It HAS Happened Here
A Cross-Agency High Water Mark Initiative

Vincent Brown, FEMA
The Problem

- Floods are the most common and costly natural disaster in the United States and all communities are vulnerable
- Over a 30-year mortgage, homes and businesses in high-risk areas have a 26% or greater chance of flooding
  - 2 ½ times greater than the chance of fire
- People and businesses often take few steps to protect themselves from floods

“It won’t happen here.”
Part of the Solution

- FEMA knows that the public does not want to hear about flooding from the Federal government*
  - Prefer to hear about it from local officials

- Developed a strategy for a high water mark campaign that relies on local ownership and implementation
  - Showcasing the outcome of a community’s most severe flood can offer a powerful testimony and daily reminder to local citizens

- FEMA approached other Federal agencies with similar concerns about flooding to jointly implement the strategy

- The High Water Mark Initiative, “Know Your Line: Be Flood Aware” was born
  - Eight Federal agencies working together
  - Goal is to motivate individuals to reduce risk

*Per findings of 2010 and 2011 Risk MAP Flood Awareness Surveys
## Participating Agencies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Division/Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
<td>Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration</td>
<td>National Weather Service, Coastal Services Center</td>
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<td>National Park Service</td>
<td>Center for Urban Ecology</td>
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<td>Small Business Administration</td>
<td>Office of Disaster Assistance</td>
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<td>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</td>
<td>Institute for Water Resources, Silver Jackets</td>
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<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Natural Resources Conservation Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
<td>Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Geological Survey</td>
<td>Office of Surface Water</td>
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“Know Your Line” Overview

- **Description**
  - Encourages communities to post markers on prominent buildings to identify how high flood waters have risen in the past, conduct a kick-off event, then reinforce with outreach over time.

- **Objectives**
  - Raise flood risk awareness, drive action to reduce risk.

- **Audience**
  - Homeowners and renters, youth, elderly, local businesses.

- **Features**
  - Turnkey outreach strategy and customizable tools and materials to allow communities to quickly establish a tailored initiative.
  - Established partnerships with numerous agencies and organizations to support widespread outreach.
Benefits of Community Participation

- Underscores its commitment to the well-being of its citizens and local business community
- Galvanizes the community to take steps now to reduce the often devastating impact of floods
- Earn Community Rating System Rating (CRS) points to reduce the cost of flood insurance across the community
- Put Federal and state mitigation assistance funds to work
First Step: Pilot Communities

- Identified 6 potential pilot communities
  - Talking with them now to determine their interest in participating

- To choose pilots, we considered:
  - Regional and demographic diversification
  - Subject to a range of types of flooding
  - Different flooding histories
  - Availability of data
  - Availability of funding
  - Strong relationships with community members or demonstrated interest in this type of activity
  - Highly visible locations
Pilot Project Responsibilities

- **Federal agency point of contact will:**
  - Help the community tailor the strategy and materials to suit their needs
  - Provide recommendations and consultation on implementation activities
  - Provide recognition to pilot participants online and at conference and trade association meetings
  - Help the community determine where the signs will go

- **Pilot participants will:**
  - Establish a point-of-contact for “Know Your Line” activities
  - Tailor the strategy and materials to suit their specific needs
  - Launch the initiative and sustaining activities
  - Provide feedback, best practices, and insights to help us improve the campaign prior to national roll-out
  - Potentially act as a mentor to communities moving forward
Next Step: National Roll-Out

- The High Water Mark Working group will update, enhance, and add tools based on pilot feedback
- We will then open participation up nationwide, hopefully in time for National Preparedness Month in September
- Announcements will be made to local officials through many vehicles, potentially including:
  - Outreach through CRS Program
  - Articles in trade association newsletters (e.g., NACo, U.S. Conference of Mayors)
  - Outreach through Federal agency contacts located throughout the country
Tools for Communities*

- Customizable “Know Your Line” sign and printing instructions
- Access to data to determine where signs should be placed
- Launch event ideas
- Customizable community outreach plan
- Pre-existing relationships with supporting organizations that can be engaged at the local level
- Website to house local flood information and “Know Your Line” events
  - In development
- Press materials to support launch
  - Release
  - Advisory
- Campaign “help desk” for feedback or assistance

*More to come based on pilot community feedback
## Timeline

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<th>FY 2012</th>
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<th>FY 2013</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership Building</strong></td>
<td>Establish Working Group</td>
<td>Establish Charter</td>
<td>Build relationships with interested orgs</td>
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<td><strong>Pilot Projects</strong></td>
<td>Select Pilot Communities</td>
<td>Pilot Coordination</td>
<td>Final Pilot Plan</td>
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<td><strong>Materials Development</strong></td>
<td>Look and Feel Development</td>
<td>Pilot Materials Development (Sets 1-3)</td>
<td>Pilot Toolkit</td>
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For More Information

Please contact Vince Brown at

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Q&A

Questions?