



2025 NAFSMA Annual Meeting

July 21-24 - Chicago, IL

Loews Chicago Hotel

Leading Through Unprecedented Change: Strategies to Navigate Uncertainty in Water Resources

Monday, July 21, 2025

1:00-4:00 PM **Registration** (*Sullivan Ballroom Foyer*)

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

7:00 – 4:00 PM **Registration** (*Sullivan Ballroom Foyer*)

8:30 – 9:00 AM **Welcome Address** (*Sullivan Ballroom*)

9:00 – 9:30 AM **Keynote Speaker** (*Sullivan Ballroom*)-*Sunny Simpkins*

- *Mark Pestrella, LA County Director of Public Works, Leading in a Time of Crisis: reflections on the LA Wildfires and managing the storms after.*

9:30 – 10:00 AM **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Update** (*Sullivan Ballroom*)

- *Elizabeth Asche, Assistant Administrator of the Federal Insurance Directorate and the senior executive of the NFIP (Virtual)*

10:00 – 10:15 AM **Break**

10:15 - 11:00 AM **Future of Flood Insurance and What it Means for Your Community** (*Sullivan Ballroom*)-*Brooke Seymour*

- *Leila Taha, Executive Director, National Flood Association (NFA)*
- *Jackie Higgins, Head of Public Sector Solutions, Swiss Re Management*

11:00 – 12:00 PM **Pluvial Flooding** (*Sullivan Ballroom*)-*Sarah White*

As rainstorms continue to intensify, and infrastructure ages how do public agencies plan and mitigate for these new storms. This session will discuss both emerging data and local strategies, and how local agencies are tackling this issue.

- *Emily Mutkoski and Lydia Church, NOAA, National Center for Environmental Information; Update on Atlas 15 NOAA Atlas 15, the new authoritative, spatially continuous National Precipitation Frequency Atlas of the United States*
- *Kevin Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director of Engineering, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD)*

12:00 – 1:00 PM **Lunch** (*City View Terrace*)

1:30 – 3:00 PM

Holistic Approaches to Reducing Flood Risk *(Sullivan Ballroom)-Tina Petersen*

- *Karl Chastko, Senior Policy Analyst, Public Safety Canada; Andy Neal, Senior Managing Director, Aon Reinsurance Solutions; and Gavin Lewis, Head of Engineering, Fathom, Canada's Comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment-Canada has focused on bridging the gap between data, science and policy to keep Canadians safe. Hear how this real-world application of data is supporting public awareness and informing flood risk and insurance programs.*
- *Ari Simon, Founder/Facilitator, Inner & Outer Engagement; Hannah Melville-Rea, Ph.D. Researcher, Doerr School of Sustainability, Stanford University, San Bruno, CA have experienced years of flooding due to aging infrastructure, increasing storm severity, sea level rise, and low-lying neighborhoods. To ensure capital improvement projects are informed by community concerns and move beyond local skepticism and anger, OneShoreline developed an outreach approach where trust-building became the foundation.*
- *Rachel Hogan Carr, Executive Director, Nature Nurture Center; What social science research and community engagement efforts can show us about how to motivate flood preparedness and response - from improved communication of forecast information to creative community-wide efforts at readiness and knowledge-building.*

3:00 - 3:15 PM

Break *(Sullivan Ballroom Foyer)*

3:15 - 4:10 PM

Levee Session *(Sullivan Ballroom)-Mark Strudley*

- *Tammy Conforti, Special Assistant for Levee Safety, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Update on the National Levee Safety Program (Confirmed)*
- *Scott Mensing, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City Levees Program, Mega-Project to raise levees along the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. One of the keys to the projects was successfully coordinating the project with the railroads.*

4:10 – 5:00 PM

Cybersecurity and AI *(Sullivan Ballroom)-MaryLynn Lodor*

What public agency leaders to know about these emerging advances in technology

- *Kirk Arthur, Microsoft, Government Solutions Lead, Cybersecurity, AI 101 and how it is advancing in Disaster Response*
- *Jeff Albee, Vice President Director of Digital Solutions, Stantec, Project application of AI for Flood Predictor Model*

6:30 PM

Welcome Reception *(City View Terrace)*

All Attendees Welcome; ticket needed.

(Note: Attendees' guests are welcome with a guest fee to be paid in advance)

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

7:00 – 4:00 PM	Registration <i>(Sullivan Ballroom Foyer)</i>
7:30 – 8:30 AM	Peer to Peer Breakfast Discussions Hosted by NAFSMA Committees <i>(Pullman Dining Room)</i> All Attendees Invited to Attend
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Keynote with D. Lee Forsgren, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (CW) <i>(Sullivan Ballroom)</i> <i>(Confirmed)</i>
9:30 – 10:15 AM	Critical USACE Headquarters Programs & Policy Updates <i>(Sullivan Ballroom)</i> -Derek Boese <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>David Hibner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Director of Contingency Operations and Chief, Office of Homeland Security (Confirmed)</i>• <i>Bonnie Jennings, USACE, Section 408 Program Coordinator (Confirmed)</i>
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Discussion on the Cost Drivers of Flood Insurance and How Levees and Mitigation could impact your rates <i>(Sullivan Ballroom Foyer)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Brad Hubbard, CEO of National Flood Experts</i>
11:00 – 12:00 PM	Washington DC Updates <i>(Sullivan Ballroom)</i> -Dan Buhman <p>Hear from advocacy members about what's going on in DC, strategies on how to advocate for water infrastructure, and how to amplify your results with NAFSMA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Kyle Gilster, Office Managing Partner of Washington, DC, Husch Blackwell</i>• <i>Geoff Bowman, Vice President, Van Scoyoc Associates</i>• <i>Julie Minerva, Carpi & Clay Government Relations</i>
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch <i>(City View Terrace)</i>
1:30 – 2:45 PM	Alternative Approaches to Capital Projects <i>(Sullivan Ballroom)</i> -Jason Uhley <p>With the changes in the federal government, how are non-federal sponsors adapting for future capital projects? Discussion on public-private partnerships, deauthorizing federal projects, and alternative financing options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Scott Elmer P.E., Chief Partnership and Programs Officer, Harris County Flood Control District - Implementing USACE Alternative Delivery Models</i>• <i>Aaron Snyder, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Water Infrastructure Financing Program Lead - Fargo-Moorehead Metropolitan Area Diversion Flood Risk Management Project. The project is the first P3 ever done in conjunction with the USACE and is a pilot project for the split-delivery model nationwide.</i>• <i>Matt Frary, Assistant Deputy Director, LA County Public Works, Federal Project Deauthorization</i>• <i>Brandy Wilson, Water Practice Lead, Merrick and Company, Innovative financing for capital projects</i>

2:45 – 3:30 PM

Local Success Stories in Stormwater Management and Flood Risk Reduction

(Sullivan Ballroom)-Mike Davis

- *Holly Sauter, Principal Civil Engineer, MWRD*, MWRD's mission to support communities and their need to address local stormwater management issues. The presentation will highlight successes and challenges of their 240 active and completed Stormwater Management projects throughout Cook County.
- *Charlie Jewell, Director of Planning and Sustainability, Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC)*, Higher sea levels and storm surge, due to climate change, could hinder BWSC system from working as designed. In 2024 BWSC implemented an expanded stormwater program that meets an elevated need for investment in stormwater infrastructure.

3:30 – 3:45 PM

Break *(Sullivan Ballroom Foyer)*

3:45 – 4:45 PM

Innovation in the Public Sector *(Sullivan Ballroom)*

Why we need to break out of comfort zones, take calculated risks and take advantage of new technology and ideas to advance our mission. This panel will discuss change management techniques and conclude with tabletop activities on the challenging issues we are facing like pluvial flooding, the federal government transition, and funding challenges.

- *Laura Kroeger, Executive Director, Mile High Flood District*

Thursday, July 24, 2025

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Peer to Peer Breakfast Discussions Hosted by NAFSMA Committees (*Pullman Dining Room*) *All Attendees Invited to Attend*

9:00 – 10:00 AM

Business Meeting/Awards (*Sullivan Ballroom*)

10:00 – 10:45 AM

Urban Waterway Design: Balancing Nature, Community, and Cost

(*Sullivan Ballroom*)-*Melissa Bryant*

This presentation emphasizes a shift from solely focusing on flood protection through hydrology and hydraulics to more holistic, nature-based designs that incorporate multiple community values. This multi-faceted approach considers factors like water quality, community access, and economic development, balancing these with cost and feasibility and advocates for a more comprehensive visioning process at the outset of projects to maximize positive outcomes.

- *Dave Skuodas, Design, Construction, & Maintenance Director, Mile High Flood District*

10:45 – 11:15 AM

Break (*Sullivan Ballroom Foyer*)

11:15 – 12:15 PM

Legal Panel (*Sullivan Ballroom*)-*Matt Frary*

Public agencies continue to face litigation when physical damage from flooding impacts private property. The panel will look at current inverse condemnation proceedings and discuss what public agencies need to be aware of in the current legal environment. Endangered Species Act (ESA)-ESA often has large impacts on the permitting of water infrastructure projects and O&M. Congress has introduced bills targeted at reforming ESA. The panel will discuss potential ESA reform and how that may impact public agencies.

- *Scott Shapiro, Downey Brand*
- *Karin Jacoby, Husch Blackwell*
- *Molly Lawrence, VanNess Feldman*

12:15-12:30

Conference Wrap Up (*Sullivan Ballroom*)

Register today on [NAFSMA's Events Page!](#)



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