

Montana HIGHGROUND Newsletter

AUGUST 2016

SAVE the DATE
AMFM
Annual Conference
March 7-9 2017
Missoula, MT

BIG HOLE RIVER

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING PROJECTS TO BEGIN IN BEAVERHEAD AND MINERAL COUNTIES

by **Michelle Phillips**
MT DNRC Floodplain Program

DNRC is pleased to announce that, along with its Program Management and Community Engagement and Risk Communication grant funding, FEMA has awarded the State Floodplain Program funding for two project grants for FFY 2016—Beaverhead Countywide Floodplain Map Project (Phase II) and Mineral County Floodplain Map Modernization Project (Phase I).

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Beaverhead Countywide Floodplain Map Modernization Project

In June 2015, the DNRC Floodplain Program received formal requests for assistance, including cash matches, from the City of Dillon and Beaverhead County for new flood risk mapping along the Beaverhead River and Blacktail Deer Creek. Based on interest and commitments from the City of Dillon and Beaverhead County, Montana DNRC reached out to FEMA to discuss opportunities to complete the new floodplain studies using a phased approach.

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The Highground Newsletter is a publication of the Association of Montana Floodplain Managers and the Montana DNRC Floodplain Program.

This newsletter & other DNRC Floodplain Program activities are funded, in part, through grants from FEMA.



Phase II of the Beaverhead Countywide Modernization Project will incorporate 131 miles of Existing Data Studies on the Big Hole

Beaverhead Countywide Floodplain Map Modernization Project (cont.)

Last year, DNRC developed a work plan to collaboratively fund a LiDAR collection project during Phase I, covering 58.8 square miles. The LiDAR collection area encompasses 41 miles of the Beaverhead River and 11 miles of Blacktail Deer Creek, along with multiple splits and sloughs that are currently mapped as approximate. DNRC selected Quantum Spatial to collect LiDAR for Phase I of the Beaverhead project; the task was completed this past June.

FEMA recently awarded DNRC with FFY 2016 FEMA grant funding to complete Phase II and fully modernize Beaverhead County floodplain maps. Phase II tasks will include Hydrology, Hydraulics, and Floodplain Mapping, along with needed survey data and additional LiDAR in Lima, MT. Phase II will also incorporate 131 miles of Existing Data Studies on the Big Hole River, which is currently unmapped on Beaverhead County's effective FIRMs.

Mineral County Floodplain Map Modernization Project

Although it was scoped for a digitalization project in 2008, Mineral County never went through a Digital FIRM conversion and still has paper floodplain maps. In addition, the effective mapping in Mineral County is comprised of 1982 Flood Hazard Boundary Maps that were converted to FIRMs by letter in 1996. The mapping is outdated and all of it is approximate mapping, making it difficult to administer.

With support from the county, Montana DNRC therefore submitted a project grant requesting FEMA funding to complete a phased approach to modernize Mineral County's floodplain maps. FEMA awarded substantial funding towards this project grant for FY 2016. Phase I will include a watershed-scale hydrology study for the Clark Fork River through four counties (allowing for multiple floodplain study segments to be completed in the future). Phase I will also include additional hydrology, collection of LiDAR, and field survey work within Mineral County.

In the long term, Montana DNRC sees this project as the first step in completing a watershed-level analysis of flood hazards along the Clark Fork River in western Montana. In the shorter term, the project will provide the necessary data to eventually update and replace all the existing miles of effective approximate mapping in Mineral County and fully modernize the county.

RUSS ANDERSON MOVES ON FROM MORRISON-MAIERLE

by Ken Salo Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

After more than 10 years, Morrison-Maierle's Russ Anderson will be leaving the company to move to Durango, Colorado. His wife, Jen, has accepted a teaching position at Fort Lewis College. He and his family will be moving this summer in order to get settled in before the school year starts. Russ will remain involved in several projects at Morrison-Maierle through the end of the year.

Throughout his tenure at Morrison-Maierle, Russ has managed diverse project teams including engineers, scientists, managers, and construction personnel on water resources projects ranging from flood plain projects to stream bank stabilization and hydraulic structures. He successfully managed both the West Gallatin and the Musselshell River floodplain projects which earned him recognition from DNRC and FEMA for his technical capabilities.

We want to wish Russ and his family all the best in Colorado and sincerely thank him for his work in Montana.



RUSS ANDERSON

Michael Baker Int. recently hired Russ to start an office in Durango, Colorado and Russ will be serving as one of their Project Managers.

WELCOME

We would like to welcome Montana's newest Floodplain Administrators. We've already seen a few of you at training events!

- Becky Farren, Butte-Silver Bow County
- Jacob Feistner, Lake County
- Lindsey McNabb, Roosevelt County
- Anita McNamara, City of Missoula
- Lawson Moorman, Park County
- Adam Smith, Richland County

FAREWELL

As we welcome our newest Floodplain Administrators, we bid farewell to others. Thank you to the following individuals for their great service to their communities as Floodplain Administrator.

- Mike Kahoe, Granite County
- LaDana Hintz, Lake County
- Dan Sietsema, Roosevelt County
- Russ Huotari, Richland County
- Wade Humphries, City of Missoula

Visit the link below for a current list of Montana's local Floodplain Administrators.

www.floodplain.mt.gov/contacts

Please call/email Michelle Phillips, MT DNRC, in order to update local Floodplain Administrator contact information.

DNRC FLOODPLAIN RESOURCE SEMINAR RECAP

If you were not able to make it to last month's Floodplain Resource Seminar in Helena, then you missed out on some great training sessions. We were lucky to have a diverse and engaged audience filled with local floodplain administrators, emergency coordinators, and planners as well as professional surveyors and engineers. In addition, we were able to bring in speakers from Montana, Colorado, and California.



STATE OF MONTANA
Floodplain Program

DAY ONE

Day one of the seminar began with sessions led by DNRC staff on floodplain basics, Letters of Map Change, mapping updates, and funding opportunities. In the afternoon, USGS's Peter McCarthy updated us on developments with Montana Stream Stats. We ended the day with a great discussion on subdivision regulations within the context of floodplain management. Anne Cossitt (Cossitt Consulting, Inc.) updated us on the progress of the model subdivision regulations update project, while Mitch Doherty (Missoula County) and Sean O'Callaghan and Chris Scott (Gallatin County) discussed their unique experiences with subdivision regulations in their communities.

DAY TWO

Day two of the seminar started with an engaging session on best practices for communication and collaboration by Maggie Linden of Resilience Action Partners. The morning then transitioned to discussing Local Emergency Planning Committees with Paul Spengler (Lewis and Clark County), followed by a discussion on the importance of disaster preparedness and the great work of the Musselshell County Recovery Team by Adam Carlson (Musselshell County). The afternoon of day two included a CRS users' group workshop led by Traci Sears (Montana DNRC), as well as a technical question-and-answer session with Steve Story (Montana DNRC).

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MAGGIE LINDEN PRESENTS ON DAY 2



PAUL SPENGLER PRESENTS ON DAY 2



DAYS THREE AND FOUR

We were delighted to see most of our seminar attendees stay for the two-day Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Workshop offered at the end of the seminar. Nadene Wadsworth (Montana DES)—along with Nicole Aimone, Margaret Doherty, and Donna Boreck (FEMA Region VIII)—facilitated practical, topical presentations taking the audience through the complex Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning process. Their session also included guest speakers Kent Atwood (Montana DES) and Ann Schwend (Montana DNRC).

Also on day three, Traci Sears led a comprehensive review session for the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) exam and then proctored the exam for two lucky volunteers.

Presentations from the 2016 Floodplain Resource Seminar can be found online:
www.floodplain.mt.gov/training

THANK YOU

To start, Montana DNRC would like to sincerely thank all who attended the Resource Seminar and helped to make it a success. In addition, we would like to recognize our wonderful presenters, including Peter McCarthy (USGS), Anne Cossitt (Cossitt Consulting, Inc.), Mitch Doherty (Missoula County), Sean O'Callaghan (Gallatin County), Chris Scott (Gallatin County), Maggie Linden (Resilience Action Partners), Paul Spengler (Lewis and Clark County) and Adam Carlson (Musselshell County).

We would also like to recognize Nadene Wadsworth (Montana DES), Nicole Aimone (FEMA Region VIII), Margaret Doherty (FEMA Region VIII), and Donna Boreck (FEMA Region VIII) for conducting FEMA's course on Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning.

Finally, this Seminar would not have been a success without excellent facility and support staff provided by our host, the UM College of Helena, or without the organization and support of our stellar administrative assistant, Bree Caldwell.

We are already accepting ideas for next year's Floodplain Resource Seminar (expected to be held the same time of year at the same location). Please send any ideas for sessions or any constructive criticism on this year's Seminar to Michelle Phillips, DNRC Outreach Specialist, at mphillips2@mt.gov.



COMPLETED FLOWER CREEK DAM, 2016
© SEABORN LARSON/THE WESTERN NEWS

early as 1978. Concrete core samples of the dam would crumble in your hand and the dam was built without rebar. While the entire process of assessment, design, permitting, public comments, and regulatory requirements took several years to negotiate, the construction phase was relatively short. Engineers, surveyors, and area contractors worked with the City of Libby to tear down the old dam, use a portion as the coffer dam, and replace the dam. The project construction was completed under budget and in about a ten-month timeframe. Despite some tense moments with two flooding events during the construction, overall the process went as planned.

A small thank you ceremony for the involved partners was held on July 20, 2016 with the city and county officials, funding partners, and construction companies. During the ceremony, large posters displaying the original dilapidated dam tumbled like dominos in a slight breeze. "That's what could have happened," DNRC Director John Tubbs said to an amused crowd. He continued, "We don't have that now; we have a solid dam. It really does secure the city's water supply for 50-100 years. The dam safety improvement here is tremendous. If there was a failure, loss of life was a potential." An event planned for later this fall will focus on the support provided by the citizens of Libby.



ORIGINAL FLOWER CREEK DAM
NOVEMBER 2014



JOHN TUBBS, DNRC DIRECTOR, SPEAKS AT THE
FLOWER CREEK DAM DEDICATION CEREMONY ON JULY 20, 2016

NEW FLOWER CREEK DAM COMPLETED

The rehabilitation and replacement of the Flower Creek Dam near Libby Montana demonstrates the importance of partnerships throughout the extensive process it takes to make a dam safe. The City of Libby, the Flower Creek Dam owner, partnered with the US Department of Rural Development, Montana Department of Commerce, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources to combine to secure more than \$14.6 million in funding to replace the dam and aging water distribution for the community.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation determined the original Flower Creek Dam, built in 1945, was on the verge of failure in 2009. The dam was showing signs of seepage through construction joints as

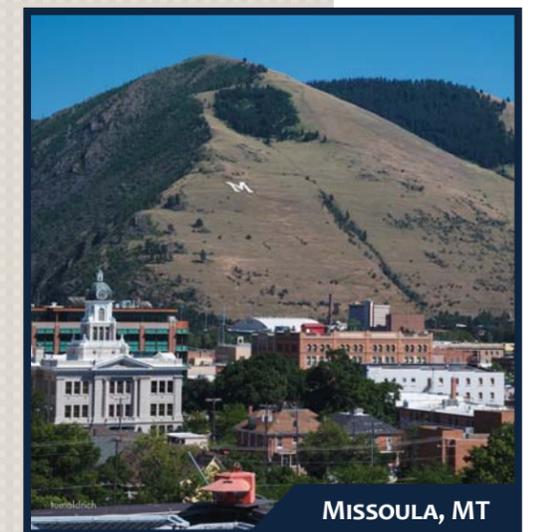
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SAVE THE DATE

2016 MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF DAM AND CANAL SYSTEMS WORKSHOP

October 18 & 19 | Missoula, MT

This year's MADCS Workshop will take place on October 18th and 19th at the Double Tree by Hilton in Missoula, MT. A Field Trip will take place on October 18 followed by the Workshop on October 19. Look for registration and agenda information soon.



MISSOULA, MT

SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE DETERMINATION PLAN: ISN'T MY ORDINANCE ENOUGH?

Planning for disaster doesn't just fall to Emergency Services personnel—it applies to local Floodplain Administrators as well. For NFIP communities, part of disaster preparedness means having a Substantial Damage Determination Plan in place BEFORE disaster strikes. Although community floodplain ordinances define Substantial Damage and those based on the model ordinance lay out a broad implementation process, neither takes the place of a separate, comprehensive Substantial Damage procedure.



Writing and following a Substantial Damage Determination Plan not only ensures compliance with the NFIP, it will assure that a community applies Substantial Damage requirements effectively, accurately, and consistently community-wide. Moreover, sound Substantial Damage Determinations will increase a community's resilience to flooding and will reduce the cost of flood insurance in the long term.

It is therefore imperative that communities develop a plan before disaster strikes to answer the all-important question, "Exactly how will my community effectively fulfill its NFIP requirement to make Substantial Damage Determinations amidst the chaos of disaster and recovery?"

Here are some key questions a Floodplain Administrator should consider when writing a Substantial Damage Determination Plan that go beyond what's written in your ordinance.

1. What is my role versus what is the property owners' role?
2. With which other departments in the community should I be coordinating this plan?
3. When and how will I notify property owners of their Substantial Damage requirement to provide data (cost estimate of repair, market value of home) during/after a disaster?
4. How will my community implement our Substantial Damage requirements?
5. How will my community handle a Substantial Damage Determination on a single property versus on many properties at one time (during a large disaster)?
6. How will the Substantial Determination process differ depending on the source of damage (building fire, wildfire, wind storm, etc.)?
7. What is the depth of water over ground that would trigger a building to be potentially Substantially Damaged in my community?
8. How does my community address Substantial Damage requirements after a non-flood disaster (fire, tornado, etc.)? Am I made aware when homes in the Special Flood Hazard Area are damaged from non-flood disasters?
9. How will my community enforce Substantial Damage requirements when a property owner is non-compliant?



SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO DAMAGE OF ANY ORIGIN (FIRE, WIND, EARTHQUAKE, ETC.)—NOT JUST FLOODS.

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GALLATIN COUNTY, 2008

Substantial Damage Determinations and Substantial Damage Plans are complex—we encourage communities to reach out to us for assistance in developing these plans.

FEMA and DNRC are currently developing guides for both Substantial Damage and Substantial Improvement requirements. In addition, we will host workshops to highlight the components that should be identified in a Substantial Damage Determination Plan—look for Substantial Damage on Monday of the next AMFM Conference.

Substantial Damage requirements are essential to reduce the risk of flooding to properties that have already experienced a significant disaster. With a comprehensive Substantial Damage Determination Plan in place, you will be able to most effectively and efficiently serve those who are going through a difficult transition. Most importantly, you will be able to assist such property owners in reducing their flood risk to avoid damage from future flooding.



STATE OF MONTANA
Floodplain Program



FEMA

UPDATE TO THE LOMR PROCESS: REVIEWING CORPORATE LIMIT BOUNDARIES, NEW ROADS, AND ROAD NAMES

FEMA is often asked to update corporate limits, road names, or show new roads during the processing of a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). **Region VIII is making some changes to the LOMR process that will provide the opportunity for the floodplain administrator and requestor to comment on the map, profiles, floodway data table, road names, and corporate limit changes before the LOMR is issued.** Within the LOMR revision area, new roads or other road names can be added or changed/updated.

After the LOMR has been issued, the 90-day appeal period is provided to allow technical data to be submitted regarding the hydrology and/or hydraulics. The appeal period does not pertain to comments such as road name corrections or corporate limit changes. More importantly, the LOMR CANNOT incorporate community boundary changes if the changes extend beyond the LOMR “box”. This is due to tie-in issues—the corporate limits must match between the LOMR box and the printed panel.

If annexation/corporate limit changes information is provided during the processing of the LOMR but cannot be shown due to the limitations described above, a note will be made in the Status of Community NFIP Maps section of the Determination Document indicating that annexation has occurred for all or a portion of the LOMR revised area. For both road data and corporate boundaries description, digital data is preferred and would need to be provided after the LOMR has been submitted. After the LOMR is issued, such comments cannot be incorporated.

CHRONOLOGY OF A LOMR

1. Once a LOMR is submitted to FEMA, it is assigned a case number and the initial submittal is reviewed.
2. Within 90 days of the submittal, a letter will be sent to the requestor indicating receipt of the package and case number, identifying outstanding fees owed, and listing any additional data that is being requested. Note that FEMA will not process a LOMR without a signed Community Concurrence Form.
3. The requestor has 90 days to provide the additional data—if it is not sent, the case will be closed. Additional data may be requested several times by FEMA’s contractor before the case is processed and the data goes through an internal QA/QC.
4. Once FEMA has received all necessary data, the data will go through an internal QA/QC.
5. FEMA’s contractor will reach out to the local floodplain administrator and requestor following internal QA/QC to allow them to review and comment on draft map, profiles, floodway data table, roads, and corporate boundaries. The turnaround for the floodplain administrator and requestor to review the draft information will be fairly short.
6. After the case goes through final approval and the local newspaper of record and publication dates have been determined, the LOMR will be issued (issue date at top of Determination Document).
7. The LOMR will identify the newspaper and publication dates in the Public Notification of Revision section of the LOMR document.
8. On the second newspaper publication date, the 90-day appeal period limited to technical data addressing hydrology & hydraulics data begins.
9. One hundred twenty days (120) from the second publication date, the LOMR will be effective (effective date is identified at the top of the Determination Document). The LOMR will also be required to be reflected in the community’s floodplain ordinance.

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10. In rare cases, the LOMR will not be effective for 6 months from the second publication date to allow a community to adopt a higher level ordinance (for example, if a community is adopting a detailed-study LOMR and their ordinance only reflects requirements for an Approximate A area).

NOTE TO FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATORS

When a LOMR first comes to your office for review, FEMA suggests that you review the corporate limit boundaries (repositories for this information are generally the Town Clerk or County Clerk and Recorder offices) and road names shown on the current effective map in the revised area to determine if they need to submit updated information to FEMA’s contractor.

The FEMA contractor will not annotate the LOMR Determination Document regarding corporate limit changes nor update the map with road/name changes unless the floodplain administrator or requestor inform them to do so.

IMPACTS TO LOMAs AND LOMR-Fs AS A RESULT OF A LOMR

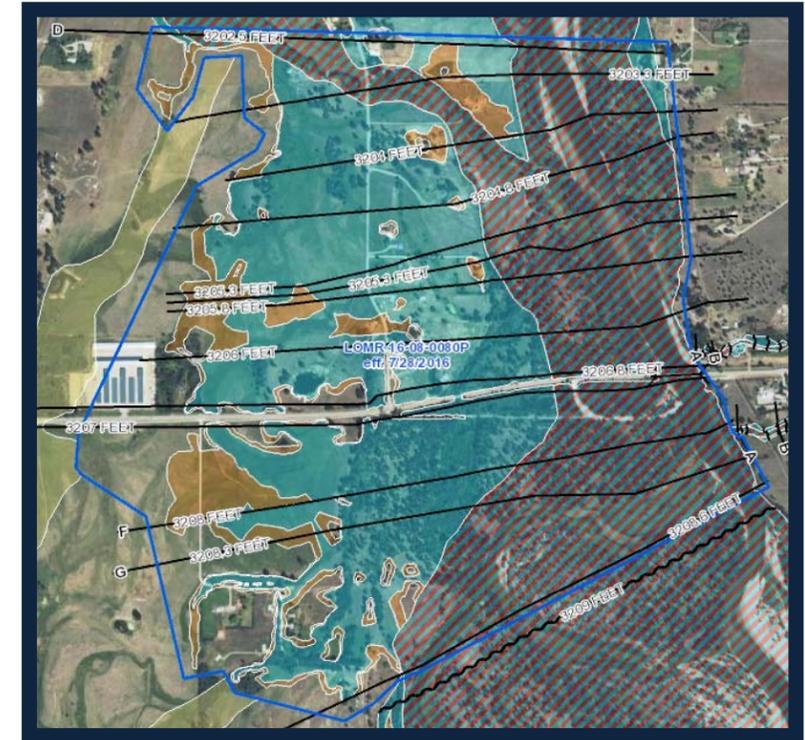
If a previously issued LOMA or LOMR-F (collectively referred to as Letters of Map Change) with a determination for Removal is in the LOMR revision box area, then the applicant or floodplain administrator can request a revalidation the day after the LOMR is effective.

FEMA does not contact property owners to alert them of the need to have their LOMA or LOMR-F revalidated. It is therefore recommended that the floodplain administrator take the initiative to notify property owners if their LOMA or LOMR-F is contained within the LOMR box area—otherwise, the property owner may not be aware that it is necessary to get their LOMA or LOMR-F revalidated. Note that it is not implied nor guaranteed that the LOMA or LOMR-F will be revalidated for removal. It is possible that the redetermination would result in a non-removal determination.

Unfortunately, there is no easy or automatic way to identify any LOMAs or LOMR-Fs contained within the LOMR box area. For communities with paper FIRMs, it requires looking through files and consulting the Map Service Center website to view the FIRM panels affected by the LOMR (listed in the determination document) to identify any LOMAs or LOMR-Fs on that panel and further effort to determine if those LOMAs or LOMR-Fs are contained within the LOMR box area.

For communities with digital maps, they can consult the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) to identify the LOMAs or LOMR-Fs inside the LOMR box and initiate a revalidation request.

For any community with FIRMs (paper or digital), there may be LOMAs or LOMR-Fs that are not listed on the Map Service Center for which the community/property owner has records. In such situations, provide the documentation for that older case to FEMA and request a revalidation. FEMA may request additional data in order to revalidate LOMAs or LOMR-Fs as data requirements have changed over time.





WATER RESOURCE SPECIALIST WITH THE STATE FLOODPLAIN PROGRAM

Helena, Montana

NOW
RECRUITING!

DUTIES

Montana DNRC's Floodplain Program is currently recruiting a Water Resource Specialist to perform a variety of educational, technical, and administrative duties relative to the National Flood Insurance Program. The Water Resource Specialist is responsible for:

- Supporting the State's Floodplain Mapping Program
- Supporting the State's Community Assistance Program
- Providing technical assistance, outreach, and training on floodplain mapping and floodplain management to a variety of audiences (government officials, engineers, the public, etc.).

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualified candidates should possess the following:

- Skill and experience in learning and applying federal, state, or local government laws, regulations, and guidelines
- Critical thinking, attention to detail, and organizational strengths
- Knowledge and experience utilizing GIS mapping applications
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills
- The ability to work on multidisciplinary teams with diverse skillsets

APPLY ONLINE BY 9/2!

www.tinyurl.com/FloodplainSpecialist

UPDATED HOW-TO GUIDES

www.tinyurl.com/nai-information

The Association of State Floodplain Managers is in the process of updating their No Adverse Impact How-To Guides. Currently, both the Mitigation and Infrastructure How-To Guides are updated to 2016. Be sure to check them out online when you have a moment!

NFIP CHANGES WEBINAR

www.tinyurl.com/NFIP-webinar-2016

Join FEMA Region 8 for the third of a Regional Webinar Series focused on the changes to the NFIP that will become effective October 1, 2016. The goal is to inform floodplain administrators, elected officials, local officials, and others of changes to the NFIP and how these changes will affect property owners in their communities.

Sessions are offered on September 8 or 9 at 10:00am MST. Follow the link below to sign up for one of the online sessions or to get more information. Registration is limited, so please sign up early. The online training link, information on using the Adobe Connect webinar interface, and the conference phone line will be emailed to you prior to the webinar.

Additional information the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act: www.fema.gov/flood-insurance-reform

Sign up to receive up-to-date information on the NFIP: www.fema.gov/write-your-own-wyo-program

SAVE THE DATE

2017

ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 7-9 | Missoula, MT

Look for a call for abstracts soon at www.mtfloods.org

UPCOMING TRAINING

PER 304 Social Media for Disasters

October 5, 2016

Bozeman, Montana

More information: www.tinyurl.com/PER304-Bozeman

Point of contact: Patrick Lonergan, plonergan@bozeman.net

This course focuses on the use of social media in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Participants are provided with the knowledge and skills to integrate social media into their current communication plans.

Montana Association of Dam and Canal Systems (MADCS) Workshop

October 18 & 19, 2016

Double Tree by Hilton | Missoula, Montana

More information: www.madcs.org

This year's MADCS Workshop will take place on October 18 and 19 at the Double Tree by Hilton in Missoula, MT. A Field Trip will take place on October 18 followed by the Workshop on October 19.

OUR NEWEST CFMS

Congratulations to Michelle Phillips (Montana DNRC) who recently became Montana's newest Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM).

BECOME A CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN MANAGER

To become a CFM, individuals take an exam administered through the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) and maintain their certification through continuing education. In Montana, proctors administer CFM testing at the annual AMFM Conference in March, at the DNRC Floodplain Resource Seminar in Helena in July, and as requested at other times throughout the year.

DNRC will proctor the next CFM exam and prep session this December in Helena. Check our website as we will announce the date, place, and time as soon as possible or contact Michelle Phillips (mphillips2@mt.gov) you are interested in taking the December exam.



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For Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Information contact Kent Atwood, State Hazard Mitigation Officer.
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We are always accepting articles and ideas for this newsletter! Please email your contributions to mphillips2@mt.gov at anytime.

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