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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025 | Vol. 12, No. 1

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF FLOOD MANAGERS



CAFM Holds 11th Annual Conference Connecticut Flood Manager Community Gathers at Central Connecticut State University

The Connecticut Association of Flood Managers (CAFM) held its 11th Annual Conference and Meeting on November 13, 2024, at the Student Center of Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut. The event attracted approximately 115 members, including representatives from Connecticut jurisdictions, consultants, state and regional government employees, federal government employees, and industry professionals.

Education Credits (CECs) for Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs), Certified Zoning Enforcement Officials (CZEOs), and members of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Attendees seeking certificates of attendance were encouraged to contact CAFM directly.

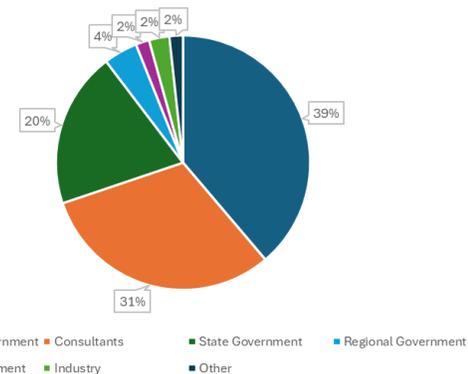
Presentations from the conference are available for download on the CAFM website.

The mission of the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers (CAFM) is to promote education, policies, and activities that mitigate current and future flood losses, costs, and human suffering caused by flooding and to protect the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains - all without causing unreasonable adverse impacts.

The conference featured a series of presentations and discussions on various flood management topics. Notable sessions included "Dam Safety 101", "Norwalk Connecticut's Flood Mitigation Success Utilizing Watershed-wide, Living Model Approach to Analysis and Flood Mitigation", an overview of CTDOT's Bridge Scour Program, and DEMHS providing an overview of the emergency management role in the August 18, 2024 historic flooding event.

The conference also provided Continuing

2024 Conference Attendees



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FEMA Ends BRIC Program

What it Means for Communities

In a significant shift in federal disaster mitigation policy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has officially announced the termination of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.

Launched in 2020, BRIC was hailed as a forward-thinking initiative designed to help communities proactively reduce disaster risk through funding innovative and sustainable infrastructure projects. Its sudden end is raising concerns across state and local governments, as well as in the disaster resilience community.

What Was BRIC?

The BRIC program emerged in response to the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, fueled in part by climate change. It replaced the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program and emphasized proactive investment over reactive disaster response. The program awarded billions of dollars in competitive grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to fund projects such as flood walls, storm-water management systems, wildfire protection strategies, and seismic retrofitting.

BRIC not only prioritized large-scale infrastructure improvements but also supported capacity-building efforts like hazard mapping and community education campaigns. Its emphasis on innovation, equity, and community-wide impact was a key feature.

Why Was It Discontinued?

FEMA cited several reasons for discontinuing BRIC, including:

Budget Constraints: Tightening federal budgets and competing priorities were cited as a primary reason for winding down the program.

Implementation Challenges: Some critics pointed to a slow and overly bureaucratic application process that hindered equitable access, particularly for smaller or under-resourced communities.

Policy Shift: FEMA indicated a pivot toward more integrated, localized disaster preparedness efforts, including partnerships with state agencies and private-sector stakeholders.

Many officials have expressed concern over the potential long-term consequences of ending a program that invested in future risk reduction.

What Happens Now?

FEMA has stated it will redirect resources into "targeted, state-led mitigation strategies" and strengthen existing programs like the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program.

State and local officials are now left reevaluating project plans and seeking new funding avenues. Communities that had pending BRIC applications or were preparing proposals must pivot quickly.

What's Next?

FEMA has indicated that existing BRIC projects will be honored through their completion, but new applications will no longer be accepted. The agency plans to redirect resilience investments through:

- An expanded Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).
- Greater support under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- A proposed new Community Climate Resilience Framework to launch later this year.

Final Thoughts

BRIC's end marks a turning point in federal resilience strategy. As FEMA reshapes its approach, it will be essential to ensure continued support for climate adaptation, especially for the most vulnerable communities. Whether the next wave of programs can live up to BRIC's ambitious vision remains to be seen.

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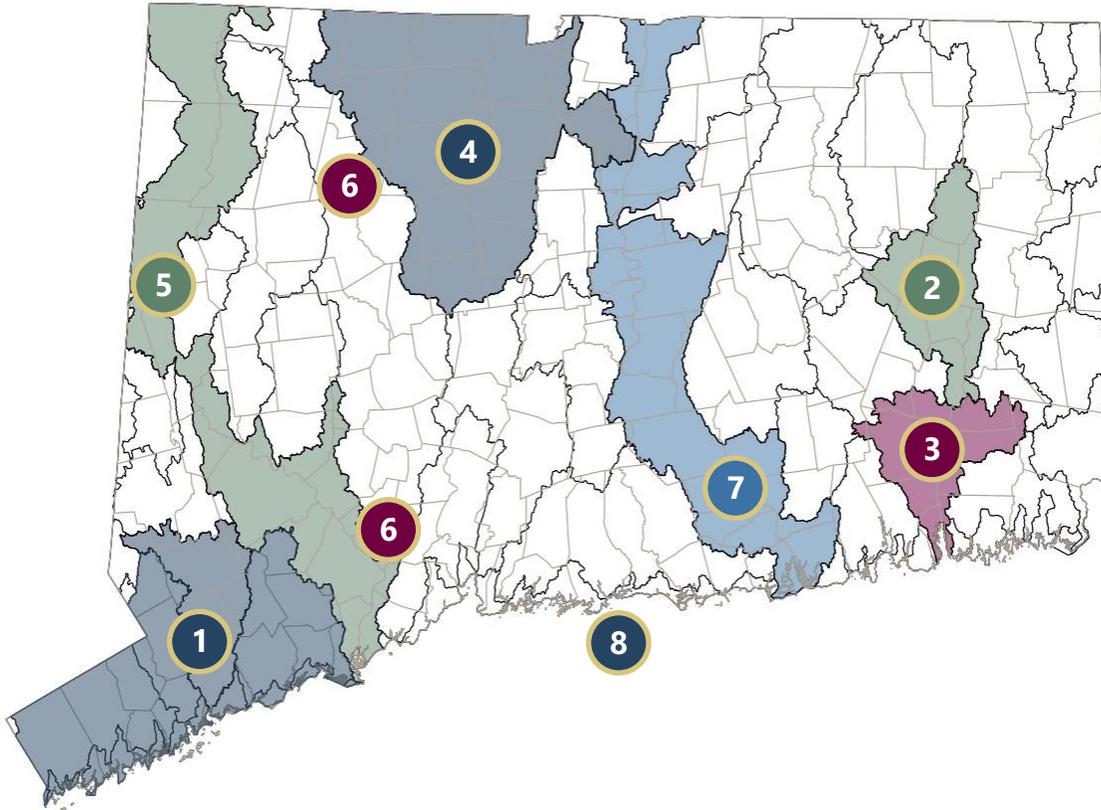
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Executive Order on State and Local Preparedness

On March 18, 2025, a new executive order titled "Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness," was enacted, aiming to enhance national resilience by empowering state and local governments, as well as individuals, to take a more active role in disaster preparedness and response. The order seeks to streamline federal policies, reduce complexity, and promote risk-informed decision-making for infrastructure investments. Key initiatives include developing a National Resilience Strategy, establishing a National Risk Register to assess threats such as natural disasters and cyberattacks, and reviewing existing preparedness policies to better support decentralized, locally-driven approaches to national security and disaster management.



Connecticut Watershed Mapping Updates



1

Saugatuck & Southwestern Connecticut

LFD scheduled for September 2025. Effective maps and studies March 2026.

2

Shetucket River

Preliminary maps and studies June 6, 2025.

3

Thames River

Preliminary maps and studies June 6, 2025.

4

Farmington River

Litchfield County: Preliminary maps and studies scheduled to be issued to communities on July 27, 2025.

Hartford County: Due to mapping contractor error on required newspaper notices, the appeal period will be opened again, beginning April/May 2025 and ending July/August 2025.

5

Housatonic River

Work maps scheduled for release to communities on May 28, 2025.

6

Naugatuck River Levee Analysis & Mapping Procedure

Meeting #2 held September 26, 2024. Meeting #3 was held on February 20, 2025.

7

Lower Connecticut

Preliminary maps and studies scheduled to be issued to communities on August 27, 2025.

8

Connecticut Coast

FEMA will initiate a coastal re-study in 2026.

CTDEEP Sponsors Elevation Certificate Workshop

CTDEEP sponsored virtual Elevation Certificate workshops held on March 12 and March 25. These were full day workshops on the new 2023 EC, provided by Del Schwalls. The workshops were funded by a grant for FEMA. There were 50 participants in each class, 100 total, and registration was paid for all participants with FEMA funding. The vast majority of participants were from Connecticut, but attendees also came from Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Florida.

News Briefs



The National Weather Service has prepared a story map on the flash flooding event that impacted western Connecticut and parts of Long Island on August 18, 2024. The storm delivered up to 16 inches of rain in some parts of Connecticut, leading to widespread damage. The story map provides an overview of the impacts, discusses how the storm system developed, and the forecasting challenges related to the event. The story map can be viewed at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8e046d3c23494b18a3a154af809965cf>



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute (EMI) has initiated a new Climate Adaptation and Hazard Mitigation Certificate Program, tailored for State, Local, Tribal, and Territory professionals, to gain the knowledge, skills, and strategic perspectives necessary to integrate climate change adaptation principles into emergency management practices.

The Program consists of 4 foundation courses, 3 elective courses, and 1 capstone project. The required foundation courses and the capstone project will be taught through courses that are delivered as self-paced EMI Independent Study online courses, online synchronized courses delivered by EMI, and in-person courses at the EMI campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland.



In July 2024, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released an updated Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide. The updated guide consolidates information and eligibility requirements for Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant funded projects. It also reflects recent policy changes to simplify program delivery through streamlined cost effectiveness methods and a lower benefit-cost analysis discount rate. HMA provides funding to reduce risk and impact of disasters such as wildfires, drought, extreme heat, hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding.

ASCE 24-24 Delivers Major Update to Flood Resistant Design Standards

A new national standard could significantly change how communities mitigate flooding. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has released Flood Resistant Design and Construction, ASCE/SEI 24-24, an update to its widely used standards for structures in flood hazard areas.

The 2024 edition provides minimum requirements for flood resistant design and construction of structures that are subject to building code requirements, floodplain management regulations, or other requirements that cite this standard. ASCE 24-24 contains significant changes from the previous version, ASCE 24-14, and aligns with the ASCE 7-22 Supplement 2 for design flood loads, which was released in May 2023.

Among numerous provisions contained in this standard, four primary updates stand out:

Expanded flood hazard area. The flood hazard area is redefined to include the 500-year floodplain (where it is mapped as Shaded X Zone or Zone B or C on some older FIRMs) as well as the 100-year floodplain (SFHA).

Elevation requirements are tied to the flood design class of the structure. The assignment of the flood design class is based on a building or structure's risk to human life, health and welfare if affected by flooding. For most residential, commercial, and industrial structures, this is the 500-year mean recurrence interval (MRI) flood event. For more important facilities, it is either the 750-year (buildings and structures that pose a high risk to the public or significant disruption to community) or 1,000-year (buildings and structures that contain essential facilities and services necessary for emergency response and recovery) MRI flood event. Only certain accessory and agricultural structures would be allowed at the 100-year MRI flood elevation.

Climate change considerations. Coastal floodplain calculations must factor in future sea level change based on historic trends.

Enhanced dry floodproofing requirements. The standard overhauls requirements for dry floodproofing, including the required use of ANSI/FM 2510- certified products and updates to inspection and maintenance needs, and flood emergency operation plans.

Article reprinted from ASFPM "News & Views", March 17, 2025.

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