

Advanced Topics in Risk Communication: Skills and Techniques for Flood Risk Managers

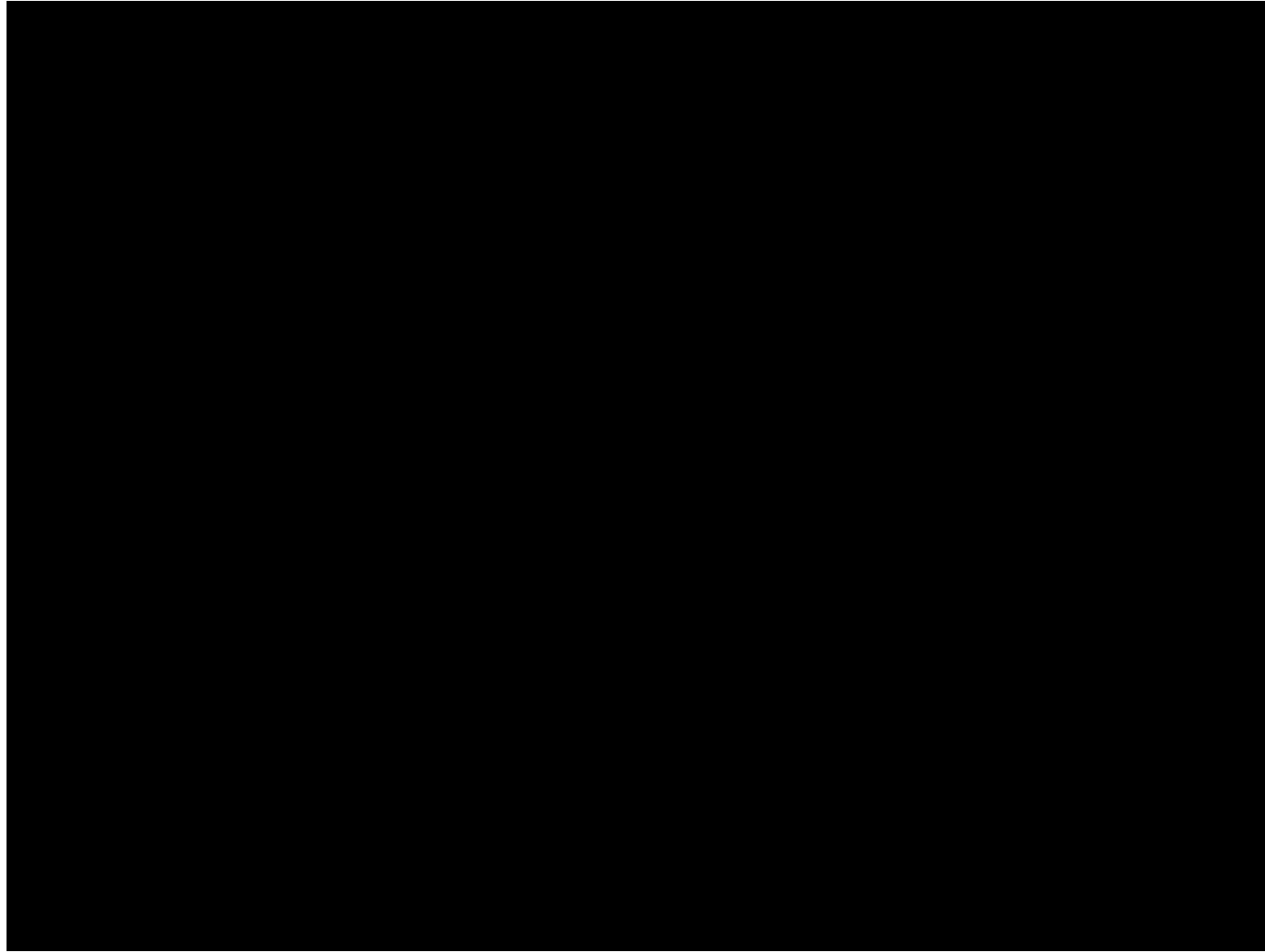
Sharing Responsibility of Risk

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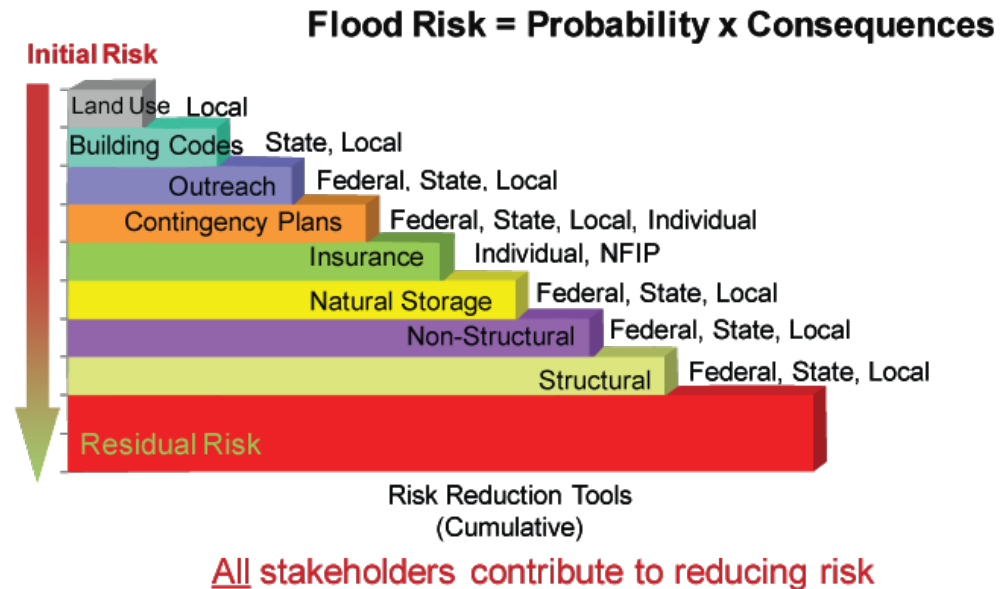


Video Testimonial



Concept

- Risk Communication is extremely complex
- Risk intimately related to perception
- Risk defined as:
 - Probability x Consequences
 - Likelihood of occurrence
 - Damage to assets



Where does risk reside?

Risk is shared by everyone

- Public
 - Government
 - Federal, state, local
 - Degree of sharing often dependent upon resources
- Private
 - Homeowners/landowners
 - Businesses
 - General public
 - Organizations

“Not knowing” about risk: not an option



Integrated Risk Management

- Risk Management should be integrated at all levels
- Why isn't it?
 - Shared responsibility
 - Ineffective communication
- Break down management and communication “silos”



Collaboration between stakeholders

- Provide audience necessary and appropriate information to involve them in making decisions
 - Two-way process with participation
 - Information provided
 - Feedback accepted and implemented



How do we communicate?

- Traditional and non-traditional methods to communicate data
 - Data are subject to change
 - Better methodologies
 - Better information
 - Better means to deliver data
- Communication methods should be consistent and “keep up with the times”
- Increases base of accurate information that decision makers use
- Measurable goals required



How do we communicate?

- Traditional
 - Maps
 - Reports
 - Publications
 - Fact Sheets
 - Public meetings
 - Web
- Non-traditional
 - Smartphones
 - Multimedia
 - Web/GIS
 - Social media
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - e.g. #kywx on Twitter
 - YouTube
 - Exponential audience growth

Risk Communication Goals

- Provide accurate information regarding risk
 - Message should be concise and understandable
 - Leads to better understanding of the science of risk
 - Dependent upon message and audience
 - Short-term and long term goals should be identified
 - Focus on personal consequences



Benefits of Effective Communication

- Reduced anxiety about risk
- Improved individual and collective decision-making
- Better educated public
- Appreciation of limited resources and difficult choices
- Increased coordination between various levels of government



Challenges to Effective Communication

- Description and measurement of risk itself
 - Is standardization needed?
 - Often there are conflicting messages regarding risk identification
- Perception of risk
 - Risk to some may not be risk to others
 - Anecdotal evidence counts
- No definitive ending
 - Personnel turnover
- Consistent message = better risk communication

Know your audience

- Stakeholder identification should be based on need and technical expertise
- KY Risk Communication Toolbox identifies 5 stakeholder groups
 - Does this include everyone?
 - Probably not but...



Getting out the message

- Consistency is key
- Subject matter experts can't expect everyone to know as much as they do
- Empathize with audience



Interagency Responsibilities

- Different agencies have different functions
 - FEMA – response, recovery, insurance
 - USACE – response, recovery, engineering, planning
 - USGS – federal “scientific arm”
 - NWS – forecasting, real-time data
 - NRCS – stream bank stabilization, EWP
- Local governments and citizens have interactions with all
- Common goal – Flood Risk Reduction
 - Crossover is inherent



Interagency Support for Risk Communication

- Keys:

1. Agencies and organizations understand their roles
2. Portray a consistent message
3. Understand resources at all levels are limited
4. Maintain up-to-date resource data for sound decisions
5. Engage civic/grassroots organizations
6. Focus on personal consequences
7. Be proactive



Bringing it all together

- Planning is critical
- Expand your audience through innovation
- Behavior change can be a long and difficult process
 - Vital to long term success
 - Start ‘em young!
- Put yourself in “their” shoes

