

Floodplain Manager Training

This summer, floodplain managers participated in Managing Development through the National Flood Insurance Program in Austin and Floodplain Management 101 in San Antonio.

Also in Austin, LCRA hosted Floodplain Management 201, which goes beyond the 101 introduction and trains professionals on permitting, Letters of Map Change and elevation certificates.

Watch for more training opportunities on the back page of Floodplain Forum or at www.tcrfc.org.

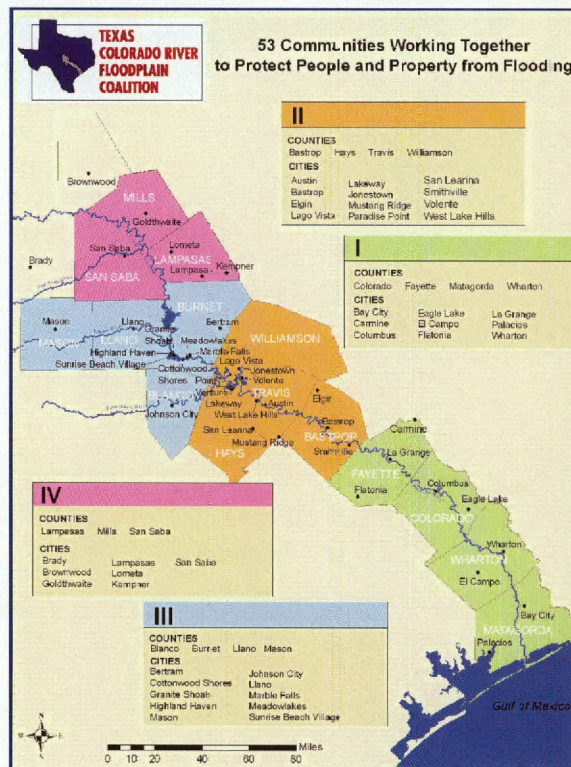
TCRFC increases regions, representation

The Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition (TCRFC) will take action at its Nov. 17, 2005, bi-annual meeting to give the organization a more regional focus and offer the Technical Committee more representation. The number of regions is proposed to increase from three to four, with a regional representative elected from each one. The voting structure is also proposed to change to allow one Executive Committee member and one Technical Committee member from each community to vote in any election.

The new regions, numbered one through four, were developed with consideration for location, similarity of flood issues, watershed characteristics, population and demographics. The responsibilities of the regional representative would include providing input, offering suggestions and providing general direction to the Coalition, communicating issues and ideas from regional members to officers, and representing TCRFC at community and civic events within the region.

The changes in voting structure would provide the Technical Committee a direct voice within the organization. Other proposed changes include the nominating and voting procedures that formalize the process and make future elections easier to facilitate and carry out.

The TCRFC officers and a subcommittee of members worked together to develop these new strategies for the Coalition. Danny Zitterich,



These are the four regions from which representatives will provide input on important issues. The new regions will be voted on during the bi-annual meeting on Nov. 17.

Fayette County floodplain administrator, chaired the committee of members from Wharton County, Eastrop County, Travis County, City of Highland Haven, San Saba County and City of Brady.

Hurricane Rita helps LCRA hone emergency response plan

LCRA was prepared for the worst if Hurricane Rita had followed through on its threat to the lower Colorado River basin. Emergency responders throughout the organization began implementing response plans as they watched the storm go from a Category 4 to Category 5 hurricane, then reduce its force as it moved eastward prior to landfall.

Initial response included shutting down operations along the Gulf Coast and evacuating LCRA employees from irrigation and other facilities in Colorado, Matagorda and Wharton counties. LCRA opened facilities at Lake Buchanan and in Bastrop County to provide shelter for evacuated employees and some responders.

Visitors included two Federal Emergency Management Agency incident management teams, who were coordinated by the Texas Forest Service and stayed at McKinney Roughs Nature Park to await landfall and prepare for initial response. Employees from throughout LCRA were prepared to deploy, including swiftwater rescue teams, transmission crews and flood hotline operators.

Additionally, LCRA's mobile command post and radio network were ready to facilitate communications among response agencies. If LCRA's service area or other portions of Texas experience a disaster of these proportions, LCRA is ready to respond and assist as needed.

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Flood safety message 'hooks' children

Thousands of people were reached with flood safety and floodplain awareness messages in September.

'Fishing' for flood safety in Burnet

Hundreds of children learned about weather and flood safety at the Sept. 17 Kids Day Out sponsored by the Burnet County Rodeo Association.

LCRA's floodplain management team operated a booth where children participated in "Go Fish for Flood Safety," where each child caught a keepsake fish with a safety message printed on its side. They were also given a bag with Owlie Skywarn and Tex Shelter Turtle coloring books, a box of crayons, pencils, "Turn Around, Don't Drown" bumper stickers and candy.

Two girls won rod and reel kits. Five other children caught fish that won NOAA All Hazards Radios for their parents.

Barbecue, TADD barricade in Brady

More than 30,000 people attended the Brady World Championship Bar-B-Que Goat Cookoff where the "Turn Around Don't Drown" barricade was featured at a booth next to the main stage.



Floodplain coordinator Roy Sedwick worked LCRA's "Fishing for Flood Safety" booth, where 8-year old Adriane Moser of Granite Shoals (pictured here) and 6-year old Sofia Rodriguez of Burnet won the two fishing rod prizes.

'The booth at the all-day event was so successful, it was fished out within three hours.'

— Roy Sedwick, LCRA floodplain coordinator

FLOODPLAIN NEWS IN BRIEF

Federal grants are available to communities for 2006. If an application deadline has passed by the time of Floodplain Forum's printing, please note that grants may be available close to this time next year.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant program

Dec. 1, 2006 is the deadline for submitting e-Grant applications to the Governor's Division of Emergency Management. A two-step application process, the first of which involved requesting access to the e-Grant system by the end of October, is for Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants that will fund projects in a communities' FEMA-approved Mitigation Action Plan (MAP). Up to \$150 million may be available nationwide. For more information, contact the mitigation staff at (512) 424-2397 or (512) 424-2423.

Hazard Mitigation Grant program

Administered by FEMA, the Hazard Mitigation Grant program provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of this is to reduce the loss of life and

property from natural disasters and enable mitigation measures to be implemented during immediate recovery from a disaster. States with an approved enhanced State Mitigation Plan in effect at the time of disaster declaration may receive additional HMGP funding. Because Texas received a disaster declaration this year, all Texas communities are eligible to apply. For more information, please visit: www.fema.gov/fima/planning.shtm.

Flood Protection Study grants

Dec. 15, 2005 is the deadline for applying for Flood Protection Study grants available through the Texas Water Development Board. The purpose of the grant program is for the state to help local governments develop flood protection plans for major and minor watersheds that provide protection from flooding through structural and non-structural measures. Planning for flood protection includes studies and analysis to determine and describe problems resulting from flooding and the response and needs of those affected by flooding. For more information, please visit www.twdb.state.tx.us/assistance/financial/fin_regionalfacilityplan/FloodControl.asp.

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING UPDATE

Updating floodplain maps is a top priority for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Progress continues on remapping projects in Bastrop, Fayette, Hays, Travis, Wharton and Williamson counties. Updated maps are critical tools in the effort to protect lives and property in the lower Colorado River basin.

BASTROP COUNTY

FEMA finalized the maps in July 19, 2005, and issued a letter of final determination. From the date of the letter, communities have six months to adopt the maps by city ordinance or county court order. The final maps will be effective Jan. 19, 2006.

FAYETTE COUNTY

FEMA delivered Fayette's preliminary maps on Sept. 13, 2005. A community coordination meeting and 90-day appeal period will follow. During the appeal period, people living within the county and corporate limits may appeal the baseline flood elevation. A public meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 21, at the LaGrange Volunteer Fire Department.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGER SPOTLIGHT

Stacey Scheffel has been a floodplain administrator with Travis County for six years.

What prepared you for this type of work?

I worked with the Travis County floodplain permitting department for two years prior to becoming the floodplain administrator for Travis County. Prior to working for the county, I was a small Highland Lakes-area homebuilder. As a homebuilder, who often built in the floodplain, I had to know the rules of the various jurisdictions in order to build compliant structures.

What was your greatest challenge as a floodplain administrator and how did you overcome it?

My biggest challenge is the 6,725 structures within the floodplain of Travis County. We are trying to get elevation data on all these structures so that we can find some way to protect them or at least know the magnitude of our problem.

It's an overwhelming task. With the data we have collected so far, we have been successful in

HAYS COUNTY

The final Hays County maps, which were adopted by county ordinance, became effective Sept. 2, 2005.

TRAVIS COUNTY

FEMA is expected to deliver the preliminary maps to the communities in February 2006. A 90-day appeal period will follow. A progress meeting with participating communities will be held in November.

WHARTON COUNTY

Wharton's appeal period ended Aug. 16, 2005, and FEMA has issued a letter of final determination on October 5. From the date of the letter, communities have six months to adopt the maps by city ordinance or county court order.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Studies and preparation of preliminary maps should be completed by June 2006. FEMA expects to publish the maps for Williamson County communities by fall 2006, with final maps published in summer 2007.

obtaining grants to purchase approximately 50 of these structures. In addition, several flood mitigation projects will be included in the county's November 2006 bond election. This is an ongoing challenge.

What would you tell others who are interested in doing this?

It is the most frustrating, yet rewarding job I have ever had. I would tell others that are interested in this type of work to grow a thick skin, but don't lose your compassion and empathy.

What motivates you?

Folks who are desperate to get out of the floodplain.



Stacey Scheffel

Need for emergency preparedness comes to light

The 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons were record breakers. In 2004, Florida saw more major hurricanes in one season than ever before.

In 2005, Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf coast with impacts that will take years to understand.

As this hurricane season ends, take a look at the 2004 Hazard Mitigation Action Plan – Creating a Disaster Resistant Lower Colorado River Basin and initiate action where needed.

Consider additional activities that would better prepare the community for a disaster.

Calendar of Events

November 2-4, 2005

Texas Floodplain Management Association Fall Conference - Kerrville, Texas

Inn of the Hills Resort & Conference Center, 1001 Junction Highway: www.tfma.org.

November 17, 2005

NEW

TCRFC Bi-annual Meeting (rescheduled)

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at McKinney Roughs Nature Park. For more information, go to www.tcrfc.org.

December 7, 2005

Second Annual Floodplain Symposium - San Marcos, Texas

Sponsored by the Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council. Contact Marty Lenhart at (512) 558-7360 or

council@thecorridor.org. For more information: www.thecorridor.org.

January 16, 19, 24 and 26, 2006

TCRFC Regional Technical Committee Meetings

(Locations TBA)

January 30-February 2, 2006

Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP - Emmitsburg, Maryland

Emergency Management Institute: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/>.

January 30-February 2, 2006

Digital Hazard Data - Emmitsburg, Maryland

Emergency Management Institute: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/>.

FEMA releases elevation certificate updates

The Federal Emergency Management Agency Elevation Certificate (EC) and Floodproofing Certificate have been updated. The overall format of the EC was changed. A significant change is the requirement to attach a minimum of four

photographs depicting the sides of a structure. The number and net area of flood vent openings are required. The new EC can be viewed at www.floods.org/PDF/FF_8131_Elevation_Certificate_Instructions.pdf.

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