

## Celebrating New CRS Communities: Waterloo and Waverly

By Erin Wendt

Members of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) Floodplain Management Division presented plaques to the Village of Waterloo and the City of Waverly commemorating their induction into the Community Rating System (CRS) on August 12, 2024, and September 24, 2024, respectively. Nebraska State NFIP Coordinator and CRS Coordinator Elijah Kaufman attended both presentations, gifting the plaques to each community's Floodplain Administrator, with Erin Wendt attending the Waterloo presentation and Anna Crist attending Waverly's presentation. The Village of Waterloo and City of Waverly are two of eight communities in Nebraska to participate in the CRS program. The cities of Lincoln, Papillion,

- See [Celebrating](#) cont. on page 5.

## Floodplain Model Roadshow: Scotts Bluff

By Jared Ashton

After visits to several other locations, NeDNR's Floodplain Model continued its journey across the state in October by making a 2-day stop at the Water Education for Tomorrow (WET) event, hosted by ESU 13 and the North Platte Natural Resource District. At WET, the Floodplain Management Team talked with nearly 300 local fifth graders about the importance of wetlands, careful floodplain management, the dangers of floodwaters, and the importance of evacuation orders.

To illustrate the importance of wetlands and floodplain management, the fifth graders were asked to construct paper houses and then place the houses in the floodplain model in a location where their house might be safe from flooding. Most houses were placed on high ground, with several tree houses

being constructed. Then a rainstorm was simulated, with the rain falling on a wetland area (represented by sponges). Only the houses placed in the river were affected by this storm.

Next, a shopping center with a large parking lot was placed over the wetlands. Instantly, the students knew that they were in trouble. The next rainstorm flooded many of the low-lying houses, demonstrating how in a river system, upstream development can have an impact miles and miles downstream.

To protect their low-lying houses, students often asked to move their house (in real life, this would be a buy-out or relocation) or to build a clay levee or dam. In the next rainstorm, both the levee and the dam protected the low-lying houses, but the new infrastructure caused upstream houses to be flooded when they had earlier avoided getting wet. This demonstrated how downstream development can have an impact upstream.

Presentations were ended theatrically by simulating a very large rainstorm and dumping the remaining bucket of water onto the model, flooding

- See [Roadshow](#) cont. on page 6.

## Welcome to the NFIP, Hampton, Dawson, Belden, and Loup County!

NeDNR is excited for the residents of these communities. They will soon have access to federally-backed flood insurance—among other benefits—by virtue of their community's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. To learn how your community can join, contact Elijah Kaufman at [Elijah.Kaufman@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Elijah.Kaufman@Nebraska.gov) or (402) 471-0640. ■

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## Meet Your Floodplain Management Team

The Floodplain Management Division is here to serve the Nebraska's floodplain administrators, property owners, insurance providers, engineers, and others. We are responsible for coordinating a comprehensive program supporting the wise use of land that is subject to flooding. Several new faces joined our ranks of our award-winning program in the past year, so we're introducing the whole team.



Jamie Reinke, PE, CFM  
Division Manager



Michele York  
Administrative Programs Officer

### Management:

Jamie Reinke develops program goals, priorities, and objectives. She manages grants and ensures that a robust body of mapping and outreach projects are advanced throughout the state as part of the floodplain management section's role as a Cooperating Technical Partner with FEMA.

### Administrative Services:

Michele helps us all stay organized. She assists with outreach event and training preparation, verifies community contacts, reviews documents for accuracy prior to distribution, assists with preparing FEMA reporting documents, and numerous other tasks related to the Floodplain Management Section's responsibilities.

### Outreach:

Led by the State NFIP Coordinator, the outreach team is here to answer your floodplain management questions. The team assists communities across the state via floodplain ordinance review and adoption, facilitates Community Assistance Visits, Community Assistance Contacts, training sessions, and provides technical assistance.



Elijah Kaufman, CFM  
State NFIP Coordinator



Isabella Bialas  
Outreach Specialist



Anna Crist  
Outreach Coordinator

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**Mercy Kipenda**  
Outreach Specialist



**Erin Wendt**  
Outreach Coordinator

**YOUR SUGGESTIONS  
WELCOME!**

What common permitting situations you have experienced in your community and would like to see discussed in the NeDNR Floodplain newsletter? Please send suggestions to Adele Phillips at [Adele.Phillips@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Adele.Phillips@Nebraska.gov)

**Mapping and Technical Assistance:**

The Mapping and Technical Assistance staff conduct approximate hydrological and hydraulic analyses for Base Flood Elevation Requests and mapping, delineate floodplain boundaries, and create Flood Risk Products. They create Flood Insurance Rate Maps and compile the mapping information into databases for FEMA submittal, ensuring the projects follow FEMA guidelines and standards.



**Harrison Jones**  
Floodplain Mapping Specialist



**Jeehoon Kim, CFM**  
Senior Floodplain Mapping Specialist



**Karl Merchant**  
Senior Floodplain Mapping Specialist



**Adele Phillips, CFM**  
Flood Mitigation Planner,  
and Mapping Specialist



**Ryan Stastny, CFM**  
Senior Floodplain Mapping Specialist

- See Meet cont. on page 4.

**Meet** continued from page 3.

## Engineering:

The engineering team develops guidelines and procedures for mapping work. They conduct approximate and detailed hydrological and hydraulic analyses for mapping, review and approve Base Flood Elevation determinations, prepare floodplain reports, and delineate floodplains. Our engineers review engineering work developed during FEMA mapping projects and perform Technical Reviews of analysis submitted by local jurisdictions, to verify accuracy and that FEMA guidelines are followed. ■



Jared Ashton, PE, CFM  
Engineer



Rebecca Podariu  
Engineer

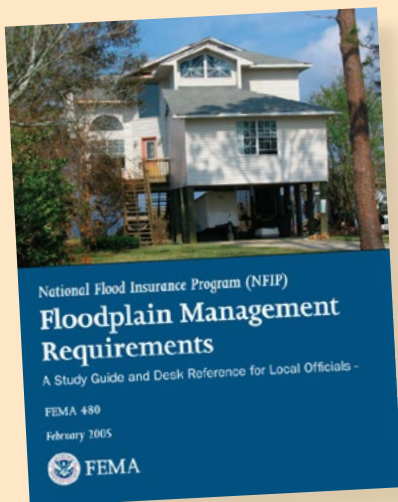


Deanna Ringenberg, PE, CFM  
Engineer



Stefan Schaepe, PE, CFM  
Engineer

## Coming in 2025!



### LO273

## Managing Floodplain Development Through the National Flood Insurance Program

February 24 - 27, 2025  
Lincoln, NE

The purpose of this free, 4-day FEMA course is to prepare participants to understand and perform the roles and responsibilities of the local Floodplain Administrator. Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

- Use a Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to determine the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) and the flood zone.
- Understand how to comply with minimum requirements of the NFIP.
- Prepare for post-disaster activities.
- Explain basic concepts of flood insurance ratings and how decisions affect the cost of flood insurance.

This course is strongly recommended for those who wish to obtain the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) certification. Reserve your spot now. Participation is limited to 30, and spots will fill quickly! For more information, visit: <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/floodplain/training-and-workshops>. ■

**Celebrating** continued from page 1.

Omaha, Fremont, Scottsbluff, and Valley are the other CRS participating communities in Nebraska, with varying levels of classes.

The Community Rating System is a voluntary program available to communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to encourage higher standard adoptions through flood insurance rate discounts. There are 10 classes within the CRS program, and classes are designated based upon a point system. Every 500 points a community earns, a five percent discount on flood insurance policies is added for all policy holders, with up to a 45% insurance premium reduction for Class 1 communities. Eligible activities to receive points fall within the following four categories: Public Information Activities, Mapping and Regulations, Flood Damage Reduction Activities, and Warning and Response. Examples of eligible activities in these categories include preserving green space and buying out high risk properties, maintaining flood related information in an easily accessible space for community members, and adopting regulations that exceed the NFIP minimum standards. These activities help to achieve the three goals of the program: “reduce flood damage to insurable property, strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program, and encourage a comprehensive approach floodplain management” (FEMA, Community Rating System). Nationwide, there are over 1,500 participating communities in the CRS program.

There are a variety of benefits to communities for participating in the CRS program. The main benefit being lower flood insurance rates for community residents, but it also includes increased opportunities for citizens to learn more about their flood risk and evaluate their vulnerabilities, provides enhanced public safety, and

- See **Celebrating** cont. on page 6.

## NeDNR Presents at NeFSMA 2024

By Elijah Kaufman

The 2024 Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (NeFSMA) Annual Conference took place this July, where floodplain administrators, zoning officials, and community leaders gathered to discuss current floodplain topics. The NeDNR Floodplain Management team were no strangers at this event, providing four different presentations on floodplain mapping and regulations.

Jamie Reinke kicked off the day with the first presentation in the floodplain management tract, discussing the importance maintaining floodplain maps through the Letter of Map Change (LOMC), specifically, the Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). A LOMR is an official modification to an effective floodplain map, typically changing the existing Base Flood Elevations (BFE) or floodplain boundaries. Jamie reminded floodplain managers and developers that floodplain maps are just snapshots in time, and should be maintained as development changes conditions. Often, this requires modifications to the effective maps outside of the normal floodplain process.

Reinke also presented on the procedures for determinations of “no-rise” for developments that occur in a floodway. She showed floodplain administrators what to look for in a no-rise determination, and reminded attendees that they can submit the engineering analysis to the NeDNR mapping team for comments before approving a permit application.

Elijah Kaufman provided presentations alongside teammates Anna Crist and Erin Wendt. Their first presentation explained the process for calculating the BFE in any flood zone, and included a hands-on exercise on how to use a Flood Insurance Study to determine the BFE by interpolating between BFE cross-sections.

The next presentation discussed how to maintain good client relations, and was geared towards floodplain administrators, surveyors, contractors, and any other group that provides customer service to clients. The presentation reminded these groups that floodplain development permitting is a commonly misunderstood process, and the best place to start when creating a relationship with a client is to help them understand the purpose behind the documentation.

Their final session provided floodplain administrators with instructions for permitting open storage, such as boat and camper parking, construction materials and equipment, or vehicles in the floodplain. The NeDNR Floodplain team has learned from floodplain administrators across Nebraska what works best for them, and how to best implement FEMA’s regulations in real world situations. NeDNR is always proud to present at the NeFSMA Annual Conference, and we strive to provide up-to-date, relevant information to Nebraska’s floodplain managers. If you have any topics you would like to hear more about at next year’s conference, please contact a member of our team at <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/floodplain/contact>. ■

Riverine Flooding is the nation's 3rd costliest natural disaster.

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**Roadshow** continued from page 1.

most of the remaining houses. A few students would brag that their house survived even this storm, until they were asked how they would leave their house to get food, water, or emergency services. Even if your house is elevated, the roads around your house often aren't and your house may be stranded. The lesson: take evacuation orders seriously.

At the end of WET, students had a great time at the Floodplain Model, bragging about how their house had survived flooding or how badly their house had gotten destroyed by the flooding. If you would like us to bring this educational opportunity to your school or event, contact Michele York at [Michele.York@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Michele.York@Nebraska.gov) or (402) 471-1214. ■



Approximately 300 fifth graders from 10 elementary schools attended North Platte Natural Resource District's annual Water Education for Tomorrow (WET) event on October 8th and 9th. NeDNR's Jared Ashton and Karl Merchant were in attendance to demonstrate the floodplain model and connections within watersheds. The students were quick studies, picking up right away on the impacts of various scenarios tested in the model. Photo by Chabella Guzman.

**Celebrating** continued from page 5.

allows communities to evaluate their floodplain management programs against nationally recognized benchmarks.

Within Nebraska, communities are automatically eligible for up to 250 points because of the state's minimum floodplain management standards, which includes freeboard requirements – or elevating a home or structure one (1) foot above the base flood elevation. Communities that are downstream of a high hazard potential dam are also eligible for points through the NeDNR's Dam Safety section's programs and 50 more points are available through NeDNR's Interactive Map or if your community has an online assessor's map from the county.

If your community is interested in joining CRS or would like more information, contact Elijah Kaufman at [Elijah.Kaufman@Nebraska.gov](mailto:Elijah.Kaufman@Nebraska.gov) or at (402) 471-0640. ■

## Training and Events

### 11.06 ■ Floodplain Management Workshop

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Casey's Community Building  
Albion, NE

This FREE workshop is suitable for both novice and seasoned floodplain administrators, as well as any officials or community members involved in floodplain management. Topics include: floodplain development permits and the permitting process, map reading, LOMAs and LOMR-Fs, and substantial damage and improvement. Attend for a whole or half day. Continuing Education Credits (CECs) are available for Certified Floodplain Managers and Nebraska county and municipal treasurers. To read the agenda and to register, visit this [link](#).

### 11.12 □ Updates to FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Virtual

The Natural Hazards Center is working with FEMA to put on the free "Making Mitigation Work" webinar series. Each of these one-hour seminars has guest speakers and highlights processes in mitigation policy, practice, and research. Additional trainings will be hosted on:

December 10, 2024; Topic: TBD  
January 21, 2025; Topic: TBD  
February 11, 2025; Topic: "Examining Rural Places, Disability, and Underserved Populations in Disaster."

March 11, 2025; Topic: TBD  
To learn more, visit this [link](#).

**Training and Events Continued:**

**11.14** □  
**Intro to 2D Mapping for Floodplain Managers**

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM  
Virtual

During this free and informative 1-hour virtual class staff from NeDNR’s Floodplain Management Division will help floodplain managers understand and use 2-Dimensional study results for managing development and communicating flood hazards in their communities, with a specific focus on highlighting the differences in how the data is represented in the Flood Insurance Study (FIS), Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), and other regulatory resources. CECs available for Certified Floodplain Managers and qualifying treasurers. For more information visit this [link](#).

**On-Demand** □  
**NFIP 101: Introduction to Floodplain Management**

Virtual

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) offers an on-demand introduction to floodplain management. This course is free and does not require ASFPM membership. It is divided into nine units. It can be taken over the course of days, weeks or even months. Up to 12 CECs are available for Certified Floodplain Managers. To learn more, visit this [link](#).

**12.12** □  
**Basic Floodplain Management**

10:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Virtual

Join NeDNR staff for a free, 4 hour virtual class detailing the fundamentals of floodplain management. Topics include: floodplain development permits and the permitting process, map reading, LOMAs and LOMR-Fs, and substantial damage and improvement. This class is suitable for both novice and seasoned floodplain administrators, as well as anyone responsible for local floodplain administration. CECs available for Certified Floodplain Managers and qualifying treasurers. For more information visit this [link](#).

**On-Demand** □  
**IS-285: Substantial Damage Estimation for Floodplain Administrators**

Virtual

Brought to you by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) this training helps state, local and tribal officials create SDEs using the FEMA SDE software. These SDEs comply with the NFIP. This course takes about eight hours to complete. To learn more and register, visit this [link](#).

**01.14 - 01.15** ■  
**Nebraska Floodplain Conference**

Day 1: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Day 2: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Lincoln, NE

Save the date to join NeDNR’s Floodplain Management Division and partner agencies, Floodplain Administrators, Emergency Managers, and officials from across the state for one or both days of free back-to-back floodplain training! To learn more, visit this [link](#).

**On-Demand** □  
**IS-1119: Letters of Map Amendment and Letters of Map Revision-Based on Fill**

Virtual

Brought to you by EMI, this course gives information to people interested in LOMCs. It focuses on LOMAs, LOMR-Fs, Conditional LOMAs, and Conditional LOMR-Fs. It talks about these LOMC processes at the applicant, community floodplain administrator, licensed professional, and FEMA levels. This course takes about three hours to complete. To learn more and register, visit this [link](#).

**November**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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		.12		.14		

**December**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				.12		

**January**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		.14	.15			

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Harrison Jones	Floodplain Mapping Specialist	(402) 471-2242

# ARE YOU IN THE 4%?

4% of Nebraska homes are at a higher risk of flooding because they're built in a floodplain. Don't wait until flooding impacts you to take action. Check our interactive map and see if your home could be at risk.

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