



FLOODWATCH

Educating, Planning, Protecting

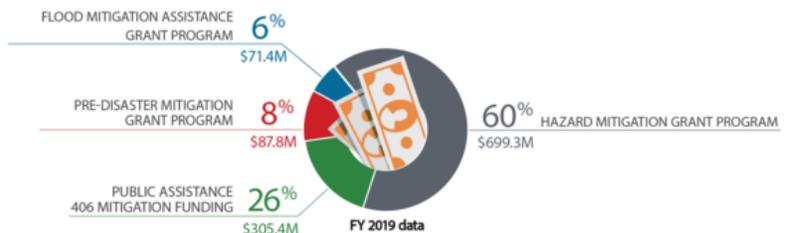
The Official Newsletter of the Louisiana Floodplain Management Association

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In FY 2019 **\$1.16B** in Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants and Public Assistance more than **406 Mitigation** funds were delivered to states, tribes, and territories, resulting in mitigation actions that will reduce risk.



Newsletter Committee

Vicki Holmes, Editor/Chair

Mitch McDonald, Contributor

Erin Johnson Linderman,
Photographer

March 2020



From the Director's Desk

By: Theodore DeBaene, P.E., CFM Executive Director

Agricultural and Accessory Structures

In February, 2020, FEMA issued a policy statement regarding Floodplain Management for Agricultural and Accessory Structures.

Essentially, these structures if situated within the SFHA must follow NFIP regulations. That is constructed above the BFE or be dry floodproofed.

To be included in these designations, the structures would have at least two outside rigid walls and a fully secured roof. Agricultural structures which do not meet these requirements are things like pole barns, holding pens, and agricultural tanks. Accessory structures which do not meet these requirements are things like gazebos, pavilions, picnic shelters and carports that are open on at least two sides. It does include structures such as those used for human habitation, whether permanent or temporary such as detached garages. However, if the lowest floor is used solely for building access, parking or limited storage, it must include at a minimum adequate flood openings designed to automatically equalize hydrostatic pressure.

The community may allow certain agricultural and/or accessory structures located in the SFHA to be wet floodproofed in lieu of the elevation or dry floodproofing requirements with a variance under a number of conditions including:

- An accessory structure is small and represents a minimal investment
- An agricultural structure has a low damage potential
- A description of the hardship to the applicant that would increase if the variance is not granted.
- The structure must be anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.
- The portions of the structure below the BFE must be constructed with flood-resistant materials
- Mechanical and utility equipment must comply with NFIP requirements
- The structure must comply with floodway encroachment provisions
- The structures must be wet floodproofed for protection against hydrostatic pressure
- The variance is not applicable to confinement obstructions, structures with liquified natural gas terminals, facilities producing and storing highly volatile, toxic or radioactive materials.

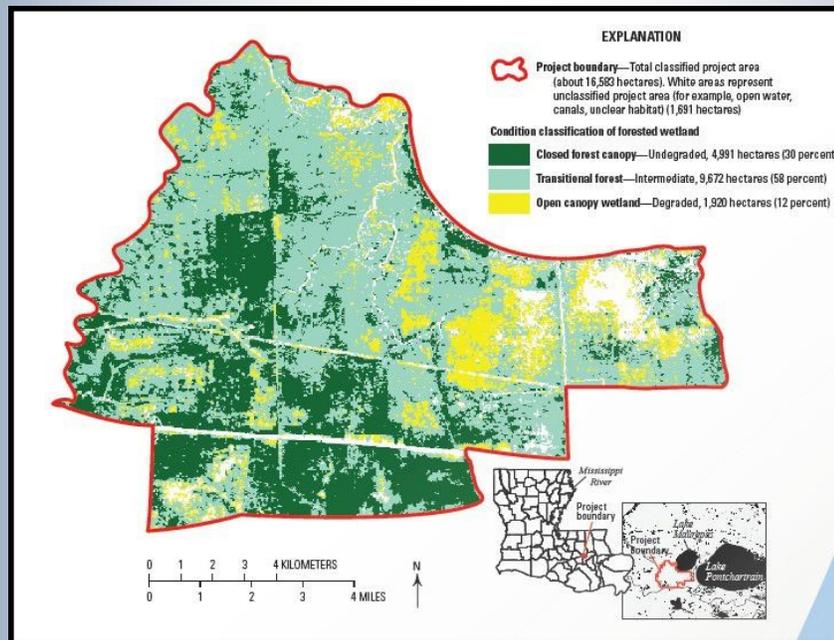
Furthermore, a community may apply to FEMA for a community-wide exception to certain types of structures to be wet floodproofed.

The specifics for these regulations may be found under FEMA Policy #104-008.03.



Diversion project to help repair Maurepas Swamp gets \$130 million BP fine boost

Submitted by Vicki Holmes



Construction of a 5 ½-mile channel through St. John the Baptist Parish to reintroduce Mississippi River water into the Maurepas Swamp could be completed in four years, thanks to a decision to dedicate \$130 million in BP oil spill fines to the project.

The award was approved Tuesday by the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, which governs the RESTORE Act trust fund. The fund oversees \$5.4 billion in Clean Water Act civil fine money resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster.

At a press conference in Baton Rouge, Gov. John Bel Edwards said the project resonates with him personally, as he hunted ducks and fished in Lake Maurepas growing up in nearby Tangipahoa Parish.

Full story [here](#).

Grant will bolster coast near Port Fourchon

Submitted by Mitch McDonald

A project that will restore wetlands that protect Port Fourchon from storms, wave action and erosion will receive \$26.3 million in federal money.

It is part of a \$30 million allocation approved last week by a board that oversees money from the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act.

Congress passed the law in 1990 to send money to Louisiana to deal coastal erosion and hurricane protection. The budget, which comes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, ranges from \$30 million to \$80 million a year.

The other \$3.7 million in the latest grant will be used for engineering and design of a project in St. Bernard Parish. It will restore 400 acres of marsh and build an 8,500-foot land terrace in St. Bernard Parish to protect the coastal Delecroix community.

Full story [here](#).



Mississippi River 50-foot deepening gets \$85M this year, promised another \$45.7M by Trump

Submitted by Mitch McDonald



The Army Corps of Engineers will spend \$85.35 million this year to begin deepening parts of the Mississippi River navigation channel between Baton Rouge and the river's mouth to 50 feet, 5 feet deeper than at present, House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-Jefferson, announced Monday.

And President Donald Trump's proposed fiscal year 2021 budget, also released Monday, includes another \$45.7 million for the dredging project, but no money for the long-discussed new lock on the Industrial Canal or the "Morganza to the Gulf" levee project.

"The Mississippi River Basin has an unprecedented impact on our national economy, global competitiveness and American job creation. Modernizing our infrastructure and deepening the river to 50 feet will help strengthen Louisiana's dominance in domestic and international commerce," Scalise said in a news release.

Full story [here](#).

Q & A with S&WB chief Ghassan Korban on Dutch drainage: 'They don't take it for granted there'

Submitted by Vicki Holmes

A delegation of academics and officials attended the [Amsterdam International Water Week Conference](#) in November, on a trip funded by the Consulate of the Netherlands.

Among them was [Sewerage & Water Board](#) executive director Ghassan Korban. Reporter Tristan Baurick and photographer Chris Granger of The Times-Picayune and The Advocate and WWNO reporter Tegan Wendland took their own trip to the Netherlands to better understand how Dutch strategies for managing water and storm surge have evolved in an era of rising seas and climate change.

Wendland talked with Korban aboard the SS Rotterdam, where he discussed what he learned during his week in the Netherlands and what ideas and approaches might work in New Orleans. The following is excerpted from their interview.

Full story [here](#).



Why does the Pearl River flood if we have a reservoir that's supposed to hold water?

Submitted by Mitch McDonald

JACKSON, Miss. (WLBT) - A lot of people have asked the question: "Why does the Reservoir have to release water?"

Remember, the Reservoir isn't technically a flood control device, but can help in times of need. The Pearl River, farther upstream, is flowing in a lot of water to the north end of the lake.

The past few days, the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District has been holding back the discharge downstream to allow for more people to get to safety.

If you've ever driven on the Rankin side of the Spillway, you'll notice this gravel area near Shaggy's. This is actually an emergency spillway that will activate (open) once the lake level goes above 300 feet above sea level, causing the lake to drop 10 feet if it is activated.

Full story [here](#).



Corps, UL report on Vermilion River dredging light on details

Submitted by Mitch McDonald



A seven-page report on a hydraulic study by the Corps of Engineers and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette on the pros and cons of dredging the Vermilion River for flood control is slim on details.

The report's findings were outlined during a Feb. 20 news conference by Congressman Clay Higgins, (R-Lafayette) of Louisiana's 3rd Congressional District, and Mark Wingate, Corps deputy district engineer of New Orleans.

The study, they said, found the \$150 million cost to dredge the entire Vermilion River was too high for the benefits, preventing about 175 homes from flooding again.

Full story [here](#).

Editor's opinion: A look at the big picture of a small island

Submitted by Mitch McDonald

The Gulf, science has established beyond a reasonable doubt, is coming for the rest of us.

The story of Isle de Jean Charles' demise has been told many times, but it's worthwhile for all of us to be reminded of the big picture every now and then.

A two-day series posted today to houmatoday.com and dailycomet.com does just that. Andrew Yawn of Gannett Louisiana, a network of newspapers that includes The Courier and Daily Comet, is among the latest to chronicle the effort to help residents of the eroding, flood-prone island off southeastern Terrebonne move to a new home about 40 miles north in Schriever.

Over time, the story of this tiny sliver of land and the American Indian people who call it home has become more dire. It is an emotional story that came to the fore during Hurricane Barry in July, when a Coast Guard helicopter lifted nearly a dozen residents to safety as 8 feet of water swamped the island, putting at least five houses under the Gulf of Mexico's tides.

Full story [here](#).



Levee board submits final report on One Lake Project

Submitted by Mitch McDonald

An engineer told the Rankin-Hinds Levee Board Friday if the One Lake Project had been built prior to historic flooding, it would have had a huge impact on today.

The number of households in Northeast Jackson with water in them would have dropped from 162 to just eight.

This week, the levee board submitted its final report to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to get the One Lake Project approved.

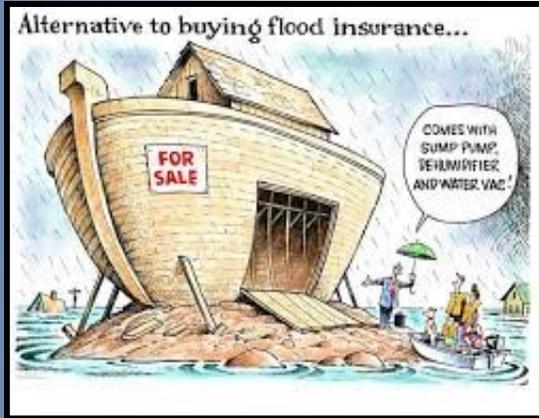
The \$350 million project calls for expanding the depth of the Pearl River between Jackson and Flowood.

One engineer said the project would drop the river level from 1 foot to a 1.5 feet in Northeast Jackson and downtown.

Andrew Whitehurst is a critic of the project. He is the Water Program Director for Health Gulf. Part of the organization's mission is to protect and restore natural resources in the Gulf Region.

Whitehurst said in part that the Rankin Hinds District "only discussed their Alternative "C", which dredges another lake into the river channel - the most disruptive choice for the Pearl River in and below Jackson according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

Flood Funnies



Beer from the heavens? Dutch turn too much rain into tasty brews

Submitted by Vicki Holmes

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands — Like New Orleans, Amsterdam is struggling with harder and more frequent rain storms that overwhelm drains, flood streets and seep under doors.

Joris Hoebe used to see Amsterdam's increasing rainfall only as a problem. Now it's an opportunity.

"It's potential beer falling from the sky," he said.

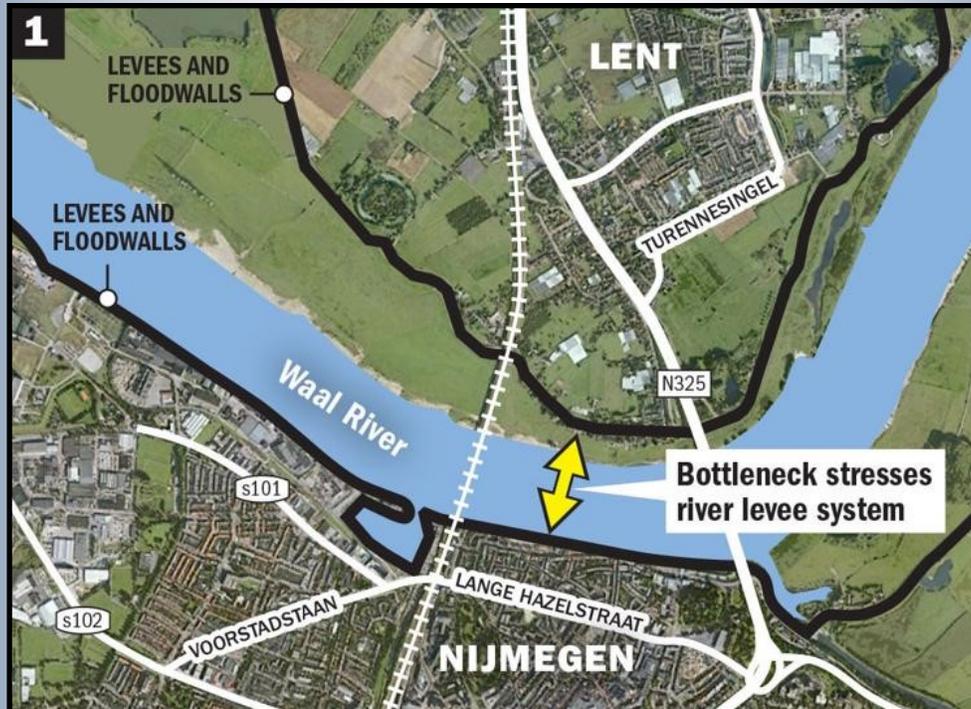
Hoebe is the founder of [Rainbeer](#), an organization that coordinates with Dutch breweries to turn excess rain into beer. Five small breweries across the country are now crafting beers from rain. There's a bitter blonde from Amsterdam, a salty sour from Groningen in the north, and an ale called the 'Cold Sniffle' that's produced at a small town on the coast.

Read the rest [here](#).



Room for a river to roam: A Dutch lesson on flood control

Submitted by Vicki Holmes

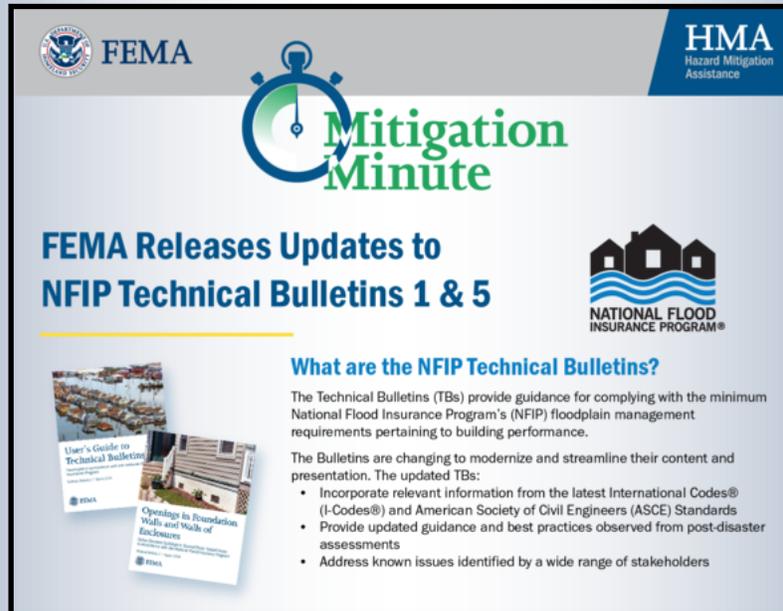


Rather than build its levees higher, the ancient city of Nijmegen, Netherlands decided to instead allow more room for the river. The city moved houses and a levee and created a wider floodplain. During flooding, this area takes on water. During the rest of the year, it's a popular park and water recreation area.

Read the rest [here](#).

FEMA Releases Updates to NFIP Technical Bulletins 1 and 5

Submitted by Vicki Holmes



The graphic features the FEMA logo in the top left and the HMA (Hazard Mitigation Assistance) logo in the top right. A central stopwatch icon is overlaid with the text "Mitigation Minute" in green. Below this, the main title "FEMA Releases Updates to NFIP Technical Bulletins 1 & 5" is displayed in blue. To the right of the title is the National Flood Insurance Program logo, which shows three houses above wavy lines representing water. On the left side, there are two overlapping images of technical bulletin covers: "User's Guide to Technical Bulletins" and "Openings in Foundation Walls and Walls of Enclosures". To the right of these images, the heading "What are the NFIP Technical Bulletins?" is followed by a paragraph explaining their purpose and a bulleted list of updates.

FEMA

HMA
Hazard Mitigation Assistance

Mitigation Minute

FEMA Releases Updates to NFIP Technical Bulletins 1 & 5

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM®

What are the NFIP Technical Bulletins?

The Technical Bulletins (TBs) provide guidance for complying with the minimum National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) floodplain management requirements pertaining to building performance.

The Bulletins are changing to modernize and streamline their content and presentation. The updated TBs:

- Incorporate relevant information from the latest International Codes® (I-Codes®) and American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Standards
- Provide updated guidance and best practices observed from post-disaster assessments
- Address known issues identified by a wide range of stakeholders

[Technical Bulletin 1, Openings in Foundation Walls and Walls of Enclosures \(2020\)](#)

[Technical Bulletin 5, Free-of-Obstruction Requirements \(2020\)](#)

Room for a river to roam: A Dutch lesson on flood control

Submitted by Vicki Holmes



This is the first installment of a Times-Picayune and Advocate series exploring how the Netherlands' climate change adaptation strategies could be a model for the Louisiana coast.

The series was produced in collaboration with WWNO New Orleans Public Radio and Climate Central, and is part of the Pulitzer Center's Connected Coastlines reporting initiative. For more information, go to pulitzercenter.org/connected-coastlines

Up close is not the best way to see the world's biggest gate.

Viewed from one end, where a three-story hinge links to a massive steel lattice, the [Maeslant storm surge barrier](#) resembles three crane towers toppled across one another. From the opposite end, nearly 280 yards away, it's an imposing white wall, like a drive-in movie screen stretched the length of 2½ football fields.

And that's only half of it.

Taking in the view from a small hill — one of the highest points in this low-lying region of South Holland — the same enormous structure is repeated on the other side of a Rhine River shipping channel running from the North Sea to Rotterdam, Europe's largest port.

Read the rest of part 1 [here](#).

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

[Part 4](#)

[Part 5](#)



Louisiana seeking \$150M grant to elevate oil and gas highway

Submitted by Darla Duet

Louisiana is making a pitch for millions of dollars in federal financing it hopes will help elevate a state highway leading to a critical national oil and gas hub.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and state lawmakers pledged \$150 million in oil spill recovery money for improvements to LA Highway 1 in Lafourche Parish heading to Port Fourchon. Louisiana's leaders want the federal government to match that with another \$150 million.

Jefferson Parish U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, who is the No. 2 House Republican, said he met with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao on Wednesday to talk of the state's request.

Chao's department is overseeing a \$900 million infrastructure grant program that Louisiana has targeted to provide the \$150 million in federal financing, to help elevate an 8.3 mile stretch of Highway 1 from Golden Meadow to Leesville.

Scalise said he stressed not only the highway's use as a key hurricane evacuation route, but also its importance to the national energy infrastructure at Port Fourchon.

"It will be an aggressive competition, but I think we have an incredibly strong story," he said.

Applications for the federal grant dollars are due by Feb. 25, Scalise said, with awards announced by the end of summer.

Upcoming Webinars for Mitigation Message Calendar for Social Media

Submitted by Melissa Becker

Just as a reminder, we are hosting two webinars, April 8 and 9 at 10am, to discuss the Mitigation Message Calendar for Social Media. If you would like to join us, please reserve your place:

- April 8 - <https://mmc2020april8.eventbrite.com/>
- April 9 - <https://mmc2020april9.eventbrite.com/>

Cindy Wirz

Community Education and Outreach Specialist | Region 6 Mitigation Division

Office: (940) 898-5164 | Mobile: (940) 213-2754

Cynthia.Wirz@fema.dhs.gov

Happy Retirement!

Juanita Fowler



Juanita is leaving her position as Director of Planning and Zoning for the City of Natchitoches on May 31st! She served as the Region VII representative for many years, and also took on the role of conference chair for the 2018 annual conference. Congratulations Juanita and thank you for your service with LFMA!

NO DEADLINES	NO OBLIGATIONS
RETIRED	
<hr/>	
ASK SOMEONE ELSE	
MON-SUN: NOT MY PROBLEM	DON'T CALL DON'T EMAIL

In Memoriam

Sandra Turley

Written by Dana Watkins



It is with a saddened heart that we have lost another member of our LFMA family, Ms. Sandra Turley. Ms. Sandra served as Regional Representative for Region 5 for a few years and attended as many workshops and conferences as she was able.

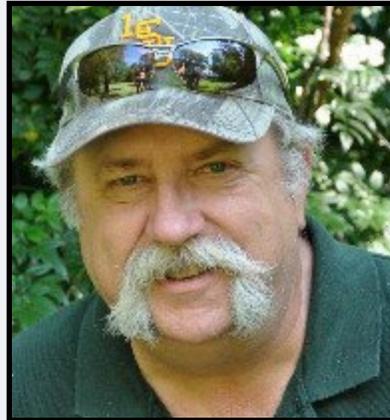
She was an Accredited Municipal Clerk for the Town of Iowa for over 20 years and was a board member of the Louisiana Asset Management Pool (LAMP). She enjoyed reading, watching movies and traveling in her spare time.

Ms. Sandra was loyal to her work and stood behind the laws of her community. She and I traveled together a couple of times to LFMA workshops and I was amazed at her sense of direction and her ability to remember all the details of her travels. She had a map of everywhere in her head. Ms. Sandra will be dearly missed as a colleague and a friend!

In Memoriam

Russ Hicks

Submitted by Melissa Becker/Shandy Heil



We have lost another LFMA member. Russ Hicks was the Floodplain Manager for East Feliciana.

I met Russ Hicks in July 2016, just a day after the LFMA Disaster Response Team (DRT) was agreed upon by the LMFA board, as a committee. Although he was retired and happily fishing four days a week, Russ attended an LFMA workshop where I made announcement about the newly formed team. Russ became the first volunteer to sign the roster.

Little did we know at that time, Russ' own community would be devastated by the August 2016 flood. After a week of volunteering for the DRT, Russ assumed the vacant role of Floodplain Manager for the Town of Clinton, then later for E. Feliciana Parish, both of which are considered jurisdictions with a "dying income", with many residents living at or below poverty level. After one day of field training with FEMA, he and I began conducting Substantial Damage assessments for his jurisdiction. After expending my volunteer time, he ended up finishing all the field assessments and data entry into the SDE program by himself – completing 101 SDE assessments total. He became an aficionado at interpreting the assessment results and even served as the SDE Team Lead for the DRT, where he was able to share his expertise.

During my time working with Russ, I was taken aback at how effective he was at enforcing the rebuilding effort. He knew pretty much all the residents by name and they knew him. And although he had tough news to deliver to many residents who were struggling to recover, they respected and trusted him. He genuinely cared about their recovery and helped come up with practical, affordable rebuilding solutions. He even counseled low and fixed-income residents on how to purchase a modicum of flood insurance to prevent such devastating losses in the future.

In Memoriam, cont.

We lost one of the great ones in this organization and industry. A person who truly cared about the work he was doing and had a vision about how to help his community for the foreseeable future. In preparation for the next “big one”, Russ maintained an updated database of all properties in his jurisdiction for conducting efficient and accurate Substantial Damage assessment operations. In addition, he continued to perfect a percent damage/flood depth chart to the actual cost of damages for his community to ensure residents were given the most accurate Substantial Damage determination possible.

Aside from floodplain management, Russ was a true renaissance man. Before serving his jurisdiction in various positions, he had careers in Wildlife and Fisheries and law enforcement. He was one of the most bad ass people I have had the pleasure of meeting and I am quite positive that if you were to throw him in the middle of a swamp, that he could not only survive, but thrive there. He loved kayaking the Morganza, Atchafalaya, and Maurepas – hunted everything from gators to boars – Russ was a true Louisiana sportsman and even could recall every genus and species of native tree that he learned while attending LSU. He was a talented photographer, a lover of history and genealogy, and an avid learner. He was not one to waste a minute of life and made an impact on many.

Shandy Heil, CFM
LFMA DRT Coordinator



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LFMA 37th Annual Business and Technical Conference

Floodplain Management 2020—What's Your Vision?

**THE CONFERENCE IS CANCELLED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE.**



**Courtyard by Marriott
142 Library Drive
Houma, LA 70360**

Conference Contact: Lisa Ledet

lisaledet@tpcg.org

985-873-6567

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ASFPM's 44th Annual National Conference

NOTICE: ASFPM is carefully monitoring the current status of COVID-19 in the U.S. At this time, there is no change to the 2020 ASFPM Annual National Conference schedule or plans. As always, health, safety and security are top priorities for our conference. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 virus situation and will communicate any changes to conference plans via our conference website, social media platforms, and email correspondence if necessary.



See the countdown to conference timeline [here](#).

Louisiana Floodplain Management Association

P.O. Box 64725
Baton Rouge, LA 70896

LFMA Board Members and Regional Representatives

CHAIRMAN: Toby Fruge', PE, CFM
(225) 926-5125
toby@owenandwhite.com

VICE CHAIR,
CAP: Kara Moree, CFM
(225) 755-2120
kmoree@bucharthorn.com

SECRETARY: Darla Duet CFM
(985) 537-7603
darlad@lafourchegov.org

TREASURER,
MEMBERSHIP: Melissa Becker, CFM
(318) 487-5401
mbecker@rapc.info

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR: Theodore E. DeBaene, PE, CFM
(225) 926-5125
tdebaene@owenandwhite.com

DRT: Shandy Heil, CFM
(225) 603-4090
shandyogeheil@gmail.com



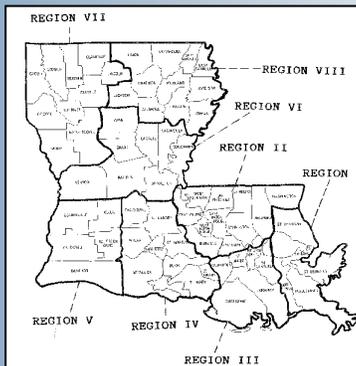
WORKSHOP
COORDINATOR: Darla Duet CFM
(985) 537-7603
darlad@lafourchegov.org

CONTINUING ED: Michelle Gonzales, CFM
(225) 223-2719
mgonzales@rostan.com

NEWSLETTER
EDITOR: Vicki Holmes, CFM
(504) 919-0066
vicki.holmes@cox.net

STATE NFIP
COORDINATOR: Cindy O'Neal, CFM
(225) 379-3005
Cindy.ONeal@LA.GOV

LEGISLATIVE
CHAIR: Gary O'Neal, Jr., CFM
(225) 423-0023
GONeal@gesla.com



Region I
Mike Hunnicutt, CFM
(202) 394-8493
mandjhunnicutt@yahoo.com

Kim Reeves, CFM (alt)
(504) 481-5132
tkreeves@cox.net

Region II
Jerri Daniels, CFM
(504) 872-3776
jdaniels@dewberry.com

Region III
Lisa Ledet, CFM
(985) 873-6567
lisaledet@tpcg.org

Region IV
Tammy Vincent
(337) 233-1130
tvincent@cityofscott.org

Bonnie Anderson, CFM (alt)
(337) 654-9312
floodmgr@gmail.com

Region V
Dana Watkins, CFM
(337) 721-3600
d Watkins@cppj.net

Region VI
Melissa Becker, CFM
(318) 487-5401
mbecker@rapc.info

Region VII
Juanita Fowler, CFM
(318) 357-3840
juanita@natchitochesla.gov

Region VIII
Lisa Richardson, CFM
(318) 398-9780
lrichadson@oppj.org
Larry Walters, CBO, CFM (alt)
(318) 747-2454
walters@ibts.org

Floodwatch is published by the Louisiana Floodplain Management Association. Information and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of all members. Items for publication and other editorial matters should be directed to the Editor: vickih@orleansshoring.com