

Executive Summary

Lane County developed this Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in an effort to limit future loss of life and property resulting from natural disasters. Natural hazard mitigation is defined as a method of permanently reducing or alleviating the losses of life, property, and injuries resulting from natural hazards through long and short-term strategies. Example strategies include planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities.

The plan provides: (1) a foundation for coordination and collaboration among agencies and the public in the County; (2) identification and prioritization of future mitigation activities; and (3) support in meeting federal planning requirements to qualify for assistance programs. Additionally, the plan recommends a set of actions to prepare for and reduce the risks posed by natural hazards through education and outreach programs, the development of partnerships, and implementation of preventive activities such as land use or watershed management programs.

How is the Plan Organized?

The Mitigation Plan contains five main sections, hazard annexes, and resource appendices. The main plan document includes the following sections: Introduction, Community Profile, Risk Assessment Summary, Mitigation Plan Goals and Action Items, and Plan Implementation. It also contains a series of 10 hazard-specific annexes covering the following hazards: Winter and Windstorms; Wildfire; Earthquake; Landslide; Flood; Volcanic Event; Dam Safety; Hazardous Materials; Terrorism; and Utility and Transportation, as well as three resource appendices covering benefit cost analysis; existing plans, policies, and programs; and common acronyms.

Who Participated in Developing the Plan?

This plan is the culmination of several mitigation planning efforts undertaken by Lane County. . The first, in 1996, resulted in a Regional All Hazard Mitigation Master Plan and was a joint effort among Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties. The second was the completion of a county-specific hazard assessment, completed in 2003 by Kenneth Goettel and Associates. The third effort took place in 2005 and resulted in the development of a countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan or CWPP. The County contracted with the Community Service Center's Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup (ONHW) at the University of Oregon to develop this plan. Building upon these initial efforts, Lane County convened a steering committee to guide the development of the natural hazards mitigation plan. The steering committee was responsible for making decisions and agreeing upon the final contents of the plan. Members of the steering committee included representatives from the following agencies:

- Lane County Emergency Management
- Lane County Land Management Division
- Oregon Department of Forestry – East Lane and South Cascade Districts
- Lane County Public Works, GIS and Roads Units
- United States Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Eugene Water and Electric Board
- Springfield Utility Board

What are the Plan Goals?

The plan goals help to guide the direction of future activities aimed at reducing risk and preventing losses from natural hazards. The goals listed here serve as the guiding principles for agencies and organizations as they begin implementing action items. Each goal includes a goal statement, which serves to further explain how each of the plan’s goals will assist in mitigating the effects of natural hazards within Lane County. The goals of the Lane County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan are to:

1. Save lives and reduce injuries
2. Minimize and prevent damage to buildings and infrastructure
3. Reduce economic loss
4. Decrease disruption to services
5. Protect natural and cultural resources
6. Increase awareness and understanding of the hazards and risks in Lane County

How are the Action Items Organized?

The plan identifies action items developed through various plan inputs, data collection and research. The action items identified by the plan are intended to move the County towards achieving the plan’s goals. Action items address both multi-hazard (MH) and hazard-specific issues.

To facilitate implementation, each action item is described in a worksheet, which includes information on key issues addressed, ideas for implementation, coordinating and partner organizations, timeline, and plan goals addressed.

How Will the Plan be Implemented?

The Lane County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan was developed and will be implemented through a collaborative process. The Plan will be adopted via resolution by the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

Upon approval by FEMA and local adoption, Lane County will gain eligibility for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, as well as Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance program funds. The effectiveness of Lane County's non-regulatory Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan will be contingent upon implementation of the plan and incorporation of the identified action items into existing Lane County plans, policies, and programs.

Coordinating Body

The Disaster Policy Council will act as the coordinating body and serve as a centralized resource for natural hazard issues and risk reduction in Lane County. Additional roles and responsibilities of the committee include:

- Serving as the local evaluation committee for funding programs such as Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and Flood Mitigation Assistance program funds;
- Prioritizing and recommending funding for natural hazard risk reduction projects;
- Documenting successes and lessons learned;
- Evaluating and updating the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in accordance with the prescribed maintenance schedule, (See Table 5.1); and
- Developing and coordinating ad hoc and/or standing subcommittees as needed.

Co-Conveners

Lane County Emergency Management and the Lane County Land Management Division will serve as co-conveners to oversee the plan's implementation and maintenance. These two entities will be responsible for calling meetings to order at scheduled times or when issues arise, (e.g., when funding becomes available or following a major natural hazard event).

Emergency Management roles:

- Coordinate Disaster Policy Council meeting dates, times, locations, agendas, and member notification;
- Document outcomes of Committee meetings;
- Serve as a communication conduit between the Disaster Policy Council and key plan stakeholders; and
- Identify emergency management-related funding sources for natural hazard mitigation projects.

Land Management roles:

- Incorporate, maintain, and update Lane County's natural hazards risk GIS data elements; and

- Utilize the Lane County Natural Hazards Risk Assessment as a tool for prioritizing proposed natural hazard risk reduction projects.

Project Prioritization

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that the plan identify a process for prioritizing potential actions. Such actions often come from a variety of sources; therefore, the project prioritization process needs to be flexible. The prioritization process outlined in the plan utilizes a four-step process to help ensure that limited mitigation funding is used in a cost-effective manner. The four steps include:

1. Examining funding requirements;
2. Completing a risk assessment evaluation;
3. Completing quantitative or qualitative assessments and economic analysis; and
4. Providing a recommendation.

Plan Maintenance and Update

The plan includes a schedule and recommended tasks to assist the County in maintaining and updating the plan. The schedule includes annual meetings as well as a five-year update.