

American Water Resources Association
2009 ANNUAL WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE
November 9-12, 2009
Seattle, WA

Monday, Nov. 9

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**SESSION 8: Panel – Evolving Guidelines for More Habitat-Friendly Floodplain
Development in the Puget Sound Region**

Panel Moderator – Peter Sturtevant
CH2M Hill, Bellevue, WA

Panel Participants

Donald Siemann
National Wildlife Federation, Western Regional Center, Seattle, WA

John Graves
FEMA Region 10, Bothell, WA

Deeann Kirkpatrick
National Marine Fisheries Service, Seattle, WA

Harold Smelt
Pierce County Surface Water Management, Tacoma, WA

Many of the streams and rivers in the Pacific Northwest comprise important habitat for endangered fish species. Floodplain development and floodplain protection measures frequently damage this habitat. In response to a Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA is developing guidelines, applicable to the Puget Sound area, to better assure that new development in floodplains in the region does not harm listed fish species. A panel of four individuals closely involved in this effort will discuss progress to date. Don Siemann of the National Wildlife Federation, which filed the lawsuit that led to the Biological Opinion, will present the legal background for this issue on a national and local scale. He will also briefly discuss several other similar efforts underway around the Country. DeeAnn Kirkpatrick from NMFS will discuss the findings of the Biological Opinion and particularly the implementation changes required to FEMA's minimum floodplain management criteria. John Graves from FEMA Region X will discuss how FEMA is moving forward with implementation by developing guidelines and a model ordinance for NFIP communities to use in meeting the new requirements. Harold Smelt (Pierce County Surface Water Management) will discuss how the local NFIP communities are responding and the potential effects upon floodplain development. An important topic will be the shared responsibilities of federal, state and local agencies to promote development activities protective of endangered species. The Panel will provide ample time for audience questions.