



September 2017 Newsletter

A Few Words from Our President

Greetings!

Welcome to our new format for the NHMA Newsletter!

As the National Flood Insurance Program is considered for reauthorization by Congress in 2017, an enormous amount of attention has been paid to the NFIP and disaster relief in both the popular press and the halls of Congress. This attention will likely be coupled with the current increased attention to the idea of “Resilience”; discussion concerning the President’s repeal of Executive Order 13690 setting a Flood Risk Management Standard; a huge interest in the misery plus mounting economic and environmental costs following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, along with other disasters including wildfires in the U.S. and throughout the world, reminding folks of Hurricanes Sandy, Katrina, Gustav, etc.

All these events give us a unique opportunity to raise awareness about preventing disasters through climate adaptation and hazard mitigation.

NHMA is reaching out to educate and inspire about Disaster Risk Reduction through its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Curriculum. As part of the [DRR Curriculum](#), NHMA has developed what we think is the best publication available on weaving together the many different programs available for building and rebuilding in a resilient manner: [Building Your Roadmap to a Disaster Resilient Future](#). That material is available on the web at: www.nhma.info and is in the process of being translated into Spanish and produced as a 508-compliant version.

I am also happy to tell you all about an extremely timely and important effort NHMA has undertaken with regard to children and disasters: Please see the material posted on the NHMA website at:

[Disaster Activity Book for Kids Spanish 20170914_508c.pdf](#)

[Disaster Activity Book for Kids English 20170907.pdf](#)

We very much hope to get this material widely distributed in Puerto Rico, and among everyone - especially the Spanish speaking communities in the Virgin Islands, Florida and Texas. **Can you think of anyone who can help?**

The story of how these children’s materials were developed and produced is itself inspiring. In the words of NHMA Board Member and RNN Community Member Rebecca Joyce, “It is amazing what the generosity of kind people can do to help those dealing with difficult circumstances.” The NHMA and RNN Communities are always ready to reach out with information, education and support to communities in need to help them achieve resiliency in the face of devastating disaster.

Ed Thomas
ed.nhma@gmail.com



Hayley Austin. USGS, Public domain

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LINKS to UPCOMING EVENTS:

[Free Webinar on Improving Earthquake Performance of Manufactured Homes \(10-4-17\)](#)

[The Iowa Watershed Approach: A New Paradigm for Flood Resilience \(10-24-17\)](#)

[Coordinating Emergency Response: Lessons from the 2017 Hurricane Season \(10-12-17\)](#)

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ARTICLE LINK: [“Inslee Quake Advisers: Invest in Pamphlets, Not Upgrades”](#)

RESOURCES LINKS:

[Children’s Disaster Preparedness Guide – Spanish](#)

[Children’s Disaster Preparedness Guide – English](#)

[NHMA DRR Curriculum](#)

[Building Your Roadmap to a Disaster Resilient Future](#)

[New E-Book! Environmental Protection in the Trump Era](#)



Matthew Barnes, USGS. Public domain

Article: US News & World Report

To Prevent Disaster, Rethink Development 3 ways better building practices can reduce the risks of hurricanes like Harvey, Irma and Maria

By [Ed Thomas](#) and [Laurie Mazur](#) | Sept. 26, 2017, at 12:15 p.m.

As floodwaters recede, storm-battered Texans, Floridians and Puerto Ricans are taking stock of their losses. While it is too soon for a final tally, it is clear that Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria have taken a dreadful toll in lives and treasure: some [75 people](#) died in Harvey's floodwaters; Hurricane Irma killed [at least 20](#) in the U.S., while at least [16 people](#) have died as a result of Maria in Puerto Rico. Preliminary estimates peg Harvey's and Irma's damage alone [at \\$290 billion](#).

Unfortunately, there is more where that came from. Flooding is on the rise across most of the US; Houston alone has seen four so-called 100-year floods since the spring of 2015. Perhaps the only thing we can say for sure is that the weather is increasingly uncertain. Yet we continue to build on the coast and in vulnerable floodplains – putting more people than ever in harm's way.

And, as floods become more frequent and damaging, taxpayers pick up a growing share of the tab.

“We are building the future every day: More than half of the built environment we will inhabit in 2025 did not exist in 2000. Through development, we can greatly reduce – or increase – our risk of floods and other disasters.”



BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/Getty Images

Wired Magazine

The Monumental Task of Restoring Houston After Harvey

ROBBIE GONZALEZ SCIENCE 09.07.17 03:48 pm

... Harvey's most destructive feature wasn't wind but water; the storm dumped upward of 50 inches of rain in parts of southeastern Texas. One of the most pressing - and ongoing - orders of business will be assessing not just the immediate damage that rain wrought but the pernicious conditions it will leave behind: ...

For full article, see:

https://www.wired.com/story/the-monumental-task-of-restoring-houston-after-harvey/?mbid=email_onsiteshare

Governance Matters Manuscript

U.S. Floods: The Necessity of Mitigation

BY BEVERLY A. CIGLER

Abstract: Floods are the costliest natural hazard events in the United States in terms of lives and property losses. The financial costs of flood disasters are unsustainable, especially for the national government, which assumes the most costs while state and local governments have the greatest ability to avoid great losses due to their influence over land use, economic policy, and other areas that can help mitigate floods and reduce the high costs of relief and recovery. This article summarizes the types, causes, and occurrence of floods in the United States and their unsustainable economic and social costs. It explains that the growing burden to taxpayers from disaster response and recovery has resulted in increased interest by national decision makers in shifting more disaster responsibilities and costs to state and local governments. The article reviews the broad tool kit of mitigation strategies available to local governments and their residents in taking greater responsibility for the impacts of flood events.

FEMA Risk MAP Guidance Updates

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains guidelines and standards to support the Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP) Program. These guidelines and standards define the implementation of the statutory and regulatory requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These also guide the development of Flood Risk Projects, processing of Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) and related Risk MAP activities. More information is available at [FEMA.gov](#).

View or download the complete [FEMA Risk MAP Guidance Updates](#) as a pdf file.



Getty Images

OPINION

Puerto Rico should have been ready for Maria

By [Eddie Borges](#) September 27, 2017 | 7:07pm

..... When I visited the island in 2013 after a decade's absence, the first thing I noticed was the virtual disappearance of the wide beaches for which Puerto Rico was once famous. According to the US Geological Survey, they were washing away at a rate of 3.3 feet per year.

For full article, see: <http://nypost.com/2017/09/27/puerto-rico-should-have-been-ready-for-maria/>



Images: Annie Flanagan for The New York Times

Life After the Storm: Children Who Survived Katrina Offer Lessons

www.nytimes.com By [BENEDICT CAREY](#) SEPT. 8, 2017

NEW ORLEANS — The children upended by Hurricane Katrina have no psychological playbook for the youngsters displaced by Harvey, or those in the path of Irma, the hurricane that spun through the Caribbean and Florida.

In the years after Katrina, a pair of sociologists, Alice Fothergill and Lori Peek, made regular trips to New Orleans, interviewing hundreds of people who had been hit hard and tracking their lives over time, checking in repeatedly. After seven years, the pair identified a rough pattern among displaced children:

For full article, see <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/08/health/katrina-harvey-children.html?r=1>



Mike Nyman, USGS. Public domain

Hurricane Harvey's Toxicity - Creating Hazards

By John Wiener, NHMA Board Member
September 30, 2017

Readers may wish to know that coverage of the Hurricane Harvey toxic chemicals releases has been better than has met most eyes. It was minimally covered in most media, and now is apparently displaced by Hurricane Maria's horrible damage in the Caribbean. There was also some coverage of the overwhelmed sewage and water systems in Florida, echoing earlier disasters with concentrated animal feeding operation wastes in North Carolina. I had a morbid curiosity about the extent of chemical toxics in Houston, and collected references, knowing that the situation would be highly political. A [selection of links](#) is posted by NHMA on its website.

The recovery from Harvey must also include assistance for millions of people who have been exposed to unobserved and unmonitored carcinogens and toxins.

This extreme example should also stimulate planners and emergency managers to assure recognition of their exposures, and the quality of safety measures and implementation. The EPA has explicitly delayed or dismissed prior policy, so this may be changing quickly; (see Columbia University Sabin Center for Climate Change Law Deregulation Tracker: <http://columbiaclimate.com/?s=Deregulation+Tracker>).

NHMA

P.O. Box 170984, Boston, MA 02117
nathazma@gmail.com

Find us on the Web:
NHMA.info

