



Natural Hazard Mitigation Association

The Hazard Mitigator

Winter 2013

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Report to the NHMA Membership on Our 2012 Accomplishments **From Ed Thomas**

Dear NHMA Members,

2012 was truly a watershed year for the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association. We are increasingly becoming recognized as an effective organization dedicated to bringing together all levels of government, business, industry, nongovernment organizations, and ordinary citizens. We bring together members of all professions, and all economic groups, in a nonpartisan, thoughtful manner with the goal of turning our nation, and the world around it, from its current practices of development, which will inevitably result in greater disasters, to a safer more sustainable future for everyone. We are unique in many ways in that we are not an organization of any one profession or at any particular level of government or non-government; our common purpose is a safe and sustainable future, which protects the property and rights of everyone.

In 2012 our volunteers conducted dozens of workshops, webinars, and interviews, which appear to be having impact on the national dialogue that is necessary to change the thoughtless way in which we are developing our nation and the world. This brief report will just discuss some of the highlights of the year, especially those of which you may not be aware.

It must be noted, that the tremendous successes mentioned below have come at a great cost to our dedicated volunteers. It is very clear that NHMA must increasingly seek funding so as to be able to hire staff, and as part of maturing, not solely rely on the efforts of volunteers. Meanwhile, more volunteers are needed to help continue our efforts. You can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for future generations by participating now in the efforts of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association.

Continued on next page.

Visit NHMA's Build Back Safer & Smarter site at <http://recovery.stormsmart.org/> for Best Community Post-Disaster Recovery Practices

NHMA Initiatives: Building Back Safer & Smarter after Hurricane Sandy

NHMA has been leading ongoing efforts to encourage rebuilding in safer and smarter ways in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. NHMA issued a paper on its website, entitled "Build Back Safer & Smarter," with nine time-tested steps communities can follow as they recover. On February 22, NHMA also presented a webinar on "Nine Steps to Build Back Safer & Smarter," led by French Wetmore.

NHMA's Hurricane Sandy Information Page includes additional resources for a safe & sustainable recovery. Visit <http://nhma.info/Sandy/> for information on protecting property and preparing for hurricanes, interactive maps, social media applications, and resources from FEMA, the American Planning Association, and the Natural Disaster Preparedness Training Center.

NHMA Board of Directors

President – Edward Thomas
1st Vice President – Jo Ann Howard
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Report from the NHMA President (cont.)

Here are just a few selected, noteworthy accomplishments for 2012. The NHMA Committees, Board Leadership, and Executive Director, especially, have done so much more than what is mentioned here. These few successes are just a glimmer of the tremendous accomplishment of NHMA in 2012.

- 1) NHMA conducted a series of lectures and workshops in Hawaii in January and February 2012. A report describing this series can be found [here](#).
- 2) NHMA was accepted as a cooperating technical partner by the Federal emergency management agency enabling us to obtain funding for the NHMA created Resilience Neighbors Network [RNN]. More information on RNN can be found at: <http://nhma.info/projects/resilient-neighbors/>
- 3) NHMA conducted the first in what we hope will be a series of workshops discussing a comprehensive "whole communities" approach to "Safe Development for All Hazards." This workshop was sponsored by the innovative state and FIP coordinator for Utah, and John Crofts. More information can be found [here](#).
- 4) Late in 2012 NHMA hired our long time volunteer Executive Director, Alessandra Jerolleman, as a part-time paid Executive Director!

"NHMA is almost entirely an all volunteer organization...what would you like to do to help create a safe future?"

- Ed Thomas, NHMA President

Build Higher!

Freeboard protects property and saves money.

Visit

<http://freeboard.stormsmart.org/> for more information.

Immediately following the devastation of "Superstorm" Sandy, NHMA launched an intensive effort to support safe, proper, and thoughtful reconstruction following Sandy. We launched this effort with a joint letter to FEMA from NHMA and the Association of State Floodplain Managers. In addition, we set up special page on our website containing information on thoughtful hazard mitigation/climate adaptation beyond sea-level rise inundation areas recovery from Sandy. That webpage is available at <http://nhma.info/sandy/> and contains innovative thoughtful materials specially developed by NHMA volunteers, including French Wetmore describing a nine-step recovery process recommended for the Sandy afflicted communities. In addition, as Board President, I was interviewed by the American Planning Association (APA) to discuss how best to proceed with local recovery from Sandy. The recording of that interview is located [here](#) and on our Sandy webpage. I was also interviewed by the New York Times for an article discussing the need for higher floodplain management standards following Sandy; that article is available [here](#). It is likely that this special Sandy effort will continue and be expanded to include broader discussion for pre-and post disaster planning and preparedness. **Volunteers are most welcome! Contact Ed Thomas if you are interested.**

Report from the NHMA President (cont.)

- 5) Under the leadership of Dr. Lori Peek, NHMA conducted our third annual International Hazard Mitigation Practitioners event, which is now referred to as the International Hazard Mitigation Practitioners Symposium. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Barry Hokanson, the draft proceedings of that event are located [here](#). The practitioners' event could not have been held without the cooperation and support from the University of Colorado's Natural Hazards Center. This event is increasingly attracting both thought leaders and thoughtful practitioners who wish to learn from each other how to approach the tremendous challenges we have of reducing the inevitable consequences of poorly designed human built development in areas subject of foreseeable natural disasters. Information for the 2013 International hazard Mitigation Practitioners Symposium is available [here](#).
- 6) In 2012 NHMA hired a part-time webmaster and tremendously increased the quality of the website and the materials which are available on the website.
- 7) In 2012 NHMA, under the leadership of NHMA Board Member, Dr. Kelly Klima, began a major effort to reach out to the climate change community so as to foster a linkage between Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation. This partnership resulted in a well-attended webinar on the linkage between [Hazard Mitigation and Climate Change](#) in December 2012 and a webinar on February 27, 2013 on [Flood Mitigation and Adaptation in the Netherlands](#).
- 8) Under the leadership of Don Watson NHMA continued work on the development of a strategic plan. We hope to get a draft of that plan to the board and then the membership in the coming months.
- 9) Among the many policy documents and initiatives begun by NHMA in 2012, I would like to mention the special effort to reach out to the international insurance industry to discuss how hazard mitigation and the efforts of and HMA can be of enormous benefit to insurance and reinsurance carriers. **This effort is just beginning and volunteers are most welcome. Contact Ed Thomas if you are interested.**
- 10) With the help of NHMA Board Member Bob Anderson, and under the leadership of Miriam Belblidia and Dr. Michele Companion, NHMA established an International Activities Committee. We have great hopes that this committee can both spread information from the US to the World; and most especially convey information from the rest of the World to US practitioners, thought leaders, and decision makers.
- 11) NHMA finally launched a newsletter!

**NHMA is almost entirely an all-volunteer organization. We are all busy folks; NHMA gives us all an opportunity for a synergistic leveraging of our time in such a manner as to create a tremendous difference in the consequences of natural events. What would you like to do to help create a safer future?
Contact Alessandra or Ed to offer to volunteer some time or money.**

NHMA Recognizes Lifetime Work of Austin's JoAnn Howard

The Natural Hazard Mitigation Association named Austin attorney and businesswoman JoAnn Howard "A National Treasure" on January 5. In granting the award, NHMA cited Howard's lifetime of work to reduce disaster losses and create safer communities. The award reads in part:

"JoAnn's successful lifetime of work includes leadership as National Flood Insurance Program administrator, president of Austin's H2O Partners, and vice president of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association. Throughout her career, she has advocated sound risk management, wise development, prudent planning, and safe communities. Jo Ann is succeeding in her efforts to make the world a better place."

Ms. Howard is president of Austin's H2O Partners, Inc., a planning firm. NHMA President Ed Thomas presented the award to Howard at NHMA's January annual board meeting in Austin, Texas.

Ms. Howard was appointed as Federal Insurance Administrator at the Federal Emergency Management Agency in March 1998 by President Bill Clinton. Serving as the administrator of the flood program, she was responsible for managing the more than \$523 billion of flood insurance in force in the National Flood Insurance Program.

After returning to Texas in March 2001, Jo Ann Howard established H2O Partners, Inc. in Austin. H2O Partners is a firm consulting in flood insurance, hazard mitigation planning, disaster protection and recovery, public assistance, HUD programs, homeland infrastructure security, and floodplain management issues.

Prior to her tenure at FEMA, she served as a gubernatorial appointee to head the Texas Department of Insurance as chief insurance regulator for the State of Texas and as a member of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. She received a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, a master's in public administration from East Texas State University, and a BS in education from Abilene Christian University in Abilene.



JoAnn Howard receiving her "National Treasure" award from NHMA President Ed Thomas

Job Hunting?

Don't forget to visit
NHMA's job postings at:
<http://nhma.info/resources/job-posting/>

NHMA Represented at Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forum

The ASFP Foundation invited Ed Thomas to join selected experts at the fourth assembly of the Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forum. It was convened February 19-20, 2013, at George Mason University's Arlington Campus in the Washington D.C. area.

The Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forums bring together leading experts in flood policy and floodplain management to evaluate topics of critical national importance. The topic of this Forum was "Human Adjustments in Coasts – Adaptive Management in Response to Changing Hazards, Risks, and Ecosystems". Ed participated as the NHMA representative and presented a paper on "Calculating the Benefits of Risky Development Practices."

Foresight Project Report: Reducing Risks of Future Disasters

By **Sir John Beddington**, UK Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Government Office for Science

The final report of the Foresight Project, "Reducing Risks of Future Disasters: Priorities for Decision Makers," has been published and can be accessed through: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/policy-futures/disasters/reports-documents>

This Foresight Project considered disasters resulting from natural hazards in developing countries. The aim has been to provide advice to decision makers on the difficult choices and priorities for investing in disaster risk reduction (DRR), so that the diverse impacts of future disasters can be effectively reduced, both around the time of the events and in the longer term.

The work looks out to 2040 and takes a fresh look at how science and evidence could help in understanding evolving future disaster risks, how those risks may best be anticipated, and the practical actions that could best be taken in risk reduction.

It is important that we grasp that disaster and death are not the inevitable consequence of greater exposure to hazards. It is possible to stabilize disaster impacts and save lives and livelihoods. Science has a huge role to play. However we require a change in culture and a new approach. Everyone with a stake in developing countries needs to play their part in reducing risk in a way that goes far beyond the traditional boundaries of development and disaster response.

I hope you will find this report of interest, and if you would like to discuss this further, please contact Mark Galtrey, Project Leader at mark.galtrey@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Apply Now for the Mary Fran Myers Scholarship

The Mary Fran Myers Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications. Recipients will receive financial support allowing them to attend the [2013 Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop](#) in Broomfield, Colorado, July 13-16. Recipients may also stay through July 17 to attend either the International Research Committee on Disasters or the NHMA add-on events for researchers and practitioners, respectively. Scholarships can cover part or all of transportation, meals, and registration costs.

The Mary Fran Myers Scholarship is awarded annually to at least one potential Workshop participant. Recipients are recognized at the Workshop and may be asked to serve as panelists, where they can highlight their research or practical experiences with hazards and disasters.

As the longtime co-director of the Natural Hazards Center, Myers recognized that many of the people and organizations that could benefit from and contribute to the Workshop—including local practitioners, students, and international professionals—were among those least likely to afford it. The scholarship was established in 2003 to fulfill Myers' request that qualified and talented individuals receive support to attend.

This year, hazards practitioners, students, and researchers with a strong commitment to disaster management and mitigation and who reside *outside* North America or the Caribbean are eligible to enter. Eligibility is based on current place of residence, not citizenship. Applicants from North America and the Caribbean will be eligible for the scholarship in 2014. Previous attendees of the Natural Hazards Workshop are *not* eligible for the 2013 Mary Fran Myers Scholarship. Preference is given to those who can demonstrate financial need.

For more information on past scholarship winners and how to apply, visit the [Mary Fran Myers Scholarship page](#) at the Natural Hazards Center Web site. Applications must be received by April 1. <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/awards/myers-scholarship.html>

Communities Showcase that Flooding Can – and Has – Happened Here: FEMA’s New “Know Your Line” High Water Mark Initiative

Nearly every community in the United States is at risk for flooding but most Americans do not believe they are at risk. To improve the public's awareness of flood risk and encourage them to take action to reduce it, FEMA and seven other Federal agencies developed the "Know Your Line: Be Flood Aware" initiative.

The Know Your Line initiative helps communities showcase their local flooding history and motivate their residents to take action by posting high water mark signs in prominent places to show how high flood waters have risen in the past. Communities are encouraged to hold a high profile event to announce the initiative, followed by a wide range of supporting activities to remind residents of their flood risk over time and prompt them to take steps to reduce it. Additionally, communities that reach out to the public to help prevent the effects of flooding through the Know Your Line initiative:

- Underscore their commitment to the well-being of residents and the local business community
- Galvanize their community to take steps now to reduce the often devastating impact of floods
- Can apply to receive Community Rating System Rating (CRS) points to reduce the cost of flood insurance
- Can put existing applicable Federal and state mitigation assistance funds to work

To inform the initiative, FEMA and its partners are currently working with communities nationwide to conduct pilot projects. The pilots will help refine the initiative's materials, messages, and create new materials that communities may need to better communicate their flood risk. Currently, there are four pilot communities including Frankfort and Franklin County, KY, Harrisburg, PA, Orange Beach, AL, and Nashville, TN. These communities anticipate launching their initiatives by April 2013, in preparation for a national rollout of the initiative.

For more information on the "Know Your Line: Be Flood Aware" initiative, visit www.fema.gov/knowyourline . If your community may be interested in participating, please send an email to Vincent Brown at FEMA at vincent.brown@fema.dhs.gov with your community's name, State, and point of contact to receive additional information.

Upcoming Conferences

Texas Floodplain Management Association's Spring Conference: Don't miss TFMA's 25th Anniversary Celebration - mark your calendars and plan to attend or present! The dates are **May 21 - 24, 2013**. For more information, visit www.tfma.org.

NHMA's International Hazard Mitigation Practitioners Symposium: The theme of the 2013 International Hazard Mitigation Practitioners Symposium – which will be held **July 16-17, 2013** – is “*From Grassroots to Global: Reducing Disaster Losses through Mitigation and Adaptation.*” This year's theme is designed to provide insight into best practices for mitigation.

The program sessions will focus on fresh insights, broad visions, and inclusive management techniques that are fundamentally changing communities at home and abroad in terms of hazard mitigation. More information will soon be available on the NHMA website at: <http://nhma.info/>

NHMA Annual Board Meeting Welcomes New Officers

The NHMA annual board meeting was held in Austin, Texas, January 4-6. The 2013 NHMA board was seated, and 2013 board officers were elected:

- President Ed Thomas
- 1st Vice President JoAnn Howard
- 2nd Vice President Ann Patton
- Treasurer David Mallory
- Secretary Tim Lovell

NHMA Represented in National Mitigation Discussions

NHMA was represented by Ed Thomas at two recent important gatherings:

1. Brookings Institute-Hamilton Project

Ed Thomas presented the results of a paper, "Reforming Natural Hazard and Mitigation Programs," co-authored with David Conrad for the Brookings Institute. The paper was presented at a major event on February 26 in Washington, DC, followed by a Capitol Hill briefing.

2. Tulane Environmental Summit

Ed Thomas gave a presentation on Sandy, Adaptation, and Hazard Mitigation, via Skype, at the Tulane Environmental Summit on February 22 in New Orleans, LA.

NHMA Webinars

- **December 10, 2012:** "[Understanding the Arkansas Game and Fish Case and the Importance of that Case to Protecting Floodplains and Wetlands](#)" (.pdf 3.35MB) – Briefing on an important decision that was issued by the Supreme Court: *Arkansas Game and Fish Comm'n v. United States*, No. 11-597 - by Edward A. Thomas Esq. on behalf of NHMA
- **December 18, 2012:** The Center for Clean Air Policy ([CCAP](#)) and the [Natural Hazard Mitigation Association](#) (NHMA) held a webinar entitled "[Bridging the Gap Between Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation](#)". The webinar featured an expert panel that identified overlaps and helped bridge gaps between the hazard mitigation and climate adaptation communities of practice to foster resilient, equitable, healthy and prosperous communities.
- **February 1, 2013:** This webinar that was organized by NHMA and USACE gives an overview of the RNN initiative for Silver Jackets teams and other state/federal flood risk groups.
- **February 27, 2013:** The webinar was presented by the [Natural Hazard Mitigation Association's International Activities Committee](#) and the Center for Clean Air Policy. It featured a presentation and discussion on Dutch flood mitigation and climate adaptation measures. Practitioners also discussed what lessons and limitations the Dutch approach brings when applied to a U.S. context.

Copies and recordings of these presentations are available at:
<http://nhma.info/publications/presentations/>

Statement of Purpose

The Hazard Mitigator is the quarterly newsletter of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Association. It provides NHMA members with original articles, committee updates, and upcoming event announcements. We encourage members to share the newsletter with colleagues and professionals working in hazard mitigation. We hope to provide existing members with useful resources and to attract new members who wish to be connected to the latest information about hazard mitigation.

Miriam Belblidia and Ponmile Olonilua are the editors of *The Hazard Mitigator*, with support from Alessandra Jerolleman and French Wetmore.

To advertise with *The Hazard Mitigator*, please see page 8.

For submissions, please contact Ponmile Olonilua at olonilua_oo@tsu.edu, with "NHMA Newsletter" in the subject line.



Newsletter Advertising Opportunity

The Natural Hazard Mitigation Association's quarterly newsletter offers advertisers a targeted audience of professionals working in government, private, and nonprofit sectors to reduce losses from disasters. If you are interested in advertising with NHMA, please submit this form and advertising artwork to Miriam Belblidia at mbelblidia@gmail.com.

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