NFIP/CRS
UPDATE

June / July 2014

Effective Date of 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* is Extended

Approval has been received from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to extend the effectiveness of the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* until December 31, 2016. As noted in a previous issue of the newsletter *[see **NFIP/CRS Update**, March 2013, p. 1]*, FEMA began implementing the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual* on April 1, 2013, under a short-term approval granted by OMB early in 2013.

A version of the *Coordinator's Manual* that reflects the new OMB expiration date of December 31, 2016, is available for download at www.CRSresources.org/manual and in the FEMA Library at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/8768. There is no difference between this version and the implementation version that has been posted and available since April 2013 in terms of content, credit criteria, credit points, or any other substantive matters. However, this version does incorporate corrections to minor typographical errors and similar changes. For this reason, it would be wise to download and use the current version. Its cover has the notation "Expires: December 31, 2016."

Remember that, at its first cycle verification visit after April 1, 2013, a participating CRS community is scored according to the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual.* Therefore, it is recommended that communities review the new *Coordinator's Manual*, attend a webinar, attend a class at EMI, or get information from its Users Group to help prepare for the verification visit. In the meantime, the community can continue to implement the activities credited under the 2007 *Coordinator's Manual.* The ISO/CRS Specialists have been working with communities on items needed for credit verification (documentation), and to identify activities for which the community may not have been receiving credit.

Note that the webinar "Preparing for the Annual CRS Recertification" is being held on August 19, 2014, and again on September 16, 2014. See page 6 for more information.

If you have questions about the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, or have trouble downloading it, please contact your ISO/CRS Specialist. ≡ ≡ ≡

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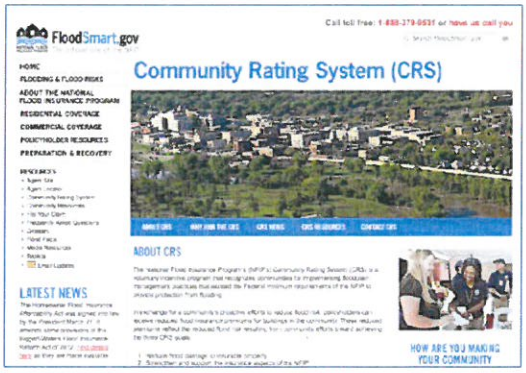
Online Resources

At FloodSmart.gov

- The CRS pages of the FloodSmart website [https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/crs/community_rating_system.jsp] have a new look, and are THE place to go for people new to the CRS who don't need the full technical details posted elsewhere. It's geared toward elected officials, newly hired CRS Coordinators, and the public—and for anyone's quick reference. It is where you go to learn about the program, who is in the program, how to get in, news, awards, and other such tidbits. Be sure to check in periodically, and don't neglect the wide range of helpful NFIP information on other portions of the FloodSmart site.



At CRSresources.org

Remember that www.CRSresources.org is constantly being updated with new CRS information. All documents referred to in the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* are being posted as soon as they are available. If you cannot find a piece of information or document, please notify your ISO/CRS Specialist or NFIPCRS@iso.com. Here are some recent additions to the website.

- "Maps as Cornerstones of Flood Warning and Response," is a one-page **handout** summarizing how a flood inundation map must correlate with a community's flood threat recognition system and its response plans. Get it at www.CRSresources.org/600-2/.
- **Webinar Schedule**—under the Training & Videos tab at www.CRSresources.org/training there is a list of all the CRS webinars scheduled to date, along with registration information.
- The last issue of the ***NFIP/CRS Update*** newsletter, in case you missed it (April/May 2014), can be found at www.CRSresources.org/100-2.

In Other Places

- "Floodplains as a Community Asset" is a 4-minute video that explains—with images and statistics—the advantages to both local governments and developers of using floodprone areas wisely and in keeping with their natural functions. Using footage from Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas, the video gives specific examples of communities that are boosting their economies, creating jobs, improving the marketability of real estate, and enhancing quality of life for their residents, all by recognizing that floodplains are desirable and valuable natural areas. This is a stimulating and persuasive tool for a community meeting or other outreach. The video was produced by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD) of the Denver metropolitan area and the National Association of Stormwater and Flood Management Agencies, in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Access it at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPdSlp0Lcyk&feature=youtu.be.
- Another short, 4-minute video, this one by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, promotes higher regulatory standards, especially freeboard, and open space as means of reducing flood losses and enhancing community livability. "Higher Standards" features results of research by Texas A&M University to determine precisely which measures truly reduce flood losses and also highlights the Community Rating System. Commentary is included from representatives of the City of Austin, Texas, and Pierce County, Washington—both CRS communities. See it at http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/91096. ≡≡≡

CRS Explored at ASFPM Conference

The annual conference of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), held in Seattle the first week of June, was punctuated by information sharing and discussion about the CRS—both formal and informal. Some highlights are below.

- It was a full house at the special Wednesday-afternoon workshop, "CRS Outreach Projects and FloodSmart: How Communities Can Expand Their CRS Public Information Efforts and Make Use of FloodSmart Tools." Members of the FloodSmart and CRS teams shared ideas, lessons learned, online tools, and local examples to help communities update their public information efforts based on the approaches recommended under CRS Activity 330 (Outreach Projects) and the new Activity 370 (Flood Insurance Promotion). CFM participants earned 3.5 CECs.
- At least 35 communities from 18 states, and some consultants, took advantage of the one-on-one appointments offered by CRS experts from Insurance Services Office, Inc., (ISO) at the conference. On behalf of FEMA, ISO met with these folks to answer specific questions and discuss a range of topics. Help and advice was dispensed about preparing for a cycle visit, BCEGS ratings, realizing class improvements, potential changes in scoring under the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*, applying to the CRS, and many more. The CRS and ISO plan to offer this arrangement again next year, as a convenient way for communities to learn more about the program and get individualized attention.
- The ASFPM Conference Committee reports that the CRS sessions got rave reviews and there were many requests on the evaluation forms for "more CRS-related content" in future conferences.

The CRS and the ASFPM are looking ahead to the 2016 conference, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 31—June 5, 2015. If you have ideas about CRS-related panels, presentations, or other options for next year's meeting, please forward them to NFIPCRS@iso.com. ≡≡≡

CRS Recertifications Coming Up

October is the annual recertification deadline for the Community Rating System. In August, ISO/CRS Specialists send each community a detailed list of the activities for which they are receiving CRS credit. Some of the more common trouble spots for communities are

- Annual reports, including those done for a public information program strategy (OPS, Activity 330) and a mitigation or floodplain management plan (Activity 510).
- Under Activity 330 (Outreach Projects), copies of all the projects sent out during the year, including additional projects (OPA), projects done pursuant to a public information program strategy (OPS), and a project to the repetitive loss area (Section 503 of the *Coordinator's Manual*).
- Reports from the local emergency manager on the annual exercise or drill of the emergency response plan, lessons learned from implementing the plan in response to an emergency or disaster, and the updated list of critical facilities affected by flooding (Activity 610).

One more piece of advice: unless the statement on the recertification form (AW-214) form requires you to attach or provide some type of documentation, please do not attach or provide anything. All you need to do is initial that the particular activity is still being maintained. Remember that, for most communities, this year's recertification is still based on the 2007 *Coordinator's Manual*. However, those communities that have been visited recently and verified under the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*, will receive a new set of activity statements as part of their annual recertification.

If you wish to submit your recertification electronically, please feel free to do so via e-mail with attachments or by submitting information on a CD. Just make sure the documents are appropriately marked to correspond with the activities. ≡≡≡

DEBBIE'S DISH ..... *on CRS Users Groups*

Debbie Cahoon Vascik, CFM
Users Groups Liaison

Tips on Recertification

It's that time of year again—recertifications! Letters from ISO will be sent to every CRS community on August 15th, to be returned by October 1st. If you are new to the CRS, the recertification is an annual submittal that confirms that your community is continuing to implement all of the practices for which you received credit in the initial application. It is ISO's version of a "checks and balances" and reminds communities that they must continually maintain their CRS program.

In theory, recertifications should be easy enough—just confirm that you're doing what you've been doing, initial it, and send it off. But sometimes, a recertification can be a little daunting, especially in the wake of the revisions to the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*. For communities who have recently made the transition to the new, 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*, this recertification form is similar to the one used under the 2007 edition, with just a few differences. Knowing that others are going through the same challenges you are is the perfect reason to reach out and join forces . . . yet another way in which being part of a Users Group really helps a CRS community.

To get the latest information from ISO on how to do a recertification, a CRS Users Group can invite its ISO/CRS Specialist to give a presentation on what he/she wants to see in the recertification submittal. (Check the list at www.CRSresources.org if you don't know your ISO/CRS Specialist.) This type of forum gives the ISO/CRS Specialist and the CRS Coordinators alike a more hands-on, individualized experience.

The CRS users group known as MOKAN (encompassing Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and soon-to-be-added Iowa) recently met and invited Christina Groves and Sherry Harper of ISO to give a webinar on this very topic. In the interest of sharing resources (since that's what Users Groups do best), and with their permission, here are some tips on recertifications (for the new *Coordinator's Manual*) suggested in the presentation.

- Read through the cover letter and note those activities for which you will need to attach additional documentation (items listed in bold type).
- Update information given on the Community Certification page (address changes, new CEO, etc.).
- For the CRS Program Data table, use baseline numbers established at the application visit or verification visit that took place under the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual.*
- Carefully review all elevation certificates for accuracy and completeness.
- Be sure necessary logs have been maintained during the year.
- Be mindful of the expiration date of your credited Floodplain Management Plan (aka MHMP or Hazard Mitigation Plan).
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn more about the CRS.
- Stay in contact with your ISO/CRS Specialist and ask questions.

Those still under the 2007 *Coordinator's Manual* may breathe a sigh of relief that your old ways of doing the annual recertification can still be used . . . for now. Soon enough, we will all be abiding by the new *Coordinator's Manual*, and CRS Users Groups will be needed more than ever. ≡ ≡ ≡

[Editor's note: Also see page 6 for information on the webinar, "Preparing for the Annual CRS Recertification," which will be held August 19, 2014, and on September 16, 2014.]

New ISO/CRS Specialist

Lou Ann Patellaro, CFM, joined the CRS team as an ISO/CRS Specialist in July. Patella holds a bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning, and most recently was employed by Calvin Giordano & Associates in Ft. Lauderdale, in their Government Services Division. Her primary assignment was to serve as the Building Permit Manager for the City of Weston, Florida. The position encompassed zoning plan review, certificates of use, code compliance, floodplain management, property appraiser reporting, and comprehensive planning. Before that, Patellaro had a long career with a variety of responsibilities in the Community Development Department of the City of Dania Beach, Florida. She will be based in Burbank, Illinois, working with communities in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Welcome, Lou Ann! ≡ ≡ ≡

Top ~~Ten~~ Fourteen Reasons to Join the Community Rating System

Not to be outdone by a certain late-night talk show host, the City of Ottawa, Illinois, has recently developed its own "top ten" list. But, as you can see by this excerpt from a presentation made by Mike Sutfin, CRS Coordinator for Ottawa, at the spring meeting of the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management, they couldn't stop at ten. The city is a CRS Class 5, and here are their 14 reasons they think other communities should participate.

You should join the CRS because it . . .

14. Gives a step-by-step manual to help your community;
13. Develops community friends united in fighting floods;
12. Develops friends in CRS who have done this and can help;
11. Develops agency partners to help you—Illinois Department of Natural Resources, CRS, U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and more;
10. Helps your community learn about available resources for managing its flood hazards;
9. Helps others in your community be ready to fight the flood;
8. Encourages you to do what's best for your community;
7. Cures flood amnesia;
6. Educates your residents;
5. Lowers insurance premiums;
4. Gives legitimacy when seeking grants;
3. Helps keep your flood problems from getting worse;
2. Is the right thing to do; and
1. Protects your community.

Additions to the CRS Task Force

Three new members have been appointed to the Community Rating System Task Force:

- Russell Jackson, Coastal Hazards Specialist with the Coastal Services Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Jackson is a veteran of NOAA with extensive involvement in tsunami and coastal hazards.
- Mike Sutfin, CFM, Building and Zoning Official for the City of Ottawa, Illinois. Sutfin was instrumental in Ottawa's achieving a Class 5 rating in the CRS. He received the CRS Award for Excellence in 2013.
- Danny Hinson, CFM, Florida Community Rating System Coordinator at the Florida Division of Emergency Management/Mitigation Section. Hinson has three decades of experience with local governments, including 16 years with the NFIP Community Rating System as an ISO/CRS Specialist.

The CRS is pleased to welcome these experts into its advisory body. The next meeting of the CRS Task Force will be held the week of September 8th. ≡ ≡ ≡

The Community Rating System Task Force is the inter-agency, multidisciplinary advisory body that has provided guidance to FEMA since the inception of the program. The CRS Task Force is made up of professionals from diverse backgrounds—representatives of FEMA, the insurance industry, professional organizations, local governments, and other governmental entities. It serves to monitor the program, discuss needed changes, and make recommendations to FEMA.

Training Opportunities

Webinars

The CRS offers webinars and workshops to help communities with their CRS requirements. If you are interested in having a webinar on the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*, the FEMA Elevation Certificate, or any other activity, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist. The following one-hour topical webinars are on the calendar, and others can be scheduled. Many will be recorded, so they can be accessed later. Registration is free, but required, as space is limited. Some courses provide continuing education credits for Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs). See www.CRSresources.org/training.

All webinars begin at 1:00 pm EST / 10:00 am PST.

- Introduction to the CRS— October 21, 2014; December 16, 2014
- Preparing for a Verification Visit with the 2013 *Coordinator's Manual*— November 18, 2014
- Preparing for the Annual CRS Recertification— August 19, 2014; September 16, 2014
- Natural Floodplain Functions— August 20, 2014
- Activity 540 (Drainage System Maintenance) — September 17, 2014
- Developing Outreach Projects under Activity 330— October 22, 2014
- Activity 610 (Flood Warning and Response) — November 19, 2014
- Developing a Program for Public Information under Activity 330 or a Coverage Improvement Plan under Activity 370, and Using FloodSmart Tools— December 17, 2014.

[continued on next page]

Training Opportunities (cont.)

Some of the other webinars anticipated in 2014 and 2015 are

- CRS Credit for Mapping and Regulations: The 400 Series
- CRS Credit for Flood Damage Reduction: The 500 Series
- The CRS and Climate Change.

For more on the CRS webinar series, to register, and to obtain agendas and required materials, go to www.CRSresources.org/training. If you have questions about the CRS Webinar Series or suggestions for future topics, please contact Becca.Croft@atkinsglobal.com.

Webinars on Record

"RiskMAP and CRS Synergy" is a recorded, one-hour webinar that introduces FEMA's Community Rating System and RiskMAP initiative and shows how communities can use both to improve their floodplain management programs. Class materials, including the handouts, the presentation slides, and a summary of the Q & A are available for download at http://www.starr-team.com/starr/Training_Materials/Risk_MAP-CRS_Synergy. The recorded webinar can be accessed at http://j.mp/starr-recorded-training (click on "Recorded Sessions" at the left).

Workshops and Training related to the CRS

- **The Community Rating System** (E278) (field-deployed course is designated as L278)

  Emergency Management Institute (Emmitsburg, Maryland) ..... April 27–30, 2015;
  ..... July 27–30, 2015; August 31—September 3, 2015

  NOTE: The three 2015 classes listed above are not yet open for registration, because the dates have not been finalized.

  This is the all-purpose training course for the CRS. It is taught at both the Emergency Management Institute (see below) and at sites throughout the country at the request of interested communities, groups, or states, pending available funding. It is based on the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual.*

  - Attendees of previous E278 CRS courses may want to repeat this course. Therefore, restrictions on repeat attendance have been waived.
  - For continuing education credit for Certified Floodplain Managers, the ASFPM will award CECs earned at the E278 CRS course even if the CFM® attended the course when it was based on a previous *CRS Coordinator's Manual.*
  - No more than two persons per community may attend at one time.

  Prerequisite: To enroll in the CRS course, you must be a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM®), or have completed the National Flood Insurance Program course listed below (E273), or be a full-time floodplain manager with more than two years of experience specifically related to floodplain management.

- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts** (E194) ..... August 25–28, 2014
- **Hazus-MH for Flood** (E172) ..... December 1–4, 2014
- **Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program: Quality Applications** (E212) ..... March 2–5, 2015

continued on next page

Training Opportunities (cont.)

- **Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP** (E273) ..... March 9-12, 2015

  E273 is also field deployed periodically. Contact your State NFIP Coordinator for more information (see http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuID=274).

- **Residential Coastal Construction** (E386) ..... August 18–21, 2014

CRS communities can receive CRS credit points after their staff members complete certain training sessions. Under Section 432.o, regulations administration (RA) of the *Coordinator's Manual,* five points are provided for each member of a community's floodplain permit staff who graduates from courses E194, E273, E278, E282, E284, or E386 (up to 25 points). Graduating from E279 is worth up to five points under Activity 360 (Flood Protection Assistance).

About the Emergency Management Institute

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI), in Emmitsburg, Maryland, offers training on topics related to floodplain management, mitigation, and construction, including the basic CRS course (E278). These are oriented to local building, zoning, planning, and engineering officials. Tuition is free for state and local government officials, travel stipends are available, and on-campus lodging is free. Free transportation is provided from the airport to the campus and back to the airport. The only out-of-pocket expense is a meal ticket—all-you-can-eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Go to the EMI website for specific details at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/NETC_Welcome_Package.pdf. The application to attend can be found at http://training.fema.gov/Apply/, or call EMI at 1-800-238-3358 or (301) 447-1035. Signed applications should be submitted through the state's Emergency Management Training Officer.

Bring the CRS to Your Home Town

In 2015 the CRS expects to conduct the field-deployed CRS course (L278, the same as the Emergency Management Institute's E278, but tailored to local conditions), depending on funding availability. The 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* and increased interest by non-CRS communities are generating a growing demand for CRS training. A state, CRS Users Group, or organization that would like to host a course or discuss CRS training opportunities should contact its FEMA Regional CRS Coordinator (see www.CRSresources.org/100). ≡ ≡ ≡

Statement of Purpose

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is a publication of the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. It provides local officials and others interested in the CRS with news they can use.

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is produced in alternate months. It is distributed electronically, at no cost, to local and state officials, consultants, and other interested persons. Communities are encouraged to copy and/or circulate the *Update* and to reprint its articles in their own local, state, or regional newsletters. No special permission is needed.

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