



FLHUG - Florida HAZUS-MH Users Group

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

State-wide, Florida



The State of Florida- The Florida HAZUS User Group (FLHUG) was formally organized in January 2006 when the group met to elect officers, create committees, form regions, and adopt a charter. Rick Burgess, City of Punta Gorda, was elected President.

The overall goal of the FLHUG is to promote the use of HAZUS-MH across the state of Florida to improve risk assessments, mitigation, preparedness and disaster response.

One way of doing this is through a committee structure, including the Outreach Committee, Technical Committee/Data Group, and Training Committee.

With regard to outreach, acknowledging that effective outreach is key to building a strong constituency of HAZUS-MH users, the FLHUG has “taken HAZUS-MH on the road” and demonstrated its use at conferences and workshops across the state. Training sessions have also been provided by the FLHUG, taking advantage of the six HAZUS-MH vendors in the state.

In early November, 2007, the FLHUG website was launched. The website is an important milestone in the growth of the FLHUG, particularly as new members are added, the committees and regional chapters continue to grow, and new HAZUS-MH applications are developed and carried out.

The FLHUG has also formed a Google Group, which is used by members to post messages, articles, links, announcements, troubleshooting tips, and other information that is of interest to HAZUS-MH users.

The second main committee is the Technical/Data Committee. Since its inception, a priority of the FLHUG has been to coordinate the statewide collection and processing of high-resolution hazard inventory data, and to integrate the data into HAZUS-MH. A Data Group was formed, headed by Tracy Toutant, Sarasota County, to coordinate the FLHUG’s data management strategy.

At the outset, one of the objectives was to develop a “master state database” that was consistent with the Florida DEM datasets. Richard Butgereit, GIS Administrator, Florida DEM, continues to work very closely with the FLHUG Data Group to coordinate State and local data needs assessment, data collection, and data sharing.

Four categories of data were targeted by the Data Group for updating: Essential Facilities; General Building Stock; User Defined Facilities; Demographics

The Data Group has made significant progress since January, 2006, guided by four project goals:

- To partner with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to provide a level two replacement of Critical Infrastructure data. FLHUG members created a new dataset, which is available to FEMA and National Institute of Building Sciences for replacing existing datasets distributed for all HAZUS-MH users modeling Florida Wind, Flood, and Earthquake events.
- To train GIS professionals across the state in HAZUS-MH and specifically the Comprehensive Data Management for HAZUS-MH, which provides in-depth instruction on data collection for HAZUS-MH
- To support the development of wind damage assessment tools
- To coordinate with the Florida DEM in the development of the Critical Facilities Inventory Data Dictionary

Finally, the Data Group will take the lead in a proposed project to develop a HAZUS-MH web based portal, in coordination with FEMA Region IV.

Training may be viewed as the “engine” that moves FLHUG. The goal is to make quality HAZUS-MH training available in all Florida regions in the next two years, in close coordination with Florida DEM and the Florida ESRI Group.

The FLHUG has a core group of experienced HAZUS-MH users who can lead a statewide training initiative in Florida, including four members who are FEMA authorized HAZUS-MH vendors under the Private Sector Initiative.

In 2008, several revised and updated courses will be offered through FEMA that incorporate changes in HAZUS-MH MR3. The FLHUG will be able to capitalize on these courses through field training in the Florida regions.

The state of Florida will continue to be a national leader in the use of HAZUS-MH. This is due to several factors:

- High visibility of natural hazards in Florida, and the proactive role of FEMA Region IV and Florida DEM in the use of HAZUS-MH in Florida.
- Strong and active technical community, including GIS professionals and HAZUS-MH specialists who routinely use HAZUS-MH
- Ongoing support from research and academia, including the National Hurricane Center and state-supported universities.

With this strong foundation to build upon, the state of Florida has an opportunity to carry out innovative HAZUS-MH projects.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **State-wide**

FEMA Region: **Region IV**

State: **Florida**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public/Private Partnership**

Hazard Type: **Severe Storm; Flooding; Hurricane/Tropical Storm; Coastal Storm**

Activity/Project Type: **HAZUS-MH**

Activity/Project Start Date: **08/2004**

Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**

Funding Source: **State sources**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **No**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://flhug.hazus.org/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3087>

Main Points

- The Florida HAZUS User Group (FLHUG) was formally organized in January 2006 when the group met to elect officers, create committees, form regions, and adopt a charter.
- The overall goal of the FLHUG is to promote the use of HAZUS-MH across the state of Florida to improve risk assessments, mitigation, preparedness and disaster response.
- Through committee structure, including the Outreach Committee, Technical Committee/Data Group, and Training Committee, FLHUG tries to promote the use of HAZUS-MH.
- The FLHUG has also formed a Google Group.
- The state of Florida will continue to be a national leader in the use of HAZUS-MH due to several factors.