Answering the many questions surrounding
CRS USERS GROUPS

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What are the questions?

- How does a users group work?
- What is the purpose of a users group?
- Who/where are the users groups?
- What do users groups do?
- What have users groups done?
- Do user groups make a difference?
- How have they made a difference?
- Who am I and how can I help?
- How can I be reached?

How does a users group work?

Volunteer community representatives who want to understand the CRS program better, want to make the program easier on themselves and others, and want to advance their ratings meet periodically in a relaxed atmosphere and share their ideas, lessons learned, and best practices. Their dedication and shared interest in the CRS program fuel the users group's success.

What is the purpose of a users group?

- Helps communities work together to achieve common goals in a cohesive approach
- Creates a forum for interactive discussion
- Empowers communities to value collaboration
- Brings clarification to program requirements
- Improves communities' floodplain management programs and CRS ratings
- Bridges communities and ISO/CRS Specialists
- Acts as a "support group"

# Who/where are the users groups?

- Regions I and II – None...*yet*
- Region III
  - Northern Virginia Users Group (VA)
  - Virginia Users Group (VA)
- Region IV
  - Miami-Dade County Users Group (FL)
  - Palm Beach County Users Group (FL)
  - Southwest Florida Users Group (FL)
  - Tampa Bay Regional CRS Committee (FL)
  - Volusia County CRS Users Group (FL)

Who/where are the users groups?

- Region IV – Continued...
  - Coastal Hazards Outreach Strategy Team (MS)
  - Georgia Users Group (GA)
- Region V
  - Illinois Users Group (IL)
- Region VI
  - Floodplain Awareness Success in Texas (TX)
  - Flood Loss Outreach and Awareness Task Force (LA)
  - Jefferson Parish Users Group (LA)
  - Oklahoma CRS Workgroup (OK)

Who/where are the users groups?

- Region VII – None…*yet*
- Region VIII
  - Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Management CRS Committee (CO)
- Region IX
  - Southern California Users Group (CA)
- Region X
  - Northwest Regional Floodplain Managers Association CRS Committee (WA)

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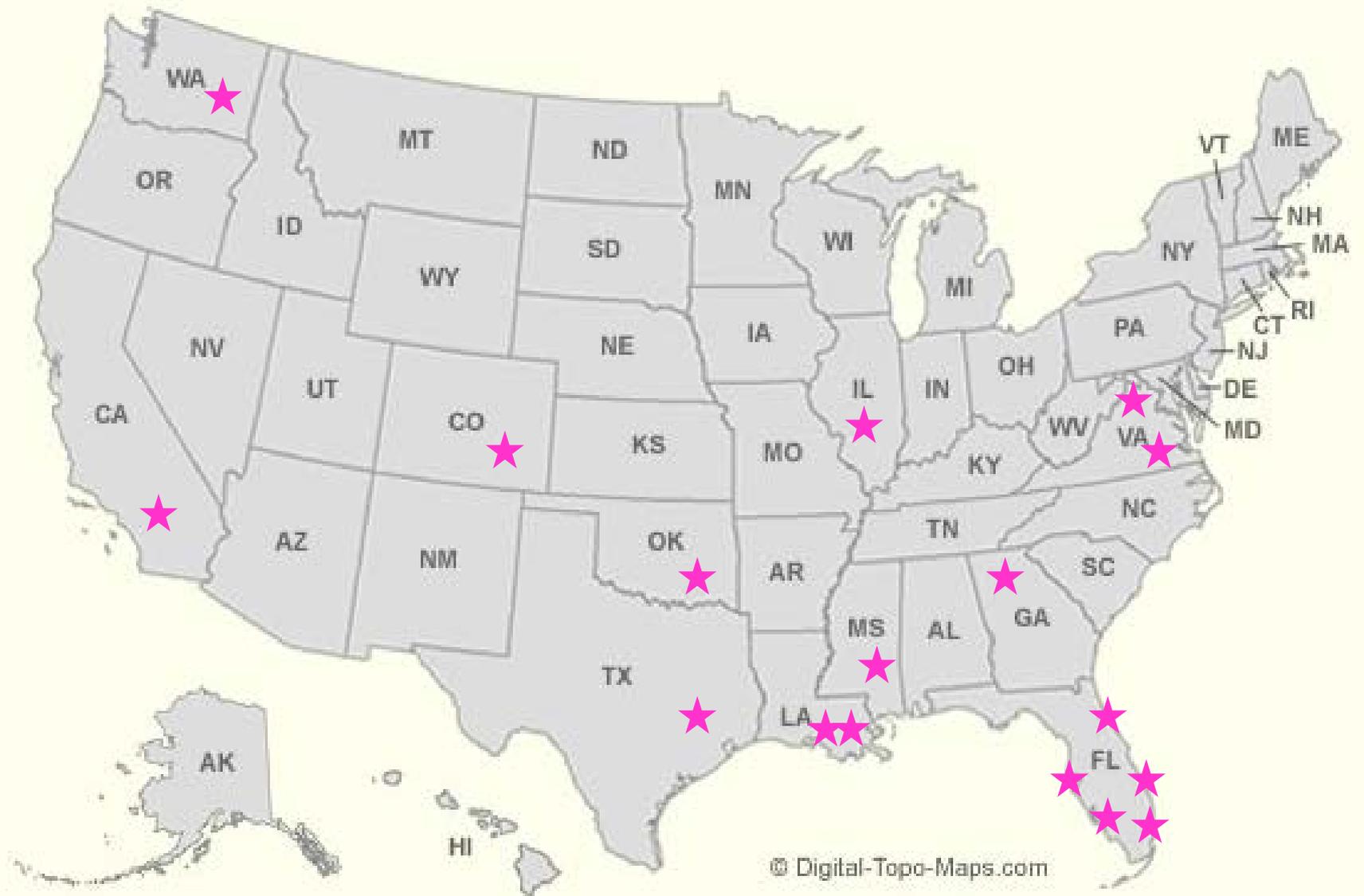
What do users groups do?

- Typical meeting:
  - Pick a topic or activity from the manual
  - Invite a speaker or member to give a presentation
  - Have members discuss their experiences
- Compare documentation to see what works best, what doesn't, and how to get the most points
- Provide resources that other communities may not have considered, especially regional ones
- Brainstorm on ideas for future meetings and training

What have users groups done?

- Field-deployed the EMI CRS class to various locations
- Hosted 19 webinars on the 2013 manual changes
- Dedicated websites for group members
- Increased participation in the CRS and improved scores for existing communities
- Reached out to key stakeholders (OPS) such as realtors, bankers, insurance agents, builders, surveyors, etc.
- Lessened the workload *(a little bit)* of the ISO CRS Specialists due to improved documentation

Do users groups make a difference?

- More class improvements makes for a better program
- Sharing the burden helps get more things done
- Communities can work together towards the same goals to achieve better results
- Promotes friendly competition among groups/states
- Creates community pride and national recognition – users groups are acknowledged by state associations, FEMA, Silver Jackets, etc.
- Gives communities more of a voice in how the CRS program operates – 10 are louder than 1

How have they made a difference?

- "What I have seen a lot of in our group is being able to find out what other communities are doing, that you never even thought of doing, or read the manual wrong, but because of our group you are now motivated to try to get that credit."
(Miami-Dade County Users Group)

- "FEMA/CRS are certainly paying attention to us. As a large cohesive group, we seem to have more 'traction' with the agencies than as single CRS communities."
(FLOAT)

How have they made a difference?

- "Having the unified group...has given us a source for disbursing information to a wider diverse group in a timely manner." *(Tampa Bay Regional CRS Committee)*

- "The Users Group has been a great help in keeping smaller communities committed and engaged." *(Palm Beach County Users Group)*

- "The workgroup is...viewed as a good recruitment tool to encourage more communities to enter the CRS program." *(Oklahoma CRS Workgroup)*

- "Love the momentum we are starting to experience – a round of applause for all involved!!" *(Georgia Users Group)*

Who am I and how can I help?

- Advice on how to form a users group (organizational assistance) – goals, ideas, plan of attack
- Group meeting operations, logistics, CECs, etc.
- Subject matter experts on CRS activities
- Activities and lessons learned by other groups
- Bring users groups together on a larger scale
- User group training requests
- Regular column in NFIP CRS Newsletter
- Feedback to ISO and CRS Task Force on groups' initiatives and successes

How can I be reached?

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