

## **A Vision for Floodplain Management in 2050**

*By Janet Thigpen, CFM*

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What will it take to reverse our nation's steadily escalating flood damages, which currently average about \$6 billion annually? This question was considered at a Policy Forum sponsored by the Association of State Floodplain Management (ASFPM) Foundation. The assembled experts concluded that existing programs and policies at all levels are short-sighted, fragmented, focused on economic development at the expense of sustainability, and insufficiently grounded in science. They recommended dramatic shifts in the current approaches and actions in order to effectively manage flood risks by 2050.

The recommendations include:

- We need to make room for water and its related natural functions and resources, both inland and along the coasts, by improved management of new development and voluntary relocation of existing communities out of high risk and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Maintenance practices for existing roads, bridges, dams, and levees, as well as strict standards for new construction, should result in infrastructure that is located outside of flood-prone and ecologically sensitive areas, with guaranteed funding for maintenance.
- It should be a national priority to protect, restore, and enhance naturally beneficial functions of riverine and coastal areas.
- We need to conduct flood hazard analyses that incorporate the anticipated impacts and vulnerability to climate change.
- The nation must develop a unified strategy for reducing flood losses, replacing perverse incentives in government programs (that unwittingly promote inappropriate action) with positive incentives for sustainable water resource management.
- We must foster personal and community responsibility for flood risks, including a move toward mandatory actuarially based flood insurance (or all-hazards insurance) for all properties.
- We must immediately intensify efforts to educate the public about flood risks and methods for reducing vulnerability.

The complete report, "Floodplain Management 2050," and a shorter thumbnail report, "A Pathway to 2050: Reducing Flood Losses and Protecting Floodplain Resources for the United States of the Future," are available on the ASFPM website, [www.floods.org](http://www.floods.org).