

## ABSTRACT OF NOAA SEMINARS

### A SYSTEM FOR OPERATIONAL FLASH FLOOD GUIDANCE WORLDWIDE

#### **Hydrologic Research Center**

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Flash floods have the dubious distinction of having the highest mortality rate of people affected among natural disasters. The world loses more than 5,000 people annually to these natural killers. A flash flood is defined by WMO and the AMS as a relatively small scale short fuse flooding event with response times 6 hours or less. Moderate to heavy rainfall that often persists on certain areas, soils that are thin or near saturation, extensive impervious areas, steep slopes that create fast moving flood waves, and development in flash flood prone areas, all conspire in various combinations to create this lethal problem, especially in developing regions of the world. Technological advances in remote sensing technology, communication networks, distributed computing and speeds, combined with forecaster experience in local conditions and availability of up-to-the-minute local information are the basic ingredients of a global approach to reducing life loss. The Hydrologic Research Center in partnership with National and International Agencies and with public and private philanthropic funding has developed an implementation plan for empowering the weather services worldwide to respond effectively to the occurrence of these events. The Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS) planned combines computational components and a system of distributed forecaster-centered functions that promote capacity-building nationally and regionally, encourage communication with disaster response agencies and support the cooperation of hydrologists and meteorologists at the national and regional level worldwide. This presentation discusses the basic components of this implementation plan.