

**DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
FLOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

November 30, 2005

The November 30, 2005 Flood Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting began at 10:00 AM at the Commission office (DRBC) in West Trenton, NJ. Peter Gabrielsen of the National Weather Service chaired the meeting.

A. Introductions and Review of the Draft Minutes from the October 5th Meeting.

Correction to minutes: on page 7 of the minutes from the October 5th meeting make the correction that it was Kathy Lear from NJ OEM that participated in the Flood Mitigation Subcommittee and also add that Michael Shuler participated from FEMA Region III.

B. Expanded Notification of Flood Advisory Committee Activities

The DRBC public information office developed a list of about 80 contacts in county emergency and planning agencies. An introductory e-mail was sent to each. A list of the 80 contacts and the introductory email were handed out as exhibit B-1 and B-2. Several groups were added to the standard notification list, Riverkeeper, UDC, WRA, and Delaware Riverside Conservancy.

Hydrologic Conditions Report

Presentation given by Rick Fromuth of the DRBC Operations Branch. Hydrologic conditions have recovered from the dry summer to the normal range for late November.

C. Opportunity for Public and Interested Party Comments

No comments offered

D. Status of Draft NJ Governor's Task Force Report

The draft report is under review by the NJDEP Commissioner. When released to the public, it will be e-mailed to members during the public review period. John Moyle commented that the NJDEP Commissioner wishes to meet with the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs due to a recommendation of the Task Force to change their building codes to be compliant with National Flood Insurance codes.

E. Potential for Automated E-mail Distribution of Flood Forecasts

Presentation given by John Yagecic of the DRBC Monitoring and Modeling Branch. John has developed software to poll 6 AHP stations along the mainstem Delaware and provide crest information automatically to e-mail addresses if flooding is forecasted. He specified that there is not a limit to the amount of email subscribers and mentioned that the use of a for-profit server might provide more reliable service. He also mentioned that the stage criteria for reporting could be listed as flood stage, flood action stage, a %-tile, etc. Some recommendations and discussion points following the presentation included:

- The forecast is updated every day between 11am and noon unless the forecast office moves into 24 hr operations where the forecast is updated more frequently. Therefore, it was recommended that the developed software run each day at noon.
- Clarification to specify NWS AHPS instead of just AHPS
- The word gage be taken out of the email and instead a high/low id attached to each forecast point
- The email mention that during flood stage the forecast is updated every 6 hours.
- A disclaimer be attached to the email

- The webpage reference in the email be a hyperlink if possible
- Concern that the notification process will contain outdated information

Action: DRBC Staff will make the suggested changes to the message page.

F. Updating of 2002 Flood Warning Recommendations

The recommendations made in the 2002 flood warning recommendations report were given as handout F1. A copy of the entire report was e-mailed to members with the meeting notice but it was acknowledged that some of the members were not able to receive the report due to its size. Rick Fromuth requested the NWS and USGS to review the recommendations and provide updated recommendations and cost information. It was stated that Laura Tessieri of the DRBC would be contacting the appropriate offices to receive the updated information. Once the updated recommendations are received, the DRBC would then prepare an updated version of the report. A timeframe of the next 2-3 months to complete this task was expressed.

Action: DRBC staff will contact NWS and USGS offices for recommendations.

G. Comments on Hazard Mitigation Plan Proposal for the Basin

Comments on the proposal were requested at the October 5th meeting. The proposal was developed with the input of a work group consisting of PEMA, FEMA, NJOEM, the Corps, and the DRBC. No comments were received as of 11/30/05.

The County plan status was reviewed. The State of Delaware has all of their plans complete. New York has Sullivan County's, which is complete. No Counties in either NJ or PA have plans which are FEMA approvable. It was clarified that it is not the Counties that are required to have an All Hazards Plan in place, but the local municipalities. Even though the Counties are often the one undertaking the planning process and FEMA will review a County plan to ensure that it is FEMA approvable, it is each local municipality that needs to be involved in the planning process and adopt the County plan locally.

Burlington County in NJ has received grant money to complete their Multi-jurisdictional All Hazard Plan. Also, NJ OEM held three workshops and is encouraging all Counties in NJ to submit an application for FY 2006 PDMC funding. Grants are expected to be very competitive since the state (applicant) is only allowed to submit 5 sub-applications (both project and planning) to FEMA. In addition, total federal funding has been reduced from \$150 M in FY 2005 to \$50 M in FY 2006. Alan Tamm mentioned that the only PA County in the basin that has received PDMC money is Lebanon County.

Flood mitigation assistance money seems the most likely source for limited funding of DRBC activity at this point. 7.5% of FMA funds are for planning but no funding has been allocated yet for FY 2006. Joe Zagone of Region III mentioned that the FMA funding is 2-yr funding so that the DRBC should check if there are any available funds from FY 2005. Joe also mentioned that risk assessment falls under the approved tasks that can be undertaken with FMA funds. Therefore, the DRBC could apply for FMA funding from all three states to prepare a Flood Risk Assessment and Mitigation Recommendations for the Basin.

Carol Collier and Bob Tudor discussed whether a pilot study to combine a watershed approach to the All Hazards Planning approach instead of a municipality based approach which FEMA is now following could be done. Joe Zagone mentioned that there would be no type of FEMA funds at this point that would address this type of prototype or pilot study. Dave Burd of Merrill Creek brought up that perhaps private funding could be sought to develop tools to help the individual

municipalities prepare their own Hazard Plans. He mentioned the William Penn Foundation and Alan Tamm mentioned the Heinz Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust.

Action: Bob Tudor recommended the following action items:

1. Plan to have another Flood Mitigation Subcommittee meeting where both Regions of FEMA and all states are in attendance.
2. Send a letter to the executive emergency management official of each state to encourage them to consider funding an interstate Hazards approach.
3. Apply for FMA funding from each state to provide a flood risk assessment of the basin.

Joe Zagone clarified that he would like to see the DRBC first apply for FMA funding and then look to increase the task at hand by applying to the states and looking at PDMC funding possibilities.

H. Availability of Flood Damage Records for Mitigation Planning

The objective is to determine how to make individual assistance data more available for mitigation planning purposes. So far, the comprehensiveness of flood insurance claims data is very limited, but the data is in a form that is very useful for screening type analysis.

Joe Zagone of Region III mentioned that it is a tough exercise to query the IA records to obtain the type of records the DRBC requires for flood mitigation. But, he stated that Region II and III are attempting to query IA records for both the September 2004 and April 2005 storms for the DRBC. Alan Tamm expressed the difficulty of PEMA receiving IA request records due to the Privacy Act. He also expressed anomalies with the georeferencing of the records.

It was mentioned that in the future it would be helpful if the IA records were stored in a way that would allow them to be queried and more easily transferred in order to better provide mitigation efforts where they are needed.

Action: DRBC will continue to work with FEMA to obtain IA records if possible.

I. Further Discussion of Flood Modeling for Basin Reservoirs

At the last DRBC Flood Advisory Committee meeting, there was discussion about possibly using the National Weather Service Flood Routing model to look at different scenarios for reservoir spill rates. Peter Gabrielsen mentioned that the model can be used to look at flood peak and rate of rise following a defined spill rate but that the model cannot be used to model the hydraulics of a structure or develop a reservoir void program. Also it was noted that the 6 hr timestep would provide a crude look at the level of attenuation downstream.

The DRBC plans to work with the NWS in defining scenarios to run through the model. The Weather Service - Mid Atlantic River Forecast Center will not be able to run the model until early in 2006 as they are busy with work generated by the heavy October rains and are moving to a new office location in early December. Once the scenarios of interest are modeled, the next step might be to work with the CORPs to run their hydraulic routing model.

Action: DRBC Staff and NWS will define model scenarios.

Rick Fromuth stated that automated real time snowpack monitors are scheduled to be installed in both the Pepacton and Neversink watersheds for this year. This will allow for better management of the snowpack void programs as agreed to by the Decree Parties to void 50 percent of the water equivalent.

Other Items Discussed:

Mid Atlantic River Forecast Center Moving

New Contact information:

NOAA, National Weather Service
Middle Atlantic Forecast Center
328 Innovation Boulevard, Suite 330
State College, PA 16803
Phone: (814) 231-2404

National Weather Service Budget

Peter Gabrielsen of the NWS mentioned that there has been word that the Commerce and Justice budget was recently passed, but that it has not yet been released. It was mentioned that an extreme labor shortfall is anticipated. Mr. Gabrielsen said he would notice the committee of how the shortfall may affect the FAC when it has been determined.

NWS Proposal to complete a High Hazard Dam Inventory in the Basin

Peter Gabrielsen brought up that there have been four high profile potential dam failures in the recent months. He noted that he would like to present a proposal for the FAC to consider at the next meeting that would catalog and inventory the high hazard dams in the basin and ensure communication and coordination with emergency management personnel in those areas.

Action: NWS will prepare draft proposal.

J. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 8, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.

**FLOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ATTENDANCE**

November 30, 2005

NAME	AGENCY
BURD, David	Merrill Creek Reservoir
COLLIER, Carol	Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
FROMUTH, Rick	DRBC
GABRIELSEN, Peter	National Weather Service (NWS)/Eastern Region Headquarters
HAINLY, Bob	United States Geological Survey (USGS) – PA
MAHOOD, Jeff	Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
MILLER, Jason	United States Army Corps of Engineers (US COE)
MOYLE, John	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP)
NICKELSBURG, Walt	NWS
NOBLE, Mary Ellen	Delaware Riverkeeper Network
PETREWSKI, Gary	PPL
POUSENO, Patrick	New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP)
REUBER, Michael	National Park Service (NPS) – Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River
RODGERS, Ted	NWS – Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center (MARFC)
SCHOPP, Bob	USGS
STEIGERWALD, Scott	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)
TAMM, Alan	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
TESSIERI, Laura	DRBC
TUDOR, Bob	DRBC
YAGECIC, John	DRBC
ZAGONE, Joseph N.	Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – FEMA Reg. III