

Climate Corner

[Urge your Senators](#) to send climate and clean energy legislation to the President!

How prepared are East Coast cities for sea level rise? [Read the telling report by EPA expert Jim Titus](#) and ask yourself, "why is [EPA suppressing](#) this critical report?!"

[Politico OpEd: Ending America's Energy Deficit](#), by NWF's Larry Schweiger and Christian Coalition's Roberta Combs.

Member Project Updates

Delaware Riverkeeper Network helped to get this [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report](#), which identifies numerous flawed Corps claims in its Delaware River Deepening project.

[The Nicollet Island Coalition's new report: Big Price Little Benefit](#) shows a \$2.2 billion Corps lock expansion proposal is not economically viable and harms Mississippi River restoration efforts.

105 Groups Cosign Comments to White House on America's New Water Policy

On April 5, [105 Corps Reform Network members and partners co-signed and delivered comments](#) to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) calling for a new federal water policy that makes environmental protection and restoration primary objectives for federally-subsidized water projects. The following [national and regional conservation groups also submitted a more detailed 55-page comment letter](#): American Rivers, Clean Water Network, Freshwater Future, Gulf Restoration Network, Izaak Walton League of America, National Wildlife Federation, Restore America's Estuaries, River Network, Sierra Club, and Waterkeeper Alliance. CEQ has also received more than 20,000 comments from citizens calling for a federal water policy that is more protective of the environment.

While the sign-on comments praise CEQ's draft for, among other things, its "systemic recognition of the value of ecosystem services to people and communities," the comments also recognize that CEQ's draft basically retains the old approach to water project planning that has harmed our waterways and public safety and wasted taxpayer dollars. The comments urge CEQ to establish a new framework for planning water resources projects that will improve environmental protection by reducing reliance on destructive structural projects and instead use non-structural and restoration solutions whenever possible that will work with nature, save money, and protect communities from climate change impacts.

The Corps Reform Network will continue to follow this process very closely and will inform our members and partners of the next opportunities to weigh in. The National Academy of Sciences is in the process of reviewing CEQ's draft and will be holding a meeting in Washington DC on May 25 where the public will have the opportunity to provide comments. The National Academy of Sciences is also accepting written comments. Thank you to all of the organizations and citizens who weighed in!

- [CRN eNews Special Edition explaining America's New Water Policy](#)
- [Comments to CEQ and other Fact Sheets and Resources](#)

[No Port Southport sues the Corps over inflated economic benefits](#) in the feasibility study for one of the largest and destructive container terminal proposals on the East Coast

Corps Reform Network Membership News

Welcome [New CRN Steering Committee Members](#): Vicki Deisner - National Wildlife Federation; Tim Guilfoile - Sierra Club; Natalie Roy - Clean Water Network; Andrew Smith - Apalachicola Riverkeeper; Shana Udvarda - American Rivers and Maya van Rossum - Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

[Read the Corps Reform Network's new 5-Year Strategic Plan](#) *Ushering in a New Era of Stewardship for America's Rivers, Wetlands and Coasts.*

Other News and Action

[Help Protect Marine Wildlife from BP Drilling Disaster](#) (Gulf Restoration Network Action Alert).

The America's Commitment to Clean Water Act ([HR 5088](#)) was introduced in the House on April 21, a companion bill to the Senate's Clean Water Restoration Act compromise. [Read more.](#)

Corps Reform Network 2010 Membership Meeting Highlights

The Corps Reform Network recently held its 2010 Membership Meeting in Washington, DC from March 14th - 16th. The meeting brought together 80 local, regional and national watershed and conservation leaders, scientists, economists, federal agency staff and high-level Obama



Administration officials. Folks came together to modernize our country's water policies to help the nation meet the challenges of climate change adaptation and improve floodplain management for people and wildlife.

Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy, the highest-ranking Corps of Engineers official, gave the key note address. Through the Q&A session that followed her speech, Assistant Secretary Darcy learned how Corps of Engineers projects are impacting the resources that Network members are working to protect and restore. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) also attended the meeting, and heard comments from Network members about how CEQ's new draft federal water policy will impact their campaigns back home. Network members greatly appreciated the time that the Assistant Secretary and CEQ spent at the meeting.

The meeting also included a fun dinner-cruise where the following people, who just stepped down from the CRN Steering Committee, were recognized with a special award for their leadership: David Conrad (National Wildlife Federation); Rich Cogen (Ohio River Foundation); Kim Knowles (Prairie Rivers Network); Debbie Neustadt (Sierra Club Volunteer Leader); Dan Tonsmeire (Apalachicola Riverkeeper) and Melissa Samet (former Corps Reform Network Co-Chair). Special recognition was also given to Gretchen Bonfert, who, while at the McKnight Foundation, supported much of the work of the Corps Reform Network.

- [Corps Reform Network 2010 Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Corps Reform Network New Strategic Plan "Ushering in a New Era of Stewardship for America's Rivers, Wetlands and Coasts"](#)

Coalition Pushes Reforms to National Flood Insurance Program

For three years the House and Senate have been struggling with extending an essentially bankrupt National Flood Insurance

Surfrider Foundation launched [Know Your H2O website that features this Cycle of Insanity video](#) that describes how our water management has altered the water cycle and what we can all do to fix it.

20 National and Regional Conservation Organizations recently [sent this letter to Assistant Secretary Jo- Ellen Darcy](#) calling for greater Corps transparency on wetlands permitting and mitigation.

Program (NFIP). In the wake of seven major Gulf Coast hurricanes in 2004 and 2005, including the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the program has maintained an insurmountable debt to the U.S. Treasury hovering near \$19 billion, which will eventually require a huge taxpayer bailout. The NFIP and its highly-subsidized insurance have also spurred development and redevelopment on the nation's coastlines and floodplains, damaging the environment and encouraging placement of homes and businesses in high-risk areas.

On April 27, the House Financial Services Committee passed the Flood Insurance Reform and Priorities Act of 2010 (H.R. 5114), a bill to reauthorize the NFIP. For years, conservation and professional floodplain organizations have sought major reforms to the mapping, flood insurance, environmental and land use and building code aspects of the program. A reformed NFIP could obviate the need for many Corps of Engineers structural flood damage reduction projects that sever rivers from their floodplain and spread flood risks downstream. Unfortunately H.R. 5114 focused almost exclusively on rate issues and included several provisions could actually worsen the financial state of the program and encourage even more high-risk development.

Additionally, the Committee voted to add windstorm coverage to the NFIP by passing H.R. 1264, introduced by Rep. Gene Taylor (D-MS), and voted to establish a federal backstop of up to \$20 billion in guarantees and government reinsurance for state natural catastrophe insurance programs, by passing H.R. 2555, introduced by Rep. Ron Klein (D-FL). Both these bills would expand the Federal role in subsidizing at-risk development in many of the most environmentally-sensitive areas in the nation.

Many Corps Reform Network Members oppose these anti-environmental proposals that would exacerbate the problems with NFIP, and will be working to improve or stop the legislation if it continues to move toward action in the full House of Representatives. With climate change increasing flooding risk through heavier rainfall, changing patterns of snowfall, more severe hurricanes, and increasing sea level, and with a major new floodplain mapping effort "discrediting" hundreds of levees across the country as being no longer able to provide adequate protection even from the 100-year (1 percent annual chance) flood, it has never been more urgent to reform the NFIP.

- [Recent conservation community letters, a revealing policy brief by NYU's Institute for Policy Integrity showing the bulk of NFIP benefits go to the wealthy areas, and testimony recently given to the Committee by NWF's David Conrad](#)

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