

Kathy Way



ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, INC.

P.O. Box 2051 Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2051 (608) 266-1926

Chair

Doug Plasencia, P.E.
Div. of Soil & Water Conservation
203 Governor St., Suite 206
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 371-6136
Fax (804) 371-7490

Vice-Chair

George Hosek
Michigan DNR
P.O. Box 30028
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 335-3182
Fax (517) 373-9965

Secretary

Peter Finke
Ohio DNR
1939 Fountain Sq., Bldg. E
Columbus, OH 43224
(614) 265-6755
Fax (614) 447-9503

Treasurer

Allison M. Nicholson
Arkansas Soil & Water
Conservation Commission
101 E. Capitol, Suite 350
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-3982
Fax (501) 682-3991

Executive Director

Larry A. Larson, P.E.
Wisconsin DNR
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-1926
Fax (608) 264-9200

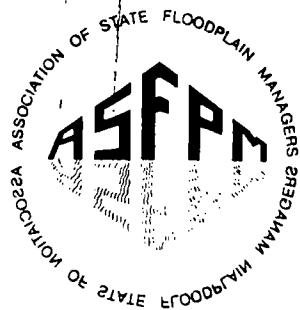
October 8, 1993

The Vice President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. Vice President:

Thank you for your letter of August 19, related to the Midwest Flood Recovery. We have found the task force efforts led by T.J. Glauthier and Katie McGinty to be particularly effective. The active role of White House staff has been beneficial for this recovery. The flood recovery has heightened an awareness and brought forward ideas that were long overdue for implementation. Over the next several months, there will continue to be issues that arise out of the midwest needing task force attention, and we will continue to support these efforts.

At this juncture, however, it is critical to begin the long term appraisal you called for in the task force formation. The success of this recovery is in part rooted in strategies that historically have received little policy support from the federal government. Our flood protection policies in the United States are virtually unchanged from fifty years ago when the conventional wisdom was "human mastery of the environment through technology". These flood control dominated policies have not allowed us to master anything; we have merely changed the rules. As with any rule change, there are winners and losers. From the national policy perspective, we have exchanged short term flood protection and increased development in flood prone areas for long term catastrophic flood damages and degradation of the river environment.



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page two

As a nation we need to make a choice. Are we going to continue to promote a single purpose flood control policy, or are we going to broaden our flood protection policies to encompass all floodplain management strategies? This is not an issue of new technologies, nor need it be an issue of finding new money. The issue is how do we best encourage our federal programs to move beyond a single purpose flood control policy.

I again urge you to form a federal flood damage reduction policy review group to examine these critical issues. Their charge would be to identify for the administration, potential executive branch and congressional adjustments to flood protection policies and laws. With sufficient support, it is feasible this could be accomplished in a ninety-day period. With this letter are two attachments. The first is an initial list of issues to be examined. The second list is an initial list of professionals that have considerable experience and vision and should be considered as part of this group.

Thank you for supporting these very important issues. I look forward to a continuing and productive working relationship.

Sincerely,



Doug Plasencia
Chair

Larry Larson
Executive Director

Jon Kusler
Executive Director
Association of Wetland Managers

cc: Carol Rasco - Domestic Policy
Kathy Way - Domestic Policy
T.J. Glauthier - OMB
Katie McGinty - Natural Resources

The following list includes names of individuals accomplished in the field of floodplain management, and organizations active in floodplain management issues with key contact people. We have not contacted these individuals but anticipate their willingness to serve if asked.

Non-Federal Individuals and Interests

Larry Larson - Chief of Dam Safety and Floodplain Programs, Wisconsin DNR, Executive Director Association of State Floodplain Managers, Professional Engineer, Member of the Natural Hazards Research Center Advisory Committee

Jon Kusler - Executive Director Association of State Wetland Managers. Author of numerous papers and books on floodplain and wetland laws and policies. Attorney, recipient of Goddard-White Award in floodplain management.

Doug Plasencia - Chief of Floodplain Programs for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Chair of the Association of State Floodplain Managers. Professional Engineer, college degrees in forestry and watershed management, state and local experience in floodplain management, member of the FEMA Advisory Board.

French Wetmore - CEO of French and Associates, a firm specializing in floodplain management mitigation activities. Author of numerous articles on flood proofing and relocation projects. Primary visionary and author of the Community Rating System for the National Flood Insurance Program. Community planner, former state flood insurance coordinator for Illinois, recipient of Goddard White award in floodplain management.

Gilbert White - Professor Emeritus and Acting Director of the Natural Hazards Research Center at The Colorado University. Author of landmark dissertation on floodplain management in the early 1940's. Internationally respected Geographer. A shaping force in floodplain management for over fifty years.

Mary Fran Myers - Project Manager for the Natural Hazards Research Center. Coordinates research projects and grants in flooding and other hazards.

Charles Hardt -Director of Public Works, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Tulsa has one of the leading urban flood protection programs in the nation. He has been involved with the various components of this program since its inception.

National Wildlife Federation - David Conrad

Environmental Defense Fund - Tim Searchinger

National Governors Association - Nolan Jones

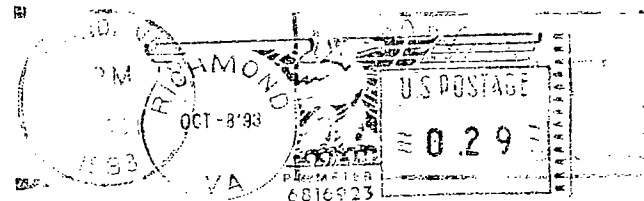
American Public Works Association - George Rowe

NATIONAL FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT POLICY ISSUES

1. Do the economic justification criteria (Principals and Guidelines), provide equal treatment between structural and non-structural project alternatives?
2. Communities are often torn by single purpose, non integrated river management programs. How can multi-objective river management programs be promoted?
3. What are the program authorities that directly or indirectly support flood protection initiatives. Do these authorities sufficiently promote a comprehensive floodplain management approach?
4. Federal agencies in many cases pioneered the technologies and strategies for non-structural floodplain management. Yet these same technologies are little utilized by these same federal agencies. In these agencies, are the floodplain management or non-structural watershed programs buried such that they have limited access or input on shaping agency culture or missions?
5. What is the cost of the extensive project justification scheme in use today? Can these procedures be simplified so as to reduce the dollars spent on producing studies rather than results?
6. Non-structural projects have the ability to be split and staged over time thus allowing states and communities to enter into staged agreements that on an annual basis may be more affordable to the federal and non-federal sponsors. Does the federal system adequately consider this in project formulation?
7. Flood Control will continue to be an important strategy in a comprehensive flood protection strategy. New development in protected areas is greatly increasing potentials for catastrophic losses. Should federal flood control projects be utilized only in fully developed areas, or in an area where the community controls new development within the protected area, such as behind levees?
8. Flood control projects often result in passing waters more quickly onto downstream or cross river communities. Some agencies mitigate for any induced flooding, others for any induced damages. The rationale for the latter is that from an economic point of view what is the difference between five feet or six feet of water in a town. How should federal flood control projects deal with induced flooding?

9. Federal engineering manuals are used extensively for flood protection design. These same manuals however contain limited material on flood proofing, elevation and relocation of homes, river restoration, bio-engineering, and other state of the art techniques. Does the lack of information in these design manuals inhibit innovative design within and external to the federal agencies?
10. Federal floodplain regulations have been little adjusted in twenty-five years. The basic standards allow floodplain encroachments that can result in an additional one foot of flood depths in the floodplain. Is this standard still sufficient or has this policy induced additional flood damages on existing structures and allowed new structures to be built that are not being protected to the 100-year flood?
11. Are there adequate safeguards in the post disaster environment to assure that we are not simply going to restore at risk, damaged structures?
12. Do our national infrastructure and agriculture policies inadvertently promote the utilization of floodplain lands, that subsequently creates the need for disaster relief or flood protection solutions?
13. What should a holistic federal watershed program consider? Is it appropriate to continue federal policies that passively promote the management of stormwater runoff, best management practices in riparian zones, and floodplain management as separate policy issues?
14. Many communities are developing well funded districts or utilities to deal locally with flooding and stormwater problems. Are there federal incentives that could be used to encourage these local initiatives?
15. The policies and programs of states often shape the need and the size of a federal response, long before the disaster occurs. States with strong floodplain management standards seem to need less federal relief during times of flood than those with weak standards. Is there appropriate recognition, incorporation and support for strong state programs from the federal government? Are there incentives to be utilized to encourage improved state programs?

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
DIVISION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
203 GOVERNOR STREET, SUITE 206
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2094



Kathy Way
Office of Domestic Policy
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20503

