



External Stakeholder Working Group

Year in Review

Calendar Year 2022



FEMA

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2022 Year in Review

1. A Year of Growth

During 2022, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Division had four main priorities for the growth of the External Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG). The overarching goal of the ESWG is to provide insight and gain stakeholder perspectives.

- 1: Connect the ESWG to HMA priorities.
- 2: Advance equity by making sure that underserved communities have a voice.
- 3: Foster deeper connections with alumni.
- 4: Recruit new members.

2. Workstreams

Each year, the ESWG identifies topics of interest for state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) stakeholders to engage in deep dive thinking and problem-solving through workstreams.

2.1. Mitigation Needs Assessment

The goal of the Mitigation Needs Assessment effort overall is to help FEMA better understand unmet mitigation needs and key barriers to accessing funding and implementing mitigation efforts to address current and future risks from natural hazards. The workstream supported this effort by providing feedback on the current state of accessing mitigation funding and projected future needs. ESWG members presented valuable information to support the development of a scope of work for the workstream client to identify the next steps. Analysis of ESWG members feedback identified four key themes: lack of education on mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency; the need for a proactive approach from federal and state agencies; the necessity of a community or tribal liaison; and the need to reduce the complexities of the programs.

2.2. Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation

In 2021, the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act became law and FEMA began the process of establishing the first revolving loan fund (RLF) for mitigation. The Safeguarding Tomorrow RLF is modeled after the revolving loan programs at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The workstream engaged external stakeholders to inform program design, development, and implementation. ESWG members provided feedback on stakeholder preferences for the program. ESWG members provided input on state and local government agencies' financing options, investigated the difference between grants and loans, and explored how the eligibility process

may be different, especially as it pertains to determining cost-effectiveness and the environmental historic and preservation process.

2.3. Flood Mitigation Assistance: Swift Current

The Swift Current workstream continued into its second year to develop Swift Current 2.0. Last year, the members focused on the development of the Notice of Funding Opportunity, program design, and implementation. This year, members provided feedback about the application process, provided key support to help sub-recipients and states with application development, and identified Justice40 components to incorporate into the development of Swift Current 2.0. Members drafted an after-action review including best practices and lessons learned to roll out a national Swift Current Initiative under Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA).

2.4. Nature-Based Solutions

The nature-based solutions (NBS) workstream focused member effort towards promoting NBS in their hazard mitigation projects that address stakeholder needs. The workstream provided feedback on how to promote eligible project types and HMA-wide implementation of *the Interagency NBS Work Group Action Plan* through developed strategies and actions. The workstream is working to make NBS more approachable through a variety of project types and is highlighting options for add-ons to traditional projects. Members are providing feedback to incorporate the important regional perspective in resources and guidance and have identified education as a crucial component to change the narrative about NBS and how to incorporate it into mitigation and adaptation.

3. Connection with Mitigation Stakeholders

For the first time in two years, ESWG members were able to convene in-person for meetings and activities. Quarter 2 and 3 (Q2 and Q3, respectively) meetings took place in-person and allowed for the members to network and engage through site visits and presentations. Priorities for the in-person meetings encompassed cultivating relationships that lasted well beyond the meeting, showcasing local mitigation projects, and gaining feedback on HMA programs and policies.

3.1. Quarter 1 Meeting: Virtual

In February 2022, the Quarter 1 (Q1) meeting was held virtually. New members were introduced to the existing cohort and participated in the workstream showcase. The workstream showcase was an opportunity for everyone to hear about what the current workstreams are working on and hear HMA ideas about potential new workstreams. The meeting covered topics of future deliverables such as the *FEMA Strategic Plan*, the *HMA Equity Action Plan*, and updates to the *HMA Program and Policy Guide*. New avenues of funding were discussed such as Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), which authorized \$3.46 billion for hazard mitigation projects.



Figure 1. Members Gather at a Future Flood Risk Reduction Mitigation Site in the Nation's Capital.

3.2. Quarter 2 Meeting: Washington, District of Columbia – FEMA Headquarters

Q2 was the first official in-person meeting since early 2020. Members were excited to gather at Headquarters (HQ) in May 2022 and meet each other for the first time since joining the ESWG. Q2 included the *FEMA Strategic Plan*, the *HMA Equity Action Plan*, and workstreams. Members discussed the new avenues of funding for hazard mitigation and implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding, HMGP for COVID-19, and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC). Members enjoyed visits from HMA Leadership (Division Director Angela Gladwell and Acting Deputy Division Director Camille Crain) and presentations on NBS (presented by Ben Prince and Melanie Perello), Local Mitigation Efforts (presented by Andrea Limauro, Environmental Protection Specialist for Washington, D.C.) and the 11th Street Bridge Park (presented by Scott Kratz, Senior Vice President of Building Bridges Across the River).

3.3. Quarter 3 Meeting: Pierce County, Washington

In August 2022, ESWG member Brynne' Walker of Pierce County, Washington, hosted the third quarterly meeting. During the three-day Q3 meeting, ESWG members enjoyed an opportunity to learn about local mitigation projects in the Seattle–Tacoma region focusing on seismic and flood risk reduction. For many, the site visits with local mitigators highlighted perseverance and the importance

of collaboration with local, state, federal, and private partners. Presentation topics included *Addressing Urban Heat in Seattle and King County* (presented by Laura Whitely Binder, King County Climate Preparedness Program Manager), *Washington State Emergency Management Division (WA EMD) Hazard Mitigation Program and Strategy* (presented by Tim Cook of the WA EMD), *the Shoalwater Bay Tribe Tsunami Tower Project* (presented by Cale Ash, Seattle Group Director at Degenkolb Engineers), *Wildfire Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis* (presented by Kevin Zerbe, WA EMD) and *Wildfire Mitigation Opportunities* (presented by Hilary Heard, Community Wildfire Liaison at Chelan County Fire District 1).



Figure 2. ESWG Members Visit the Site of a Seismic Mitigation Project.

3.4. Quarter 4 Meeting: Virtual

The Quarter 4 (Q4) meeting took place virtually in November 2022. During the meeting, members discussed in-progress regulatory updates, learned about the ongoing *HMA Program and Policy Guide* update, and participated in a follow-up session focused on changes to the FY2022 Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) requirements. Outgoing members took a few moments to reflect on their experiences and provide feedback for future improvements to the group. Finally, towards the end of the Q4 meeting, members participated in an aspirational brainstorming activity, considering what they “like, wish, and wonder” about FEMA, HMA, and their community mitigation programs, which produced helpful feedback and insight to incorporate into the new year.

4. Membership

4.1. Congratulations

Miles Anderson, 2017–2018 ESWG member, retired from Florida’s Division of Emergency Management where he spent 15 years as the state hazard mitigation officer and chief of mitigation.

Jaleesa Tate, 2021 ESWG member, has started a new position as a senior community resilience professional at Tetra Tech.

Paige Nutter, a current ESWG member representing the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, was selected for the Emergency Managers Exchange Program and worked with the Resilience team to identify and aid in overcoming the barriers faced by tribal nations when accessing FEMA services. She worked toward supporting the growth of more resilient tribal nations and building a better relationship and stream of communication. Her exchange concluded in December 2022. Information on the [Emergency Managers Exchange Program](https://www.fema.gov/partnerships/emergency-manager-exchange) is available on FEMA's website (www.fema.gov/partnerships/emergency-manager-exchange).

Jacy Hyde, 2022 ESWG member, has started a new position as the Executive Director of the California Fire Safe Council.

Jack Krolkowski, 2022 ESWG member, has started a new position as a flood planning director at the American Flood Coalition.

In 2021, FEMA, HMA Policy, Tools and Training Branch, Branch Chief Jennie Orenstein, stepped down as the ESWG Chair. HMA would like to thank Jennie for her service to the ESWG. In 2022, FEMA, HMA Community Infrastructure Resilience Branch, Branch Chief Sam Capasso, started serving as the ESWG Chair.

In 2021, FEMA, Resilience, Equity Adviser Kate Judson stepped down as the program manager and operations lead of the ESWG. HMA would like to thank Kate for her dedication to the ESWG. In 2022, FEMA, HMA Policy, Tools and Training Branch, Program Analyst Josh Ghaffari, started serving as the ESWG program manager and operations lead.

4.2. Appreciation for Outgoing Members

HMA would like to express sincere gratitude to the following ESWG members whose membership term ended in December 2022.

- Amanda Adaire – FEMA Region 6, supervisory grants management specialist
- Steve Duryea – Tribal land planner, FEMA liaison, and hazard mitigation officer, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Kansas
- Megan Hart – FEMA Region 5, HMA branch chief
- Jacy Hyde – Executive Director of the California Fire Safe Council
- Jack Krolkowski – Flood planning director, American Flood Coalition
- Brynne' Walker – Floodplain management planner, Pierce County, Washington

4.3. Welcome to Incoming Members

HMA is excited to welcome the following new members in 2023:

- Sandra Dugas – Executive Officer, Hazard Mitigation Assistance, Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Yael Levine – Director of mitigation – New York City
- Amanda LeMaster – State energy assurance coordinator – Kentucky
- Mark Junker – Tribal response coordinator – Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska
- Sarena Bonora – FEMA Region 8, grants management specialist – Colorado
- Jane Rockhold – FEMA Region 10, HMGP section chief – Washington

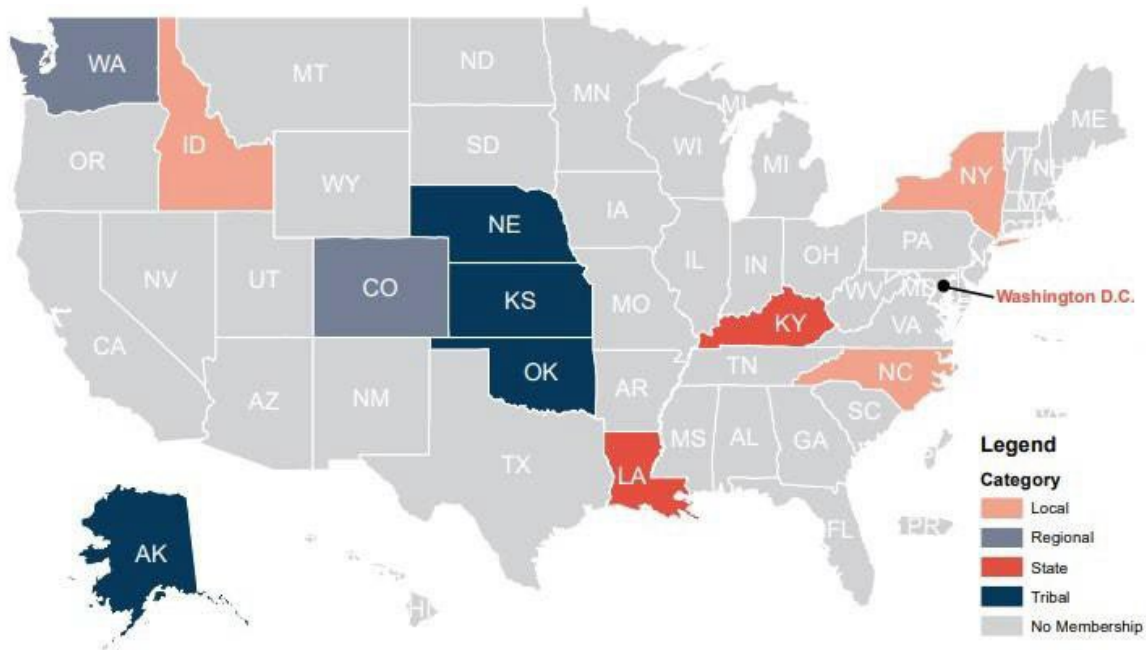


Figure 3. ESWG 2023 Member Map

4.4. Alumni Connect

As the ESWG alumni body continues to grow, HMA aims to keep them engaged and a part of the yearly activities to further foster connections and engagement. Alumni were invited to virtual quarterly meetings and presentations to provide additional feedback. During Q3, the current cohort engaged with alumni in a panel session. For the upcoming year, alumni expressed excitement about changes to FMA and the rollout of new initiatives building on Swift Current and tackling environmental justice and equity goals. Discussion during the Alumni Connect touched on the importance of streamlined

