



## Resilience Commission Introduced to Governor

The Resilience Commission Working Group which includes Directors Taotasi Archie Soliai, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), Faamao Asalele, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Lisa Tuatoo, Office of Disaster Assistance and Petroleum Management (ODAPM), gave a presentation to the Governor and his Cabinet on September 9, 2021. The Directors explained the potential impact of climate change and the need for American Samoa to respond now to protect the Territory. They recommended having a Resilience Commission and a Resilience Office. The presentation concluded with the development of an Executive Order that is being reviewed by the Governor's Legal Counsel.

The Resilience Commission Working Group mentioned in their presentation, "We must work together, using fa'aSamoa, to determine where villages and roads can be relocated, and we must be prepared to move away from the coast." *(Article continues on p.3)*

## FEMA Congratulates ODAPM!!

"We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your staff; no compliance issues were identified over the course of the review." Yuliya Rzad, Grant Services Branch Chief on behalf of Paulene Graham-Melvin, Director of Grants Management Division, FEMA.

According to the Director of FEMA Region IX's Grants Management Division, an examination of financial grants identified no difficulties with compliance. The review took place on September 29, 2021 and addressed four FEMA grants totaling \$14.2 million under ODAPM.

## News from Lima Fiatoa, Territorial Hazard Mitigation Officer



American Samoa Community College (ASCC) representatives meeting for BRIC applications.

Welcome to the second edition of *Hazard Mitigation Quarterly*. The ODAPM Mitigation Division is actively supporting sub-recipients to complete well-rounded grant applications for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants. These grants are due to ODAPM for review and completion by **December 27, 2021**.

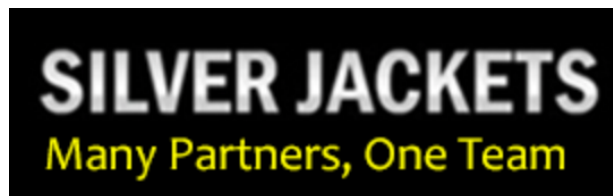
**Hazard Mitigation** is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from hazard events. It is an on-going process that occurs before, during, and after disasters and serves to break the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction.

### For more information please contact:

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## Founding a Silver Jackets Team

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) supports state and territory-led Silver Jackets teams through its Flood Risk Management Program. Silver Jackets teams exist in all states and in several territories including Guam and Hawaii. Benjamin Reder, Project Manager, USACE, is supporting ODAPM in developing the American Samoa Silver Jackets Team.



The name “Silver Jackets” is used to signify the common mission of diverse agencies working together. Traditionally, different agencies wear different-colored jackets when responding to emergencies (for example, FEMA personnel wear blue and USACE personnel wear red). The Silver Jackets are a single team of diverse agencies working to reduce flood risk. Their motto is “Many Partners, One Team.” Each team brings together multiple agencies from various government levels to learn from each other and apply their knowledge to reduce the risk of flooding and other natural hazards. American Samoa intends to include all members of the Hazard Mitigation Council on its Silver Jackets Team, which compliments other efforts undertaken by the Hazard Mitigation Council and its member agencies and departments.

The goals of the Silver Jackets program are:

- Facilitate strategic life-cycle flood risk reduction.
- Create or supplement a continuous mechanism to collaboratively solve state-prioritized issues and implement or recommend those solutions.
- Improve processes, identifying and resolving gaps and counteractive programs.
- Leverage and optimize resources.
- Improve and increase flood risk communication and present a unified interagency message.
- Establish close relationships to facilitate integrated post-disaster recovery solutions.

You can learn more about the Silver Jackets program here: <https://silverjackets.nfrmp.us>.

## GIS Workshop

The Department of Commerce (DOC) held a Geographic Information System (GIS) Workshop on September 21, 2021, to provide an overview of GIS.

Using Survey123 and Field Maps, participants were introduced to field applications and tutorials. Survey123 may be used to collect data on mobile devices as well as create smart forms. Following the demonstration, participants tested their skills with Survey123.

ODAPM staff intends to use Survey123 to collect data that will contribute to an update of the risk and vulnerability assessment included in the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan.



*Participants at the GIS Workshop.*

Hazard Mitigation Plan Goal: Reduce the risk of all natural hazards (identified and unidentified) to the Territory, thus, alleviating loss of life and property to insure the well-being of the people of American Samoa.

## PNRS Awareness Workshop

The Department of Commerce (DOC) has the responsibility to oversee the American Samoa Coastal Management Program (ASCMP) that regulates and restricts development in areas subject to flooding, storm surge, tsunamis, landslides, and coastal erosion. The system of environmental review is called the Project Notification and Review System (PNRS). PNRS is a land use management system that provides a mechanism for regulating building practices to keep people and property in American Samoa safe.

On September 23, 2021, ODAPM joined DOC in visits to the Villages of Afono and Aua to introduce them to the PNRS. This outreach workshop included presentations from Tino Mao, PNRS Chairperson and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator, DOC, Tanielu Aiava, DOC, and Bryan Maifea, Field Compliance Officer, ODAPM. The Workshop emphasized the consideration of environmental impacts of human activities and how to take actions to avoid negative impacts and build more resilient communities.



*Bryan Maifea, Field Compliance Officer, ODAPM.*

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## Resilience Commission (continued)

American Samoa faces many climate change impacts including:

- Sea-level rise three times greater than the global average,
- Loss of coastal lands due to erosion,
- Increased dependence on off-island food sources,
- Degradation of the coral reef ecosystem,
- Economic and environmental impacts from intensified tropical cyclones, and
- Increased health risks from a decrease in potable water resources.

American Samoa Sea Grant Extension Agent, Kelley Anderson Tagarino, is currently working on two climate adaptation projects to increase resilience to climate change. One project is a Sea Level Rise Viewer, an interactive mapping tool that details sea level rise exposure today and in the future. The other project is a living shoreline in Lions Park that is being developed in conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). A living shoreline uses native vegetation to buffer shorelines from waves and storms and are more resilient to hurricanes than bulkheads and other hard infrastructure.

Mitigating and adapting to the risks of climate change requires American Samoa to plan strategically with a coordinated approach the Resilience Commission can provide. To learn more about climate change in American Samoa you can view the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment for American Samoa here: <https://pirca.org>. This report details how human health risks, stronger cyclones, coral reef death, and coastal flooding are major challenges posed by climate change.

## Island-Wide Preparedness

The American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS) and many other departments participated in several preparedness events including **National Preparedness Month** in September and **International Shakeout Day** on October 21, 2021.



ASDHS and ODAPM waving for National Preparedness Month.

## STEAM Meeting

STEAM is a program that combines Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics in educational settings. The Department of Education (DOE) held a meeting on October 21, 2021 to introduce government departments to STEAM.

STEAM encourages kids to be curious learners who seek innovative solutions to real-world issues allowing them to build skills they need to thrive as adults.

Government departments shared their requests for what skills STEAM could share with students to build a stronger and safer community. For instance, ODAPM would like to see disaster-related projects, and development of local engineers. Many departments mentioned the need they have for more qualified staff such as scientists, engineers, and meteorologists.



Magdalene Leauanae, DOE, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, STEAM Co-Chair.

## Territorial Hazard Mitigation Council (HM Council)

The Hazard Mitigation Council, first established in 2002, is appointed by the Governor and acts as an authority of the American Samoa Hazard Mitigation Plan. They ensure policies and projects are implemented which are adequate to mitigate risk to life and property from natural hazards. For more information about the authority of the HM Council visit: <https://odapm.as.gov/hm-council>.



Acting Governor Talauega E.V. Ale, Directors from DOE, DPW, ASDHS, ODAPM, and their staff conducted a site visit on the island of Aunu'u on September 8, 2021.

- Talauega E. V. Ale, Governor’s Authorized Representative, Office of the Governor
- Mauga Tasi Asuega, Secretary, Samoan Affairs
- Tuigamoa Tavai, Senator, FONO
- Ape Mike Asifoa, House Representative, FONO
- Petti Matila, Director, Department of Commerce
- Chris King, Director, Department of Port Administration
- Faleosina Voigt, Director, Department of Public Works
- Fa’amao Asalele, Director, AS-Environmental Protection Agency
- Tuimalo Elvis Zodiagal, Officer, Historic Preservation Office
- Wallon Young, CEO, American Samoa Power Authority
- Chuck Leota, CEO, American Samoa Telecommunications Authority
- Lisa Tuato’o, Director, Office of Disaster Assistance and Petroleum Management
- Samana Ve’ave’a, Director, American Samoa Department of Homeland Security
- Ella Gurr, President, Chamber of Commerce

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