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State of Illinois

Flood Risk Management Team

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Illinois Flood Risk Management Team

Purpose:

This document implements creation of the Illinois Flood Risk Management Team (IFRMT). The creation of the Illinois Flood Risk Management Team will bring together Federal and State Agencies to focus on four themes to reduce flood risk in Illinois: hazard mitigation, emergency response, structural flood reduction measures, and policy evaluation. The IFRMT will establish and strengthen intergovernmental partnerships within the State of Illinois that will serve as a catalyst to develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable solutions to flood hazard challenges in Illinois. Additionally, this document recommends guidance regarding the flood risk management expectations, efforts, and priorities.

Goals:

The IFRMT will have four focus themes:

1. Illinois Mitigation Advisory Group (IMAG) – non-structural solutions,
2. Illinois Flood Management Group (IFMG) – structural solutions to flood reduction,
3. Illinois Emergency Response Group (IERG) – emergency response and preparedness, and
4. Illinois Policy Advisory Group (IPAG) – policy analysis.

Since 1993, IMAG has effectively coordinated mitigation and regulatory efforts among federal and state agencies responsible for addressing all natural hazards within the State of Illinois. The focus of IMAG has been non-structural solutions to natural hazards, most frequently flood hazards. The organization's efforts include jointly discussing, prioritizing, and coordinating hazard mitigation from application through implementation. Partnership with flood risk management team members will not change the primary focus of IMAG; but rather, bring a wider cross section of issues and expectations to address the state's identified mitigation priorities. The IFRMT members will also be available to discuss and assist with existing IMAG mitigation efforts (e.g., acquisition of flood-prone properties).

The IFMG will collaborate on structural solutions to flood problems. The various agencies will bring differing authorities and funding sources to collectively implement structural solutions. A more comprehensive review of benefits and impacts will be assessed by the varying agencies for their constituents.

The IERG will establish better communication among the IFRMT partners for better response during flood emergencies. Sharing of assessment information and needs of the communities and levee districts during a flood will provide for a better coordinated response. The IERG will collaborate on pre-disaster planning, emergency response, and flood recovery efforts.

The IPAG will review and assess flood hazard policy issues. Several national levee policies are currently being proffered. Changes to IFRMT member's programs will be reviewed and comments prepared from the IPAG. Recommendations for changes to flood risk management program and guidance may be made by the IPAG.

The IFRMT members will focus on reducing near-term and long-term flood risk by:

- leveraging and sharing available information and resources among agencies,
- improving flood risk communication and outreach,
- providing a forum to examine structural and non-structural solutions for flood risk management,
- collaboratively solving flood hazard issues and implementing solutions,
- implementing life-cycle mitigation actions (i.e., preparation, response, and recovery) to reduce vulnerability to flooding,

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- help coordinate all state and Federal floodplain management and regulatory issues that may impact mitigation priorities,
- identifying opportunities to coordinate and improve flood risk programs and processes, and
- establishing strong agency relationships to better work together before, during, and after floods events.

Membership & Responsibilities:

The IFRMT team is comprised of multiple state and federal agencies that will work together to support the State of Illinois' flood risk reduction needs. Individual membership will vary based on available resources and team focus; however, the core signatory agencies involved include the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Chicago (LRC), St. Louis (MVS) and Rock Island (MVR) Districts. Additional resources and expertise will be drawn from the Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Department of Transportation (DOT), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), Small Business Administration (SBA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). USACE participants will coordinate and share information with all Corps Districts and Divisions which operate within the state boundaries of Illinois as well as state partners on the IFRMT. Other federal and state agencies that have multiple jurisdictions within the state are also expected to coordinate and share information as members of the IFRMT.

Initially, the lead agency will be the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and this lead agency may rotate among the other core members. With the support of all team members, the agency assuming the leadership role is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and facilitating team meetings, as well as recording and maintaining final meeting minutes. The lead agency representative may request assistance in performing any of their responsibilities.

During flood disaster situations the IFRMT members will automatically shift its lead agency to IEMA and actions will be coordinated thru the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The team will meet as often as necessary to coordinate state and federal agency programs and their staff resources offering assistance to communities, businesses, and the general public. Following severe flood situations the flood risk management partners will mobilize with response teams in the field to identify and discuss with agency partners, stakeholders, and the public, opportunities for structural and non-structural measures which will reduce future flood risk.

Meetings:

IFMRT meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis and will initially be held following the IMAG scheduled meetings. Meeting leadership will rotate among the four focus groups. Meetings will be held more frequently in the post disaster and recovery period. Coordination between meetings may occur through email and teleconferencing. An agenda shall be distributed prior to each scheduled meeting and draft minutes shall be distributed via email for comment following the meeting. Members are encouraged to fully participate in all aspects of the IFMRT meetings and initiatives.

Initial Flood Risk Management Priorities:

Priority areas addressed by the group will be identified and agreed upon through discussion and consensus. Examples of flood risk management initiatives that may be introduced for consideration include:

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- Interagency Levee Work Group priorities (e.g., advancing potential non-structural alternatives and Flood Risk Policy Change);
- Correction of Levee Design Deficiencies such as Wood River Levee and Metro East Sanitary District Levee;
- Levee Certification for the National Flood Insurance Program;
- The National Levee Safety Program;
- Interactive Flood Risk Mapping and Flood Warning Systems;
- Enhancing coordination and communication thru the SEOC during a flood event (may include evacuation planning);
- Residual risk awareness outreach and flood insurance promotion in leveed areas of the state; and
- FEMA's multi-year mapping plan titled "Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (RISK MAP) Multi-Year Plan: Fiscal Years 2010 – 2014.