

Regional Flood Risk Management Team

1 Sep 09 Quarterly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

(NOTE: Current and future action items are shown in bold font.)

The First Quarterly Meeting of the Regional Flood Risk Management Team (RFRMT) was called to order by BG Walsh at 8:40 a.m.

1. **Leadership Report:** The Tri-Chairs, Norbert Schwartz [FEMA Region 5], Melissa Janssen [FEMA Region 7], and BG Walsh [Commander MVD], acknowledged the importance of the launching of this new regional effort on a long-term partnership basis, and encouraged all agencies present and on the phone to keep a clear vision of the future of the Upper Midwest/Upper Mississippi River watershed as we move forward. This regional partnership is the first of its kind in the nation, and all eyes will be watching and learning. This is a proud moment as we move from addressing regional flood response and recovery issues to planning, mitigation, and preparedness.
2. **Approval of Previous Minutes:** (N/A; no previous meeting)
3. **Charter Revisions:** A few comments were received since the discussions of the charter at the 14 July 09 meeting. They were incorporated into version distributed in preparation for this quarterly meeting. Four of the edits were major, so required discussion and approval by the RFRMT:
 - a. Paragraph 9.a was proposed to be revised to read, “This RFRMT will be led by a committee of three federal or state agencies to be rotated as desired by majority of the RFRMT core members. Initially, the committee will include the Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), the director of either FEMA Region V or FEMA Region VII, and a signatory state member.” Following discussions, the proposed revision was modified to read, “The RFRMT 3-member leadership committee will consist of the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), a signatory state, and a FEMA region member. The state member and the FEMA Region member will be rotated on an annual basis. FEMA Region 7 will sit in the leadership committee when the selected State is located within the FEMA Region 5 area of responsibility. FEMA Region 5 will sit in the leadership committee when the selected state is located within the FEMA Region 7 area of responsibility.” A motion was made to accept this revision to paragraph 9.a. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
 - b. After further discussion, the State of Illinois accepted an invitation to be the first state to sit on the leadership committee, which then dictated that FEMA Region

7 sit on the leadership committee for the first year. This arrangement will begin immediately following adjournment of this first quarterly meeting.

c. Paragraph 9.b was proposed to be revised to read, “The leadership will work to obtain a consensus among the core members. When no consensus can be reached, the leaders may table the issue or return it to its proponent for further development.” A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the revision as presented.

d. Paragraph 11.a was proposed to be revised to read, “The RFRMT will generally meet quarterly to conduct business, or at different intervals as agreed to by RFRMT members. The decision to hold the next scheduled meeting face-to-face shall be determined by the RFRMT leadership committee no less than 45 days prior to the proposed meeting date.” A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the revision as presented. Face-to-face meetings were strongly recommended for the first year.

e. Paragraph 13.b was proposed to be revised to read, “Additionally, this charter provides for the use of the State Flood Risk Management Teams to become the nucleus for the establishment of Interagency Flood Risk Management Working Groups (IFRMWGs) operating at the Joint Field Office (JFO) level at the discretion of the Federal Coordinating Officer [(FCO), the FEMA official located within the JFO who is responsible for synchronizing federal agency response and coordinating with the lead state agency], along with representatives from the federal agencies identified in paragraph 8 and appropriate state representatives, to facilitate integrated post disaster recovery and mitigation solutions.” A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the revision as presented.

4. Charter Signing: Following acceptance of the Charter revisions, the opportunity was provided for Core Members, as identified in the Charter, to endorse the Charter signifying a commitment to partner to reduce risks associated with floods in the region. Seven of eighteen members signed; with others stating that agency leadership will be signing in the near future. Four additional signatures have been provided since the meeting, bring to 11 the total number of endorsements received.

5. FEMA DAP 9524.3 Status Update: Norb Schwartz provided an update of the subject FEMA public assistance policy. Norb provided quick background of the revised policy issued February 25, 2009, as amended on August 5, 2009. Norb then provided an overview of the salient points of the DAP 9524.3 public assistance policy, as amended. Afterwards, **Jud Knuevean, USACE NWK, brought up that his district was concerned about the term “inactive” as used in the policy; that it may mean “ineligible”. Pete Rabbon, USACE, acknowledged the concern and indicated that HQ USACE would investigate further to make sure there was no misunderstanding. Additionally, Norb indicated that this policy was still receiving scrutiny within FEMA.**

6. ILTF Policy White Paper Update: Mr. Jeff Jensen, HQ USACE, provided an update on the status of the three federal agency policy revisions recommended by BG Walsh, on behalf of the ILTF, to the USACE/FEMA Senior Leaders Seminar in April 2009.

a. NRCS Easement Data Protection Policy – **HQs USACE and NRCS are partnering to develop several watershed planning tools that will enable the release of salient portions of the NRCS easement data for incorporation into the USACE data base.** This will assist in developing a comprehensive and collaborated national levee data base.

b. FEMA PA 406 Policy - Part of this policy recommendation was to combine PA 406 with USACE PL84-99 flood reduction measures. The recommendation was **forwarded to FEMA and USACE for consideration, and they are currently assessing the viability of this recommendation.**

c. USACE PL84-99 - Part of this policy recommendation was to have a planning capability to evaluate future mitigation measure opportunities in flood impacted areas. While this program is currently not able to conduct studies, **HQ USACE is looking at using other programs, such as Planning Assistance to States (PAS), to facilitate viable studies resulting from PL84-99 activities.**

d. Jeff stated that pursuing the recommendations made by the ILTF will help ensure that we are bringing existing response and recovery authorities to bear on planning to solve problematic issues and projects. Further, he stated that collaboration is the key, that no one agency can meet all the needs to planning and mitigation.

e. Norb Schwartz mentioned the Gulfport, IL, example to reiterate that prior planning is really the key to success. Moreover, Norb stated, and several members agreed, that we need to move from a focus on response and recovery to planning and mitigation in order to have a long term impact on flood risk reduction, and indicated that revisions to PL84-99 were going to be the main avenue for getting there. He also encouraged USACE to be familiar with local mitigation plans when doing planning.

f. COL O'Hara, Commander St. Louis District USACE, offered a specific example of an issue that he would like the RFRMT to pursue for change to PL84-99 policy. Currently districts are not able to construct breach control structures when rehabilitating levees following a flood, as they are considered betterments and not currently covered under PL84-99 for use of federal funds. A change to this policy will have long-term affects for reducing flood risks in levees that have repetitive breaching in the same location from all major flood events. Having the ability to be proactive is the key. Implementation of the construction of a breach control structure would be the call of the local sponsor, and not the immediate solution.

i. Mr. Pete Rabbon HQ USACE stated that he thought the issue of resiliency would be a great topic for the RFRMT to pursue in the future, and provide

recommendations to HQ USACE for policy changes; however, he sees this as a states issue.

- ii. Mr. Paul Parmenter, Director MO SEMA, stated that it will be very tough to get the states to take this as their responsibility.
- iii. Mr. Gary Clark, Director IL Office of Water Resources, DNR, stated that this problem has been around a long time and won't go away anytime soon if left to the states. This needs to be resolved and encouraged all of the states to work together to follow Mr. Rabbon's advice.
- iv. **BG Walsh requested that the RFRMT (and state FRMTs) push ahead with an investigation to develop recommendations to HQ USACE for changes to PL84-99 to affect quicker, better, stronger, more resilient, less expensive fixes (resilient NSAs) such as breach control structures.**

g. Norb Schwartz also indicated that the discussion regarding breach control structures in levees can equally apply to providing for breach control structures in earthen dams, tied potentially to the Dam Safety Program. Perhaps this is a topic for future pursuit as well.

7. State FRM Team Activity Reports:

- a. Illinois (Ron Davis) – Mr. Davis reported that the Illinois FRMT is subdividing into 4 sub-committees: Mitigation, Policy, Recovery, and Structural. The teams for each are still being identified. Topics currently under discussion include levee certification, long term flood recovery vs. economic development, development of a communication plan to include use of the Silver Jackets web site for communication, and Corps of Engineers cabin leases.
 - i. Mr. Pete Rabbon encouraged Ron and his team to **determine which cabin leases are in violation of local building codes and sanitation ordinances, and submit those leases for termination.**
- b. Iowa (Tom Oswald) – Mr. Oswald provided a quick summary of the status of the development of the Iowa FRMT, and some of the topics it is pursuing. The team's "to-do" list was outlined. The brief concluded with an update on Louisa County #11 levee district NSA.
- c. Mr. Bruce Munholand requested both **Ron Davis and Tom Oswald provide a brief organizational framework showing where the functions of the FRM Teams will reside within in each of their states.**

8. Status of FRM Principals and Guidelines, and Executive Order 11988: In summary, Mr. Rabbon presented:

- a. **The RFRMT can review the Draft Principles and Guidelines when they are distributed later this fall, and submit collective comments to HQ USACE for consideration.**
- b. **Mr. Rabbon will provide the RFRMT the most recent copy of the draft revised Executive Order 11988 (June 2009) for posting on the RFRMT website. In addition, he will provide all of the current implementation guidance documents.**

- c. The stated purpose for revising EO 11988 is to elevate the need for and role of floodplain management for the long term reduction of flood risk within federal agencies.
- d. In mid-November 2009 a federal FRM Task Force will be implemented as a forum for a federal interagency FRM “gap analysis” of coverage by all programs and authorities. It will look at program compatibility issues, and determine the most efficient method for fielding the revised EO 11988 when it is released later in FY10.
- e. **The RFRMT may likely be asked to provide assistance with fielding of EO 11988 by analyzing potential impacts and developing recommendations for solutions to mitigate those impacts.**

9. National, Regional, and State Level Implementation of National FRM Program: Jeff Jensen (HQ USACE), along with Carl Pigott (MVD) and Matt Hunn (MVS), presented the path ahead for implementation of their level of the Corps’ National Flood Risk Management Program (NFRMP). Jeff introduced the vision, mission, goals, background, and objectives; and then illustrated his concept of the flood risk management cycle and how USACE flood risk management would evolve to better support state and regional flood mitigation priorities. The proposed organizations were outlined for the headquarters, division, and district levels with a concentration on the coordination of resources. Lastly, implementation challenges and milestones were discussed.

10. Future Meetings:

- a. 2nd Quarterly Meeting date December 1, 2009
- b. Host is the State of Illinois (charter signatory state)
- c. Location is Springfield, IL at DNR headquarters
- d. Bruce Munholand recommended that the following be adopted as standing agenda items, as the RFRMT exists to assist the States with implementing long range mitigation plans:
 - i. Leadership Reports
 - ii. Approval of Previous Minutes
 - iii. State Long Range Planning Reports
 - iv. State FRM Team Activity reports
- e. The RFRMT members were asked to prioritize the items that they feel are most urgent and most meaningful to pursue immediately. From the list provided each attendee, the top 10 issues were:
 - i. Flood damage repairs and provisions (including controlled breaches and resiliency) as provided in PL84-99
 - ii. Flood hazard mitigation planning
 - iii. National Levee Safety Program topics
 - iv. Watershed / Regional planning
 - v. What services are available during a flood emergency
 - vi. Local, state, and federal roles (emergency preparedness and response)
 - vii. Reducing public risks (emergency preparedness)
 - viii. USGS presentation on stream gage networks and flood inundation mapping and modeling

- ix. Relaxing the current 1:1 BCR requirement and supplement with considerations; BCR for NSA consideration
- x. How to request resources during a flood emergency.
- f. Bruce Munholand indicated that the equivalent of 2 full time employees (program manager, assistant, and administrative support) were required for the administration of the ILTF, and would likely be appropriate to support the RFRMT. BG Walsh volunteered initial staff support from MVD with FEMA Region 5 and Region 7 also volunteering to contribute additional part-time support. Norb Schwartz added that FEMA district assistance workforce may also be available when there is a flood event. **Specific staff support by MVD, FEMA Region 5, and FEMA Region 7 need to be articulated and agreed to.**

11. BG Walsh Posted Challenges:

- a. **Pursue all remaining charter signatures;** they represent public commitment to partnership.
- b. **RFRMT determine its “focus”;** where do you envision being 10 years from now, and what needs to be done to get there.
- c. **Think about and agree upon ways to measure success** internally (are you getting return on your investment), and externally (is the public getting return on your investment).
- d. **Work the action items;** they are what will likely be the measure of whether or not you are achieving the metrics you set.
- e. **Continue follow up on the ILTF Policy White Papers.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Bruce A. Munholand P.E., PMP
ILTF Program Manager