Hazard Mitigation Plan

Volume 1: Planning-Area-Wide Elements

FINAL

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TETRA TECH

Kittitas County

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN
VOLUME 1: PLANNING-AREA-WIDE ELEMENTS

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Kittitas County
Hazard Mitigation Plan;
Volume 1—Planning-Area-Wide Elements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) is federal legislation that promotes proactive pre-disaster planning by making it a condition of receiving financial assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Act. The DMA established a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and new requirements for the national post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

The DMA encourages state and local authorities to work together on pre-disaster planning, and it promotes sustainability as a strategy for disaster resistance. Sustainable hazard mitigation addresses the sound management of natural resources and local economic and social resiliency, and it recognizes that hazards and mitigation must be understood in a broad social and economic context. The planning network called for by the DMA helps local governments articulate accurate needs for mitigation, resulting in faster allocation of funding and more cost-effective risk-reduction projects.

A planning partnership made up of Kittitas County and local governments worked together to create this Kittitas County Hazard Mitigation Plan to fulfill the DMA requirements for all fully participating partners.

PLAN PURPOSE

Several factors initiated this planning effort for Kittitas County and its planning partners:

- The Kittitas County area has significant exposure to numerous natural hazards that have caused millions of dollars in past damage.
- Limited local resources make it difficult to be pre-emptive in risk reduction initiatives. Being able to leverage federal financial assistance is paramount to successful hazard mitigation in the area.
- The partners wanted to be proactive in preparedness for the impacts of natural hazards.

With these factors in mind, Kittitas County committed to the preparation of the plan by attaining funding for the effort through grants, establishing the planning partnership, and securing technical assistance to facilitate a planning process that would comply with multiple program requirements.

THE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

The planning partnership assembled for this plan consists of Kittitas County, four incorporated cities and 13 special purpose districts defined as “local governments” under the Disaster Mitigation Act. This partnership represents approximately 50 percent of eligible local governments in the planning area. Of these 18 planning partners, 11 completed all required phases of this plan’s development. Jurisdictional annexes for those 11 partners are included in Volume 2 of the plan. Jurisdictions not covered by this process can link to this plan at a future date by following the linkage procedures identified in Appendix B of Volume 2 of this plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

Development of the Kittitas County Hazard Mitigation Plan included seven phases:

- **Phase 1—Organize resources**——Under this phase, grant funding was secured to fund the effort, the planning partnership was formed and a steering committee of planning partners

and other stakeholders was assembled to oversee development of the plan. Also under this phase were coordination with local, state and federal agencies, and a comprehensive review of existing programs that may support or enhance hazard mitigation.

- **Phase 2—Assess risk**—Risk assessment is the process of measuring the potential loss of life, personal injury, economic injury, and property damage resulting from natural hazards. This process focuses on the following parameters:
  - Hazard identification and profiling
  - The impact of hazards on physical, social and economic assets
  - Vulnerability identification
  - Estimates of the cost of damage or costs that can be avoided through mitigation.

  Phase 2 occurred simultaneously with Phase 1, with the two efforts using information generated by one another.
- **Phase 3—Involve the public**—Under this phase, a public involvement strategy was developed that used multiple media to give the public multiple opportunities to provide comment on the plan. The strategy focused on three primary objectives:
  - Assess the public's perception of risk.
  - Assess the public's perception of vulnerability to those risks.
  - Identify mitigation strategies that will be supported by the public.
- **Phase 4—Identify goals, objectives and actions**—Under this phase, the steering committee and planning team identified goals and objectives for the planning area, as well as a range of potential mitigation actions for each natural hazard. A "mitigation catalog" was used by each planning partner to guide the selection of recommended mitigation initiatives to reduce the effects of hazards on new development and existing inventory and infrastructure. A process was created under this phase for prioritizing, implementing, and administering action items based in part on a review of project benefits versus project costs.
- **Phase 5—Develop a plan maintenance strategy**—Under this phase, a strategy for long-term mitigation plan maintenance was created, with the following components:
  - A method for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the plan on a five-year cycle
  - A protocol for a progress report to be completed annually on the plan's accomplishments
  - A process for incorporating requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms
  - Ongoing public participation in the mitigation plan maintenance process
  - "Linkage procedures" that address potential changes in the planning partnership.
- **Phase 6—Develop the plan**—The steering committee assembled key information into a document to meet DMA requirements. The document was produced in two volumes: Volume 1 including all information that applies to the entire planning area; and Volume 2, including jurisdiction-specific information.
- **Phase 7—Implement and adopt the plan**—Once pre-adoption approval has been granted by the Washington Emergency Management Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the final adoption phase will begin. Each planning partner will be required to adopt the plan according to its formal adoption protocol.

MITIGATION GUIDING PRINCIPLE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following guided the steering committee and the planning partnership in selecting the initiatives recommended in this plan:

- **Guiding Principle**—Through partnerships, reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards in order to protect the health, safety, welfare and economy of the communities within Kittitas County.

Based on this guiding principle, the following goals were established:

1. Protect life, property and the environment.
2. Continuously build and support local capacity to enable the public to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from the impact of hazards and disasters.
3. Establish a hazard and disaster resilient economy.
4. Promote public awareness, engage public participation and enhance partnerships through education and outreach.
5. Encourage the development and implementation of long-term, cost-effective mitigation projects.

Objectives were identified that meet multiple goals, acting as a bridge between the mitigation goals and actions and helping to establish priorities. The objectives are as follows:

1. Reduce natural hazard-related risks and vulnerability to populations, critical facilities and infrastructure within the planning area.
2. Minimize the impacts of natural hazards on current and future land uses by encouraging use of incentives for hazard mitigation (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program, Community Rating System).
3. Prevent or discourage new development in hazardous areas or ensure that if building occurs in high-risk areas it is done in such a way as to minimize risk.
4. Integrate hazard mitigation policies into land use plans within the planning area.
5. Update the plan annually to integrate local hazard mitigation plans and the results of disaster- and hazard-specific planning efforts.
6. Educate the public on the risk exposure to natural hazards and ways to increase the public's capability to prepare, respond, recover and mitigate the impacts of these events.
7. Use the best available data, science and technologies to improve understanding of the location and potential impacts of natural hazards, the vulnerability of building types, and community development patterns and the measures needed to protect life safety.
8. Retrofit, purchase, or relocate structures in high hazard areas including those known to be repetitively damaged.
9. Establish a partnership among all levels of government and the business community to improve and implement methods to protect property.
10. Encourage hazard mitigation measures that result in the least adverse effect on the natural environmental and that use natural processes.

MITIGATION INITIATIVES

For the purposes of this document, mitigation initiatives are defined as activities designed to reduce or eliminate losses resulting from natural hazards. The mitigation initiatives are the key element of the hazard mitigation plan. It is through the implementation of these initiatives that the planning partners can strive to become disaster-resistant through sustainable hazard mitigation.

Although one of the driving influences for preparing this plan was grant funding eligibility, its purpose is more than just access to federal funding. It was important to the planning partnership and the steering committee to look at initiatives that will work through all phases of emergency management. Some of the initiatives outlined in this plan are not grant eligible—grant eligibility was not the focus of the selection. Rather, the focus was the initiatives' effectiveness in achieving the goals of the plan and whether they are within each jurisdiction's capabilities.

This planning process resulted in the identification 157 mitigation actions to be targeted for implementation by individual planning partners. These initiatives and their priorities can be found in Volume 2 of this plan. In addition, the steering committee and the planning partnership identified a series of countywide initiatives benefiting the whole partnership that will be implemented by pooling resources based on capability. These countywide initiatives are summarized in Table ES-1.

CONCLUSION

Full implementation of the recommendations of this plan will take time and resources. The measure of the plan's success will be the coordination and pooling of resources within the planning partnership. Keeping this coordination and communication intact will be the key to successful implementation of the plan. Teaming together to seek financial assistance at the state and federal level will be a priority to initiate projects that are dependent on alternative funding sources. This plan was built upon the effective leadership of a multi-disciplined steering committee and a process that relied heavily on public input and support. The plan will succeed for the same reasons.

TABLE ES-1.
ACTION PLAN—COUNTYWIDE MITIGATION INITIATIVES

Hazards Addressed	Lead Agency	Possible Funding Sources or Resources	Time Line[a]	Objectives
CW-1—Continue to maintain a countywide hazard mitigation plan website to house the plan and plan updates, in order to provide the public an opportunity to monitor plan implementation and progress. Each planning partner may support the initiative by including an initiative in its action plan and creating a web link to the website.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works	General Fund	Short term/ ongoing	6, 7, 9
CW-2—Leverage public outreach partnering capabilities to inform and educate the public about hazard mitigation and preparedness.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works/ All Planning Partners	General Fund	Short term/ ongoing	6, 7, 9
CW-3—Coordinate all mitigation planning and project efforts, including grant application support, to maximize all resources available to the planning partnership.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works	General Fund, FEMA mitigation grants	Short term/ ongoing	1, 7, 8, 9, 10
CW-4—Support the collection of improved data (hydrologic, geologic, topographic, volcanic, historical, etc.) to better assess risks and vulnerabilities.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works	General Fund, FEMA mitigation grants	Short term/ ongoing	6, 7, 9
CW-5—Provide coordination and technical assistance in grant application preparation that includes assistance in cost vs. benefit analysis for grant-eligible projects.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works	General Fund, FEMA mitigation grants	Short term/ ongoing	1, 7, 8, 9, 10
CW-6—Where appropriate, support retrofitting, purchase, or relocation of structures or infrastructure located in hazard-prone areas to protect structures/infrastructure from future damage, with repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss properties as priority when applicable.				
All Hazards	Al Planning Partners	FEMA mitigation grants	Long term	7, 8, 9, 10
CW-7—Continue to maintain the steering committee as a viable committee to monitor the progress of the hazard mitigation plan, provide technical assistance to planning partners and oversee the update of the plan as necessary.				
All Hazards	Kittitas County Department of Public Works	General Fund	Short term/ ongoing	5, 9