

# DELAWARE RIVER BASIN FLOOD MITIGATION TASK FORCE

## ORGANIZATION/ STEERING MEETING MINUTES

Date: October 25, 2006; 10:00 am

Location: Delaware River Basin Commission, Goddard Room

### In Attendance:

Amir, Orly	Legislative Assistant, US Rep Rush Holt
Anderson, Rad	Chief Planning Section, NYS EMO
Collier, Carol	Executive Director, DRBC
Colvin, Mary	Chief Community Mitigation Programs Branch, FEMA
Comey, John	Executive Assistant to Director, PEMA
Cronce, Paul	Office of Emergency Management, City of Lambertville
Darwak, Jeff	Constituent Services Rep, US Rep. Fitzpatrick
Fitzpatrick, Dan	State NFIP Coordinator, PA DCED
Frazier, Dean	Commissioner of Watershed Affairs, Delaware County, NY
Fromuth, Rick	Operations Branch Head, DRBC
Gabrielsen, Peter	Chief Hydrologic Services, NOAA/NWS
Garlits, Edward E.	Stakeholder
Gast, William	Chief Water Planning Engineer, PADEP
Gruber, Gene	MT Division Director, FEMA/DHS Region III
Gruber, Hank	Chief Basin Planning, USACE
Hainly, Bob	Assistant Director, USGS- PA Water Science Center
Hofman, Dirk C.	Retired CEO President, Cornelis Associates
Karrow, Marcia	NJ Assemblywoman, NJ Legislature
Mazzei, Vince	Engineer, NJDEP Land Use Regulation
Molzahn, Robert	President, WRADRB
Noble, Mary Ellen	Associate Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Patterson, Henry	Executive Director, NJWSA
Picciano, Joe	Dep RD, FEMA/DHS Region II
Powell, Michael	Flood Mitigation Program, Delaware DNREC
Reese, Geoff	Assistant Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Rosenblatt, Dave	Administrator Engineering/Construction, NJDEP
Ruggeri, Joseph	Engineer, NJDEP Dam Safety and Flood Control
Russo, Jeff	Attorney, Delaware Riverside Conservancy
Shallcross, Amy	NJWSA
Spalinski, Linda	Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
Stevens, Glen	USACE - Philadelphia
Tessieri, Laura	Water Resources Engineer, DRBC
Tudor, Bob	Deputy Executive Director, DRBC
Van Rossum, Maya	Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Westfall, Greg	Water Resource Planner, USDA NRCS
Wilson, Kerry	State NFIP Coordinator, PA DCED
Winslade, William	Yardley Boro Manager

**Summary:**

The initial meeting of the Flood Mitigation Task Force convened at 10am at the Commission's office in West Trenton, NJ. Carol Collier, Executive Director of DRBC, gave introductions and opening remarks. She reviewed the Governor's directive which charges the task force to develop a preliminary action plan by the end of the year. In developing a preliminary action plan, she encouraged the task force to consider intrastate vs. interstate solutions, main stem vs. tributaries, short-term vs. long-term, and measures for historic towns vs. measures to deal with future development.

Bob Tudor, Deputy Executive Director of the DRBC, then gave an overview of the proposed agenda, timeline and meeting packet that was provided to each member. Although the timeline was thought to be quite aggressive, there were no objections to either the proposed meeting agenda or the timeline. It was understood that the timeline was set by the Governors with the objective to begin implementing the recommendations as soon as possible. It was discussed that the agenda did not allow time for public comment prior to issuing a draft preliminary action plan, but that public comment will certainly be sought via meetings during Jan-March of 2007 after the Governors have had a chance to review the draft preliminary plan. It was stressed that there needs to be coordination between state and federal entities to come up with preliminary actions that are able to be pragmatic, implementable and meet County and municipal needs.

A few state perspectives and expectations were offered by state representatives in attendance at the task force meeting:

Dave Rosenblatt of NJDEP mentioned the recent effort of the NJ Task Force regarding the Delaware River. He hopes that this interstate task force can expand upon that work and combine it with the best resources of PA, NY and DE to find a common denominator. He charged the task force to find the common denominator, but not the least common denominator.

Bill Gast of PADEP mentioned that he is a member of DRBC's Regulated Flow Advisory Committee (RFAC). He stressed that this task force needs to consider many ways to achieve flood loss reduction including floodplain management, flood warning, stormwater management and the reservoirs. He stressed that reservoir management is important, but that there are limited amounts of benefits able to be derived from managing voids in the reservoirs.

Kerry Wilson of PA DCED stated that he is involved with local communities because his department is the state coordinating department for NFIP. He would like to see some sort of educational tool developed for outreach to inform and educate the public on the broader picture attributed to the flooding, not just the reservoirs.

Mike Powell of Delaware DNREC explained that in his state, their flooding is mostly due to storm surges and that they deal more with shoreline management instead of floodway and flood fringes. In considering specific recommendations, it was decided that there should be a consideration of both tidal and non-tidal concerns.

Rad Anderson of NY SEMO is interested in recommendations that would be able to be implemented at the local level. He echoed an earlier recommendation from Dirk Hofman that NYC should have a seat on the Task Force. He also voiced that the earlier local input could be gathered on the recommendations, the better.

An inventory of ongoing initiatives in the binder was reviewed. It was mentioned that this is not a complete list, but that it attempts to list the initiatives that state and federal governments are

involved in. It is hoped that the list can be included as part of the final report. If members have additional initiatives or desire corrections to the initiatives, they should email Bob Tudor at [Robert.Tudor@drbc.state.nj.us](mailto:Robert.Tudor@drbc.state.nj.us).

The idea of report focus areas was proposed. The focus areas were initially presented as follows:

- A. Reservoir Operations
- B. Floodplain Mapping
- C. Floodplain Regulations
- D. Structural and Non-structural Mitigation Measures
- E. Flood Warning
- F. Stormwater Management
- G. Institutional Coordination and Cooperation
- H. Education and Outreach

It was discussed whether or not a separate focus group, and therefore a separate section in the report, should be dedicated to both Institutional Coordination and Cooperation (G) and Education and Outreach (H). Dave Rosenblatt of NJDEP stated that Education and Outreach should not stand alone that they should be considered individually underneath each above focus area. Mary Ellen Noble agreed and said that section often gets overlooked if it stands alone. Joe Picciano of FEMA thinks it should be considered as a separate item and Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow thinks it instead belongs as an Appendix. It was decided at this point that both Institutional Coordination and Cooperation (G) and Education and Outreach (H) would be removed as separate sections and that recommendations speaking to each focus area should be included underneath the separate focus area sections. Final organization of the recommendations in the report can be revisited at a later date.

The Task Force agreed that the focus area framework should be organized into three sections: Floodwater Management, Floodplain Management and Flood Warning. The focus area framework agreed upon by the Task Force after much discussion is included as Attachment 1.

Floodwater Management includes actions to modify the natural flow of floodwaters to reduce losses to human resources and/or protect resources associated with the flooding. Sample actions would be conveying flows through reservoirs, dams and natural basins, managing flows through reservoir re-operation and managing watersheds by decreasing rainfall runoff and providing headwater stream protection.

Floodplain Management includes actions to the floodplain to reduce losses to human resources within the floodplain and/or to protect benefits to natural resources associated with floodplains and flooding. Sample actions of floodplain management include acquisitions and elevations in the floodplain, stronger floodplain regulations, floodplain mapping, land-use decisions, etc.

Flood Warning includes the enhancement of flood forecasting capabilities, emergency response, and the development and linkage of flood-inundation mapping with flood forecasting capabilities.

Bill Gast of PADEP asked where funding and legislation was to be included. This raised the question of whether or not \$ amounts were expected to be attached to recommendations. Mary Ellen Noble said that with the short time period, assigning dollar numbers to each of the

recommendations would be too time consuming. She also indicated that the task force had not been charged with such a task. Rad Anderson of FEMA indicated that he thought dollar numbers and identifying priority projects and funding areas was important. Henry Patterson of NJWSA said that with the short time period that we should not get caught up in assigning costs and using multipliers if it's not something that we don't already have a handle on. For certain recommendations, he believes it's appropriate to attach \$ numbers, for others – he thinks they should be left out. Dirk Hofman said that the cost amount is not the most important part of the recommendation, but that it is important to determine where the funding comes from and how it is allocated. He added that those that derive the most benefit from the projects should contribute to the cost of the projects. It was decided that under each recommendation that a cost would be provided if it was available, but that it should not be assigned just to assign a cost. Instead, we should try to identify the responsible agency and appropriate funding mechanism.

The idea of Flood Mitigation Guiding Principles was presented. Bob Tudor said that the idea of guiding principles had been a good idea with the construction of the Water Resources Plan for the Delaware River Basin completed in 2004. He asked the group if they would like something similar at the front of the task force report that would set the tone for the report. He explained that DRBC had gone through the process of benchmarking a few different reports regarding flood mitigation both in the basin and throughout the nation and worldwide. Guiding principles and Straw recommendations were obtained from these resources which included the following:

- A DRBC flood loss reduction handout
- Excerpts from the DRBC Water Resources Plan, September 2004.
- The NJ Flood Mitigation Task Force Report, August 2006.
- Best Practices on Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation, European Union, June 2003.
- California Floodplain Management Task Force Recommendation, December 2002.
- International Flood Mitigation Initiative for the Red River Basin, 2001.

The idea of guiding principles was discussed and agreed upon. A draft set of ten guiding principles put together by DRBC staff was reviewed as a first step in this direction. It was mentioned that if anyone would like to provide substantial comments on a set of guiding principles, they should email their comments to Laura Tessieri at [Laura.Tessieri@drbc.state.nj.us](mailto:Laura.Tessieri@drbc.state.nj.us). One comment on the guiding principles was offered by Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow. She offered that the principles should include the protection of the public in addition to ecosystems on No.5. These will be further developed by Focus Area Teams as well.

In addition to the guiding principles, the idea of adding a section at the front of the report to identify key issues and stressors to floodplain management and risk management in the basin was proposed. This section could identify overarching issues such as management of the reservoirs, development, climate variability and the changing hydrology and stream bed configuration over time. It was agreed by the group that this section was important and that it would be included as a section in the report titled Flood Mitigation – Key Issues. This section will identify conditions as they currently exist and then set the stage to provide recommendations to reduce risk and damage in the basin.

Sign-up sheets to join the differing focus groups as identified on page 3 and Attachment 1 were passed out. The individuals who signed up for the focus groups at the 10/25/06 meeting (or signed up by peers) are the following:

Reservoir Operations: Lead Rick Fromuth (DRBC); [Richard.Fromuth@drbc.state.nj.us](mailto:Richard.Fromuth@drbc.state.nj.us)

Frazier, Dean  
Garlits, Edward E.  
Gast, William  
Hainly, Bob  
Karrow, Marcia  
Miri, Joe  
Moyle, John  
Shallcross, Amy  
Van Rossum, Maya  
Vogt, Bill

Floodplain Mapping: Lead Joseph Ruggeri (NJDEP); [Joseph.Ruggeri@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:Joseph.Ruggeri@dep.state.nj.us)

Colvin, Mary  
Frazier, Dean  
Hainly, Bob  
Nechamen, Bill  
Van Rossum, Maya  
Wilson, Kerry

Floodplain Regulations: Lead Vince Mazzei (NJDEP); [Vincent.Mazzei@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:Vincent.Mazzei@dep.state.nj.us)

Colvin, Mary  
Fitzpatrick, Dan  
Frazier, Dean  
Karrow, Marcia  
Shuler, Mike  
Van Rossum, Maya  
Vogt, Bill  
Williams, Greg  
Winslade, William

Structural and Non-structural Mitigation Measures:

Co-Leads David Dech (Warren County, NJ) and Scott Steigerwald (PADEP)  
[ddech@co.warren.nj.us](mailto:ddech@co.warren.nj.us) and [ssteigerwa@state.pa.us](mailto:ssteigerwa@state.pa.us)

Anderson, Rad  
Duell, Scott  
Garlits, Edward E.  
Hofman, Dirk C.  
Karrow, Marcia  
Moyle, John  
Patterson, Henry  
Powell, Michael  
Spalinski, Linda

Stevens, Glen  
Van Rossum, Maya  
Westfall, Greg  
Winslade, William

Flood Warning: Co-Leads Laura Tessieri (DRBC) and Peter Gabrielsen (NOAA/NWS)  
[Laura.Tessieri@drbc.state.nj.us](mailto:Laura.Tessieri@drbc.state.nj.us) and [Peter.Gabrielsen@noaa.gov](mailto:Peter.Gabrielsen@noaa.gov)  
Comey, John  
Hainly, Bob

Stormwater Management: Lead Amy Shallcross (NJSWA); [ashallcross@njwsa.org](mailto:ashallcross@njwsa.org)  
Blick, Sandy  
Murin, Ken  
Hunterdon County Planning (if needed)  
Nechamen, Bill  
Reese, Geoff  
Van Rossum, Maya

The focus teams will work to come up with a list of draft recommendations. The chairs will arrange either a meeting or a conference call in anticipation of the next meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>, where each team will give a status report and share their information with each other and the larger group. The next meeting is called a technical meeting and all task force members are invited, but they are welcome to send a technical representative if they desire. Bob Tudor indicated that if anyone had suggested recommendations independent of whether or not they were signed up to the focus team, they should either email the lead of the focus group or else they could email Bob Tudor at [Robert.Tudor@drbc.state.nj.us](mailto:Robert.Tudor@drbc.state.nj.us).

It was discussed that each focus team should consider the following factors that they craft issue-specific recommendations:

1. Mainstem vs. Tributary
2. Interstate (shared water) vs. Intrastate
3. Protect Built Environment vs. Planning Future Development
4. Short-Term vs. Long-Term
5. Institutional Coordination and Cooperation
6. Education and Outreach
7. Funding
8. Legislation
9. Tidal vs. Non-tidal

Joe Picciano of FEMA stressed that when forming recommendations, you should concentrate on viable solutions that are both implementable and make the Basin more flood resistant. Maya Van Rossum of the Riverkeeper said that we should be wary of arranging solutions by short-term vs. long-term because we don't want everyone to focus on and spend the money on short-term solutions and then have nothing left to implement potentially more effective long-term solutions. It was again discussed that a cost should be provided under each recommendation if it was available, but that it should not be assigned if the data was not available. Instead, each team

should attempt to identify the responsible agency and appropriate funding mechanism for implementing the recommendation.

As the meeting came to a close, it was reiterated that the intent of this task force is to prepare a draft preliminary action plan to the Governors by the end of the year. Dirk Hofman asked if the Commissioners to the DRBC were planning on reviewing and voting on the document prior to it going to the Governors. DRBC indicated that they would contact the Commissioners to see what the appropriate course of action would be while working within the timeframe given to them. The Committee did agree, though, that it was important for the Task Force to pass judgment and review the draft plan prior to it going to either the Commissioners or the Governors.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm. The next meeting is at DRBC on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. In the meantime, individual focus groups are charged to meet and discuss the substance and format of their recommendations.