

EQUITY-BASED APPROACHES TO FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT IN VIRGINIA



FEMA EQUITY DAY

DECEMBER 7, 2021

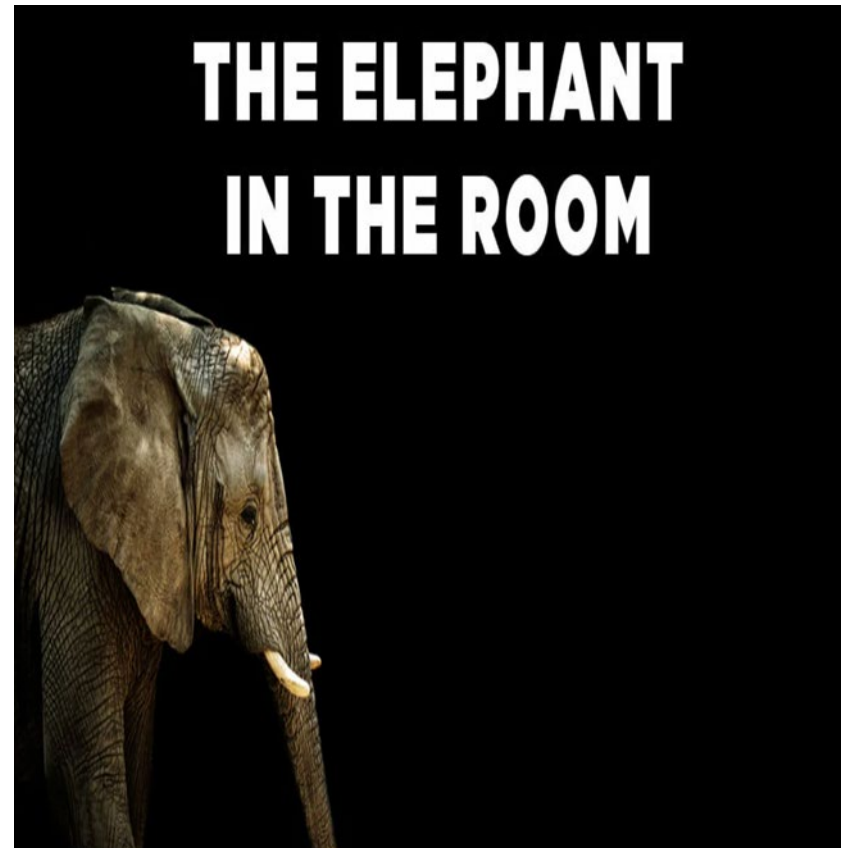
Where We Started

- ▶ Large gaps in the capacity to manage floodplains community-to-community
- ▶ Needs different community-to-community based on types of flooding
- ▶ Options to manage the floodplains varied based on each community's comprehensive plans, mitigation plans, etc.



Where We Started

- ▶ Look at existing planned strategies
- ▶ Evaluate areas impacted by planned strategies
- ▶ **Why did mitigation look different depending on who was exposed?**



Status Quo?

- ▶ Gaps in capacity and support in underserved communities
- ▶ History of disenfranchisement
- ▶ Education, awareness and subsequently **access**, delivered inequitably
- ▶ Choice verses circumstance



2019

- ▶ Governor's Council for Environmental Justice (reinstated)
 - ▶ State advisory council to the Executive Branch which addresses environmental justice issues across the Commonwealth as well as generates proposals for consistent approaches to evaluating EJ in State agencies
 - ▶ Representatives from: Indigenous Tribes & Sovereign Nations, Faith-Based Organizations, Civil Rights Advocates, Rural Stewards, and Academic Professionals
 - ▶ State agency representatives serve as SME, liaison for agency needs, and workgroup participants for Coastal Resilience and Policy

2019

- ▶ Dr. Janice Underwood, appointed by Governor Northam to serve the Commonwealth, as the nation's first cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer.
- ▶ With the creation of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Virginia is becoming a national exemplar in addressing the historical injustices and inequities that have existed for the last 400 years within all systems across our Commonwealth.



2020

▶ Flood Awareness Week 2020

- ▶ Goal: Find creative solutions to enhance and effectively deliver flood risk communications.
- ▶ Strategy: Offer a variety of communications and events to engage a wider audience and ***meet people where they are.***



2020

Everything Changed ...

expendable denial whereisthehelp
sacrificecommunities minoritydeath
death bias alltheothers
racism sickness isolation
unintentional loneliness loss hope
intentional abandonment protests advocacy
georgefloyd fear riots anger marches
support covid jobloss foodinsecurity
policing depression unsafe
awareness mentalhealth
afraid ahmaudarbery housinginsecurity

2020

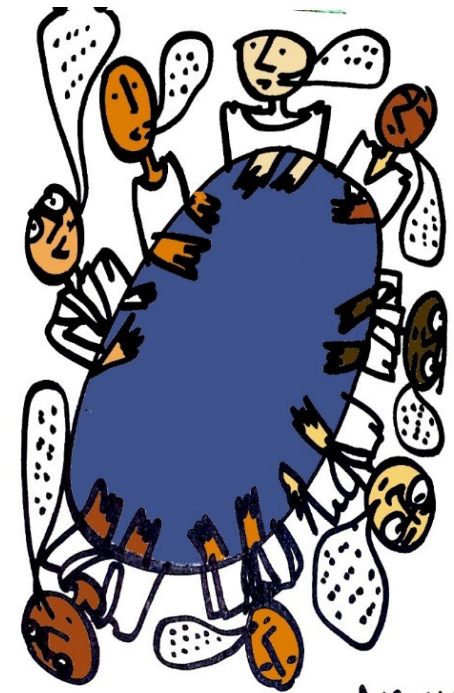
What we knew to be true

- ▶ Flood risk education is not enough
- ▶ Those most vulnerable seldom have a voice or a choice
- ▶ Flood history and the placement and displacement of communities are key to understanding
- ▶ Before you gain buy in for a solution; people have to understand how we arrived at our current destination



2020 – 2021 Real Talk

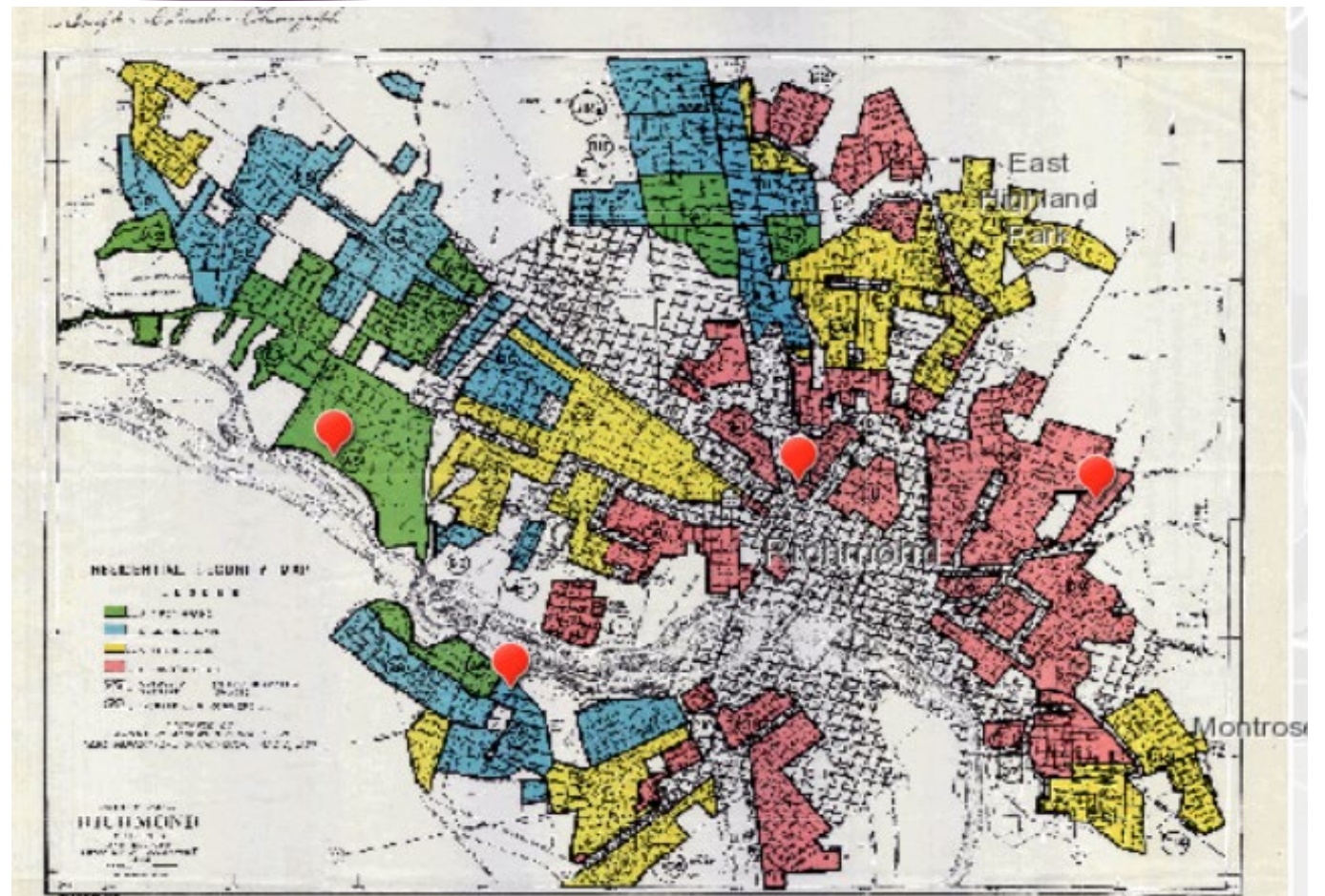
- ▶ Redlining
- ▶ Sacrifice Zones
- ▶ Choice Verses Circumstance
- ▶ Urban Renewal and Environmental Justice
- ▶ Hazard Mitigation Programs
- ▶ National Flood Insurance Program
- ▶ Climate Change
- ▶ Vulnerable Populations Subjected to Flooding,
NOT Populations Vulnerable to Flooding



AROUND THE
TABLE BRAINSTORM

Policy Matters

- ▶ Redlining
- ▶ Sacrifice Zones
- ▶ Choice verses Circumstance



Policy Matters

- ▶ DCR in partnership with the Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia hosted a roundtable discussion titled Impacts of Space, Place, Climate Change and Race.
- ▶ This event brought together community and policy leaders to discuss the impacts of historic and systemic racism, and the impacts to minority communities grappling with flooding and climate change.

VIRGINIA FLOOD AWARENESS WEEK | MARCH 14-20

THE IMPACTS OF PLACE, SPACE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RACE

MARCH 18 | 6-9 P.M. EST

Register at www.dcr.virginia.gov/FloodAwarenessWeek



A virtual discussion on the disparate impacts of flooding in minority communities, barriers to recovery and why Virginia must be a leader for change.

This panel brings together community and policy leaders to discuss the impacts of historic and systemic racism and the impacts to minority communities grappling with flooding and climate change.

 <p>Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali Vice President of Environmental Justice, Climate, and Community Revitalization, National Wildlife Federation</p>	 <p>Dr. Robert K. Nelson Director, Digital Scholarship Lab at the University of Richmond</p>	 <p>Rudene Haynes Partner, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP</p>	 <p>Mary C. Lauderdale Visitor Services Manager, Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia</p>
 <p>Dr. Janice Underwood Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Commonwealth of Virginia</p>	 <p>Desiré Branch-Ellis Policy Advisor, Virginia Department of Emergency Management</p>	 <p>Rob Jones Executive Director, Groundwork RVA</p>	 <p>Angela Davis Floodplain Program Planner, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation</p>

 Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
in partnership with the Black History Museum
and Cultural Center of Virginia

 **BHMVA**
Black History Museum
& Cultural Center of Virginia

2021

VIRGINIA FLOOD AWARENESS WEEK | MARCH 14-20

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW BEEN IMPACTED BY FLOODING?

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU.
YOUR STORY COULD SAVE A LIFE!



WHEN FLOODING OCCURS,
MINORITY COMMUNITIES OFTEN HAVE
THE LONGEST ROAD TO RECOVERY.

SHARE YOUR FLOOD STORY.
www.dcr.virginia.gov/FloodStory



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Progress???

- ▶ Urban Renewal: Is it really progress?
 - ▶ Urban renewal is a program of land redevelopment often used to address urban decay in cities. Urban renewal is the clearing out of blighted areas in inner cities to clear out slums and create opportunities for higher class housing, businesses, and more. A primary purpose of urban renewal is to restore economic viability to a given area by attracting external private and public investment and by encouraging business start-ups and survival.
 - ▶ For urban renewal to thrive, there must first be divestment or trauma.
 - ▶ By 1962 more than 800 black communities had already been displaced by Urban Renewal.

Vinegar Hill – Charlottesville VA

That World Is Gone: Race and Displacement in a Southern Town



Looking east on Main Street from the base of Vinegar Hill, 1930s. (Charlottesville DTM)



The Westhaven housing project, completed in 1964, housed many of the displaced Vinegar Hill residents. (Rip Payne Collection/Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society)

Fulton Bottom – Richmond VA



Historic Fulton comprises about 350 acres on Richmond's East Side and includes a section along the James River called Rocketts. Linda Egister Sutton grew up in her grandparents' house at 208 Orleans, two blocks from the river.



Fulton was one of Richmond's oldest neighborhoods but a 1970 urban renewal plan destroyed more than 800 homes and buildings and displaced thousands of people in the mostly Black community. This image from W. Palmer Gray Collection at The Valentine shows Fulton in 1922. W. Palmer Gray Collection, The Valentine

Union Hill – Buckingham County VA

- ▶ Union Hill is an unincorporated community in Buckingham County, Virginia that was founded by freed slaves after the American Civil War.
- ▶ Union Hill was unique and not unique. The patterns are quite widespread,” said Mary Finley-Brook, who served on the Virginia governor’s advisory council on environmental justice at the time of the Union Hill battle. Historically, “infrastructure was definitively put through Black communities. We [saw] that with the interstate and with power lines and it continues to develop that way.”



Environmental Justice

- ▶ Virginia's ***Environmental Justice Act***, building on federal frameworks established in the 1990s, requires the state to promote environmental justice, defined as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of every person, regardless of race, color, national origin, income, faith, or disability, regarding the development, implementation, or enforcement of any environmental law, regulation, or policy.” A particular consideration in environmental justice assessments is whether a given group of people bears “a disproportionate share” of negative environmental impacts.



Environmental Justice

- ▶ The issue has been a sore spot in Virginia, particularly in the aftermath of the Union Hill case, where the 4th Circuit admonished the state for its inadequate consideration of environmental justice issues in issuing an air permit for the now-canceled Atlantic Coast Pipeline's Buckingham compressor station.
- ▶ “Environmental justice is not merely a box to be checked, and the board’s failure to consider the disproportionate impact on those closest to the compressor station resulted in a flawed analysis,” the court declared in that case.

Mountain Valley Pipeline – Pittsylvania County VA



- ▶ Key to the discussion was DEQ's identification of the immediate area as an environmental justice community under the 2020 Virginia Environmental Justice Act given high percentages of Black and low-income people near the site.
- ▶ DEQ analysis found that 32 percent of the population living within one mile of the compressor station would be Black, despite the fact that Black people make up 20 percent of Virginia's overall population. Additionally, 31 percent of residents within five miles of the site were found to be low-income.
- ▶ Air Board member Hope Cupit said "I have concluded that **when we equitably consider — not just consider, but equitably consider** — the potential negative environmental consequences of this permit on these communities, granting this permit would not promote environmental justice,"

Why These Stories Matter

- ▶ Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.
- ▶ Climate Justice: As a form of environmental justice, climate justice is the fair treatment of all people and the freedom from discrimination in the creation of policies and projects that address climate change as well as the systems that create climate change and perpetuate discrimination.
- ▶ Climate justice, housing justice, racial equity, and economic opportunity are interconnected.
- ▶ <https://Climate and Environmental Justice – Houston> (<https://youtu.be/gU-D3YkOe-w>)

Federal Programs

Consequences of History

- ▶ Hazard Mitigation Programs
 - ▶ FEMA  Virginia Department of Emergency Management
 - ▶ Planning District Commissions
 - ▶ Local Governments and Stakeholders
- ▶ National Flood Insurance Program
 - ▶ FEMA  Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
 - ▶ Local Government – Floodplain Administrators and Stakeholders
 - ▶ Insurers, Homeowners, Renters

Climate Change

Nothing New Under The Sun

► Climate Change

- *Climate Gentrification*: Increasingly, high-income households are moving away from coastal properties to avoid threats like sea-level rise and erosion. The lurking impacts of the climate crisis “are pushing people inland onto communities that have been rooted there and have endured disinvestment, racism, and inequality and are now under the threat of gentrification and displacement.
- *Green Gentrification*: Efforts to implement eco-friendly infrastructure can be a potential trigger for displacement. Green gentrification, such as the building of large-scale green spaces in neighborhoods, can inadvertently push out residents from the surrounding areas as it increases property values.



Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable Populations Subjected to Flooding

-NOT-

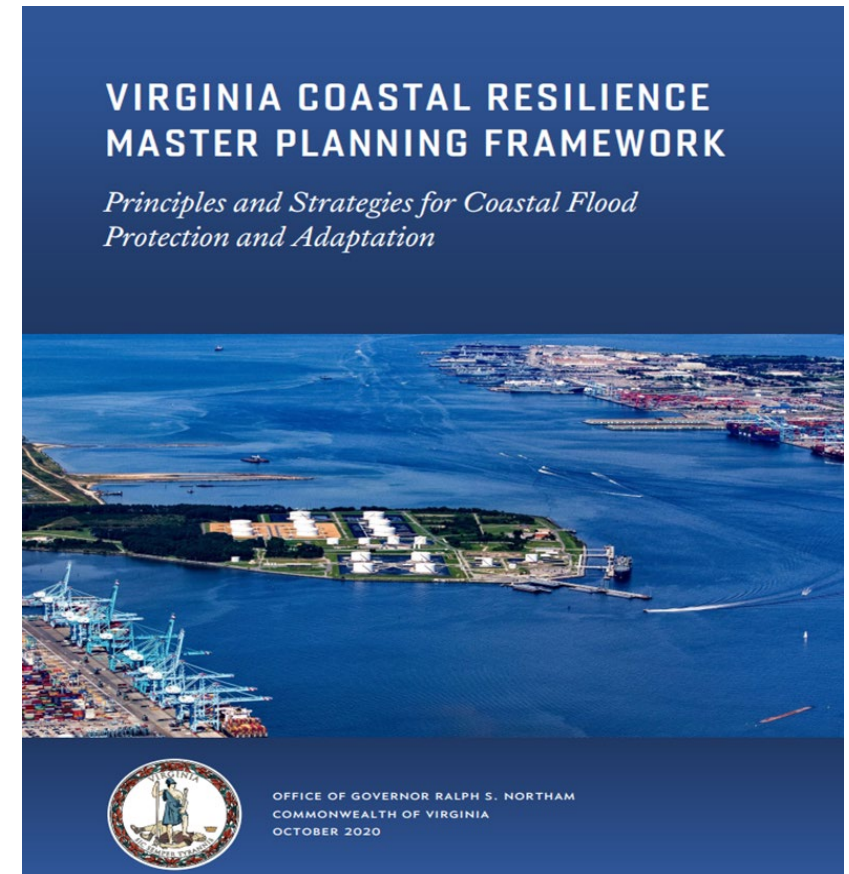
Populations Vulnerable to Flooding

- ▶ Prioritize *vulnerable populations*
- ▶ Evaluate how buyouts and relocations are conducted using DCR programs and the impacts on vulnerable communities.
- ▶ Create a new strategy for outreach and education to communities that provides tools, templates, and rubber meets the road assistance, not just information

Making Changes

- ▶ EO 24 Increasing Virginia's Resilience to Sea Level Rise and Natural Hazards
- ▶ EO 45 Floodplain Management Requirements and Planning Standards for State Agencies, Institutions, and Property
- ▶ Expand to develop statewide strategies to address climate change, sea-level rise, and recurrent flooding

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/executive-actions/>



Making Changes

- ▶ Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF)
 - ▶ Established by 2020 legislation
 - ▶ Funded by Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative beginning in 2021
 - ▶ As of November 1, 2021 auctions have provided more than \$60M to the CFPF. Funds are actively being provided to localities through grants
 - ▶ **At least 25% of funds awarded must go to low-income geographic areas**
- ▶ Provide support for regions and localities across Virginia to reduce the impacts of flooding statewide, including flooding driven by climate change.
- ▶ Prioritize projects that are in concert with local, state and federal floodplain management standards, local resilience plans and the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan.
- ▶ Empower communities to complete vulnerability assessments and develop and implement action-oriented approaches to bolster flood preparedness and resilience.

CHANGE COMES FROM DELIBERATE ACTIONS AND CONSCIOUS DECISIONS

- ▶ The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has rolled out their own Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), located at their headquarters in Chesterfield, Virginia.
- ▶ This development is the first of its kind across the nation, having an entire office dedicated to the mission of reducing barriers to assistance and equality in disaster relief and emergency management.



Virginia Department of
Emergency Management

HAZARD RISK & VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

2021 HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS EQUITY WORKSHOPS

The Deloitte Health360 Solution informs population vulnerability and enables a data-driven approach to operationalizing equity in mitigation projects. It is broken down into two components: Population Vulnerability and Hazard Risk. Both components are added together to identify potential priority areas to support future mitigation projects.

SERIES OBJECTIVES

- 1 Interpret data from the Deloitte Analysis and identify flooding risk in these areas.
- 2 Understand and explore potential solutions to hazard risk areas and vulnerable populations.
- 3 Educate stakeholders on funding programs such as FEMA hazard mitigation grants, CDBG grants, and the new CFP fund.
- 4 Discuss next steps, technical assistance needs, and training.



POPULATION VULNERABILITY

Provides a people-focused metric that can be combined with infrastructure, elevation, and financial metrics to support a holistic approach to mitigation planning.



HAZARD RISK

Reflects the number of households in each flood or hurricane zone weighted by risk severity to provide a people-focused risk metric.



PRIORITIZED CENSUS TRACTS

Combining population vulnerability and hazard risk at a sub-locality level can identify potential priority areas to support with future mitigation projects.



40 Localities
Identified Scoring
Over 70%

Rural Focus – Engaging with and developing strategies for Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities

- ▶ Risk Rating 2.0
- ▶ RiskMAP
- ▶ Mitigation Tactics
- ▶ Administrative Procedures/Enforcement
- ▶ Education, Training and Technical Assistance
- ▶ Funding Strategies
- ▶ Resilience Plans

Federal &
State

Local

Resilience

Rural Focus – Southwest Virginia

- ▶ SWVA does not have oceans and the issues with sea level rise and storm surge, but does have mountains and rivers.
- ▶ More extreme and frequent rain events increases the risk of river surges and flash floods and will cause more flood damage to properties and infrastructure and potentially cost lives.
- ▶ Only 7% of NFIP flood policies are in effect outside of the coastal region.

Historical Flood Impact

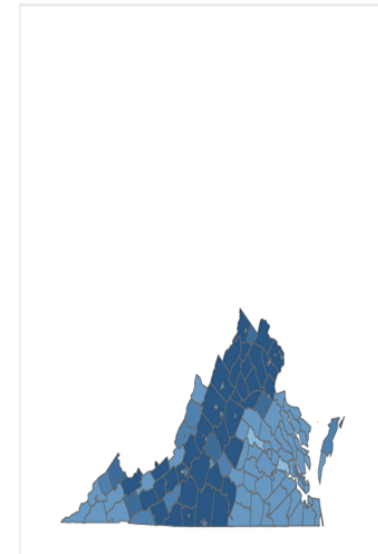
See how floods have impacted your state according to data from NOAA's Storm Events Database.

Choose a State

VIRGINIA ▼

Flood Events

- 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 50+



<https://www.fema.gov/data-visualization/historical-flood-risk-and-costs>

Rural Focus – Southwest Virginia

2022

- ▶ DCR will launch its 2022 outreach initiative in SWVA January 11- 13
- ▶ Training will be in person to address accessibility and connectivity.
- ▶ Training will also be available virtually.
- ▶ Registration will be announced soon.



January 11, Natural Bridge State Park

Natural Bridge Conference Center;
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

January 12, Hungry Mother State Park

Hemlock Haven Conference Center;
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

January 13, Natural Tunnel State Park

Cove Ridge Center;
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Flooding Is Not Just Coastal

Hurley Virginia 2021



There Is Much to Be Done, But How Do You Eat An Elephant... One Bite At A Time



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FEMA EQUITY DAY

DECEMBER 7, 2021

Questions?



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