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Public Information Statement  
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To:           Subscribers:  
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From:         Dan Matusiewicz  
              NWS National Hydrologic Outreach Program Leader

Subject: 2011 Flood Safety Awareness Week: March 14-18, 2011

NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) has designated March 14-18, 2011, as the annual Flood Safety Awareness Week. It floods someplace in the United States or its territories nearly every day of the year. In the past 30 years, floods have killed an average of 95 people a year and have caused an average of \$7.5 billion dollars in damages annually. The goals of Flood Safety Awareness Week are to heighten public awareness of the risks associated with floods and flash floods, inform the public about NWS forecast and warning services and flood safety information, and empower citizens to take actions necessary to protect their lives and property.

Americans depend on river and flood forecasts issued by the NWS throughout the year. Each geographic region of the United States has one or more times of the year when flooding is an increased concern. In the late fall and winter Powerful Pacific storms can strike the West Coast causing extensive flooding. From late winter into spring, people living across the northern third of the nation closely monitor NWS forecasts when snow and ice can melt quickly, sometimes causing ice jams and extensive river flooding. In the spring and summer, the threat of a flash flood from a thunderstorm is always a possibility almost anywhere in the country. Each summer and fall, millions of people living near the Gulf and East coasts listen keenly to tropical weather reports to determine if their area will be impacted by a flood from a tropical storm or hurricane.

NWS is committed to improving the timeliness and accuracy of river and flood forecasts and warnings necessary to move people out of harm's way and save valuable resources.

Gary Carter, Director of the NWS Office of Hydrologic Development, stated, "Water resource issues, including floods, profoundly affect our nation's economy, policies and regulatory frameworks. To address the growing water challenges and guide critical decisions, NOAA is leading an interagency consortium called Integrated Water Resources Science and Services (IWRSS), which consists initially of NOAA, the U.S. Army Corps

of Engineers, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The consortium will unify and leverage each agency's water science, observation and prediction capabilities to improve water resources forecasts, foster better communications and provide the common operating picture required to mitigate the death and destruction caused by major floods."

Dr. Thomas Graziano, Chief of the NWS Hydrologic Services Division, stated, "Population growth, climate change and the increased habitation and economic development of flood prone regions increase the flood threat and underscore the need for improved science and services. Since no single agency has all of the capabilities and resources needed to tackle these complex issues, IWRSS provides the business model needed to facilitate working together in the Information Age."

Extensive information about flooding and flood safety, including educational materials, videos, brochures, and news articles can be found online at:

<http://www.weather.gov/floodsafety>

Detailed information can be found on this webpage about important topics covered in the following paragraphs.

Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service:

The Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS) is the NWS frontline solution for providing improved river and flood forecasting and water information across America. AHPS provides a suite of graphical and numeric products over the Internet to assist the public, community leaders and emergency managers in making better life and cost saving decisions about evacuations and movement of property before flooding occurs. The broad reach of AHPS extends the range of forecasts from short-term (up to six hours) to long-term (out to weeks and months). AHPS provides the public with more detailed and accurate answers to the following questions: How high will the river rise? When will the river reach its peak? Where will the flooding occur? How long will the flood last? How long will the drought continue? How certain is the forecast?

Your gateway to web resources provided through AHPS begins here:

<http://water.weather.gov>

Turn Around, Don't Drown:

Most flood-related deaths occur in motor vehicles when people attempt to drive through flooded roadways. Don't underestimate the power of flowing water across a road. NWS has developed the flood safety slogan: Turn Around, Don't Drown and hopes you will remember these words when you're faced with a flooded roadway and have an important decision to make. Be especially cautious when driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

Floods, Droughts, and Other Related Phenomena:

Many parts of the nation will experience floods or flash floods this year. In other areas, drought will prevail. Hydrologic extremes have always plagued our vast nation. Tropical cyclone inland flooding, snowmelt flooding, ice jams and debris flows are just some of the flood-related phenomena which pose a threat to Americans.

Flood Insurance:

Flood losses typically are not covered in homeowner insurance policies; however, flood insurance is available in communities taking part in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA's FloodSmart campaign promotes the idea that all Americans should know their flood risk and choose the appropriate flood insurance. For more information on flood insurance, refer to:

<http://www.floodsmart.gov>

Flood Safety:

NWS, along with government and private sector partners, educates communities across the United States about flood risks and how to respond to flood threat. Knowing what to do before, during and after a flood can save lives and reduce injuries and property damage.

NWS is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. It operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy. Visit us online at:

<https://www.weather.gov>

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at:

<https://www.noaa.gov>

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notifications/archive>

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