

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2022



2022 MassFM Annual Conference a Smashing Success!

Were you there?? Our in-person 2022 Conference was held on an appropriately rainy October 13 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Milford, MA. The gathering was a great opportunity to meet members and re-connect with each other after the Covid-19 pandemic isolation!

This year's conference featured three sessions of speakers and a plenary panel at the end of the day.

Two sessions of municipal resilience case studies were presented. Attendees learned about the levee accreditation process in action on the Connecticut and Mill Rivers; plans to improve a pedestrian walkway traversing a floodplain and wetland in Framingham; coastal protection alternatives being considered by Vineyard Haven and Salem; and green infrastructure measures for stormwater management in Fall River.



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Massachusetts Association for Floodplain Management (MassFM)

We educate, promote, & inform on practices related to floodplain management.

We welcome and encourage readers to send us notices of training and other events, articles or other contributions to share with others in our community.

Please visit our website at www.massFM.org for additional articles and resources, and to sign up to receive future editions via email.

Contact: massfloodplain@gmail.com

2022 massFM Annual Conference, cont'd.

Attendees enjoyed a catered lunch while Harriett Festing, Executive Director of the [Anthropocene Alliance](#) spoke from a remote connection as our keynote speaker. The Alliance supports 125 communities and organizations fighting for climate and environmental justice.

During the third conference session we learned of new state tools and resources to address climate change with speakers from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

The afternoon plenary session featured discussion of public involvement efforts by five different organizations. The speakers described their experiences working in economic justice communities and shared strategies they found effective.

Our MassFM Annual Meeting was held at the end of the day. We reviewed chapter events, membership statistics, financial status, board member election results and gave a great big THANK YOU to our sponsors and conference organizers! We look forward to getting together again in 2023 and invite members to participate in committees and events throughout the year.



massFM Board of Directors and/or Planning Committee members: (from left to right) Ellie Baker, Joy Duperault, Marybeth Groff, Rosalie Starvish, Bin Wang, Rebecca Haney, Shannon Hulst, David Azinheira, Noah Slovin, Linda Hutchins (Not shown - Gabrielle Belfit, Matt Shultz, Joe Rossi)

From the State Floodplain Office

Letter of Map Revision, Community Role

Written by Joy Duperault, CFM

We sometimes receive calls from local floodplain administrators asking about their responsibility for signing a FEMA form when there is a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) request in their floodplain. The scenario may include one of the following common situations:

- a) An applicant wants to place fill in the floodplain so they can build a structure with a basement;
- b) An applicant doesn't agree with the FEMA maps and wants to submit a technical change to the maps; or
- c) An applicant wants to point out that their property is not in the regulated floodway, as the map may show.

Once in a while the local official (or community) may not like or agree with what the applicant wants to do. They ask, "Do I have to sign the form?" The short answer is 'no.' There is no law stating that the community must sign the form, which is called the Community Acknowledgement Form or Community Concurrence Form. However, the applicant does have the right to submit the LOMR request to FEMA, and the submission requires a locally signed form. What to do?

The community can always make comments about the proposal—how it does/doesn't fit with local floodplain management practices; why the community thinks that the proposal is lacking or inappropriate; etc. These comments can be placed directly on the form or as an attachment to the form. When attaching, be sure that you also send a copy of the form and attachment to FEMA, because the original attachment can occasionally come up missing in the final package.

Additionally, if the community's signature indicates that there is documentation or certification that was reviewed by the community, be sure to keep a copy of those materials in your files. FEMA may ask to see those at a later date. (It's not up to the community to send materials like these to FEMA—that's the applicant's job.) Such documentation may include:

- A hydrologic and hydraulic analysis/ report
- Certification of no-rise in the base flood elevation
- Environmental Impact Report showing no impact on endangered or threatened species
- Engineering documentation that a structure meets the standards in FEMA Technical Bulletin 10
- Proof for date of placement of existing fill

Websites where you can find out more:

<https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/change-your-flood-zone/lomr-clomr>

Community Acknowledgement Form: <https://omb.report/icr/201802-1660-007/ic/181698>

Or reach out to your MA Flood Hazard Management Office: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/floodplain-management>

Joy is the Massachusetts State Floodplain Manager

Updated Sea Level Rise Science and an Application Guide Are Now Available

Written by Rebecca Love, Senior Coastal Management Specialist with Consolidated Safety Services, Inc. (CSS) at NOAA's Office for Coastal Management

The [2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#) provides the most up-to-date sea level rise projections available for all U.S. states and territories, out to the year 2150. The report shares that on average sea level along the U.S. coast is projected to rise around 10-12 inches in the next 30 years. Most U.S. locations will see minor high tide flooding become a normal occurrence by 2050, and more damaging moderate high tide flooding will happen more often than minor flooding occurs today. The report was the latest product of the Interagency Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flood Hazard and Tool Task Force which includes NOAA, EPA, NASA, USGS, and USACE.

NOAA and other collaborators also developed a companion piece, the [Application Guide for the 2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#). The guide was designed to assist coastal decision-makers and professionals with applying and integrating the information in the Technical Report into local sea level rise planning and adaptation decisions. The Application Guide represents a unique collaboration of NOAA's National Ocean Service, Sea Grant programs (Georgia, Florida, Mississippi/Alabama, California, Washington and Hawaii), Mississippi State University, EcoAdapt, and the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve. The writing team brought sea level rise planning experience from a diverse range of geographies, and worked closely with authors of the Technical Report to ensure scientific accuracy. The result is practical guidance on where to start with sea level rise planning, how to consider the updated information, and best practices for decision-making in the face of uncertainty.

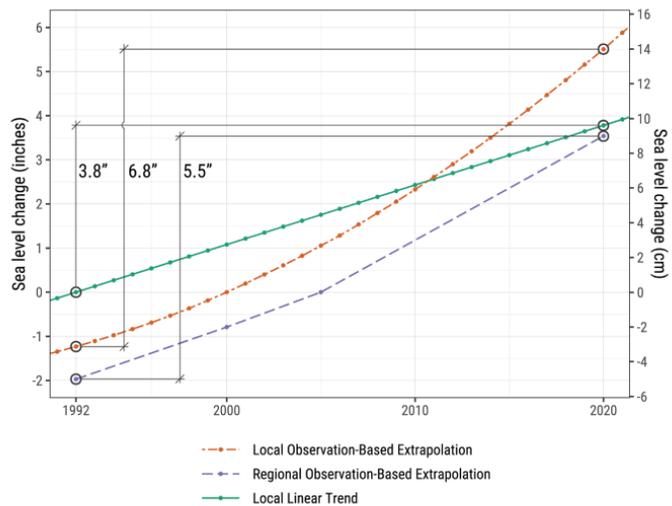
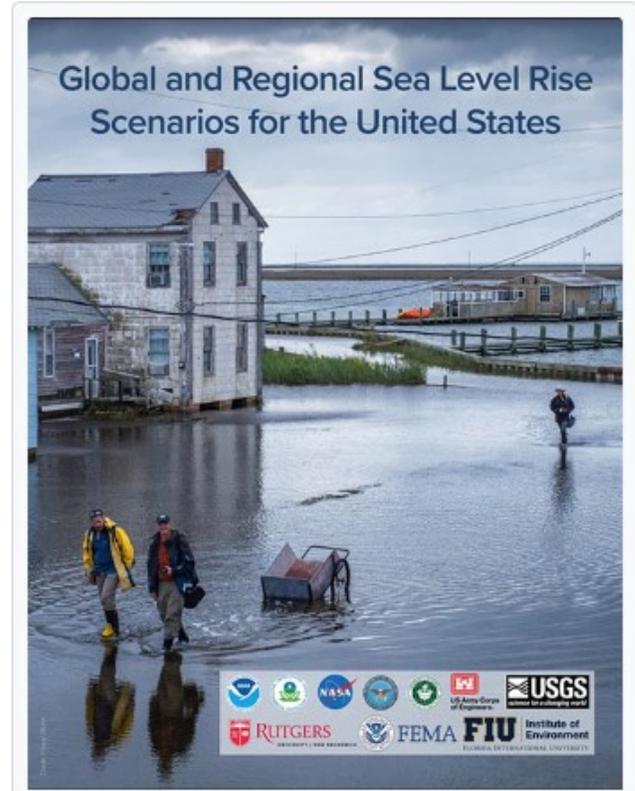
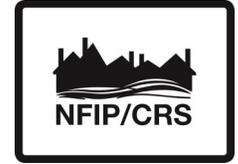


Figure A-1. Three characterizations of historic sea level change at the Washington, DC, tide gauge: the long-term linear rate of change based on data from 1924 to 2021, the non-linear trend fit to observed water levels from 1970 to 2020, and the non-linear trend built from the 1970-2020 tide-gauge trends throughout the Northeast region. Relative differences in sea level for 1992-2020 are annotated.

Community Rating System Corner

A Handy Place to Stay Current on CRS Matters



Written by Shannon Hulst, CFM

Challenges with Risk Rating 2.0 and the Community Rating System

In April of this year, the National Flood Insurance Program transitioned the way flood insurance policies are rated to a new system called Risk Rating 2.0. As you've seen in this newsletter in the past, RR2.0 increases accuracy, makes the NFIP more consistent with current insurance practices in the private industry, and increases premium equity based on structural value. The CRS discount is still a critical part of the flood insurance premium rating, and it now applies to all flood insurance policies in a community!

As this is the first year RR2.0 has been rolled out for all policies, we are still working to understand how it is playing out. One big question: how do we understand what a community's CRS savings are? Because of the way RR2.0 incorporates the CRS discount, we can no longer use the What If scenarios to provide an accurate review of a community's savings. The way the CRS data are currently incorporated, the discount won't show until a property has reached its full risk rate (potentially after several years of 18% annual increases). That means that, for now, CRS savings cannot be calculated on a community-wide basis while many properties in a community remain below full risk rate.

This has been identified as an issue nationwide. While we wait for a solution, in the meantime we can continue to support our communities that participate in the CRS to make sure our residents are getting the best flood resilience possible with the added bonus of a flood insurance discount.

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program within the National Flood Insurance Program that offers discounts on flood insurance in exchange for actions taken within a community that improve flood resilience. More information can be found at www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/community-rating-system and crsresources.org.

Shannon is the CRS & Floodplain Coordinator for Barnstable County through the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension & Woods Hole Sea Grant.



We would like to extend a Thank You to our Sponsors!



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Our mission at massFM is to create a forum for the exchange of local knowledge about floodplain management, to share that knowledge with the public, to inform municipal and statewide policies and procedures, and to improve the Commonwealth's ability to mitigate flood hazards now and in the future. massFM strives to be inclusive across multiple disciplines, regardless of means. We welcome you to join us.