

Building a Safer World to Thrive in the New Normal

Proceedings for the
2015 International Hazard Mitigation Practitioner's Symposium



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Resilient Cities

Understanding Catastrophe Insurance

Structural Vulnerability

Earthquake Risk Mitigation

Understanding the New Normal

Crafting & Designing New Programs

The Flood-Fire Connection

Severe Thunderstorm Impacts

Is this the New Normal?

The data is in. Regardless of the causes, our global climate is changing. It seems every day we hear about increased flooding, droughts becoming more severe, winter storms more extreme, tornadoes more destructive, and wildfires more intense. Is this the “new normal”? If so, how can we, as practitioners in the arena of hazard mitigation, prepare our communities and future generations to not only be safer but thrive in these changing conditions? Fortunately, there are many people exploring and implementing ways to prepare our residents, their homes, their businesses, their neighborhoods, and their communities to become more resilient and sustainable through innovative Disaster Risk Reduction and climate adaptation practice.

The 2015 International Hazard Mitigation Practitioner’s Symposium offered practitioners an opportunity to hear from some of the leading voices and communities in the world discussing a variety of hazards.

To see the opening presentation given by Edward Thomas, [click here](#).

Resilient Cities

New problems demand new solutions. This is particularly true for local leaders who are being challenged to not only reduce today's hazard risks but to also prepare for those anticipated to get worse in the future. To help meet these demands and promote more resilient and sustainable communities, the Rockefeller Foundation launched its 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) initiative in 2013. This session brought together leading practitioners from some of the world's first 100RC cities representing three different regions of the United States, each facing unique hazards and their own physical, social, and economic challenges, but all sharing the common goal of becoming a safer and truly resilient city.

Moderator: Darrin Punchard, AICP, CFM, Hawksley Consulting

Speakers:

[Arrietta Chakos, Urban Resilience Policy Advisor, Association of Bay Area Governments, CA](#)

[Greg Guibert, Chief Resiliency Officer: City of Boulder, CO](#)

[James Redick, Director, Department of Emergency Preparedness & Response, City of Norfolk, VA](#)

Understanding Catastrophe Insurance

Insurance plays a vital role in managing the risk of natural hazards, as well as in the economic recovery of communities following a disaster. The tremendous growth in population in recent decades has resulted in more people being exposed to the impacts of natural hazards, necessitating the ability to understand and mitigate the impacts. This session discussed how catastrophe insurance works, its role in natural hazard mitigation and recovery, and the value and growth of risk assessment modeling within the industry.

Moderator: Kirsten Orwing, Ph. D., SwissRE

Speakers:

[Michael Cohen RenaissanceRe](#)

[Brandon Katz, Ph.D., JL Towers Re](#)

Structural Vulnerability- Warding off the 3 Uglies

With the advent of ASCE-24-5 Flood Resistant Design and Construction, 2015 International Building Code® (IBC) and the 2015 International Residential Code® (IRC) and the management of structural end-user protection expectations, public officials and mitigation practitioners are being asked more frequently for technical guidance on resilience to this triad. The panel focused on Structural Vulnerability for Earthquakes, Flood, and Wildfire/Urban Interface issues that affect Residents, Businesses, Critical Facilities (Private and Public Sectors) and Public Facilities. The Panel discussed real-world Good and Bad Practices encountered, specific vulnerabilities and the always embraced Regulations, Guidance and Building Codes and possible solution resources. The flood content included Nature Based Coastal Solutions and resilient Alternate Sites for COOP and Business Recovery.

Moderator: Tom Hughes, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Speakers:

[Randy Behm, PE, United States Army Corps of Engineers](#)

[Mai \(Mike\) Tong, National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program \(NEHRP\), FEMA](#)

[Clark Woodward, RedZone Software](#)



Earthquake Risk Mitigation, A Bridge Between Policy & Engineering

This interactive discussion on how policy and engineering can develop together to bring progress on seismic resilience of both individuals and society. The panelists presented a new vision for strategic collaboration between the technical and policy worlds to better assist individuals, organizations, and communities in understanding and managing their natural disaster risks. The presentation highlighted, as an example, preliminary results of a California Earthquake Authority study investigating the performance of single-family dwellings during the August 24, 2014 South Napa earthquake, the findings of which can contribute to improving behavior motivation programs, engineering practices, and disaster policy broadly

Speakers:

[Janiele Maffei, California Earthquake Authority](#)

[Sharyl Rabinovici, Ph.D., Consultant](#)

Understanding & Responding to The New Normal

As the field of hazard mitigation continues to evolve and grow to respond to the ever changing landscape, it is crucial to understand the depth and range of the issues and factors that intersect when we understand and respond to the new normal. Our speakers come from a diverse array of sectors, providing a discourse on the new normal that will address drought and other weather-based dynamics, how a local government balances existing stressors with emerging threats, then weaving in the knowledge learned from a global adaption index that helps development leaders manage risks, and finally providing a perspective of federal priorities to assist decision makers working toward a better baseline for action.

Moderator: Matt Sitkowski, Ph.D., The Weather Channel
Speakers:

[Bob Henson, Ph.D., Weather Underground](#)

[Vicki Bennett, City of Salt Lake City, UT](#)

Joyce Coffee, ND-GAIN

[Kevin Nelson, AICP, Environmental Protection Agency](#)



Crafting & Designing Programs by Practitioner's For a Safer Future

As a Nation we may never have had a greater opportunity to seriously consider how to reduce the mounting toll of devastation which so often follows foreseeable natural events. The passion and energy of those who believe in the reality of climate change brings an entire new breath of oxygen into conversations about what sort of future we will build for the next generations. As a Nation, we are building the future every day: one cubic yard of fill at a time, one building at a time, and one road at a time. Demographics will drive development in our Nation and the World. In the US fully one half of the development we will see in 2050 does not exist today. We have a choice: we can build safely and properly so as to not exacerbate existing problems caused by improper construction and development; or we can continue to do business as usual and build an unsustainable future of misery, waste and needless destruction. Developing a Resilient society requires a win-win “Whole Community” approach based on sound economic principles.

Moderator: [Ed Thomas, Esq., NHMA](#)

Speakers:

[Matt Campbell, FEMA](#)

[Jason Vogel, Ph.D., ABT Associates](#)

[Katie Skakel, CFM, NHMA](#)

The Flood-Fire Connection: Linking Hazards & Mitigation

Wildfires and floods have a unique relationship in the hazards world. One disaster frequently follows the other, leaving behind more devastating impacts to communities still in response and recovery mode. What are the lessons learned from communities who have either experienced the fire-flood disasters and/or are preparing themselves to mitigate future potential impacts? This session brought practitioner perspectives from the western U.S. to share insights, best practices, and creative funding solutions to encourage other communities in addressing the fire-flood connection and reducing future damage.

Moderator: Molly Mowery, Wildfire Planning International

Speakers:

[Brian Varrella, PE, Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers](#)

[Tim Mitros, PE, City of Colorado Springs](#)

[Vance Fossinger, PE, Wilson & Company](#)

[Mark Brehl, City of Flagstaff, AZ](#)



Severe Thunderstorm Impacts & Mitigation

Need description

Moderator: Kirsten Orwig, Ph.D., SwissRe

Speakers:

[Tanya Brown, Ph.D., Institute for Business and Home Safety](#)

[Marc Levitan, Ph.D., National Institute of Standards and Technology](#)

[Kevin Simmons, Ph.D., Austin College](#)

[Erin Capps, JD, NHMA/H2O Partners](#)

About NHMA

The NHMA promotes natural hazard risk reduction & climate adaptation through planning, adaptation, and mitigation.

The NHMA promotes steps to reduce the risk and consequences of natural events with a special emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable populations in our communities.

[Learn More Now!](#)

