

MWMC Annual Conference – December 8, 2017

The 2016 Ellicott City Flood: A 225-Year-Old Mill Town's Survival Story

Jim Caldwell - Director, Howard County Office of Community Sustainability

Historic Ellicott City was established as a mill town in 1772 and for almost 150 years was a thriving industrial town that used water from the surrounding streams that powered mills to grind grain and make lumber. Today the town is full of restaurants and shops that draw people from around central Maryland. Unfortunately, due to its location, age, and building density, the town is no stranger to flooding. On July 30, 2016 the town experienced a devastating flash flood that destroyed main street. This presentation will describe the various factors that led to the flood, document the level of damage and describe the subsequent rebuilding and engineering studies underway to provide greater resilience in the future.

Biography

Jim has spent his career as a local government environmental manager in the Baltimore, Washington region. Jim was appointed the Director of the Howard County Office of Community Sustainability in December of 2014. Guided by principles of science, ingenuity, sustainability and stewardship, the Office engages in water quality, economic development, agriculture, energy and education initiatives. Jim worked for Montgomery County Maryland for 25 years, and for 12 years he served as Director of the Department of Environmental Protection, overseeing natural resource protection programs for water, air, energy, and pollution prevention. His long dedication to environmental protection is grounded in training in wildlife zoology from Ohio State University and a MS in Environmental Management from American University. Jim is a member of the Board of the Maryland Water Monitoring Council, and is also a member and past chairman of the Maryland Science Center's, Science Advisory Council.