



FLOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 10, 2002

MEETING SUMMARY

The Flood Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting, chaired by Clark Gilman, began at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission (DRBC) office in West Trenton, N.J.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Tamm requested the words "quit claim" in the last paragraph on page one be changed to "land use". There being no other comments or changes, the Minutes were approved.

FLOOD WARNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Gilman informed the committee that Walt Nickelsburg of the NWS wanted everyone to know that the Northwest Jersey NOAA radio is now on the air after being upgraded, serviced and relocated to the top of the PSFS building in Philadelphia.

- Revisions to the Flood Recommendations Report

Mr. Fromuth handed out and reviewed a section of the Flood Warning Recommendations Report from last year that was modified to reflect updated costs and status of gage information. He noted that one recommendation (S-4) had been removed from the original list as PPL has made real-time lake level elevation and any power generating release data from Lake Wallenpaupack available on the PPL website. One new recommendation was added to the list so there is still the same overall number of site-specific deficiencies and recommendations.

Anyone with changes should inform him of them within the next week as he will be publishing the report as a revised edition for 2002 and referencing it when dealing with any issues relating to appropriations.

Mr. Burd suggested that any outdated information be left in the document with a strikeout placed through it and the updated information added so one can see the changes.

- Recent Implementation Activity

Mr. Fromuth explained another handout, which was a list of changes that were made since April, 2001 in the way of gaging, AHPS and other additions in the basin's flood warning system. The information included improvements that have been funded or completed during the last year, some new, re-installed or modernized stream gages that have a potential loss of federal funding with the proposed FY03 budget, and two items currently in progress.

Mr. Gilman noted he attended a strategic roundtable meeting on April 9. FEMA is proposing an all new state-of-the-art hybrid warning system for terrorism, earthquakes, natural catastrophic events, etc. with the short-term goal for 2003 and all other goals set for 2008. Mr. Gabrielsen noted some partnerships between FEMA and the NWS were for civil defense disasters so this idea is not that unrealistic and encouraged

partnership possibilities.

Mr. Gabrielsen also noted that the President's FY03 budget zeroed out for the first time the Susquehanna Flood Forecasting Warning System. He believes the House and Senate will present requests and an influx of money should appear next year. Ever since Sept. 11, money that was earmarked for hazard mitigation is shifting slightly to focus on Homeland Security issues. It is believed that the entire Homeland Securities program is causing competition with NWS for resources for some of the natural hazard type of mitigation and environmental monitoring that the NWS is attempting to do.

Mr. Gilman commented it appeared money seems to be shifting towards training and equipping first responders. Mr. Gabrielsen noted there is a strong correlation between the environmental monitoring the NWS, the USGS, and the ACOE does and what AHPS is and the Homeland Security issue. Mr. Gilman stated that the link between Homeland Security and FEMA appears to be unsure as they seem to have similar missions but not entirely connected yet.

Mr. Fromuth discussed a reconnaissance study the ACOE performed on the upper Delaware River Basin in New York after the flooding in 1996. The Corps inventoried the damages that occurred, performed interviews and research on a range of possible alternatives that might be considered in some type of feasibility study. There was no local sponsorship for any continued activity beyond the ACOE funded study. However, there has been some recent activity on this on the part of the NY DEC and ACOE. The ACOE wrote a report last November outlining the four areas that would be the focus of a feasibility study. But instead of it being the entire NY state portion of the Delaware River Basin, the study area would be the west branch of the Delaware upstream of Cannonsville Reservoir. The four areas are: flood insurance map upgrades, hazard mitigation plans for the communities, a review of flooding and bridges and best management practices for stream channel stabilization. Mr. Fromuth noted the overall program has changed considerably since 1996.

Mr. Gilman commented FEMA is to receive 360 million dollars this year to start updating the Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Rate Maps throughout the country. They will be contracting with other agencies such as the ACOE and private agencies for this work.

DRBC FUNDING SUPPORT LETTER AND ACTIVITIES

The Executive Director of DRBC, Carol Collier, sent a letter to the Delaware River Basin Task Force in early March 2002 to support funding for a variety of AHPS items the Commission is interested in seeing appropriations made for. Mr. Fromuth noted that it appears if money becomes available through these appropriations, it will be directed towards the mid-Atlantic states for the AHPS program rather than specific gages.

Mr. Fromuth then spoke of another handout of a PowerPoint slide that appears on the NWS website acknowledging various interested constituents and partners of the AHPS program. Although the DRBC and SRBC are listed, he would like to suggest having the USGS and ACOE also included as they are partners in either sponsoring or providing data to make AHPS work.

Mr. Gabrielsen commented he assisted in the creation of the slide mentioned and the intent was to focus on groups looking for large area funding requests, which is why the DRBC, the SRBC and the St. John's River Basin were included in the list. He also commented that the major AHPS efforts in the United States pushing forward are in the eastern region, which he believes will be a benefit for the Delaware basin, as well.

Mr. Fromuth addressed a comment made at the last FAC meeting about the potential for disaster mitigation funds stemming from the September 11th tragedy in New York and whether there was any potential for application of the funds to flood warning related work in hazard mitigation and other areas.

He advised the committee he spoke to John DiNuzzo and Rad Anderson at the New York State Emergency Management office and was informed that the policy on the money states that whatever is done has to directly benefit the five Boroughs of New York. He further noted that there may be security issues related to affects on NYC's water supply that could be applicable, but in terms of flood loss reduction in the Delaware River Basin they saw very little chance for any type of funding.

Lastly, Mr. Fromuth spoke of the Washington Report from the Association of State Floodplain Managers handout made available for today's meeting. It provides a breakdown of the President's proposed budget funding to different agencies. It includes reductions in Section 22 Planning Assistance funding to the ACOE, floodplain management services, the USGS region program funding reduction and the potential loss of 130 gages nationwide, which is all part of the President's budget. It also addresses the NWS, NOAA and the 4.5 million dollar increase proposed in AHPS for a total of 6.2 million dollars and how the funds, as Mr. Gabrielsen mentioned, would be targeted to the eastern part of the country.

REPORT ON MARCH 14 OUTREACH MEETING WITH EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGERS

At the last FAC meeting in January a discussion was held about the potential of having the NWS and USGS give a presentation on current products that would be useful to emergency workers in either Bucks or Montgomery counties. At their regular monthly meeting, the Eastern Montgomery County Emergency Managers Group consisting of 50-60 members ranging from police officers, fireman, Red Cross workers and local emergency managers met with representatives from NWS, USGS, PEMA and DRBC to hear the presentation. Mr. Fromuth noted he felt the presentation was successful due to the information provided by the NWS, USGS and PEMA . The presentation focused on products that can use by the group.

The session included a PowerPoint presentation by Joe MiKetta of the NWS on the type of products currently available. Bob Hainly of USGS presented drought products available such as ground water and surface water indicators. Alan Tamm reviewed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and the ramifications it has for local hazard mitigation plans. The group expressed interest in helping support funding efforts for AHPS and improvement of NWS products and obtaining more stream gages in their area. They were provided contact information so they could write in support of the NWS products.

Additional sessions could be organized in different parts of the basin with the focus varied from flood warning products to topics such as hazard mitigation efforts, etc.

REPORT ON MARCH 21 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING TO REFINE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of an all-day session attended on March 21 by FAC comprehensive planning sub-committee members, changes in dates and language were recommended for the draft objectives in the comprehensive plan strategy document. The changes were recommended in order to improve the objectives.

All advisory committee recommendations will be sent to the WAC for evaluation and consideration at their next workshop scheduled for mid-May. As it is anticipated that the WAC will agree to the changes from the FAC, the next step the committee will be involved in will be putting together implementation strategies, which are the series of steps necessary to achieve the objectives.

Sub-committee members attending the March 21 session included Alan Tamm, Lloyd Stuebner, Jerry Kauffman, George Sauls, Peter Gabrielsen, Scott Steigerwald, Clark Gilman and David Burd. The session was facilitated by Bob France of the PA DEP.

If needed or desired, the sub-committee may request consulting help for developing the implementation strategies. There is money available through the Comprehensive Plan Budget to provide the committees with

technical help. Mr. Fromuth stated he believed under the GSA, consultants with a broad experience in flood loss reduction are available to the DRBC. One approach could be to draft a Scope of Work (SOW) with the SOW products being the implementation steps for achieving the objectives. As DRBC would like to have the implementation strategies by the end of this year, Mr. Fromuth stated he would like to start on a SOW in the near future.

Mr. Gilman requested that the Corps be an agency to consider as the consultant as they have already studied and reported on many of the areas in the basin prone to flood damage. Mr. Sauls noted the Corps has previously done work with the Commission and saw no problem with investigating this avenue especially since the project would be totally funded by the DRBC. Mr. Hainly asked if the deadline for this work would present any problem with the Corps to meet. Mr. Sauls and Mr. Fromuth stated they felt the timeframe was feasible.

Mr. Fromuth noted that \$450,000 has been appropriated to the Corps for reconnaissance and planning efforts for the Delaware River Basin. The DRBC planning staff is working with the Corps to come up with an approach that could include flood loss reduction. He suggested the FAC could take the money that may be available to the committee through the planning process and do cost sharing with the Corps on some of the \$450,000, which would provide more money and extend the time.

Mr. Tamm spoke of working with a consultant on an implementation strategy including how flood warning products can fit into the local emergency management organization and how all efforts could be utilized on a county by county or community by community basis.

There was discussion on the objectives and what is expected from the committee or DRBC. Mr. Burd stated that as part of the WAC it is his understanding that the DRBC is not going to be responsible for the execution of the objectives or management strategies but that the responsibility for implementation will be assigned, in a cooperative way, to others. He reiterated an earlier comment made by Mr. Kane that this is a local initiative in which the local people will need to assist in to achieving the goals also.

The DRBC Comprehensive Plan and a prioritized list of projects should assist communities seeking funding to purchase flood damaged structures or retrofitting them and complete the process in a more efficient manner. FEMA requires a plan prior to releasing their money. One of the implementation steps in the DRBC Comprehensive Plan would be development of hazard mitigation plans.

DISASTER MITIGATION ACT OF 2000 AND DEVELOPMENT OF DISASTER MITIGATION PLANS

Mr. Tamm reviewed a Regulatory Review Guide, which is actual legislation in a condensed version. He noted the following items:

- State management efforts need specific hazard mitigation opportunities identified with the lot, block and geocode number (longitude/latitude) of the site; and
- Implementing regulations clearly state an estimate of all dollar losses to vulnerable structures is required.

For vulnerability - a digital ortho photo plot overlaid with the GIS digitized floodplain data from the National Flood Insurance floodplain panel maps (Q3 data) that clearly shows structures and areas at risk for flooding.

For dollar loss - the estimated dollar cost is established by calculations involving the height of first floor elevations and the assessed values of structures, which are either market values or county assessments

with the current multiplier factor applied.

Mr. Tamm stated the approach in using this type of estimate is to be able to provide an estimate of the true costs of fixing the problem permanently when requesting disaster assistance so that the aide can be given readily to the residents.

Mr. Tamm noted that although the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 is in the Federal Register as proposed, it has been decided to give it priority consideration because it impacts human health and welfare.

Ms. Lear commented she believes it is unrealistic to have all the municipalities in the states have finalized plans by November, 2003. Mr. Tamm cited (3) of sub-section 201.6 whereby it states "multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan." He further noted that in the preamble and justification of making this immediate legislation, it was noted that 5,000 plans nationwide should be anticipated. It also states "C(1) The Planning Process shall include opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and on the plan prior to plan approval."

Costs involved with the program were mentioned. Mr. Gilman and Ms. Lear noted even with a 75/25 cost share (FEMA's responsibility 75% (maximum \$15,000), community responsibility 25%) and a model flood mitigation plan, NJ communities are backing away from submitting proposals for projects under the program, even the communities with the most repetitive losses, due to the amount of time and work involved. Mr. Tamm commented some PA communities with their downtown business sections, having previously flooded, are very hesitant to commit to any type of mitigation planning. He also commented that early costs in doing the plan were extraordinary. Realizing there wasn't that kind of money available for everyone, PEMA has taken the ASTM approach of site assessments in an attempt to make a very standardized bare minimum template that could take as much as three days of a community leader's time and bring the costs into a range of about \$1,500 - \$2,000.

Mr. Fromuth spoke about the Floodplain Management Services Program offered by the Corps and asked if a community, rather than a state, could approach the Corps asking for their assistance. Mr. Sauls indicated the Corps could work for a community.

Mr. Tamm asked how DRBC is going to be included in the plan development and approval process. He asked if the states should include a procedure in their approval process that requires each plan to pass by the DRBC and how does the DRBC want to handle the plans.

Mr. Gilman requested this topic be continued until the next meeting to allow the states an opportunity to find out what FEMA is going to require. Mr. Fromuth noted that the vehicle used in the past by DRBC to get involved with any review process is through their dockets issued for certain classes of projects dealing with water withdrawals. He also noted the DRBC has floodplain regulations that apply to any project before the Commission for a permit but the criteria that triggers the review is the amount of withdrawal where the discharge is. Conservation requirements have also been coupled to the dockets. Approved County Planning Commission water projects do not involve the DRBC however. It was Mr. Fromuth's feeling that for the DRBC to begin to review hazard mitigation plans in-house would require an entire new addition into the review. He suggested that perhaps a requirement be added to the application so when projects are submitted, there is proof that the community where the project is proposed had a state approved hazard mitigation plan.

Mr. Hainly noted that when the Commission adopts the Comprehensive Plan, Objective "B" under Goal 1 of Waterway Corridor Management can be achieved only if such requirement is made of the local communities. Mr. Tamm suggested that the same management strategies be used as in the drought management plans and for all hazards.

Having completed the discussion, Ms. Lear asked for an explanation of what will happen to the Delaware River when New York starts experiencing more serious water problems with the drought situation. Mr. Fromuth explained that since we are currently in a drought emergency situation, the diversion to New York City is reduced and the flow targets in Montague, NJ are reduced. When the flows decrease, releases from the reservoirs would be made to meet the flow target. The lower basin reservoirs would also be utilized to maintain the Trenton flow targets. The flow targets will fluctuate depending on where the chlorides are in the Delaware.

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Fromuth stated the Flood Committee is required to provide a yearly report to the Commissioners. With the next Commission meeting scheduled for May 31 he asked the committee to decide when they wanted to proceed with the report. Mr. Gilman suggested waiting until after the WAC in mid-May as that will allow more information to be supplied about the committee's progress on the Comprehensive Plan issue.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for **Wednesday, June 5, 2002**, at 10:00 a.m. at the DRBC offices in West Trenton, N.J.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Tamm announced that the Pennsylvania Planning Association has requested him to put together a seminar on hazard mitigation planning. Therefore, he is planning the event for September 11, 2002 in Hatfield, PA, which will be a brainstorming session with planners to review Tropical Storm Allison and have them decide what would be appropriate retrofits and mitigation procedures for the community. He requested the committee members to plan on attending the session.

FLOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE APRIL 10, 2002

ATTENDANCE

NAME	AGENCY
BURD, Dave.	Merrill Creek Reservoir
FROMUTH, Rick	DRBC
GABRIELSEN, Peter	National Weather Service - ERH
GILMAN, Clark D.	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection - Flood Plain Management
HAINLY, Bob	U.S. Geological Survey - Pa.
KANE, John F.	New York City Department of Environmental Protection
LEAR, Kathy	New Jersey Office of Emergency Management
NORTH, A.J.	National Park Service
SAULS, George	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

SCHOPP, Bob	U.S. Geological Survey - N.J.
SIKORA, John	National Weather Service
STEIGERWALD, Scott A.	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
TAMM, Alan	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

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