

CRS Activity 510

Progress Report on Implementation of Credited Plan

Date this Report was Prepared: October 27, 2021

Name of Community: Benton County, OR

Name of Plan: Benton County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Date of Adoption of Plan: July 19, 2016¹

5 Year CRS Expiration Date: 10/01/2021

1. How can a copy of the original plan or area analysis report be obtained:

A copy of the Benton County Multi-Jurisdiction Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (2016) is available either in person at the Benton County Sheriff's Office, or from the BCSO website:

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff/page/natural-hazards-mitigation-plan-nhmp>.

2. Describe how this evaluation report was prepared and how it was submitted to the governing body, released to the media, and made available to the public:

The 2016 Benton County NHMP was prepared in accordance with 44 CFR Part 201, and was approved by both the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and FEMA Region X. Steering committee members from the Emergency Services Division, Community Development, Public Works, and other departments collaborated to discuss the progress of each high priority action item outlined in the 2016 Benton County NHMP.

The plan was adopted by a resolution of the Benton County Board of Commissioners on 19 July 2016, and subsequently made available to the media and the public both physically at the Benton County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Division, and electronically through the BCSO website. A

¹ Note: The Benton County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) runs on a 5-year approval cycle and, therefore, expired in July 2021. Due to the need to respond to the covid pandemic and area wildfires in 2020 to 2021, Benton County was unable to provide staffing for coordination, drafting, and implementation of a revised NHMP. Benton County has submitted a grant request for funding and resources from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for help in preparing a revised NHMP. The most recent response to that request was provided via email dated August 2, 2021 from Marian Lahav, DLCD NHMP Program Coordinator, who provided the following statement: "The application was submitted over the weekend as Stephen mentioned. There are no RFIs yet; those are for a different application."

press release notifying the public of this Progress Report will go out through the Benton County Board of Commissioners Office. A copy of this report will be available both physically and electronically for any member of the public to review.

3. Provide a description of the implementation of each recommendation or action item in the action plan or area analysis report, including a statement on how the project was implemented or not implemented during the previous year:

See Attached

4. Discuss why any objectives were not reached or why implementation is behind schedule:

See Attached

5. What are the recommendations for new projects or revised recommendations?

The majority of the projects outlined in the Progress Report have transitioned into the “ongoing” phase. Many projects listed are projects that will need to be on “in progress” constantly to capture any changes in infrastructure, building code, standards, planning activities, or plan updates.

Possible additions to the NHMP action item list could be:

1. Educate the public on natural hazard risks and encourage individual and community preparedness.

Community outreach and presentations has been adversely impacted due to COVID. However, during the last year, we were able to offer several community outreach events virtually to support emergency preparedness and the threat of natural disasters.

2. Engage City, County, and allied agencies in regular training and exercises focusing on response and recovery based on hazards outlined in the NHMP.

Our monthly Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team trainings and exercises are focused on natural hazards outlined in the NHMP including flooding, fires, dam break, winter storms, and others.

Attachment: CRS Activity 510, Progress Report

Implementation Status & Discussion of Action Items
Identified in the
Benton County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016

Table A-I Benton County High Priority NHMP Actions

Item ID	Action Item
Priority Actions	
MH #1	Enhance hazard resistant construction methods (wind, winter storm, landslide, etc.) where possible to reduce damage to utilities and critical facilities. In part, this may be accomplished by encouraging electric utility providers to convert existing overhead lines to underground lines.
MH #3	Integrate the Mitigation Plan findings into planning and regulatory documents and programs including Comprehensive Plans.
MH #6	Continue to evaluate the impacts of climate change on the characteristics and frequency of natural hazards in Benton County
MH #11	Assess vulnerability, determine, and then implement appropriate mitigation measures for Alsea area bridges and access routes.
EQ #3	Seismically retrofit the historic Benton County Courthouse, a vital public building. Consider both structural and non-structural retrofit options.
FL #1	Coordinate with FEMA and state agencies to maintain and update Benton County Flood Insurance Rate Maps as necessary. Prioritize the determination of Base Flood Elevations (BFE) for all approximate Zone A areas.
FL #2	Take steps to participate, maintain, or improve Community Rating System (CRS) rating, as applicable.
FL #6	Improve remote draft site at Daisy Drive in Marys River Estates.
FL #7	Identify all structures with floors below the Base Flood Elevation and prioritize mitigation based on flood risk and type of required mitigation.
LS #1	Utilize the updated regional landslide risk maps (DOGAMI O-16-02) to identify hazard areas and collaborate with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to work on landslide risk reduction efforts; determine areas and buildings at risk to landslides and propose Comprehensive Plan and land use policies accordingly.
WF #1	Implement actions identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Source: Benton County NHMP Steering Committee (2015)

Multi-Hazard

MH #1

Ongoing: **Enhance hazard resistant construction methods where possible to reduce damage to utilities and critical facilities. In part, this may be accomplished by encouraging electric utility providers to convert existing overhead lines to underground lines.** This project is ongoing. Most new construction projects of critical infrastructure are utilizing hazard resistant construction.

MH #3

Ongoing: **Integrate the Mitigation Plan findings into planning and regulatory documents and programs including Comprehensive Plans.** This project is in progress based on the additional creation of new disaster plans such as the Mass Care/Sheltering Plan, Volunteer/Donations Management Plan,

Evacuation Plan, Joint Information Center/PIO Plan, Pet Sheltering/Rescue Plan, and many others. Each of these plans will incorporate findings from the NHMP as part of the planning process. Our current update to the Benton County Emergency Operations Plan incorporates mitigation plan findings. This plan was formally adopted by the Board of Commissioners in September of 2020.

MH #6

Ongoing: **Continue to evaluate the impacts of climate change on the characteristics and frequency of natural hazards in Benton County.** Benton County Emergency Management is keeping a catalog of changes in natural disaster patterns for the operational area including the number of times the Marys, Willamette, and Long Tom rivers reach flood stage; any wildfires that require an all-county response; the number of “red-flag warning” days; and any natural disasters that require a disaster declaration.

MH #11

Ongoing/Deferred: **Assess vulnerability, determine, and then implement appropriate mitigation measures for Alsea area bridges and access routes.** County staff, in coordination with ODOT staff, completed a seismic vulnerability assessment of the bridges located within Benton County. The goal of the study was to determine: If a bridge on a state highway fails, are there acceptable alternative routes on County roads that would be less impacted? Unfortunately, there are no suitable alternatives for any of the ODOT bridges in the Alsea area. The only ways in or out of Alsea are on state highways; therefore, an emphasis on ensuring the bridges between Alsea and the next jurisdiction receive priority points in future project selection processes is recommended.

Earthquake

EQ #3

Deferred: **Seismically retrofit the historic Benton County Courthouse, a vital public building. Consider both structural and non-structural retrofit options.** This project is being evaluated as part of the overall Justice System Improvement Plan (JSIP). The extent of any future retrofitting and/or upgrades to the Courthouse will be dependent upon the outcome of the JSIP process. An outcome is not expected until the latter part of this biennium.

Flood

FL #1

Ongoing: **Coordinate with FEMA and state agencies to maintain and update Benton County Flood Insurance Rate Maps as necessary. Prioritize the determination of Base Flood Elevations (BFE) for all approximate Zone A areas.**

North Albany Flood Map Revision: Benton County participated in the City of Albany’s Letter of Map Revision request for revision of five Flood Insurance Rate Map panels (Panel Nos. 41003C 0094G, 41003C 0111G, 41003C 0112G, 41003C 0113G, and 41003C 0114G) to correct mapping errors associated with the Willamette River and Thornton Lakes System Special Flood Hazard Areas. These corrections became effective on Dec. 9, 2016.

Countywide Revision of Approximate Zone A Flood Hazard Areas for Establishment of Base Flood Elevations: Benton County continues to search for funding sources as well as project partners in order to establish Base Flood Elevations in all areas of the county with a mapped Special Flood Hazard Area designation of approximate Zone A. There are over 300 stream miles of waterways in the county that have this designation. A designation of approximate Zone A means that, although a 1%-annual chance flood hazard has been identified, no designation of Base Flood Elevations has been provided.

Background: The Benton County Community Development Department has been told that funding for remapping the approximate Zone A areas is not fundable through state Hazard Mitigation Grant programs because there are other projects that have a higher priority. Two requests for funding this type of project were also submitted to the county Capital Improvement Projects committee but both requests were denied, each for a different reason.

Over the past 19 years, Community Development staff has continued to discuss the need for revised mapping of the approximate Zone A areas with staff at the Department of Geological & Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), STARR (an agency that FEMA contracts with to complete Flood Insurance Rate Map revisions), the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Although all four agencies are willing to help collaborate with the county on a project to create Base Flood Elevations for the approximate Zone A areas, none of them have the ability to fund such a project in its entirety.

Although it was suggested by a STARR staff member that if the county were to become a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP), additional funding might become available, county staff was later told that this is not necessary because DOGAMI is already a CTP and can fill that role if it is required.

County staff met with representatives from DOGAMI and ACOE in January 2019 and were provided information regarding an upcoming multi-hazard mapping project that would re-study the existing Zone AE areas of the Willamette River watershed to revise existing Base Flood Elevation (BFE) data for that area. However, it was also noted that this project would not be able to establish BFE data for any approximate Zone A areas. The ACOE representative at this meeting stated that he had access to a funding source that, if granted, could fund a flood study of a small stream reach. Such funding has been requested by ACOE for a section of Greasy Creek (beginning at its confluence with the Marys River and extending as far southwest as possible) and possibly for a section of the Marys River (beginning at the northern extent of the current flood study area and extending as far northwest as possible) but the funding requests were not granted.

Update #1: Although ACOE staff was able to obtain funding for an alternate small project consisting of remapping the flood hazard associated with the Luckiamute River. This project will revise boundaries of the current approximate Zone A area associated with the river as well as establish BFEs for this river section. ACOE staff completed survey work for this project in the summer of 2021 and the data is currently being analyzed so that revised modeling can be developed. Current estimates indicate that this project will be completed within 1 to 2 years.

Update #2: At a Kick-Off meeting held on June 23, 2020, FEMA Region X staff provided information about the upcoming Upper Willamette Watershed flood map revision project that is in its initial phases. According to the information provided at the meeting, Benton County's need for revised and accurate flood hazard mapping data throughout the county is great enough that the project scope is expected to extend beyond the Willamette River watershed in Benton County. A Discovery Meeting was held for this project in January 2021. The Discovery Report was issued in July 2021 and the Scoping Meeting will be held on October 28, 2021. As explained by FEMA, the timeline for this project is approximately 7 to 10 years and it is expected that the project will cover the entire Upper Willamette Watershed in Benton County and will re-evaluate all Zone AE areas (areas already mapped with BFEs) as well as incorporate as much additional evaluation of approximate Zone A areas as FEMA is able to obtain funding for. There is no guarantee yet as to how much of the approximate

Zone A areas will be able to be addressed but FEMA is aware of the county's continued need for map revision and BFE development in these areas. (The Luckiamute and Alsea watersheds will not be evaluated as part of this project.)

FL #2

Ongoing: Take steps to participate, maintain, or improve Community Rating System (CRS) rating, as applicable. Benton County continues to actively participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) and currently maintains a Class 7 rating. Meetings were held with the state National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator (Nov. 6, 2018) and the ISO CRS Senior Floodplain Specialist (Jan. 15, 2019) to review the importance and role of floodplain management in Benton County, the county's current CRS rating, and ways to improve this rating to a Class 6 or better.

A follow-up meeting was held on Feb. 13, 2019 with the Board of Commissioners, Community Development Director, and Floodplain Manager to discuss the options and ideas presented in the previous two meetings. At the follow-up meeting, it was determined that, although Benton County is not currently in a position to improve the CRS Class 7 rating to a Class 6 rating, there are opportunities for improvement of the Benton County floodplain program. Specific items identified include:

1. Pursuing acquisition of Base Flood Elevation data for the approximate Zone A areas identified on Benton County Flood Insurance Rate Maps, specifically in the vicinity of Greasy Creek, Marys River, and Muddy Creek; and
2. Adjusting current floodplain outreach efforts by (a) targeting specific groups such as realtors, insurance agents, property owners, etc.; (b) providing floodplain information several times throughout the year, rather than a yearly mailing; and (c) contracting with a flood insurance agent to provide presentations for the groups identified in (a) above.

FL #6

Complete: Improve remote draft site at Daisy Drive in Marys River Estates. Per an e-mail dated Oct. 8, 2018 from Cpt. Rich Saalsaa, Philomath Fire & Rescue Fire and Life Safety Officer, the work (identified by Cpt. Saalsaa as "better road surfaces and concrete flooring added to the pump housing") for the improvements to the draft site has been completed.

FL #7

Deferred: Identify all structures with floors below the Base Flood Elevation and prioritize mitigation based on flood risk and type of required mitigation. Funding is required to initiate this item. The project requires a complete inventory of residential and commercial buildings within 100-year and 500-year floodplains, with GIS mapping, as well as surveying each qualifying structure to determine floor elevations relative to Base Flood Elevations and completion of a FEMA elevation certificate for each structure. Benton County currently has close to 700 such structures located within mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas and only a small portion of those have elevation certificates based on the current Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Landslide

LS #1

Deferred: Utilize the updated regional landslide risk maps (DOGAMI O-16-02) to identify hazard areas and collaborate with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to work on landslide risk reduction efforts; determine areas and buildings at risk to landslides and propose

Comprehensive Plan and land use policies accordingly. Avenues for funding targeted studies and LiDAR analysis need to be identified before this project can be implemented.

Wildfire

WF #1

Ongoing: Implement actions identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This CWPP is primarily implemented by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). Currently, many of these projects within the CWPP are completed or ongoing including, but not limited to, evacuation route planning/development, fire mitigation projects (e.g. chipping), community outreach workshops, and others.