

The BFE*

* BASE FLOOD ELEVATION

2026 Spring Technical Update

by Brandon Claborn WSB, Conference Co-chair

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The Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association (OFMA) Spring Technical Conference was held at the River Spirit Casino Resort on April 7th, 2026. The theme was something we all are thinking about more and more as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly enmeshed in our daily lives- from work to personal use: Trusting Your Data.

The day kicked off with a warm welcome, invocation, and the National Anthem, followed by updates from key figures: Kenneth Schwab, PE, SE, CFM, OFMA Chair; Jon Phillips, CFM, State NFIP Coordinator, OWRB; and Annie Vest, CFM OEM Executive director.

The morning plenary session continued with presentations from consultants at WSB. Audrey Fincannon and Janet Meshek shared lessons learned from the Tulsa County Flood Buyout; reflecting on the good, the bad and the ugly. This was followed by a CRS 101 presentation from Allison Whatsitt and Chris Hill covering the Community Rating System program basics, GIS tools for program management, and program updates.

The afternoon featured breakout sessions across three tracks: Floodplain Management, Stormwater Management, and Disaster. The following presentations were delivered:

Floodplain Management Topics

- Grant Moore from Moore Stormwater Engineering presented "AI & Trust: Opposites or Allies?"
- Kyle King from CEC presented "Changing Survey Datum"
- Carloine Jones and Chad Bunger from Freese & Nicholes presented "Addressing Flood Risk Uncertainty Through Future Conditions Flood Modeling & Regulation"

Stormwater Management Topics

- Alan Dennis and Jordan Angot from Garver presented "Facing the Underminer: Scour & Erosion due to Flooding"

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Words from the Chair

Kenny Schwab PE, SE, CFM | Chair
Assistant City Manager | City of Broken Arrow

In a word, I think leadership is what so many organizations, private or public, and certainly our profession and industry need more than ever. In fact, the Dean of my Civil Engineering College spoke to the seniors back in my day and told us that he received more calls from prospective employers asking for leaders. Repeatedly, they would ask for him to send them anyone that possesses leadership skills with critical thinking abilities. That was 35 years ago. I now understand that statement. It has not changed over three and a half decades. We need leaders who can think critically!

Leadership is not just a busy word. It requires action. Everyone talks about it, but do we really know what it means. I suspect if we asked ten different people to define leadership, we would get eleven different answers. Many definitions may be similar but certainly different. In truth, the textbook definition of leadership is straight forward. It is simply “influencing others.” That’s it. Influencing others is leadership. But how you influence others is an art and a skill. It is an art and a skill that we truthfully develop over time. It starts in childhood and continues through our adulthood. Your influence can be positive or negative.

With respect to our industry, we need positive leaders. Leaders who understand the technical aspects of our profession, but they can communicate them to the public and elected officials in an understandable and non-threatening manner. We need leaders who can make decisions based upon critical thinking skills, yet they can build consensus with their team and their administration in the midst of so many different opposing voices. We need leaders who can rally the troops during challenging times by inspiring people to work together as a team to solve the problems at hand. Above all, we need leaders who will hold themselves accountable and take ownership of their actions and responsibility for those of their team’s.

Sounds great, but how do we find these leaders? Well, if I knew that answer, I would be wealthy today. But I do think it starts with us. Period. We must grow our leaders within our organizations. We must set the standard of expectation we want in our leaders. We must promote that standard among our people. We must strive to meet that standard. And celebrate it when we achieve it.

As a member of an Administration, it’s my job to identify those individuals who possess a lot of the talents and skills that embodies our concept of leadership. We must identify those individuals who work well with all people. They respect and value others’ positions, ideas, and input whether they agree with it or not. They can stay focused on the task at hand while at the same time they can easily assist the other members of their team. These are the members who are having a positive impact on the organization. This positive impact is the leadership that all organizations desperately need. These are the future leaders in your organization.

Honestly, I cannot think of any better organization than OFMA where leadership is both needed and fostered. OFMA recognizes that growing its leadership today for the future is crucial. You can see it behind the scenes with those individuals who participate in the Boards and the Committees. You can see their ability to influence others. You can see it growing and impacting the people within our organization, as well as people outside of our organization. This is why an active and involved membership is so critical. It is critical for the individuals and for the organization.

In closing, I encourage you to get involved within OFMA and become a part of the leadership. You need us, and we need you! I look forward to working with you.

Kenneth D. Schwab

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- Jacob Hagen from City of Tulsa presented “Watershed Wildflower Meadows”
- Mark Thibodeau from ODEQ presented “ODEQ Permit Renewals”

Disaster Topics

- Bill Smith with HISINC provided a Disaster Response Team (DRT) training workshop

After the breakout sessions the group gathered for the afternoon plenary session before announcements, closing remarks and door prizes.

In this session, Lars Ostervold with Black & Veatch and John Dean with OEM gave an update on the recovery efforts in Barnsdall, Marietta, and Sulphur, which were impacted by tornadoes in 2024. To close out the day’s presentations, Yohannes from OWRB provided an overview of the Dam Safety Program which included upcoming training opportunities.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Vice Chair Zack Henson and everyone who contributed to making this year’s workshop a success.

Call for Presenters



Abstracts Due by June 5, 2026

OFMA is inviting speakers to present at our 2026 Stormwater Technical Workshop. Topics of discussion at the basic or advanced level should focus on how we use data to help policymakers make informed decisions. Some possible topics:

- BMP Implementation: What’s working, what isn’t
- Public Education and Outreach Campaigns
- TMDL Lessons Learned
- Inspection and Enforcement Tips/Tricks (construction, post-construction, good housekeeping)

Speakers will be allocated up to 25 minutes, followed by a 5-minute question/answer period, but longer presentations may be accommodated. If you are interested in presenting or know someone who would, please submit an abstract to Morgan Lozoya at morgan.lozoya@wsbeng.com, 918.518.0358. [Register online](#)

Congratulations to the winners of our Turn Around Don't Drown® Flood Safety Poster Contest

OFMA appreciates all the hard work of teachers, parents, and many others who supported this year's poster contest.

The students who entered also deserve our thanks.

We hope that by working together to spread the Turn Around Don't Drown® message. Floodwaters will harm fewer people in Oklahoma.

This year, more than 375 participants submitted their beautiful artwork.



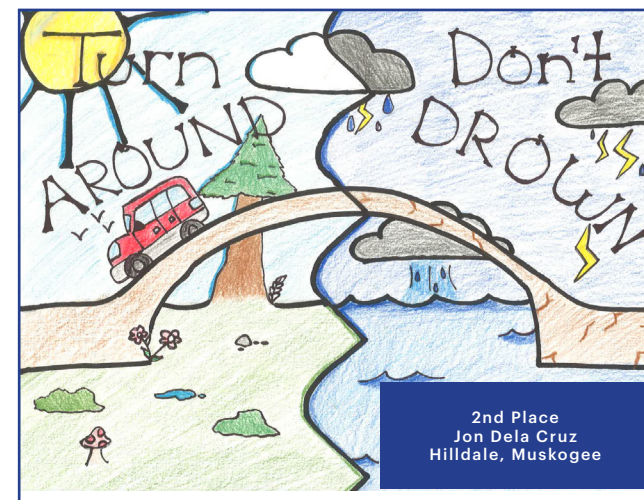
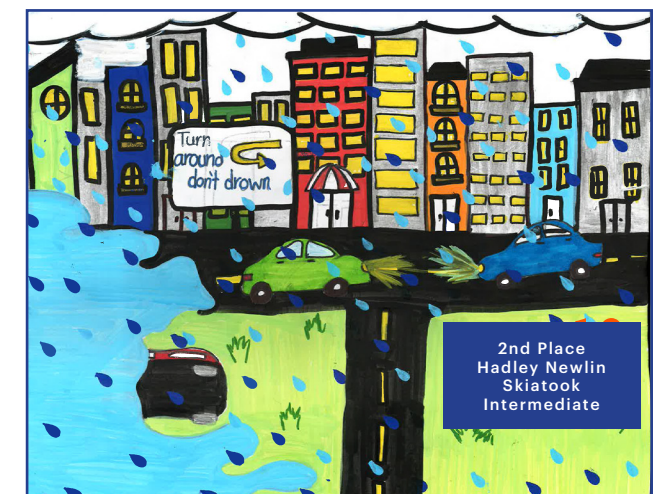
CONTEST WINNERS

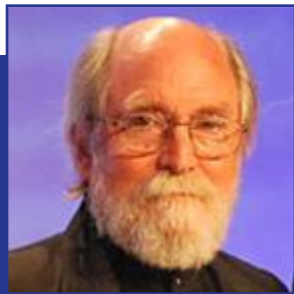
1st Place - Laikyn Zimmerman, Rush Springs
2nd Place - Jon Dela Cruz, Hilldale, Muskogee
3rd Place - Hadley Newlin, Skiatook Intermediate
Honorable Mention - Cydney Posey, Owasso Northeast Elementary

First, second and third place winners receive cash awards in the amount of \$150, \$100, and \$50, respectively. The top 13 posters in the state are published in the OFMA Turn Around Don't Drown® calendar. Each student participant is awarded a certificate of participation. Teachers receive a letter of appreciation.

Thank you to the following schools for supporting student participation in this year's program:

- Bearden School
- Bridge Creek
- Bridge Creek Intermediate
- Bristow Adventist School
- Canyon Ridge Intermediate
- Chouteau Public Schools
- Creek Elementary
- E-School Virtual Charter
- Fort Gibson IE
- Greenwood Elementary
- Hilldale Elementary
- Inola Elementary
- Lincoln Elementary
- MacArthur Elementary
- Maryetta School
- Metro Christian Academy
- Northeast Elementary
- Roland Schools
- Rush Springs Elementary
- Skiatook Intermediate
- Skiatook Public Schools
- Stone Canyon Elementary
- Tenkiller Public School
- Tonkawa Elementary
- Tulsa Adventist Academy
- Zion Public Schools





OFMA DRT Corner

Rev. W. B. “Bill” Smith, PE, CFM | OFMA DRT Coordinator

Working Together – Emergency Managers and Floodplain Administrators

Over the years, I have been sharing my thoughts on Disaster Response, sometimes relating to the role of the Emergency Managers and the Floodplain Administrators when disaster strikes a community or a state. With our already violent 2026 storm season – record tornados in March and the line of storms that rolled through on April 14th, the need for cooperation and working together seems to be even more important. Fortunately, we have a Director of the OEM who understands both Emergency Management and Floodplain Management and continues to get us all to work together.

When a disaster strikes a community, one of the first responders to the site of the damage is the local Emergency Manager. This individual has the responsibility of assessing the damage in that location along with many others perhaps, with the goal of estimating the associated damage costs. This information is provided to the Governor of the State for the purpose of issuing a State Declaration, if the damage meets the state requirement, and/or requesting a Federal Declaration, again if the damage meets the threshold. Once that assessment is complete, the EM will continue the efforts of response and recovery and possible mitigation efforts. This disaster could be within or outside the Special Flood Hazard Area or both.

When a disaster strikes a community one of the second responders to the site is the Floodplain Administrator. This individual has the responsibility of assessing the same damage as the EM with the goal of determining if the damage to the structures reaches the level of “substantially damaged” or not as well as if the damaged structures are compliant. They

then issue floodplain development permits if: 1) the structure is not substantially damaged, 2) the structure is substantially damaged, but compliant, or 3) the structure is substantially damage and not compliant for reconstruction or modification.

The roles of these two individuals assisting our communities are not a territorial battle — they are two different perspectives on the same disaster. The EM and the FPA are on the same team in the community — assisting those citizens in need. Sometimes the EM and the FPA are the same individual and when that occurs the EM needs to “turn their hat around” and assess the same damage from the perspective of the FPA as well. That EM/FPA may have to turn their hat around a number of times during any single disaster.

The FPA can assist the EM with information that will assist our citizens – including possible evacuation route information, possible immediate citizen evacuation from their homes or businesses due to rapidly rising waters, information about roadway crossings where culverts or bridges may be subject to washout, information about temporary housing outside the 500-Year floodplain if FEMA temporary housing is required, etc. etc.

Our OFMA DRT has worked hand in hand with OEM and Emergency Managers on many disasters since 2008 and will continue to do so as we have a cooperative respect for each other’s duties and responsibilities. We learned it was much easier to work together for the benefit of the community, than to dispute over territorial roles. That’s the way it should be. Be safe out there this spring. The rains and storms are here, and it looks like may be for some time with the shift in the spring season.

Just another 2 cents of my opinion!!

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Editor, The BFE | PO Box 8101 | Tulsa, OK 74101

Chair

Kenneth D. Schwab PE, SE, CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N. Poplar Avenue
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918-259-2400
kschwab@brokenarrowok.gov

Region I Representative

Michael Kimbro PE, CFM
ODOT
200 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405.522.0612
mkimbro@odot.org

Region V Representative

Jacob Price
Garfield County
216 West Oxford
Enid, OK 73701
580.242.6013
jprice@garfieldok.com

Ex Officio

Julie Cunningham
Executive Director
OWRB
3800 N. Classen Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
julie.cunningham@owrb.ok.gov

Vice Chair

Zack Henson, CPSWQ, CFM
City of Stillwater
723 S. Lewis Street
Stillwater, OK 74074
405.533.8436
zack.henson@stillwaterok.gov

Region II Representative

Patrick Wilson PE ,CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N Poplar Ave
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918.259.7000
Pwilson@brokenarrowok.gov

State NFIP Coordinator

Jonathan Phillips CFM
OWRB
3800 North Classen Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
jon.phillips@owrb.ok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ken Morris
OWRB—Retired
5400 E. Tecumseh Road
Norman, OK 73026
405.530.8861
kensbbd@gmail.com

Secretary

Rachael Cooper PE, CFM
Cross Timber Consulting
2223 E Skelly Dr, Ste 10
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.348.9916
rachael.cooper@crosstimbersconsulting.com

Region III Representative

Dennis Yochum
LeFlore County EM
1215 South Broadway
Poteau, OK 74953
918.635.3610
emlcdirector@gmail.com

Past Chair

Jesse Beck EI, CFM
City of Ponca City
516 East Grand
Ponca City, OK 74601
580.767.0383
beckje@poncacityok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ronald D. Flanagan CFM
R.D. Flanagan & Associates
3015 E. Skelly Drive
No. 270
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.749.2696
rdflanagan@rdflanagan.com

Treasurer

Carolyn Schultz, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3527 S. 401st W. Ave.
Mannford, OK 74044
918.906.3922
cschultz@cimtel.net

Region IV Representative

Johnny A. Barron PE, CFM
City of Altus
509 S. Main
Altus, OK 73521
580.481.3518
jbarron@altusok.gov

PDCC Chair / Honorary Board Member

Joseph Remondini PE, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3225 S. Detroit
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.361.8636
jremondini@aol.com

BFE Editor

Chandler Trotter EI, CFM
WSB LLC
416 S Utica Ave
Tulsa, OK 74014
918.324.2351
chandler.trotter@wsbeng.com

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2026 Stormwater Quality Workshop Update

by Brandon Claborn WSB, Conference Co-chair

On July 15, stormwater professionals from across Oklahoma gathered at Gaillardia Country Club in Oklahoma City for the annual Stormwater Quality Technical Workshop. Now in its third year at the venue, the workshop again drew strong attendance from industry experts and offered informative presentations, excellent facilities, and valuable opportunities to connect.

The event started with an opening plenary and a warm welcome from OFMA Chair, Kenneth Schwab, PE, SE, CFM who stressed the importance of including stormwater quality as part of our work in floodplain management.

Kathryn Perdue from Green County Stormwater Alliance (GCSA) and Cailyn Prather from Central Oklahoma Stormwater Alliance (COSWA) began with an introduction to their respective agencies and the support they provide. Then, Gabriel Stevens from ODEQ updated us on what is new at the department including OKR04 updates while introducing the new ODEQ MS4 Program Coordinator, Thomas Fuentes.

Craig Fairbaugh with Contech Engineered Solutions provided twenty years of insight on stormwater filtration media, including best practices and lessons learned from years of actual field experience. We closed out the morning session with an update from Dr. Jason Vogel, PE, with the University of Oklahoma and Dr. Jamie Schussler, with Oklahoma State University. They followed up their 2025 presentation introducing the mission of the Great Plains Stormwater Center of Excellence, with an update on the program.

After a networking lunch, attendees joined breakout sessions focused on General Topics, Inspections and Reporting, and Research Topics.

- The General Topics session was moderated by Patrick Wilson from the City of Broken Arrow. Julianna Monnot from the City of Sand Springs presented on MS4 and stormwater outreach opportunities, Chris Franks from the City of Stillwater discussed FOG programs, and Brian Lewis from the City of Tulsa concluded the session with a presentation on the Joe Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project.
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Words from the Chair

Kenny Schwab PE, SE, CFM | Chair
Assistant City Manager | City of Broken Arrow

Well, it is that time of year again. Our annual conference is just around the corner. Hard to believe that a year has passed so quickly! It seems like yesterday that we were all in Midwest City enjoying a great conference and discussing our future as an organization. As for the OFMA Board, we've made a lot of progress behind the scenes over the past year, yet there is still more to do.

The Board met in October at its annual Strategic Planning Retreat. Under the leadership of Past-Chair, Jesse Beck, the Board accepted the challenge and made it a mission this year to accomplish several important initiatives. The most critical aspect of this mission was determining how we can make OFMA more resilient in its leadership and more accessible to our young professionals. These challenges are of the utmost importance to our organization. I'm pleased to share that we've already taken meaningful steps to address these challenges, and we continue to make steady progress on several others.

OFMA implemented an expanded organizational structure which included several honorary officers. The goal was to include the committee chairs as honorary officers of OFMA. In addition, we created a few new voting officers. One of the most important additions was the creation of the Young Professional Officer position on the Board. Embracing our young professionals within the organization and including them in the future direction is imperative to our future success. I am excited to see this aspect unfold.

Maybe the most important steps of all include establishing a Search Committee for an Executive Director. Although we have not completed this effort, it is ongoing, and we have started the process. The Executive Director is crucial for the organization as we continue to grow and embrace more stormwater aspects within the state. Likewise, the Board has

created a new position, Assistant Treasurer, to help ensure that the organization has the proper checks and balances in place plus added redundancy regarding our finances. It is overwhelming to think that OFMA has had only one treasurer over our 37-year history! That is mindboggling. We absolutely had to get others involved in this aspect. I am excited to report that this has now been accomplished, and the learning process has begun.

We have more to do! We need to support and transition the Professional Development and Certification Committee Officer to another member. The position is much like the Treasurer in the sense that it has been performed by one person for decades! Now we need to ensure we have the people in place to transition that leadership role within the organization. We plan to do something similar to what we did with the Assistant Treasurer's position. Create an understudy, if you will, to allow time to train and learn the ropes. If you are interested, please seek out a Board member at the upcoming conference.

As you can see, the Board has had a very busy and active year. I am excited about the steps we have taken as an organization and even more excited that we are poised for new leadership to join us within the organization. As I have stated before, the strength of the organization is its leadership. The leaders help grow the power of the members and help guide us as one united voice. We have had a great history of tremendous leadership. I believe there are new and exciting opportunities for others within this organization. Leadership starts with you!

In closing, I encourage you to get involved within OFMA and become a part of the leadership team. You need us, and we need you! I look forward to working with you.

Kenneth D. Schwab

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- The Inspections and Reporting session was moderated by Morgan Lozoya from WSB. Cailyn Prather from the City of Yukon opened with a presentation on construction site compliance for Phase I and II MS4s. Michele Loudenback and Michelle Chao from the City of Norman then led a construction inspection role-playing activity. The session concluded with Morgan Lozoya from WSB, Josh Martin, and Brett Callahan from Rogers County sharing IDDE lessons learned.
- The Research Topics session was moderated by Dr. Jason Vogel from the University of Oklahoma and Dr. Jaime Schussler from Oklahoma State University. The session highlighted stormwater management research presented by University of Oklahoma students Nitu Adhikari, Ian Erwin, and Jennifer Albert; Oklahoma State University students Holly Schnettler, Mamata Pandey, and Connor Bailey; and East Central University student Adrian Odhiambo.

The afternoon plenary featured Allison Whitsitt with WSB, who explained the connection between stormwater solutions and the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS). A highly engaging panel on stormwater utility fees followed, moderated by Brandon Claborn with WSB. Panelists included Sophia West from the City of McAlester, Zack Henson from the City of Stillwater, Kenneth Schwab from the City of Broken Arrow, and Carrie Evenson from Midwest City.

A special thank you goes to SWQ Chair, Morgan Lozoya, and those who helped make this year's workshop successful.

Register Today for the Annual Conference in Tulsa

September 21-23, 2026
Osage Casino Hotel
951 West 36th Street North
Tulsa OK

[Register Today](#)

Calling Grade School Artists!

Turn Around Don't Drown Flood Safety Poster Contest

Each year more deaths occur due to flooding than any other thunderstorm-related hazard. Why? The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in automobiles that are swept downstream. Many drownings are preventable, but too many people continue to drive around the barriers that warn you that the road is flooded and Turn Around Don't Drown. Participation in the Turn Around Don't Drown Flood Safety Poster Contest helps children learn and inform their parents about flooding hazards. A particularly timely subject given last year's record flooding. Plus, students and their teachers could win cash prizes. If this is something your local school (third through fifth graders) would like to participate in, please contact your Region Representative (contact information on Page 9) to receive calendar contest guidelines. Calendar requests deadline April 1, 2027.



Preparing for Oklahoma's New Camp Safety Law: Understanding House Bill 1675B

By Keli Cain, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management

In Oklahoma, we know that planning ahead for flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, and other hazards is an important part of keeping people safe. Now a new law establishes emergency preparedness and safety requirements for youth camps, camp facilities, outdoor programs, and recreational campgrounds, helping camp operators be ready to protect campers and staff when emergencies occur.

House Bill 1675, authored by Rep. Josh Cantrell (R-Kingston) and Sen. Ally Seifried (R-Claremore), takes effect on November 1, 2026, with an initial compliance deadline of January 1, 2027. To ensure compliance, camp operators and local jurisdictions must understand their specific statutory requirements.

Who is Affected?

The Act applies to all camp facilities, youth camps, and outdoor programs operating in Oklahoma. This includes day, overnight, seasonal, and specialty camps serving individuals under 18. Programs operated exclusively by parents for their own children and certain single-day programs are exempt. Recreational Campgrounds are also included in the law but have different requirements. More information is provided below.

Requirements for Youth Camps and Outdoor Programs

By January 1, 2027, camps and outdoor programs must complete two safety documents and submit them to their county emergency management director, with updates every three years.

1. Site-Specific Hazard Assessment: Identify applicable severe weather hazards, such as flooding, tornadoes, high winds, wildfires, or extreme temperatures, proximity to hazard exposure zones, building vulnerabilities, evacuation routes, and shelter-in-place locations.

2. Emergency Action Plan (EAP): Maintain a written plan addressing severe weather monitoring, decision-making authority, evacuation versus sheltering criteria, accountability, and post-event communication and reunification.

Youth camps or outdoor programs held at a separate camp facility must use the facility's hazard assessment and EAP rather than creating their own.

Additionally, camps and programs must maintain two independent weather alert methods (one non-cellular), an internal communication system, and parent notification procedures and must provide access to storm shelters. Staff must receive annual training on hazard recognition, and camps must conduct periodic drills and maintain training records. Prior to participation, camps must provide a written disclosure of severe weather hazards and obtain an acknowledgment of receipt from participants (or parents/guardians, if the participant is a minor).

Recreational Campgrounds

Under Section 10 of the Act, recreational campgrounds are authorized to design and maintain campgrounds for flood and weather protection. They must develop written EAPs identifying location-specific hazards, evacuation routes, and warning systems. Campground operators must review plans annually and file them with the emergency management director for their jurisdiction by January 1 of each year.

Local Authority & Resources

The County Emergency Management Director serves as the regulating authority under the Act. County directors are responsible for reviewing and filing assessments and plans, adopting local rules (including variance procedures), inspecting training records, and carrying out necessary enforcement. Camp operators are encouraged to contact their county emergency management director soon as they prepare to meet the new requirements.

OEM also recommends counties and municipalities consult their district attorney or other legal representative for guidance on their authority and adopting rules or ordinances.

Floodplain managers can also be a valuable resource as camp operators identify flood hazards, understand local flood risk, and consider appropriate evacuation and warning procedures for camp facilities.

In July, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) hosted an introductory meeting to bring together associations and agencies impacted by the new law or who may provide resources for compliance. Attendees included OFMA, the American Camp Association, Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO), Oklahoma Municipal League (OML), Oklahoma Emergency Management Association

(OEMA), Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB), and others. The meeting was convened to help share the specifics of the new law, raise overall awareness, and connect organizations with resources.

With the new requirements taking effect this fall, now is the time for camp operators and local jurisdictions to start preparing. Implementing these requirements now will help camps be ready for a safe and fun 2027 camp season.



Find more information online, including emergency management contacts, EAP template resources, an implementation checklist, and more online at [Oklahoma.gov/oem/campsafety](https://oklahoma.gov/oem/campsafety).

The Money's Back, But Rules Are Changing

WHAT BRIC, FMA, AND SWIFT CURRENT LOOK LIKE IN 2026, AND HOW TO GET READY

By Wendi Lemons, WSB

After more than a year of stops, starts, and lawsuits, federal hazard mitigation dollars are moving again. FEMA reopened the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and released a new Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) funding cycle - good news for Oklahoma communities that have been sitting on mitigation projects while waiting for a funding source.

However, the programs that came back are not the same programs that left. This article walks through what has changed and what jurisdictions should be doing right now, before the next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) drops.

What's Different This Time

Several changes have shown up across BRIC and FMA this year, and floodplain managers should expect them to carry forward into future cycles:

Shovel-ready projects score dramatically better. BRIC's scoring now awards up to 30 points for projects at 90 to 100 percent design, compared to roughly half that for a project at the 30 percent design minimum. A well-developed concept is

no longer enough to be competitive.

Phased projects are effectively gone. FEMA discouraged, and in practice eliminated, the multi-phase approach that allowed communities to spread a large project across several funding cycles. The maximum BRIC performance period also dropped from 48 months to 36 months, so applicants need a realistic plan to go from award to construction inside a shorter window.

Planning and scoping money is drying up. Hazard mitigation plans are no longer an eligible BRIC activity, and FEMA removed project scoping as an eligible expense under FMA Swift Current. Capability- and capacity-building funds must now tie directly to a specific infrastructure project or building code adoption effort rather than general planning.

Application windows are short, and state deadlines are shorter. FMA's federal window ran roughly ten weeks. States and pass-through entities are setting internal pre-application deadlines well ahead of FEMA's own deadline, which means the effective window for a local jurisdiction to pull together a full application is often just a few weeks.

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Other scoring and policy shifts. FEMA eliminated the BRIC National Review Panel scoring step, reduced emphasis on Justice40 and disadvantaged community designations, rescinded the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, and removed climate change references from Hazard Mitigation Assistance guidance. Meanwhile, adopting the 2021 or 2024 editions of the International Building Code (IBC) now carries a scoring advantage.

What Jurisdictions Should Do Now

With shorter windows and a strong preference for ready-to-go projects, the work that wins a grant now happens mostly before the NOFO is ever published. A few practical steps:

- Review hazard mitigation plans, participate in plan update processes, and take the necessary steps to keep plans from expiring.
- Identify and rank candidate projects today. Do not wait for a funding announcement to decide what you would even apply for.
- Advance design on your top projects. Since design maturity now drives a large share of the score, moving a project from a rough concept toward 30 percent design, and ideally further, pays off directly.
- Start the benefit-cost analysis (BCA) early. FEMA's BCA process takes real time to document properly, and having a completed BCA in hand before a NOFO opens removes one of the biggest bottlenecks to submitting on time.
- Get environmental and historic preservation review moving. These reviews are frequently the longest pole in the tent and can be started well before a funding source is identified.
- Procure grant writing, engineering, and grant management support ahead of the NOFO, not after. Short application windows do not leave time to run a normal RFQ or RFP once the clock starts. Consider an on-call or pre-qualified consultant contract so support is already in place when a NOFO drops.
- Check your building code adoption status. Adopting the current IBC edition is a low-cost step that improves competitiveness on multiple programs.

- Line up local match and council or board approval in advance. Cost-share obligations have not gone away, and internal budget approvals often take longer than the application window allows if they are not started early.
- Stay in contact with your State Hazard Mitigation Officer. State pass-through deadlines are typically earlier than FEMA's, and state staff are the first to know when a new NOFO is coming.

Don't Overlook State Financing: OWRB

Federal mitigation grants get most of the attention, but the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) has been active this year too, and its programs can help with local match, complementary drainage work, or projects that do not fit neatly into a FEMA category.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). OWRB's SFY 2027 Intended Use Plan makes roughly \$272.5 million available for below-market-rate financing, at approximately 40 percent below typical municipal rates, for projects including stormwater retrofits, green infrastructure, streambank stabilization, riparian protection, and other non-point source activities. Eligible communities in OWRB's affordability tiers can receive principal forgiveness of 25 percent on a portion of their loan, and non-point source projects can qualify for up to \$1 million in forgiveness annually. For a community trying to fund the local match on a BRIC or FMA award, or to finance a stormwater component that FEMA will not cover, CWSRF is worth a call to OWRB's Financial Assistance Division early in project planning.

New state water infrastructure funding. In June 2026, the Oklahoma Legislature approved roughly \$73 million in additional water and wastewater infrastructure funding administered through OWRB, including a new \$35 million Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Investment Program and \$10 million in additional Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grants, alongside continued Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and emergency grant funding. Most of this is aimed at drinking water and wastewater systems rather than flood control specifically, but it is a reminder that OWRB is a moving target worth checking regularly, particularly for communities

pairing a flood mitigation project with broader utility or drainage upgrades.

The Bottom Line

Federal funding is tentatively flowing again, which is welcome news after a year of uncertainty. State tools like OWRB's financing programs are a useful complement to it. But the programs that reopened reward jurisdictions that treat project readiness as an ongoing effort rather than a scramble that starts the day a NOFO is published. Communities that use this quieter period between cycles to identify projects, advance design, and line up technical and financial support will be in a far stronger position the next time BRIC, FMA, Swift Current,

or another mitigation program opens its doors.

For More Information

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants: [fema.gov/grants/mitigation](https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation)

FEMA Notices of Funding Opportunities: [fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/notice-funding-opportunities](https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/notice-funding-opportunities)

FEMA Swift Current: [fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/flood-mitigation-assistance/swift-current](https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/flood-mitigation-assistance/swift-current)

Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Mitigation Section: oklahoma.gov/oem

Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Financing Programs: oklahoma.gov/owrb/financing.html



OKLAHOMA
Water Resources Board

FY'27 Floodplain Administrator Accreditation Renewal

A New Accreditation Year Is Underway!

The new Floodplain Administrator (FPA) accreditation year officially began **July 1, 2026**, and there is an important change for the FY'27 accreditation year: **all FPAs renewing their accreditation are now required to submit a renewal application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB).**

Whether you are working toward completing your annual requirements or are ready to renew, now is the time to get started. **Renewal applications are required for every FPA seeking to renew their accreditation for FY'27.** Be sure to complete your required training and submit your renewal application to maintain your accreditation.

Still Need Training? We Have Opportunities Remaining!

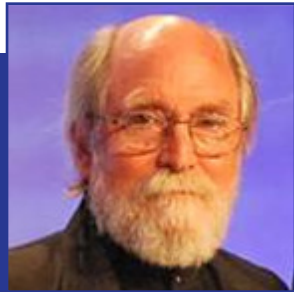
There are still several in-person Floodplain Management training opportunities available across the state:

- September 15 – Ponca City
- October 13 – Ardmore
- November 3 – McAlester

These remaining classes provide an excellent opportunity to complete your training requirements before submitting your FY'27 renewal application.

Don't wait until the end of the accreditation year! Review your requirements, register for an upcoming class if needed, and remember to submit your **FY'27 renewal application**. Renewal applications are now a required part of the accreditation process for all FPAs renewing their accreditation.

For questions about FY'27 accreditation, renewal applications, or training opportunities, contact the OWRB Floodplain Management team.



OFMA DRT Corner

Rev. W. B. “Bill” Smith, PE, CFM | OFMA DRT Coordinator

How Far Have We Come??

This week we lost a historic member of the OFMA Family. Harold Springer was involved in OFMA, OWRB, and Dept of Agriculture, but was always involved in the lives of those who were in need after a disaster. I was blessed to have known Harold most of my career on and off. I still have some of his files that he gave me when he decided to clean out his home. He will be sorely missed, but always in our hearts.

So that brings me to the point of my opinion today. Those of us in this watershed/stormwater/floodplain business seem to be getting fewer and fewer and the baton needs to be handed down. It is up to each of us to promote future career paths for the rain will not stop, the storms will continue to pass through and flooding will be forever. Remember “It will Rain Again, It will Flood Again.” It happens all the time in some parts of the world every day almost, as we see on the TV news. And the storms are becoming more devastating, higher intensity and more frequent – even during a period of drought.

I find myself having to teach, and re-teach, and re-teach what stormwater runoff is all about, what floodplain management is all about, how to prepare and file a Floodplain Development Permit, or properly complete an Elevation Certificate, or share the regulations of elevating a structure at or above the BFE and the methods that can be used successfully. It’s now

been almost 60 years since the NFIP was authorized and FEMA was created as a manner in which to not only provide flood insurance but also to regulate development, and more and more to respond to a disaster – flood, fire, strong winds, tornado, earthquake, and hail.

We as community leaders are now being asked to step up even more for disaster response – FEMA, in whatever form it is shaping into, is not going to be the knight in shining armor – coming to rescue the damsel in distress. It is we, the communities (State and Local) that will have to provide the method and funding mechanism for future disaster response and future mitigation measures. And it all starts with proper development.

The number of disaster claims within the SFHA is reducing, but the areas on the fringe and outside (0.2%) and greater are the ones being hit the hardest.

We all need to do our best to make certain that future generations who are going to take our place are knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated to our professions. So, I ask that you support the young people you know or work with by mentoring, identifying possible future engineers or planners or career opportunities in our fields of hydrology, hydraulics, water quality, stormwater management, floodplain management, construction, environmental science, etc.

It is our responsibility to secure the future.

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Editor, The BFE | PO Box 8101 | Tulsa, OK 74101

Chair

Kenneth D. Schwab PE, SE, CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N. Poplar Avenue
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918-259-2400
kschwab@brokenarrowok.gov

Region I Representative

Michael Kimbro PE, CFM
ODOT
200 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405.522.0612
mkimbro@odot.org

Region V Representative

Jacob Price
Garfield County
216 West Oxford
Enid, OK 73701
580.242.6013
jprice@garfieldok.com

Ex Officio

Julie Cunningham
Executive Director
OWRB
3800 N. Classen Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
julie.cunningham@owrb.ok.gov

Vice Chair

Zack Henson, CPSWQ, CFM
City of Stillwater
723 S. Lewis Street
Stillwater, OK 74074
405.533.8436
zack.henson@stillwaterok.gov

Region II Representative

Patrick Wilson PE ,CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N Poplar Ave
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918.259.7000
Pwilson@brokenarrowok.gov

State NFIP Coordinator

Jonathan Phillips CFM
OWRB
3800 North Classen Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
jon.phillips@owrb.ok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ken Morris
OWRB—Retired
5400 E. Tecumseh Road
Norman, OK 73026
405.530.8861
kensbbd@gmail.com

Secretary

Rachael Cooper PE, CFM
Cross Timber Consulting
2223 E Skelly Dr, Ste 10
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.348.9916
rachael.cooper@crosstimbersconsulting.com

Region III Representative

Dennis Yochum
LeFlore County EM
1215 South Broadway
Poteau, OK 74953
918.635.3610
emlcdirector@gmail.com

Past Chair

Jesse Beck EI, CFM
City of Ponca City
516 East Grand
Ponca City, OK 74601
580.767.0383
beckje@poncacityok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ronald D. Flanagan CFM
R.D. Flanagan & Associates
3015 E. Skelly Drive
No. 270
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.749.2696
rdflanagan@rdflanagan.com

Treasurer

Carolyn Schultz, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3527 S. 401st W. Ave.
Mannford, OK 74044
918.906.3922
cschultz@cimtel.net

Region IV Representative

Johnny A. Barron PE, CFM
City of Altus
509 S. Main
Altus, OK 73521
580.481.3518
jbarron@altusok.gov

PDCC Chair / Honorary Board Member

Joseph Remondini PE, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3225 S. Detroit
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.361.8636
jremondini@aol.com

BFE Editor

Chandler Trotter PE, CFM
WSB LLC
416 S Utica Ave
Tulsa, OK 74014
918.324.2351
chandler.trotter@wsbeng.com

The BFE*

* BASE FLOOD ELEVATION

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OKLAHOMA
Water Resources Board



2026 OWRB - OFMA Training

In 2026, the rivers may rise and the rains may fall - but across Oklahoma, communities will be more prepared than ever.

That's because the **Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB)** and the **Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association (OFMA)** are once again teaming up to bring floodplain management training to communities across the state. Their shared mission is simple: **help more people understand how to live, build, and plan safely in flood-prone areas**. And the best part? These trainings are **open to anyone** who wants to learn more - local officials, planners, engineers, emergency managers, and even curious residents.

The 2026 training journey kicks off in western Oklahoma on **March 17 in Clinton**, where participants will gather to learn the fundamentals of floodplain management and the real-world impact of smart development decisions.

Next, the training heads east to **Langley on April 1** as an OFMA only offering, continuing the effort to make floodplain knowledge accessible to communities near Oklahoma's lakes and waterways.

By **April 14**, the program reaches **Woodward**, bringing practical tools and guidance to the High Plains. Then on **May 6**, the training stops in **Oklahoma City**, giving metro-area professionals and residents an opportunity to sharpen their understanding of flood risk, regulations, and resilience.

After a summer break, the tour resumes in **Broken Arrow on August 18**, where growth and development make floodplain awareness especially important. From there, the team travels north to **Ponca City on September 15**, sharing strategies that help protect both people and property.

Fall brings two more opportunities to join in: **Ardmore on October 13** and **McAlester on November 3**, rounding out a statewide effort to strengthen floodplain knowledge from border to border.

At each stop, attendees can expect practical guidance, real examples, and the chance to connect with others who care about safer, smarter communities. Whether someone is brand new to floodplain management or has years of experience, the trainings are designed to be welcoming, informative, and useful.

In 2026, OWRB and OFMA aren't just offering classes - they're building a network of Oklahomans who are better prepared for the realities of flooding and better equipped to protect the places they call home.



Words from the Chair

Kenny Schwab PE, SE, CFM | Chair
Assistant City Manager | City of Broken Arrow

Happy new year! I hope everyone has a blessed 2026. As an organization, OFMA is looking for ways to expand our leadership roles both in getting more people involved and in expanding our reach as a professional organization. This should be no surprise. We have talked a lot about it for the past few years, and now, in my opinion, that day is here.

In my previous letter to the membership, I spoke about the Leadership Pipeline and closed the letter talking about a few Constitutional Amendments that the Board will place in front of the membership in early 2026. That time is here. At the end of January, the Board finalized the wording of the amendments, and we followed up with placing that wording in front of the membership. The point of the amendments is to create more leadership roles and help divide the work up among our members.

First and foremost, we propose redefining the Vice Chair's position. If you have been a part of any of the technical sessions, awards banquet, and annual conference over the past, then you have seen the work of the Vice Chair. That individual puts forth an awful lot of effort in conjunction with others to make those functions work. The Board has elected to make two (2) vice chair positions. The First Vice Chair will serve in the place of the Chair, if that individual is unable to perform the duties, and will still serve as the technical session and annual conference coordinator and liaison. The new Second Vice Chair will serve as the coordinator and liaison for the awards banquet and, more importantly,

will assist the First Vice Chair in all planning aspects of the technical session and annual conference. This will allow the Second Vice Chair to learn the processes and procedures for a one-year period before they are thrust into the leadership role for those events.

Another exciting new Board position that membership will be asked to consider is the Young Professional Officer. I have been a part of several organizations that have incorporated this concept into their organization. Each one has prospered because of the new energy and excitement induced into the organization. OFMA is growing exponentially in our young professional membership. We want to embrace, encourage, and provide more opportunities for this critical part of our membership. A Young Professional Officer can help with this core mission.

Look for these Constitutional Amendments in your inbox. I will close this letter like I did my last one. I encourage everyone in this organization to find a way to get involved. In truth, we need you! The strength of our organization is its leadership. The leaders help grow the power of the members and help guide us as one united voice. I believe there are new and exciting opportunities for others within this organization. Leadership takes you!

Keep doing what you do to keep your community and this state safe!!

Kenneth D. Schwab

Save the Date

Spring Technical Workshop

April 7, 2026

River Spirit Casino Resort,
8330 Riverside Pkwy, Tulsa, OK 74137



FEMA

Adopting New Flood Insurance Maps: Community Responsibilities Under the NFIP

Whenever FEMA issues new or revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports, participating communities must update their floodplain management regulations to adopt the new flood hazard data. If the community's existing ordinance already meets NFIP requirements, this may simply involve updating the map reference section. However, if FEMA adds new types of data - such as Base Flood Elevations (BFEs), regulatory floodways, or coastal high-hazard zones - the ordinance may need additional provisions. The Letter of Final Determination (LFD) explains which sections of the NFIP regulations (44 CFR 60.3) the community must adopt based on the updated data.

Communities have six months from the date of the LFD to adopt compliant regulations, and the changes must be approved by FEMA and the State before the FIRM and FIS become effective. FEMA sends reminder letters 90 days and 30 days before the effective date. If the required regulations are adopted and approved in time, the community remains in good standing in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

When adopting these regulatory updates, communities must also follow their state's legal procedures for adopting ordinances or resolutions. In Oklahoma, this includes complying with the **Open Meeting Act**, which requires proper public notice of meetings, posting of agendas that clearly state the proposed flood map adoption, and conducting the vote in a meeting open to the public. Following these procedures helps ensure the adoption is legally valid and transparent.

If a community fails to adopt the required regulations before the effective date, it will be suspended from the NFIP. Suspension has serious consequences: residents cannot purchase or renew NFIP flood insurance policies; certain federal grants, loans, mortgage insurance, and disaster assistance become unavailable for properties in mapped flood hazard areas; and lenders must notify borrowers that federal disaster assistance will not be available. Communities can regain eligibility by adopting compliant regulations, but they may also have to address any non-compliant development that occurred during the suspension.



FEMA

Flood Data Application

FEMA has launched a new Archived Flood Data application, offering an alternative to submitting PDF requests through the FEMA Engineering Library. The new platform allows users to manage requests online with several added benefits, including:

- Progress tracking
- Faster processing
- Support from Engineering Library staff
- Virtually guided walkthrough
- Secure payments through Pay.gov
- Secure login through Login.gov

While PDF requests remain available, FEMA encourages users to create an account and submit archived flood data requests online for a more efficient experience.

Visit: [Request](#) | [Archived Flood Data](#)

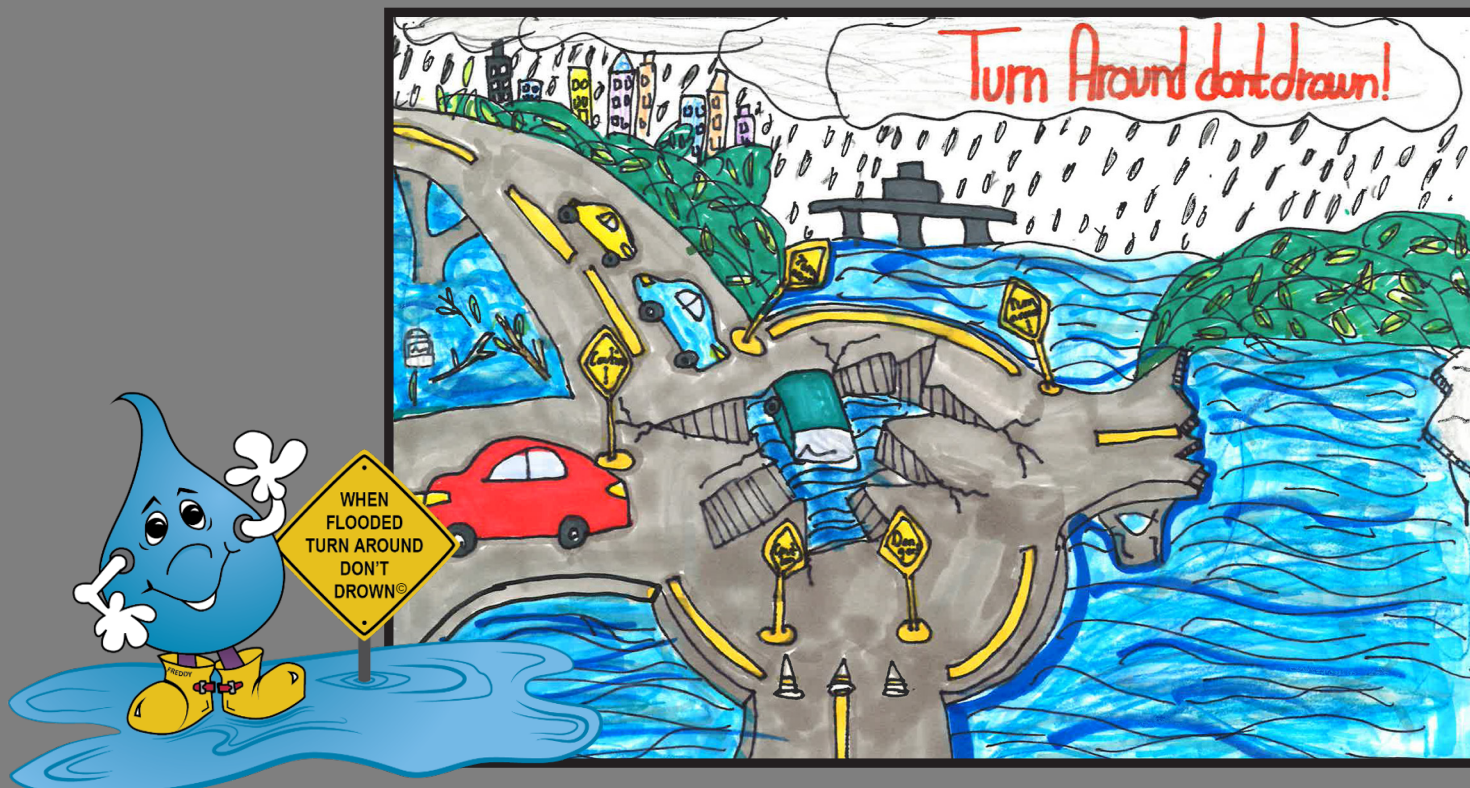
Calling Grade School Artists!

Turn Around Don't Drown Flood Safety Poster Contest

Each year more deaths occur due to flooding than any other thunderstorm-related hazard. Why? The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in automobiles that are swept downstream. Many drownings are preventable, but too many people continue to drive around the barriers that warn you that the road is flooded and Turn Around Don't Drown. Participation in the Turn Around Don't Drown Flood Safety Poster Contest helps children learn and inform their parents about flooding

hazards. A particularly timely subject given last year's record flooding. Plus, students and their teachers could win cash prizes. If this is something your local school (third through fifth graders) would like to participate in, please contact your Region Representative (contact information on Page 8) to receive 2026 OFMA calendars, including this year's calendar contest guidelines.

Calendar requests deadline April 1, 2026.



ARCHIVED FLOOD DATA

Make your request for technical data and administrative information for Flood Insurance Studies and flood maps through FEMA's new Archived Flood Data website. Get your information easier than before!



The digital process is an alternative to the PDF request form and enhances the customer experience with faster service and a guided, interactive workflow.

The New Website for Requesting Flood Insurance Study Data Features



Two request options – Guided walkthrough or streamlined approach



Live chat and direct messaging with staff

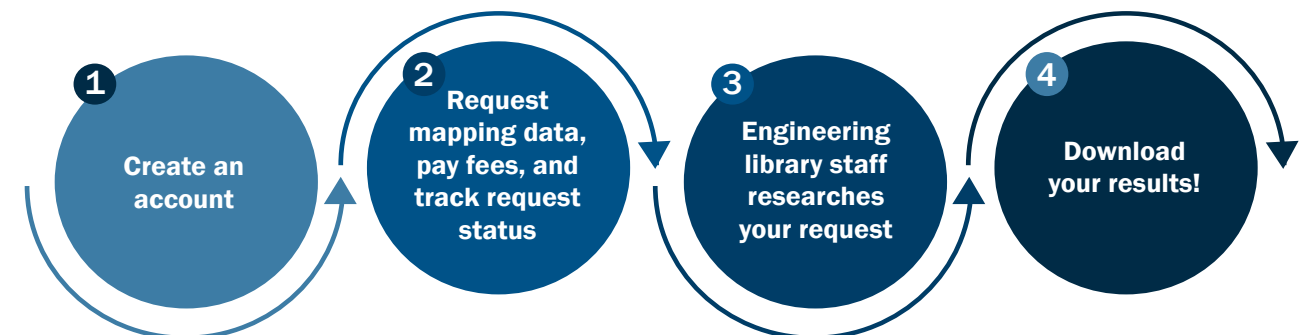


Secure login and online fee payments



Customer dashboard to track requests and retrieve research results

How the Request Process Works



AVAILABLE DATA TYPES

- Engineering Analysis
 - Coastal and riverine hydraulic/hydrology data
- Mapping
 - GIS and terrain mapping
- Individual Letters of Map Change (LOMC)
 - LOMA, LOMR
- Survey

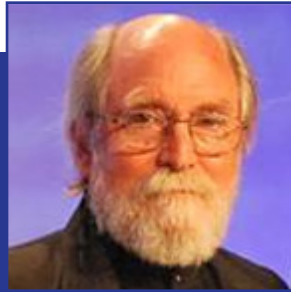
FOR HELP

The FEMA Mapping and Insurance eXchange (FMIX) Customer Care Center provides expert assistance for flood mapping and insurance questions.

FEMA-FMIX@fema.dhs.gov | 877.336.2627



FEMA



OFMA DRT Corner

Rev. W. B. "Bill" Smith, PE, CFM | OFMA DRT Coordinator

The OFMA Disaster Response Team (DRT) will be preparing for the Spring 2026 Flood season over the winter. Supplies will be checked. We are in need of additional volunteers. We currently have about 25 active volunteers.

We are trying to schedule a basic training program during the OFMA Spring Technical Workshop for DRT volunteers who are new or want a refresher course prior to the Spring Flooding (??) Season. Please sign up for this training when registering for the Spring Workshop or please notify Bill Smith, P.E. CFM, DRT Coordinator, by e-mail if you intend to participate in the training.

We continue to request that communities "pre-enroll" with the DRT Coordinator in the event that your community needs the assistance of the DRT.

HINT for the Month

Has your community been "cleaning ditches, drainage channels, and culverts" this winter in preparation for the spring rains?? If not, it's not too late – remember that accumulated debris will cause debris to catch and cause higher water surface elevations on the upstream areas that could flood structures. Don't forget to "permit yourself" for any modifications to the drainage conveyance structures – channels, culverts, etc.

Save the Date

2026 OFMA Annual Conference
September 21-23, 2026

Osage Casino Hotel
951 West 36th Street North
Tulsa, OK

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Editor, The BFE | PO Box 8101 | Tulsa, OK 74101

Chair

Kenneth D. Schwab PE, SE, CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N. Poplar Avenue
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918-259-2400
kschwab@brokenarrowok.gov

Region I Representative

Michael Kimbro PE, CFM
ODOT
200 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405.522.0612
mkimbrow@odot.org

Region V Representative

Jacob Price
Garfield County
216 West Oxford
Enid, OK 73701
580.242.6013
jprice@garfieldok.com

Ex Officio

Julie Cunningham
Executive Director
OWRB
3800 N. Classen Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
julie.cunningham@owrb.ok.gov

Vice Chair

Zack Henson, CPSWQ, CFM
City of Stillwater
723 S. Lewis Street
Stillwater, OK 74074
405.533.8436
zack.henson@stillwaterok.gov

Region II Representative

Patrick Wilson PE, CFM
City of Broken Arrow
485 N Poplar Ave
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
918.259.7000
Pwilson@brokenarrowok.gov

State NFIP Coordinator

Jonathan Phillips CFM
OWRB
3800 North Classen Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405.530.8800
jon.phillips@owrb.ok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ken Morris
OWRB—Retired
5400 E. Tecumseh Road
Norman, OK 73026
405.530.8861
kensbbd@gmail.com

Secretary

Rachael Cooper PE, CFM
Cross Timber Consulting
2223 E Skelly Dr, Ste 10
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.348.9916
rachael.cooper@crosstimbersconsulting.com

Region III Representative

Dennis Yochum
LeFlore County EM
1215 South Broadway
Poteau, OK 74953
918.635.3610
emlcdirector@gmail.com

Past Chair

Jesse Beck EI, CFM
City of Ponca City
516 East Grand
Ponca City, OK 74601
580.767.0383
beckje@poncacityok.gov

Honorary Board Member

Ronald D. Flanagan CFM
R.D. Flanagan & Associates
3015 E. Skelly Drive
No. 270
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.749.2696
rdflanagan@rdflanagan.com

Treasurer

Carolyn Schultz, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3527 S. 401st W. Ave.
Mannford, OK 74044
918.906.3922
cschultz@cimtel.net

Region IV Representative

Johnny A. Barron PE, CFM
City of Altus
509 S. Main
Altus, OK 73521
580.481.3518
jbarron@altusok.gov

PDCC Chair / Honorary Board Member

Joseph Remondini PE, CFM
Corps of Engineers—Retired
3225 S. Detroit
Tulsa, OK 74105
918.361.8636
jremondini@aol.com

BFE Editor

Chandler Trotter EI, CFM
WSB LLC
1437 S. Boulder Ave.
No. 1550
Tulsa, OK 74119
918.324.2351
chandler.trotter@wsbeng.com