

# **KANSAS**

## **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT**

### **NEWSLETTER**



**April 2012**

### **Dam Safety Conference**

The Water Structures Program at the Division of Water Resources (DWR) hosted its 9th annual conference Feb. 15 in Topeka to increase stakeholder knowledge of dam safety and state regulations. Conference topics this year included cultural historical site impacts, breach modeling, dam inspection, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permitting, spillway sliplining, dam maintenance, prescribed burning, origins of water, water rights and safety for boaters. At this year's conference there were 28 speakers, 12 round table sessions and more than 180 attendees.

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For more information, or to find out how to attend next year's conference, contact Cindy Higgins at [cindy.higgins@kda.ks.gov](mailto:cindy.higgins@kda.ks.gov) or at 785-296-0573.



## Window Wells

A common question about window wells concerns measuring the lowest adjacent grade (LAG). This question has been answered different ways by different people in the past. Because the issue with window wells can be confusing, we requested FEMA for guidance on this topic. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map Information exchange (FMIX) has provided the following information.

“In the situation of a sunken window well, the LAG must be taken at the bottom of the window well. We recommend citing spot elevations within the Comments section of the Elevation Certificate to show the elevation of the surface grade around the top of the window well. Typically, if it is shown that the naturally occurring ground surrounding the structure is equal to or above the base flood elevation (BFE), then it may be possible to issue a favorable determination. However, we may use the intervening high ground consideration only if the request is based on natural ground, without the placement of fill, and the requestor has provided adequate topography to demonstrate that there is sufficient high ground preventing flood waters from reaching the lowest point of the structure (window well).”



Photo of LAG for window well.

Measure LAG at the window well bottom and include notes in the comments section of the elevation certificate form about the ground elevation at the window well top. The MT-EZ form that is used for a Letter Of Map Amendment (LOMA) does not have a comments section. A common practice seems to be to put an asterisk by the LAG on the form and a comment with an asterisk about the intervening higher ground where there is room on the form. An elevation certificate with comments also can be turned in with an MT-EZ form.

Contact Steve Samuelson with questions at 785-296-4622.

## Community Assistance Visit Prioritization

A community Assistance Visit (CAV) is an audit of a community's floodplain management program to determine a program's compliance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created a CAV Prioritization Tool, which is a spreadsheet that ranks the need for a CAV based on statistics such as the number of policies, population growth and repetitive loss structures in the community. Communities needing a letter of compliance to join the Community Rating System (CRS) get top priority for scheduling a CAV. Another criterion for a CAV is when there is reason to think that a community has enough noncompliance issues that the community's floodplain management program is in jeopardy. The CAV is also used as a means to monitor recovery after a disaster event.

Community officials sometimes ask staff at Division of Water Resources (DWR) when their community can expect a CAV. The answer depends on how high the community ranks based on the CAV Prioritization Tool from FEMA, CRS applications and compliance issues. If you want to schedule a CAV for your community, please call Tom Morey at 785-296-5440.

## Elevation Certificates

The Elevation Certificate (EC) is a form used for insurance purposes and to document compliance. An EC alone does not remove a property from a special flood hazard area. Only a Letter of Map Change (LOMC) can remove a property from a special flood hazard area. An EC can be used as a document to support the request for an LOMC.

Because of the EC's importance, it is vital that the document be filled out accurately and completely. For the growing number of Community Rating System (CRS) communities in Kansas, accurate and complete ECs are a requirement for continued CRS participation.

The Floodplain Management Team at Division of Water Resources (DWR) has a copy of the Gig List showing all the spaces on an elevation certificate that must have information entered into them. The Gig List is available on the DWR website at: <http://www.ksda.gov/structures/content/196/cid/701>. All fields shown in yellow on the Gig List must be completed.

If a blank space on the elevation certificate does not apply, indicate that with "N/A" (non-applicable) in that space. A good example is when a house does not have an attached garage, and a surveyor leaves section A9 for an attached garage blank. During a review of records, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) might assume that there was a garage and that information was omitted from the EC. For this reason, each blank that does not apply should have the "N/A" entry. A community in CRS can actually get kicked out of the program for this simple omission. Make sure the entire form is complete and no lines are left blank.

Here is a list of other common mistakes found on the elevation certificate form:

- Incorrect building diagram indicated on line A7
- Building has crawl space but no vents or insufficient vents are shown in A8
- Community has new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) but the previous map is listed in B6
- Flood Insurance Study to determine Base Flood Elevation (BFE) in B10 wasn't used
- Box for "No" is not checked in B12
- Building is finished construction but section C1 is only based on construction drawings
- Section C2 is not filled out completely (use N/A if something does not apply)
- Elevation in B9 is not one foot higher than the elevation of rating floor found in C2
- An expired EC form was used (Note: EC form expires March 31, 2012)

Less common mistakes have included box checked for meters instead of feet, conversion of data issues, typing errors, number transposition, numbers rounded to nearest one foot, incorrect community name and failure to note that vent height above grade was measured on inside of crawlspace.

Community officials should insist that all elevation certificates be accurate and complete as a condition of an approved floodplain development permit. Some communities will not issue a certificate of occupancy if the elevation certificate is not correct.

An incorrectly completed EC can result in higher flood insurance costs for citizens. Help your citizens and your community by ensuring EC forms are complete. Contact the Floodplain Management Team at DWR if you need assistance in reviewing an elevation certificate that you think is incomplete. DWR provides a training class on how to complete elevation certificates. Steve Samuelson can answer questions about training opportunities. Contact Steve at [steve.samuelson@ksda.ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@ksda.ks.gov) or at 785-296-4622.

## Training Opportunities

The Floodplain Management Program will host the following training sessions throughout Kansas. If you are interested in any of the no-cost training opportunities, please contact Tom Morey at 785-296-5440 or Steve Samuelson at 785-296-4622. A training registration form is in this newsletter.

### **Post Flood Responsibilities**

This class is intended for community officials responsible for administering floodplain management regulations. The course focuses on what to do during and after a disaster event. Topics include substantial damage, permitting, Increased Cost of Compliance and violations. Approved 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Tonganoxie - April 11, 2012 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Abilene - Aug. 21, 2012 8:30am - 12:30pm

### **Basics of the National Flood Insurance Program**

This class is for officials responsible for administering their local floodplain management ordinance. The focus is on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and concepts of floodplain management, maps and studies, ordinance administration, and the relationship between floodplain management and flood insurance. Approved 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Lawrence - April 17, 2012 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### **Elevation Certificates and Letters Of Map Amendment**

This class is designed for community officials responsible for administering floodplain management as well as surveyors and engineers who complete Letters Of Map Amendment (LOMA) and Elevation Certificate forms. The course will focus on accurate completion of Federal Emergency Management Agency technical forms, building diagrams and base flood elevation. Approved 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Dodge City - May 1, 2012 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The electronic version of the newsletter has links you may click on and photos are in color. If you are getting this newsletter by postal mail and would prefer email, please contact [steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov)

Alicia Benson recently left the Floodplain Management Team to take a new position with Caterpillar in Wamego. Join us in wishing her luck in her new career path. If you worked with Alicia, you know that she did a great job and always wanted to help the communities of Kansas.

Mark your calendar. The Kansas Association for Floodplain Management 2012 conference will be Sept. 5 and 6 in Hutchinson. More information will be posted at the website [www.ekafm.org](http://www.ekafm.org). Registration will be done through a link on the website. If you have questions about registration, please contact Jon Bristor, Treasurer, at 620-326-2207.

**Kansas Department of Agriculture**  
**Division of Water Resources**  
**Floodplain Program**  
**Training Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name, date and location of training you will attend \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Please share this invitation with anyone else who could benefit from the training.

\*\*Classroom locations will be sent to registered participants one week before the training.

Please mail or fax your registration to:

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
109 SW 9<sup>th</sup> STREET, 2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR  
TOPEKA, KS 66612-1283  
Fax to: 785-296-1176

If you have questions about training, please contact Steve Samuelson by email at [steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov) or by phone 785 296-4622, or contact Tom Morey at [tom.morey@kda.ks.gov](mailto:tom.morey@kda.ks.gov) and 785 296-5440.

Please help us keep our records current. If the name that appears on this newsletter is for an individual no longer with your organization, please call (785) 296-4622, or send an e-mail to [steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@kda.ks.gov) to report the change.

046-17  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Division of Water Resources  
Floodplain Management  
109 SW 9th St 2nd Floor  
Topeka, KS 66612-1283

### **ASFPM 2012 National Conference in Texas**

The 2012 Association of State Floodplain Managers National Conference will be May 20-25, 2012 in San Antonio, Texas. This conference is an excellent opportunity for floodplain managers to receive training on mapping technologies, regulations, permitting, outreach and best practices. It is estimated the conference will be attended by more than a thousand floodplain management professionals. This conference is great chance to meet people for net working and to learn latest concepts in floodplain management.

### **KDA/DWR Water Structures Floodplain Program Staff**

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Erika Stanley, Floodplain Mapping Specialist  
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