



# FLOOD VENTS

## Thank You for Another Successful Conference!

### A Message from RIFMA's Chair, Carissa Mills

Dear RIFMA Members,

In April, we had another great conference! Our theme this year was to highlight people and actions that have gone "Above and Beyond" in the field of floodplain management. The diverse group of speakers from around the country was well-received by participants.

Special thanks to our keynote speaker Martha Graham, who came all the way up from St. Augustine, FL to discuss lessons learned from Hurricanes Matthew & Irma.

With that behind us, it's time for our RIFMA Board of Directors to plan for long term sustainability. This summer, for the first time, we will be doing some strategic planning to better understand how to serve our members and to set priorities for moving forward.

Stay tuned!

*Carissa*

## Upcoming Events

### An Orientation to the Floodplain Management Field in RI

The RIFMA Education and Outreach Committee is offering an encore of our successful February workshop on July 17, 2018 from 4:30-6:00pm in Room 300, RIDEM, 235 Promenade Street, Providence.

Please join us for this **FREE** workshop geared toward entry-level professionals and those in related fields who would like to become more involved with floodplain management. This is a great informational and networking opportunity for those who are looking for ways to expand their careers in the environmental industry!

Please sign up [HERE](#). And please spread the word! Questions? Please email [rhodeislandfma@gmail.com](mailto:rhodeislandfma@gmail.com).



Engaged Conference Attendees!

**THANK YOU to all of our 2018 sponsors!**

<b>Platinum</b>	
<b>Gold</b>	
<b>Silver</b>	

#### Interested in what we do?

ALL of RIFMA's meetings are open to the public!

We meet monthly on the second Thursday at 2 pm.

Email us at [RhodeIslandFMA@gmail.com](mailto:RhodeIslandFMA@gmail.com) for more information.

## Rhode Island News

### Building Height in a Flood Hazard Area: Finding Balance

Written and Submitted by Carissa Mills

Planning to build a house along the coast in Rhode Island? Pay attention to House Bill 7741 and Senate Bill 2413 currently being discussed by legislators. Proposed amendments to the [Rhode Island Zoning Enabling Act](#) will change how building heights are measured in Rhode Island.



Currently building height is measured from the grade at the base of the foundation up to the top of the highest point of the roof. If a parcel to be developed is in a special flood hazard area and you want to include up to five feet of freeboard for extra flood protection, this freeboard amount is excluded from the building height calculations. For example, if a municipal zoning ordinance caps building heights at 35 feet, a new building in a flood zone that incorporates freeboard may be built up to 40 feet tall.

The proposed changes to the Act take this a step further, allowing houses to be built even higher in the more vulnerable flood-prone areas. New language requires that building heights be measured from the base flood elevation up to the top of the roof. Up to five feet of freeboard will still be excluded in calculating the building height, meaning that in an area with a base flood elevation of 11 feet, a house can be built with the lowest level 11 feet above the existing grade, plus an additional five feet of freeboard before the height is measured. In a municipality with 35-foot limits on building heights, the roof peak of a 35-foot house could end up being 51 feet above the ground. That 16 feet of space is taken up by pilings to elevate the house; it is not livable space.

A second recommended change to the Act is to allow builders to use the best available information. The Rhode Island Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) is in the process of developing design elevation maps that provide a more accurate level of future flood risk. New amendments to the Act allow the builder to utilize the CRMC's designation of the base flood elevation which may be higher than what is depicted on the FEMA maps.



These proposed changes have received mixed reactions. On one hand, it looks like the State is making efforts to better protect the built environment within the most vulnerable flood zones. On the other hand, these taller buildings may be more vulnerable to the effects from high wind events. From an aesthetic standpoint, the look of the coastline may change as taller, bulkier structures are erected close to the shore.

Coastal communities concerned about increasing building heights along the coast will have to amend their local zoning ordinances to include special overlay districts with adjusted building height requirements.

As the State explores ways to adapt to changing climate conditions, there will be concerns from municipalities, businesses, and residents. We will always be looking for some sort of middle ground to keep the Rhode Island we love while planning for the Rhode Island we want to see in the future. Educate yourselves on the issues and talk to your elected officials.

## Out in the Field...

### Lincoln Woods State Park Beachfront Facilities

Submitted by Elena Pascarella, Landscape Elements, LLC

The beachfront facilities of Lincoln Woods State Park, located on the southern shore of Olney Pond, were targeted for redevelopment by RIDEM as a result of increased user demand and issues with water quality (high fecal coliform counts). Landscape Elements, LLC served as the project landscape architect working closely with the project team to integrate the site and buildings into the surrounding landscape.



The design approach followed Sustainable SITES criteria by reusing and recycling materials whenever possible, using native plants, integrating stormwater management through rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable asphalt, preserving and protecting mature trees and minimizing impact to the character and quality of the existing landscape. Great job!

## FEMA News

### In Case You Missed It...

FEMA released an affordability framework in April 2018, as required by the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA). The framework, "An Affordability Framework for the National Flood Insurance Program," provides the first ever data-driven analysis of policyholder and potential policyholder incomes by flood risk and home ownership status. Full story [here](#).

*Do you have an announcement, event, project or program that you would like to share with RIFMA members?*

*Contact us at*

*RhodeIslandFMA@gmail.com with the subject line "Newsletter"*

## What's New at RIFlood.org

Did you miss RIFMA's 2018 conference?

Did you attend the conference and promptly lose all your fantastic notes?

Fear not! All of the presentations and conference materials have been uploaded to [RIFlood.org](http://RIFlood.org).

Take another look at what our presenters discussed or check out the materials from another track (that you missed because there were so many other interesting presentations!)

All available [here!](#)

## News from the University of Rhode Island

URI Coastal Resources Center/RI Sea Grant

Submitted by Pam Rubinoff

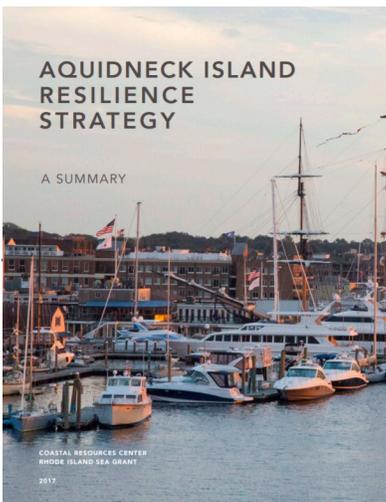
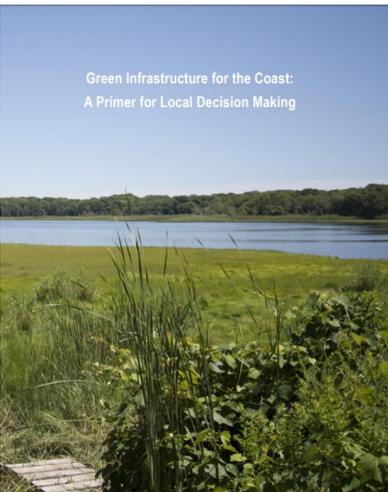
### Coastal Green and Resilient Infrastructure Project (GRIP) Booklet

Provided by URI's Coastal Resources Center, [Green Infrastructure for the Coast: A Primer for Local Decision Making](#) provides municipal staff and officials with insights on implementing green infrastructure projects, with special attention to coastal areas. It answers ten key questions that arose during the development of conceptual designs for GRIP's three coastal green infrastructure pilot projects in Warwick, North Kingstown, and Newport:

1. How is green infrastructure applied on the coast?
2. What are the benefits of implementing coastal green infrastructure?
3. What is an integrated design process and how does it enhance outcomes?
4. What are some key design considerations?
5. Why is planning for maintenance critical to the design process?
6. How do you start to frame decision making about green infrastructure?
7. What are the considerations for appropriate plant selection?
8. How do municipalities fund green infrastructure?
9. What are the barriers to adopting green infrastructure? What are the solutions?
10. Where can I get additional information and support?

### Aquidneck Island Resilience Strategy: A Summary

[The Aquidneck island Resilience Strategy: A Summary](#) captures the recommendations from a year-long, island-wide effort focused on building adaptation into key areas of community life- from public safety and road maintenance to business networking and home protection. Focusing on the areas of Emergency Response and Preparedness, Transportation, Island Economy, and Residential Flooding, the summary highlights key concerns and makes recommendations for implementation.



### URI Ocean Engineering Students Evaluate the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier

Submitted by Professor Chris Baxter, URI Departments of Ocean/Civil and Environmental Engineering

Students of URI's Ocean Engineering program assessed the performance of the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier from the effects of storm surge and sea level rise as part of their senior capstone design experience. This was accomplished using a variety of tools developed at URI, such as STORMTOOLS to estimate inundation levels and the Coastal Environmental Risk Index (CERI) to estimate damage to individual structures behind the barrier. CERI incorporates information from the E911 database, wave heights and inundation levels, and damage functions from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a GIS format. The scenarios evaluated include a 100-year storm event with and without 7' of sea level rise and possible riverine flooding from comparable precipitation events. Stability analyses suggest that the west wing walls of the Hurricane Barrier may be compromised during a 100-year storm event with 7' of sea level rise due to overtopping and erosion of the upstream armoring layer. Another significant finding was that greater than 3' of sea level rise will significantly impact downtown Providence from tidal flooding; however these effects can be mitigated by a levee system along the west bank of the Providence River downtown. This project was supported by RI Sea Grant and was part of an integrated capstone experience involving students from URI's Departments of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, Landscape Architecture, and Marine Affairs.

**Keep in Touch!**

[www.riflood.org](http://www.riflood.org)

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[@rifma](https://twitter.com/rifma)

**About RIFMA**

The Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association (RIFMA) was formed in October 2006 with the goal of forming a network of associates who could bring their ideas and experiences to a forum of sharing and learning. The result is a network of floodplain managers and other interested members who can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of floodplain management in the State of Rhode Island. The Association includes:

- City and County Officials
- Consulting Engineers and Surveyors
- State Government: CRMC, EMA, DEM, DOT, and DHS
- Watershed Districts
- Federal Government: FEMA, NOAA, NWS, USCOE, USGS, NRCS
- Insurance Agents

The first RIFMA Board of Directors, with the help of many other individuals, worked to create the Association’s foundation and to establish opportunities for floodplain managers and others from around the state to gather and share ideas and experiences at various events.

## 2018 Conference Comments

***“Once again, this is a fantastic conference for us as a sponsor as well as individually as members.”***

***“This conference is such a great way to bring minds together.”***

***“Keep doing what you’re doing- keeping it current and relevant.”***

***“Great speakers- I wish I could have gone to each track!”***

## National News from the ASFPM

[www.floods.org](http://www.floods.org)

- FEMA re-introduced FloodSmart.gov with a new look and feel. Check it out [here](#)
- FEMA establishes a new Resilience Organization. View the new organizational chart [here](#).
- Florida recently published a Post-Disaster Toolkit for Floodplain Administrators available for download [here](#), and Florida’s CRS-CAV Pilot Program: A pathway to Flood Resiliency through NFIP Compliance and CRS program, available for download [here](#).
- ASPFM Comments on Draft National Mitigation Investment Strategy available [here](#).

**2018/2019 Board Members:**

Wayne Barnes  
Sarah DeSimone  
Ken Filarski  
Chuck Lowe  
Kate Michaud  
Carissa Mills  
Dave Prescott  
Igor Runge  
Jen West