

Notes

Combined Floodplain Seminar for Elected Officials &
Trinity River COMMON VISION Steering Committee
Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 2025

1:00 PM, 616 Six Flags Dr, Arlington 76011



1. **Welcome and Introductions** (Susan Alvarez, NCTCOG)
2. **Overview of Flood Community Assistance and Flood Planning Programs** (Jasmine Ferrell and Katie Koslan, Texas Water Development Board)
3. **89th Texas Legislature 1st Special Session Overview** (Jackie Nolasco, NCTCOG)
4. **Flood Warning Communications, Outreach, and Regional Information Sharing** (Dr. Maribel Martinez-Mejia, CEM, NCTCOG)
Maribel Martinez-Mejia (NCTCOG) informed all in attendance that she and her team can be found on the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and X.
5. **Flooded Roads Information System Project** (Nathan Drozd, NCTCOG)
Someone in attendance asked on behalf of cities looking for flood detection if “there’s any alternative for someone not using maps?” Nathan Drozd (NCTCOG) responded that he and the other project managers are aware that not everyone is utilizing the maps and reassured the cities that the issue is being considered and addressed as part of the scope of the project. NCTCOG is in the process of identifying possible solutions and alternative methods and examining the practical application of these options. Visit <https://www.511dfw.org/map-viewer> to review and test the mapper for the DFW 511 – NCTCOG Transportation project.

Nathan further confirmed that historical data will be employed in system design and development, and that the final product will undergo many levels of verification to ensure accurate and accessible operation.
6. **Building a Flood Resilient Community** (Nick Fang, PhD, PE Water Engineering Research Center - University of Texas at Arlington)
Jonathan Killebrew (TRWD) opened discussion by soliciting “lessons learned” and insights drawn from the tragic Hill Country flooding during Fourth of July weekend.

Dr. Nick Fang (Water Engineering Research Center – UT at Arlington) highlighted several key deficiencies that exacerbated the severity of the Hill Country floods, underscoring the necessity for better communication and the adoption of proactive awareness measures. He added that convective storms are difficult to predict and can change rapidly, complicating the forecasting of similar incidents given our current understanding of meteorology, weather models, and observational networks.

Jonathan cited an observed general/collective sense of apathy through desensitization as a contributing factor and a significant obstacle. With flooding events becoming more frequent and intense, people have become “numb” to the normalized threat—despite

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knowing the devastating consequences. Jonathan stressed the importance of breaking this “informational fatigue” to effectively galvanize and incite the public into action.

Dr. Fang emphasized that education and social media is pertinent to keep people in the know and emphasize communication and outreach. Both Jonathan and Dr. Fang noted that cell phone service before and during the incident was exceptionally poor in the affected area, and recommended that, although challenging, better communication enhancing fiber cable should be installed to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Jonathan encouraged those in attendance to look at what can be done for flood prevention in the North Central Texas region. Someone in attendance inquired if a state-wide Flood Warning System (FWS) might be implemented. Dr. Fang explained that the technology necessary for a state-wide FWS is feasible, but that there are many obstacles to implementing such a far-reaching system. Firstly) the system would need to be sophisticated because the climatic region is sophisticated and cycles through many phases across a vast and diverse area. Secondly) there are many political and financial hurdles to consider. A representative from Watauga brought to everyone’s attention the utilization of geofencing for Flood Early Warning Systems (FEWS), and how they are using it for tagging promotions that can be applied to awareness practices.

7. Developing a Multijurisdictional Program for Public Information under the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program (Randy Peterman, PE, CFM, Halff, Erin Blackman, CFM, NCTCOG)

Erin Blackman (NCTCOG) and Randy Peterman (Halff) discussed the Program for Public Information (PPI) and proposed it as an opportunity for communities to collaborate on.

A PPI is a component of FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System (CRS), designed to influence public behavior by encouraging individuals to make informed decisions and take proactive steps to protect themselves from flooding. A PPI is a continuous, locally driven effort to identify, implement, and monitor public outreach activities tailored to specific community needs.

While individual communities can develop their own PPIs, a multi-jurisdictional approach—where several communities collaborate—is emphasized in this presentation due to its alignment with NCTCOG’s mission to plan for common needs, cooperate for mutual benefit, and recognize regional opportunities. This collaborative model also helps communities earn CRS credits, which can lead to reduced flood insurance premiums for residents and businesses.

CRS participation is voluntary, and communities earn credit points for floodplain management activities. The more points earned, the lower the CRS class, resulting in greater insurance premium discounts. Many North Texas communities are active in CRS, with Dallas achieving a Class 3 rating—the highest discount level in the region.

Erin and Randy explained that to develop a PPI, communities must follow a seven-step process:

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- 1) Organize a committee: The committee must meet at least twice: once to review the needs assessment and once to finalize the PPI document before it goes to governing bodies for approval. The North Central Texas CRS Users Group could serve as a foundation for this committee, though it would need restructuring to meet formal requirements.
- 2) Assess needs: This includes identifying flood-prone areas, priority audiences, existing outreach efforts, and flood insurance coverage. Each community's priorities are included in the PPI without comparing or ranking them.
- 3) Create messaging: Communities must either state what the audience should do or provide basic information with a note on where to get more information. For example: "Turn around, don't drown!" "You may live in a floodplain. Find out more by calling 555-1234."
- 4) Pick projects for each message: Questions to ask may include: Which media to use? Who will do it? When will it be done (at least once a year)? Which communities will benefit?
- 5) Include other initiatives: Initiatives from several activities identified in the CRS program offer additional opportunities to earn points. A total of 259 points are possible through a PPI. CRS credit is received only for implementation of these activities.
- 6) Write and adopt report: The report must be adopted and approved by the governing body.
- 7) Implement, monitor, and evaluate: The committee is charged with evaluating the PPW annually and updating every five years. The PPI must be approved by the governing body every five years when updated.

BREAK

8. **Transportation and Stormwater Infrastructure Study and Preliminary Findings on Valley Storage** (Kate Zielke, CFM, NCTCOG, Landon Erickson, PE, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Landon Erickson (USACE) presented the preliminary findings from the TSI Study on valley storage, reiterating what was shared at the most recent Flood Management Task Force Meeting. For context, the following text was documented in the August 2025 *Meeting Summary*, which can be found on the NCTCOG Flood Management Task Force page under FY2025 August 15, 2025 meeting documents at [NCTCOG - Flood Management Task Force](#):

"...USACE was able to map projection models based on readily available valley storage loss information gathered by the agency. A portion of Mary's Creek located in Fort Worth (bordered by the Interstate 820 Loop to the west, Benbrook Boulevard to the east, and Camp Bowie West Boulevard to the north) was mapped utilizing this information to predict the percent difference in 100-year peak discharges between

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existing conditions (2020) and future conditions (2070). The difference was stark, forecasting a 1.2-foot increase in the 100-yr flood depth, along with an estimated 20-30% increase in 100-year flood flows. Landon emphasized to the Task Force that flood response time is expected to shorten by 45 minutes over the next 50 years (approximately), which would impact dozens of structures situated within the FEMA floodway, where the current velocity conditions are already dangerously high—estimating between 7-9 feet per second with several feet of flood depth for the 100-yr event. Future 100-yr condition estimates indicate these same structures would experience 7-9 feet of flood depth with velocities of 7-10 feet per second, increasing the threat to life safety in areas already facing extreme flood hazards under current conditions.”

Landon proceeded to describe the extant conditions at Mary’s Creek as an eventuality comparable to the Hill Country flooding; stressing that a catastrophic event is not a matter of “if, but when.”

Johnathan Killebrew asked if anyone is doing anything presently to mitigate the problem proactively. Landon shared that the City of Benbrook has pursued financing for buyouts to remove the residential properties from the floodway, but that they’ve had difficulty securing funding due to a lack of documented flooding. However, USACE maintains many mechanisms that may be able to assist in substituting the documentation necessary to justify funding, including Evacuation Studies, EPs (Emergency Preparedness), and (potentially) the flooding projections mapped through the TSI Study. Additionally, there may be other ways to procure funding that have not been considered to date, USACE plans to help in any way they can.

Jonathan questioned whether there were any ongoing discussions about adding extra storage, recalling that this option had been deliberated back in the 60’s. Landon warned that the addition of storage could prove to be detrimental and hazardous. Craig Ottman (TRWD) focused attention on the Tarrant Regional Water District’s possible reservoir project, to which Jonathan probed if there was any support. Craig stated that he believes there is general support for the project, but fears that the same obstacle Benbrook faced (and continues to face) in procuring buyouts will become an issue in actualizing the TRWD reservoir project—drawing attention back to the reactive over proactive attitude met when attempting to fund mitigation projects. In other words, without an extensive history of flooding it may be difficult to justify the cost of the project. However, it is evident in the Trinity Watershed WHA study that the hydrologic and hydraulic data collected and analyzed at Mary’s Creek is frighteningly similar to the area affected by the Hill County flooding.

Someone in attendance questioned if state legislation is the primary culprit for proactive measures and practices not being widely adopted and employed, pointing out the absurdity in having to “wait for people to die to make things work.” Craig explained that the largest obstacle lies in funding and revenue, citing project costs as the foremost reason preventing further mitigation pursuits. He went on to say, however, that the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) Intended Use Plan (IUP) is “just getting going,” and should be a vital source of funding for projects like the reservoir in the near future. The program, as an integral part of

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the newly adopted State Flood Plan, will provide financial assistance in the form of loans and grants for flood control, flood mitigation, and drainage projects. Craig assured those in attendance that the legislature is aware of the issue and is taking steps towards improving flood mitigation and prevention across the state of Texas. Landon advised that “outreach,” is the best tool to expedite change, and urged everyone to raise public awareness in order to overcome what he referred to as the “last mile problem.”

A few in attendance disputed the legislature’s purported prioritization of improving flood prevention and mitigation state-wide, citing the recently enacted Senate Bill 15—which limits cities’ ability to regulate lot sizes and density. In an effort to stabilize the housing market and accommodate further growth and development, the bill shifts zoning authority from local government to the state by preventing cities from imposing minimum residential lot sizes larger than 1,400 to 3,000 square feet. Allowing developers to build more housing on smaller lots with limited oversight by city/county governments (who typically have a better understanding of the flood-prone areas unique to the municipalities) will result in an increase in impervious surfaces and reduction of green space, ultimately heightening flood risk across the state. One attendee in particular argued that SB 15 effectively counteracts legislation geared towards elevating flood mitigation projects and employing necessary prevention measures.

9. **The COMMON VISION Program and Corridor Development Certificate Process** (Kate Zielke, Mike Danella, PE, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
10. **Voting Item: Summary of November 1, 2024, COMMON VISION Steering Committee Meeting** (Kate Zielke)
Jonathan Killebrew motioned to approve the November 1, 2024, COMMON VISION Meeting Summary. David Phan (City of Dallas) seconded the motion. All were in favor, including Jeff Kelly (City of Lewisville) and Ruth Ray (Tarrant County); none were opposed.
11. **Voting Item: Approval of FY 2026 Trinity River COMMON VISION Work Program and Budget** (Kate Zielke)
Kate Zielke (NCTCOG) introduced the FY 2026 Trinity River COMMON VISION Work Program and Budget, recommended by the Flood Management Task Force to be considered for approval and finalization. All updates and adjustments were tracked in the review changes panel of the draft document provided during the meeting and posted to the NCTCOG website at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

Changes of note include adjustments/additions to the Ongoing Program Activity: Coordination for Flood Science Training; a significant update to the language in the

Ongoing Additional Technical Activity: Participation in the Model Consolidation Committee; and the addition of Program Activity: Support Participation in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS).

Adjustments to the Coordination for Flood Science Training Activity consist of the addition of flood science software and incorporating the CDC process into USACE training for city staff, developers, and engineers (ref. 4.a.i. CDC Training Workshop Timeline).

Johnathan Killebrew asked if the newly added CRS item included the information presented previously to support regional efforts that could allow lower residents' flood insurance premiums. Kate responded, yes. Because NCTCOG has lost most of its FEMA funding, CRS has been shifted to COMMON VISION and hours will have to be reduced for each task in accordance with the budget.

Language in the Participation in the Model Consolidation Committee Activity has been changed due to FEMA's request that all references to NFIP be removed from the CDC Model. The Flood Management Task Force submitted for consideration renaming the "NFIP-CDC Consolidated Model" to the "CDC Consolidated Model," and changing the "NFIP East Fork and Extended Trinity River Main Stem Model" to the "Combined East Fork and Extended Trinity River Main Stem Model." Jonathan Killebrew asked for clarification on the funding mechanism to participate and coordinate with the USACE on future model updates. Kate explained that the cost shares collected from the Steering Committee funds the overall Work Plan, including activities to coordinate with USACE on future model updates. Kate reiterated FEMA has requested that NCTCOG remove references to NFIP in the models, but the models themselves will not change.

Regarding Cost shares, there are no plans to increase rates in FY 2026, the amount will remain the same.

In the absence of FEMA funding, Kate proposed to the Flood Management Task Force voting on a shift of CV Cost-Share Funds to a personal services agreement (PSA) for use in the TSI Study. This would mean that \$30,000 be relocated from funding for USACE (since they do not allow funding matches) to support the TSI Study in the North Study Area.

Jonathan Killebrew asked if this PSA to fund an independent contractor is a former USACE employee. Kate responded yes, and his role will help QA/QC H&H models built by Halff. Sue further explained that he has been instrumental to this project from the beginning and this would allow him to continue his important technical role on the project. Ruth Ray asked if the request is for an additional \$30,000 or in lieu of the original allocated \$30,000 to the USACE. Kate responded in lieu.

Kate asked if there were any suggested changes or questions concerning the FY2026 work program and/or budget before voting. Johnathan required further clarification in reference to budget changes from "USACE to PSA." Sue explained that this was done to "keep the technical team together" for consistency's sake.

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Jonathan motioned to approve the FY 2026 Work Plan and existing budget; Ruth Ray seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. However, transfer of funds from USACE to PSA was not motioned to approve. Instead, Ruth inquired if there was a way to see the agreement and further consider the recommendation. Kate clarified that USACE would continue more generalized work, while the PSA is “purely for technical review.”

12. Roundtable Topics/Other Business (Kate Zielke)

Upcoming meetings were reported, including the Region 3 Flood planning Meeting on October 3, shared by Sue Alvarez (NCTCOG).

Craig Ottman requested if it was possible to conduct a new request for proposals (RFP) for the services outlined in the PSA. Kate Zielke (NCTCOG) explained that NCTCOG follows procurement regulations and this PSA did not trigger the RFP process. At this point in the project, it would not be possible to issue an RFP as that can be a 6-month process.

13. Adjournment

Attendance List	
Bobby Stovall	Hurst County
Ray Richardson	City of Everman
Craig Ottman	TRWD
Karen Brennan	City of Keller
Randy Peterman	Halff Associates
Ruth Ray	Tarrant County
Johnnie Allen	City of Everman
Susan Alvarez	NCTCOG
Kate Zielke	NCTCOG
Katie Hunter	NCTCOG
Erin Blackman	NCTCOG
Cris Blackburn	City of Watauga
Donna Renee Anderson	City of Terrell
Tam Vu	City of Dallas
Michael Danella	USACE
Jenny LaFoy	Halff Associates
Kenneth Michels	City of Kennedale
Yoon Kim	Collin County
Brian Downing	Halff Associates

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Billie Wallace	City of Waxahachie
Landon Erickson	USACE
Nick Fang	UTA
David Phan	City of Dallas
Joe Hill	City of Corsicana
Chuck Taggart	City of Southlake
Lauren LaNeave	City of Southlake
William Wiegard	Haltom City
Jeff Kelly	City of Lewisville
Johnathan Killebrew	TRWD
Frances Scharli	City of Southlake
Colby Shawn	Wise County
Kevin Burns	Wise County

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