

Flood Risk in the Mid-Atlantic

Goddard Forum

September 10, 2025

Penn State Harrisburg



Goddard Forums

- Foster dialogue on important environmental issues among government, industry, academia, and the general public.
- “Enhance the University’s commitment to the Commonwealth to provide direction in balanced resource conservation and utilization through programs of public service, research and instruction”
- Address resource issues ranging from international forest policy to hazardous waste facility siting to biodiversity conservation.
- 2024 Forum on climate-smart forestry

Flood Risk

Community Flash Flood Prediction and Warning Preparedness:
Workshop on Flood Warning System Implementation, Operation and
Maintenance, November 17, 2023, State College, PA

Flooding in Pennsylvania: Hazard, Risk, Response: Millennium Cafe
Flash Talks, Spring 2025, State College

Flooding in Pennsylvania under Extreme Climate and Changing Federal
Institutional Arrangements: Session at Climate Solutions Symposium,
May 19-20, 2025, State College, PA

Goddard Chair in Forestry and Environmental Resource Conservation



Established in 1983 to honor and extend the science-and-policy legacy of Maurice K. Goddard, PhD (1912-95)

- Director of the School of Forestry at Penn State (1952-55)
- Secretary, Pennsylvania Dept. of Forests and Waters (1955-70)
- Secretary, Dept. of Environmental Resources (1970-79), now DCNR
- After retirement, remained active in the National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Goddard Chairs

- Christopher Scott (2021-present)
- Calvin W. DuBrock (2015-2018)
- James R. Grace (2010-2014)
- Robert B. McKinstry, Jr. (2001-2007)
- Caren E. Glotfelty (1995-2000)
- Steven G. Thorne (1991-1994)
- Benjamin A. Jayne (1988-1991)
- Arthur A. Davis (1984-1987)

Hurricane Agnes, 1972: Goddard as Secretary, DER (now DCNR)

After major 1936 flood, Army Corps of Engineers constructed flood control works e.g., Wilkes-Barre earthen dikes built three feet higher than the 1936 high-water mark... little comprehensive planning for hazards

After Agnes, Goddard stated that “this new storm indicates that we were too conservative” with protection against flooding

Structural methods to protect valley bottoms seen as the only logical method

Relocation was not an option given that entire industries, ethnic communities, and ways of life would be uprooted

Flood hazard luminaries

- Gilbert White, Univ. of Colorado – non-structural measures
- Deanne Criswell, FEMA, prev. NY City Emergency Management - raised the profile of social and economic inequity of flood impacts
- Spike Lee, “Katrina: Come Hell and High Water” (2005), “When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts” (2006) – brought floods to the public eye
- Emiko Okuyama, Mayor of Sendai, Japan, during the Fukushima Tsunami; provided leadership for the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Bangladesh and its people

Gilbert White - floodplain management

- President, Haverford College (1946-55)
- Professor, University of Chicago; University of Colorado
 - Honorary doctorates: Swarthmore College, U. Arizona (among many)
- Pioneered “Human adjustments to floods” (U. Chicago, 1945) including both structural and non-structural
- Advocated where feasible adaptation to or accommodation of flood hazards rather than structural solutions
- Advised President LB Johnson on establishment of the National Flood Insurance Program
- White and Maurice Goddard were contemporaries; but Jim Goddard (Tennessee Valley Authority) and White collaborated

Goddard Forum 2025



- Photo: Scott Drzyzga

A round of introductions

- Your name
- Position in your organization
- Favorite body of water or river reach

Principles for meaningful exchange of views

- Everyone has a perspective and a right to voice their opinions
- Cannot “get to yes” without acknowledging, exploring “why not?”
- Communication is not just a two-way street:
 - Listener: how the message is heard and interpreted is as important as
 - Speaker: how the message is conveyed, often with a question...
- What’s “said in this room stays in the room” (with all of us present, including the opportunity to provide input, modification to the forum report before it is finalized)
- Let’s have some fun!

Thematic session rapporteurs

- Organizing committee members – provide notes taken during sessions, leading to clear, short (1/2 page) synthesis