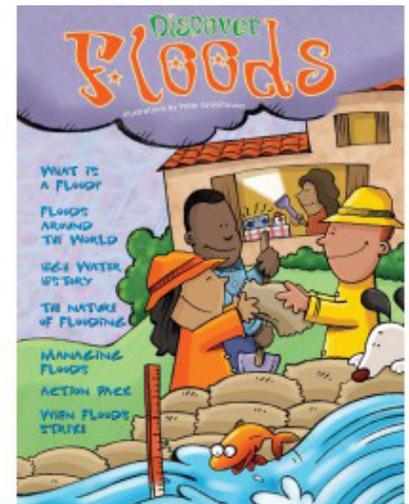
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/41ecfedd3b889396440c30d34b9b91ea/Agent_Quick_RefGuide_September_2013.pdf

<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/bw-12.jsp>

Conducting Outreach for Youth

Thank you, Yellowstone River Conservation District Council for donating 250 Project WET Discover the Yellowstone River Activity Booklets to the state floodplain program. The floodplain program will, in turn, happily distribute the booklets to interested communities on the Yellowstone River.

Project WET also produced a Discover Floods and Discover the Missouri River Activity booklets that are geared for kids up to about age 12. Booklets cost less than \$2/each and are available from the Project WET store at <http://store.projectwet.org>



Calendar



January 9, 2014 – Ice Jam Awareness Day in Montana

March 16-22, 2014 – Flood Safety Awareness Week

Sponsored by the National Weather Service and FEMA highlights areas of flood safety on a daily basis through web messaging. For information from FSA in 2013 visit <http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov>

March 24-27, 2014 • Billings – The Association of Montana Floodplain Managers (AMFM) will be hosting their 15th Annual Conference. For more information visit: <http://www.mtfloods.org>

April 8-10, 2014 • Billings – Montana Storm Water Conference

Visit Montana Watercourse for more info: <http://mtwatercourse.org/home/page.php?pageID=46>

April 29, 2014 • Miles City – Flood Awareness Day

To get involved contact Sam Malenovsky with the City of Miles City at 406.234.3493 smalenovsky@milescity-mt.org

April 30, 2014 • Glendive – Flood Awareness Day for Dawson County. To get involved contact Dana Burns, with the City of Glendive at 406.377.3318 ext. 16 or burnsd@midrivers.com or Mary Guokas at 406.444.1343 or mguokas@mt.gov

May 1, 2014 • Glendive – Eastern Montana Task Force Meeting

July 21-25, 2014 • Helena – Montana Floodplain Resource Seminar

For more information contact, Bri Shipman at 406.444.1300 or bshipman@mt.gov

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Persons with disabilities who need an alternative accessible format of this document should contact DNRC public information officer at 406-444-0465.

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