
NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Sea-Level Rise Board Game Nets National Award

County's Game of Floods racks up another accolade

San Rafael, CA – The County of Marin has received the Gold 2017 National Planning Achievement Award for Public Outreach from the American Planning Association (APA) for its educational board game called the [Game of Floods](#).

The game, designed and created by staff members from the [Community Development Agency](#) and [Department of Public Works](#), is designed to engage and educate the community about sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation. Marin County was one of 12 [APA Achievement Award recipients](#) this year.

The Marin staff will be honored at a special luncheon during [APA's National Planning Conference](#) in New York City on May 8 and be featured in the May 2017 issue of *Planning* magazine.

This was the fourth major award for the Game of Floods. Last year, it received the California APA's Public Outreach Award of Excellence (qualifying it for the national award), the California State Association of Counties Merit Award and the top County of Marin Innovation "Inny" Award.

"Developing this tool was truly an interdepartmental team effort and modeled the need to break down silos and work together across disciplines," said Jack Liebster, Marin County Planning Manager.

"We face difficult and complex decisions in responding to increasing threats of sea-level rise, and playing the game helps people become our partners in this process," added Public Works Senior Engineer Roger Leventhal, who came up with the original idea.

"We've played the game in a wide variety of settings, and consistently the energy and enthusiasm that participants show gives us hope that we can make real progress," said Alex Westhoff, a CDA planner.

The Game of Floods allows players to act as planning commissioners who are challenged to develop a 2050 vision for the hypothetical Marin Island. The conceptual game board highlights anticipated sea-level rise and more frequent and intense storms brought on by climate change that are projected to cause deterioration or loss of homes, roads, community facilities, utilities and other resources. Players move around the board, working together to discuss adaptation strategies, considering their effectiveness, impacts and relative costs. Once the group reaches a consensus, players stick measures on the board, finalize recommendations and tally costs.

"Good planning is not just preparing the community for the future, but engaging the residents in the discussions and decision-making that will impact their lives," said W. Shedrick Coleman, AIA, 2017 chair of APA's Awards Jury. "This year's award recipients advanced the planning profession by more thoroughly engaging all residents in the planning process."

Each year, APA recognizes outstanding efforts in planning and planning leadership through its [National Planning Excellence and Achievement Awards](#). The two-tier awards are selected through a juried process. Excellence recipients are the highest honor and Achievement Awards recognize areas of specialization with the planning profession.

APA's national awards program, the profession's highest honor, is a proud tradition established more than 50 years ago to recognize outstanding community plans, planning programs and initiatives, public education efforts, and individuals for their leadership on planning issues.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning – physical, economic and social – so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live.

For more information, visit www.planning.org.

Photo caption: The Game of Floods has been played at dozens of public events across the country.