Flood Risk and Mitigation Public Information Working Group (FRMPIWG)

Meeting 3

Friday, October 16, 2026

Virtual via Teams

Meeting Minutes

Introduction/ Call meeting to order

Maxine Moore called the meeting to order and welcomed participants to the third meeting of the Flood Risk and Mitigation Public Information Working Group (FRMPIWG). Following introductions, several attendees identified themselves as first-time participants, prompting an overview of the group's purpose, structure, and responsibilities. Maxine explained that the FRMPIWG serves as a multi-jurisdictional committee dedicated to improving flood risk communication and public outreach throughout Pinellas County. The working group is composed of approximately equal representation from local governments and community stakeholders, ensuring that both municipal perspectives and community interests are represented. As a key component of the County's Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS), the FRMPIWG helps develop, coordinate, and evaluate public information initiatives related to flood hazards, mitigation, preparedness, and resilience. The group also supports Community Rating System (CRS) requirements for participating jurisdictions by collaboratively developing outreach programs and promoting consistent flood-related messaging across the county.

Maxine reminded attendees that continued participation is essential to maintaining CRS credit for participating communities. To satisfy CRS requirements, members are expected to attend at least two working group meetings each year, maintain active stakeholder and municipal representation, and participate in annual program evaluations and outreach activities. She emphasized the importance of ongoing collaboration among municipalities and stakeholders to strengthen public awareness efforts and support countywide flood risk reduction goals.

LMS Annual Update

Maxine provided an update on the County's LMS strategy and summarized discussions from the recent LMS meeting. Members reviewed updates to LMS Table D-1, which serves as the primary tracking tool for mitigation initiatives throughout the county. The table contains detailed information on hazard mitigation projects, including project descriptions, estimated costs, funding sources, hazard categories, implementation schedules, and current project status. Updates were made to ensure project information remains current and to support future planning and reporting efforts. Members were reminded that inclusion in the LMS is a prerequisite for consideration under many hazard mitigation grant programs.

2027 LMS Meeting Schedule

Maxine also informed attendees of the tentative 2027 LMS meeting schedule and encouraged continued participation throughout the year. Upcoming LMS meetings are scheduled for:

- **January 20, 2027**

- **April 7, 2027**
- **July 7, 2027**
- **August 25, 2027** (Annual Update Training)

Program for Public Information (PPI) Annual Update

Membership Updates

As part of the annual PPI evaluation, Maxine Moore reviewed the Working Group membership structure and requested updates to primary and alternate contacts. Municipalities were asked to provide their 2026 reporting representatives, anticipated 2027 core members, and any staffing or stakeholder changes.

Key Message Review and Proposed Addition

Maxine reviewed the ten established PPI outreach topics. The group then discussed adding a new message focused on flood gauge alert systems to encourage residents to sign up for local alerts, monitor rainfall and creek conditions, and utilize available flood monitoring technology. The group agreed to move the flood gauge alert concept forward and develop draft language for review at the January meeting. The proposal received strong support. Gene Henry emphasized the value of integrating local gauge alerts with emergency management communications, while Vasili Kostakis recommended placing the message under Protect People from Flood Hazard.

Outreach Effectiveness

The group held an extensive discussion regarding the effectiveness of current outreach efforts and the ability to measure program success. Members noted that while outreach objectives and desired outcomes have been identified, meaningful metrics for evaluating effectiveness remain limited.

Several participants offered recommendations for improving outcome tracking:

- Gene suggested monitoring which key messages are used most frequently by municipalities and identifying opportunities to compare outreach efforts with measurable outcomes.
- Vasili recommended evaluating outreach effectiveness by comparing communication frequency with indicators such as flood insurance participation rates and public engagement data.
- Gerry suggested utilizing publicly available FEMA and NFIP datasets to evaluate flood insurance trends and noted that references to Preferred Risk Policies should be updated to reflect current Risk Rating 2.0 terminology.
- Mary Burrell questioned whether existing outreach efforts are producing measurable behavioral changes and emphasized the importance of determining whether outreach initiatives are truly influencing public actions and decision-making.

The discussion highlighted a shared interest in developing more meaningful performance measures to assess the success of the PPI program.

University Partnership Opportunity

To support future evaluations, the group discussed potential partnerships with local universities, including the University of South Florida. Possible collaboration areas include outreach effectiveness studies, flood insurance trend analysis, public behavior research, and development of performance metrics. The concept received broad support for future consideration.

Outreach Project Review

Maxine reviewed current PPI outreach projects and confirmed implementation of both the Veterinarian Outreach Project and ongoing Homeowner Association Outreach efforts. Members shared updates on how these materials continue to be used to distribute flood awareness information throughout the community.

New Outreach Ideas

Several new outreach opportunities were discussed, including:

- Transit advertising through PSTA buses and transit facilities.
- Traffic control box murals.
- A flood education initiative for local scouting organizations, potentially tied to badge or educational achievement programs.

The group expressed interest in all three concepts as future outreach projects.

Grant Opportunities

Members discussed a variety of potential funding sources for outreach initiatives, including FWC grants, Walmart Community Grants, arts-based engagement programs, and educational partnerships. Chelsea Goodman suggested creating a SharePoint-based grant resource library to share funding opportunities among participating jurisdictions, which was well received by the group.

Flood Response Messaging

The group discussed lessons learned from recent storm and flood events and explored opportunities to improve emergency communications. Members agreed that many municipalities independently develop valuable flood response messaging; however, those resources are not currently shared in a centralized location. As a result, communities are often creating similar materials without the benefit of leveraging successful examples from other jurisdictions. John Carkeet discussed challenges associated with communicating multiple flood-related hazards simultaneously, including heavy rainfall, high tides, tropical weather systems, and localized flooding. He noted the difficulty of conveying complex information while keeping messages concise and understandable for the public.

To address these challenges, participants supported developing a centralized library of:

- Flood response messages.
- Transition and preparedness language.
- Multi-hazard communication templates.
- Severity-specific messaging examples.

Members agreed that such a resource could improve consistency among jurisdictions and reduce the time required to prepare communications during emergency situations.

SharePoint Improvements

The group reviewed the current FRMPIWG SharePoint site and discussed opportunities to improve organization and usability. Members supported restructuring files by project, municipality, and year to make resources easier to locate. Participants also favored identifying countywide projects that may provide CRS benefits across multiple jurisdictions and unanimously supported continued use of the SharePoint calendar for meetings, training opportunities, and outreach events.

Any additional needs from municipalities – *None*

2027 FRMPIWG Meeting Details

The 2027 FRMPIWG meetings will be held on January 22, May 14, and October 15.

Meetings are expected to remain virtual unless future accommodations allow hybrid participation.

Upcoming events

- Flood Barrier Demonstration – Pasco County (10/19/2026)
- Real Estate Flood Disclosure Program & Property Appraiser Essentials Training (10/29/2026)

Public Comment – *None*

Action Items

- **Chelsea Goodman** will distribute the LMS Table D-1 project list to members, annual update materials and feedback surveys.
- **All municipalities** will provide updated 2026 and 2027 core member information.
- **Municipal representatives and stakeholders** will develop draft flood gauge alert messaging for review at the January meeting.
- **Maxine Moore and Chelsea Goodman** will explore methods for tracking outreach messaging usage and effectiveness.
- **Maxine Moore** will investigate opportunities for university partnerships to assist with outreach evaluation.
- **All municipalities** will compile and share examples of flood response messaging.
- **Maxine Moore and Communications Staff** will develop a centralized repository for flood response messaging resources.
- **Chelsea Goodman** will create a grant and funding resource library within the SharePoint site.
- **Maxine Moore and Chelsea Goodman** will reorganize SharePoint resources to improve accessibility and project tracking.
- **All municipal representatives** will verify attendance and update invitation lists for 2027 meetings.
- Prior to the January meeting, **all participants** will provide comments on key messages, outreach projects, and program outcomes.

Adjourn