



Florida SHMPoints

Providing insightful mitigation news and information from around the State of Florida.

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An Innovative Approach to Streamline the Environmental Review Process

By: Rose Luzader

In recent years, the time and cost necessary to ensure compliance with the multitude of environmental laws and regulations has become a heavily debated topic within the government, the media, and the public. As a possible solution to the controversy of environmental regulations, the topic of streamlining the environmental review process to become more efficient and effective has become a focal point of the debate, especially within the current administration. Streamlining efforts have occurred on both an administrative level for many federal agencies, but the efforts can only be contained within each individual agency. Although federal agencies have taken actions to best utilize their resources within their own agency, they have often overlooked the potential to use state partners to create a more efficient review process while minimizing duplication of efforts. FDEM Mitigation Bureau, already performing state level environmental compliance reviews, was aware of this potential and capitalized on the opportunity.

Currently, potential projects are reviewed at the state level by environmental specialists prior to grant application submittal. After a project has formally been submitted to FEMA by FDEM, FEMA performs another environmental compliance review. The reason for this being that FEMA is statutorily required to ensure that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has been satisfactorily met. This current NEPA process can lead to delayed applications, missed deadlines, and an overall confusion about the status of a grant application. Becoming increasingly aware of the duplication of efforts, FDEM Mitigation team began searching for a way to improve the environmental review process to be more cohesive, transparent, and efficient while avoiding unlawfully adopting federal agency responsibilities. The resulting process allows the FDEM Mitigation environmental specialists to perform

environmental compliance reviews as a member of FEMA R4 EHP team, all while FEMA retains their legal responsibility for ultimate approval.

This solution was possible through a Memorandum of Understanding between FDEM Mitigation Bureau and the Region 4 FEMA Environmental Administrator. Utilizing an MOU has avoided unnecessary legislation, and allows flexibility to the roles and responsibilities of each organization. The MOU crafted allows for FDEM Environmental Specialists to be trained exactly the same as FEMA personnel, to perform environmental compliance reviews on behalf of FEMA, and to have a more active role in consultations between local agencies and the federal resource agencies. These benefits will ultimately lead to a more consistent environmental review that allows Florida communities to have their mitigation project applications move through the FEMA approval process much faster.

This new partnership between FEMA and FDEM is an innovative and collaborative method of streamlining the NEPA process between all levels of government. Although streamlining efforts that include the use of state agencies have occurred in a couple of federal agencies (see FHWA-FDOT NEPA approval authority), federal legislation to be passed through Congress has been necessary to allow the partnership. This one-of-a-kind program that is now in development between FEMA and FDEM will serve as an example for streamlining the NEPA process that can occur between state and federal levels of an organization without the need for legislative changes.

HLMP GRANT PROGRAM

By: Kayley Stutson

The Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program is a state-funded mitigation grant that aims to increase Floridian communities' ability to withstand hurricane-force winds and weather related flooding. Every year, HLMP distributes \$194,000 grant agreements to awarded counties, cities, and non-profit organizations to fund mitigation efforts in their communities. Do not miss out on this funding opportunity in 2018!

"Please let anyone at FDEM associated with the program know how grateful we are for the funds we received and how thankful the homeowners are that we have been able to help." –
Taylor County

"Our only issues after the storm [Irma] were power related and we can definitely attest that the program not only helped us mitigate our homes but helped with overall disaster preparedness." –Manatee County

"The homeowners under the Residential Wind Mitigation program express gratitude for the opportunity to increase wind resilience, and to help ensure the safety and strength of their homes and family during the hurricane season." –
Miami-Dade County

"I felt very safe during Hurricane Irma, I heard the winds outside, but I went right back to sleep." –Northwest Jacksonville CDC

HLMP GRANT PROGRAM

Save the Date: Procurement Expected January 2018

Successful proposals are those who follow these guidelines...

- Address every component on the scoring rubric.
- Display a clear understanding of mitigation.
- Define a team who can successfully manage the grant.
- Highlight examples of previous successful projects.
- Remain concise, avoiding embellishment.

My Florida Market Place is a source for centralized procurement activities, efficient coordination between vendors and state government entities, and the facilitation of procurement for the State of Florida. My Florida Market Place also offers RFP document outlines. Applicants will need to first register with MFMP before beginning the application process.

HLMP will be conducting workshops across the state of Florida. If you are interested in learning more about our program and the RFP process, please call or email:

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Why All The Interest in Elevation Certificates?

By: Jay Anderson

Contribution by: Josh Overmyer

What are Elevation Certificates & Why are they Essential to Reduce Risk?

An Elevation Certificate (EC), FEMA form 086-0-33, is a four-page document that provides elevation information for structures and certain equipment to ensure that structures are elevated to or above the 1% annual chance flood level established on Flood Insurance Rate Maps. By requiring and retaining accurate and complete EC forms for all new construction and substantial improvements, communities can help ensure that properties are reasonably safe from flooding.

Maintaining correct elevation data is required for communities to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Certificates of elevation are required in local community floodplain management ordinances and in the Florida Building Code. ECs are used to help determine flood insurance rates and are used to support requests for Letters of Map Change such as a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA), or Letter of Map Revision based on Fill (LOMR-F).

The fileable EC and instructions can be accessed at: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1503346187820-b2f06c29a603ba9d08de1dc3ab64235b/F-053_EC_May2017_RE_rev.pdf

How do Elevation Certificates Help Ensure Community Compliance with the NFIP?

One of the requirements of the NFIP is for participating communities to obtain the elevation of the lowest floor (including basement) of all new and substantially improved buildings, and maintain a record of this information. The EC provides a way for a community to document compliance with the community's floodplain management ordinance by showing the lowest floor to be at or above the Base Flood Elevations (BFE). ECs must be completed, signed and sealed by a Florida licensed surveyor, engineer, or design professional, if they are qualified to do so.

Two ECs are required for new construction. One EC must be submitted prior to vertical construction and the other upon completion of construction prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Community officials may fill out ECs for structures located in Approximate A and AO Zones, where BFE's have not yet been determined, to show the elevation of lowest or highest adjacent grade next to a structure or to show the site of a proposed structure.

For insurance purposes, ECs determine risk based on lowest floor elevation and the applicable flood zone. A Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) or Letter of Map Revision may be obtained from FEMA when the elevation of the lowest adjacent grade (shown on the EC) is at or above the Base Flood Elevation. ECs are also used for insurance purposes to verify that a structure or lot is at or above the BFE and thus eligible for reduced insurance rates.

Why All The Interest in Elevation Certificates?

How do ECs Affect Community Participation in CRS?

ECs are the cornerstone of the Community Rating System. Participating communities are required to collect ECs for all new construction and all Substantial Improvement in flood zones. In addition, ECs are scored in Activity 310, based upon the number of accurate ECs that are presented to the Insurance Service Office Inc. (ISO)/CRS Specialist. CRS communities must maintain a 90% accuracy rate to remain eligible for participation in CRS. The community's Activity 310 score is based upon the first review of ECs by the ISO staff, so it is important for communities to stay on top of their EC accuracy ahead of time. Failing a 90% accuracy standard, a community will be given the opportunity to correct errors on the EC, or track down the licensed surveyor or mapper to fix the errors, but the initial score in Activity 310 will remain.

How can Citizens and Communities Obtain Additional Information about ECs?

ECs are now required to be submitted by surveyors and mappers to FDEM within 30 days of completion. Beginning January 1, 2017, Section 472.0366, F.S. requires "a surveyor and mapper shall, within 30 days of completion, submit to the Division a copy of each elevation certificate that he or she completes."

A web application for surveyors and mappers to submit ECs is available at: <https://maps.floridadisaster.org/ec>.

Elevation certificates previously submitted to the Division may also be viewed through the above link.

Elevation Certificate Training

If you are interested in taking a one day course explaining ECs and how to fill them out, please visit the Florida Floodplain Managers Association site for the Events Calendar, which gives training opportunity times and locations at: <http://ffloods.org/>

Need More Information?

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The Bureau of Mitigation

Mitigation is an integral part of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). Mitigation actions reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Due to Florida's weather, geography, and miles of coastline the state is highly vulnerable to disasters. Disasters can be very costly to both the citizens and government.

Under the direction of Division Director Wesley Maul and State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Miles E. Anderson, the Bureau of Mitigation administers several federal mitigation grant programs including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. The Bureau also administers a state funded mitigation program called the Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program. If you would like to know more about mitigation in Florida please visit: www.floridadisaster.org/mitigation.



2018 SHMP UPDATE

The draft plan will soon be up for public comment. We welcome any feedback. The plan is due in February and we will keep you all posted on the status.

