

## August 2017 TAG Blog

Well, it's August and I guess like me many of you are in holiday mode. I am very lucky to be taking two holidays this summer but they both serve to remind us of the changing climate and in particular flooding events. Early in the summer I went to northern Poland and got rather wet on a few occasions, the gentleman we hired a cottage from apologised for the weather saying "it's not normally like this, we usually only get one or two days rain in July but this is like Ireland!"

Next week I am heading off to the Isle of Wight, as northerners we hope this is a trip will be to the sunny, warm south coast and yet the last time I was there was 2004, the week of the Boscastle flooding disaster.

There are numerous examples of more frequent disasters caused by extreme rainfall events, here are just a few:

- Aug 2016 saw days of heavy rain that caused historic flooding in the US state of Louisiana, bringing as much as 31in (79cm) across a third of the state, four times their average amount of rainfall for August.
- March 2017 saw flooding in Peru kill 67 and spark criticism of the country's climate change preparedness
- March 2017 flooding in New South Wales saw five areas declared disaster zones after ex-cyclone Debbie
- In the last week we've seen flooding cause a major disaster with the landslide in Sierra Leone, the death toll there is hundreds.

In July this year the Met Office published a report saying that there is now a high risk of 'unprecedented' winter downpours such as those that caused extensive flooding in 2014. (link to article: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-40683302>)

Their study suggests there's now a one in three chance of monthly rainfall records being broken in England and Wales in winter.

Those responsible for flood risk management; funders, regulators and our engineers and scientists need to think more broadly about how we manage such challenges, and it was pleasing in July to see the flood minister announce the allocation of further funds as part of the Government's £15m investment in natural flood management. In total, 34 community led schemes and 24 catchment scale projects have now been funded. In my own region, the Upper Weardale Natural Flood Management Pilot Project received the largest allocation of just over £2m. There are many examples of where these natural interventions can be small and very cost effective, delivering some great benefits, particularly to our small rural communities. So, I look forward to see what can be achieved on the catchment scale.

Ruth Bendell  
FCRM Committee Chair