

Dear Reader,

Good things come from conferences!

At a recent IAEM conference, Dr. William Waugh, Jr, PhD, our Editor-in-Chief, and I were enjoying a conference luncheon and while introducing ourselves to those around us, we were fortunate to meet Damarys Acevedo-Markey, PE, an environmental engineer with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), who has been instrumental in USACE's post-disaster recovery analysis in Puerto Rico. The introductions led to a deeper discussion about the issues surrounding Hurricane Maria and the devastation it caused in Puerto Rico. The disaster presented real pre- and post-disaster challenges across the spectrum. There was much to be researched and a new paradigm is needed to ensure this disaster does not happen again. From this discussion at the conference, the special issue on this important disaster was born! So our sincere thanks to Damarys for her support of this project!

As we formulated the special issue, Dr. Waugh suggested just one individual as Special Issue Editor. A researcher, sociologist, public health expert, and thought leader, we were thrilled when Dr. Fernando I. Rivera, PhD accepted our invitation to lead this project. Our sincere thanks to Dr. Rivera for his time and dedication to this special issue.

And finally, to the authors and reviewers who spent countless hours researching, writing and peer-reviewing, we extend our sincere thanks for a job well done. I know we taxed your patience while getting this issue ready during the pandemic. But, I also offer a challenge. The work in Puerto Rico is not done. I challenge everyone to put that research into practice and make that island a beacon of preparedness and resilience by the year 2025. To that end, I invite researchers, authors, and practitioners to step forward as we pull together a conference on this topic. Please send a letter of interest to the **JEM** mailbox at [jem@pnpc.com](mailto:jem@pnpc.com). We are looking for conference committee members, planners, and others who share the passion on this subject.

Again, my sincere thanks to all involved in this special issue.



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