

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR RISK REDUCTION: A SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PARTNERS FOR DISASTER RESISTANCE & RESILIENCE OREGON SHOWCASE STATE

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Abstract

This paper is based upon the success of the *Partners for Disaster Resistance & Resilience: Oregon Showcase State Initiative* (hereafter known as the *Partnership*). Since 2000, the Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup (ONHW) at the University of Oregon's Community Service Center has been leading the development of the *Partnership* Initiative. The intent was to build a communication and resource network for risk reduction that would empower communities to strive for disaster resilience and sustainability. The *Partnership* fosters communication and collaboration among private and public agencies, empowers communities and organizations to determine needs, helps identify issues and resources, and develops strategies for risk reduction and preparedness. To date, the *Partnership* has built local capacity by providing communities with resources and increased communication and coordination for natural hazards planning. As a result of these planning efforts, Oregon communities submitted 16 project proposals to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's national competitive Pre-Disaster Mitigation program in 2005. Of the proposals submitted, 14 were selected for funding for a total of more than \$14.5 million in federal funding for mitigation projects this year. Additionally, through the *Partnership*, ONHW is leading the largest coordinated and collaborative pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation planning effort in the State. This planning initiative covers more than one-third of the geographic area of Oregon and nearly one-third of its counties.

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Introduction

States and jurisdictions throughout the U.S. face many natural hazards that have the potential to cause loss of life, severe disruption to essential human services, and substantial economic and property damage. Disaster events strain the ability of taxpayers and communities to pay for losses, and the ability of governmental and nonprofit relief agencies to respond. Since 1989, the nation has frequently entered periods in which losses from catastrophic natural disasters averaged about \$1 billion per week. Moreover, the dramatic increase in disaster losses is expected to continue (Mileti 1999). Many costs associated with disaster events, including social and economic disruption, are difficult to quantify but have a profound, long-term impact on communities. These events weaken the core of any community—its businesses and its population.

Often, the sole burden of developing and implementing risk reduction strategies (i.e.: mitigation planning, policies, and program implementation) falls on local jurisdictions. Despite the growing recognition of the need for long-term coordination to reduce risk from disasters, many communities continue to experience difficulty in developing and implementing hazard risk reduction plans, policies, and programs. Communities regularly suffer from a lack of technical and funding assistance, as well as insufficient coordination among public, private, and not-for-profit sectors at the regional, statewide, and local levels. Additionally, efforts to change community and individual behavior to better manage risk have proven to be a difficult “sell” to citizens, business owners, and even community decision makers. The effectiveness of risk reduction endeavors is severely limited if these efforts are not well-coordinated and funded..

Research has shown that reducing risk from natural hazards requires integration with land use planning, coordination by government, and more extensive public participation (Burby, 1998, 2002; Mileti, 1999; Platt, 1999). An integrated approach is most effectively achieved through a collaborative planning process that includes a full range of decision makers with a stake in the issues (stakeholders) (Burby, 1998, 2002; Mileti, 1999). These stakeholders include local government staffs, elected officials, business interests, property owners, and interest groups (Burby, 1998). Mileti (1999) notes that it takes more time and money to involve stakeholders, but the long-term savings compensates this investment because the resulting mitigation options are more acceptable. Similarly, Burby (1998) emphasizes that the involvement of a broad base of stakeholders builds partnerships and constituencies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’ (FEMA) points out that this more collaborative approach "goes well beyond the scope of traditional emergency management and touches areas of planning, development, economics, education, critical care, and cultural facilities." FEMA’s how-to guide suggests that operationalizing this depends upon the participation of the entire community (FEMA, 2001).

Partners for Disaster Resistance & Resilience: Oregon Showcase State (hereafter known as the *Partnership*) is based upon the foundational concepts identified in the literature. The *Partnership* engaged a broad range of organizations—from state and local government, nonprofit organizations, and citizens’ groups, to private industry. It focused on audiences who have the authority and accountability to make a difference in natural disaster safety and loss reduction. These individuals and organizations ranged from those making household and business decisions to those who affect the sustainability of entire communities and beyond -- such as community planners, local fire marshals, city managers, conservation club members, and builders/contractors. The goal in *Partnership* involvement is for organizations, agencies, and communities to enhance their capacity to reach the goals

they have set regarding loss reduction, protection of public safety, corporate citizenship, and community sustainability. This summary report serves both as a reflection on the initial three years as well as a blueprint of the vision for future sustainability of the *Partnership*. Following a brief discussion of Oregon’s policy framework and the *Partnership*’s history, “Part I – Reflection” outlines general and specific challenges and opportunities that provide the rationale behind the recommended next steps; “Part II” presents the next steps for the *Partnership*.

Part I: Reflection

Oregon’s Policy Framework and Partnership History

Background

In 1996-1997 Oregon was hit by devastating floods and landslides caused by heavy rain and melting snow, which caused several fatalities and \$280,000,000 in damage. (IHMT 1996) Following this series of events, Governor John Kitzhaber looked to state agencies to find ways to reduce the state’s vulnerability to natural hazards. Kitzhaber specifically called on the state’s Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to review the *Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 7—Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards*.

Goal 7 requires Oregon’s incorporated cities and counties to inventory natural hazards and adopt “appropriate safeguards” to limit development in hazardous areas. The Community Service Center’s Community Planning Workshop (CPW) at the University of Oregon was hired to evaluate the status of *Goal 7* and natural hazards planning in Oregon. The investigation showed that many communities experience difficulties in evaluating development proposals and implementing hazard risk reduction policies. Specifically, the CPW concluded the following:

- Most communities have not considered the cumulative impacts of development in hazardous areas.
- Many communities, particularly rural communities, suffer from a lack of technical resources. CPW identified a need for better technical assistance to local governments, business, and the general public.
- Oregon could benefit enormously from increased coordination among small businesses, government, community-based organizations, and citizens involved in natural hazards inventorying, as well as from development of effective statewide hazard mitigation policies.

In response to these findings, CPW began to work in partnership with government agencies and organizations to develop tools to strengthen the state’s risk and loss reduction efforts. The University of Oregon’s Community Service Center (CSC) established the Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup (ONHW) in 2000 specifically to work on identified natural hazards issues in Oregon.

For the past 25 years the CSC, an interdisciplinary organization at the University of Oregon, has provided planning and technical assistance to local and regional entities, to help improve the quality of life in Oregon, and help make Oregon communities more self-reliant, while at the same time affording the highest quality of graduate-level education and professional training. The role of the ONHW is to

link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the natural hazard risk reduction needs of communities and regions in Oregon, thereby providing a service to the state and learning opportunities for students. Through the CSC service-learning model, student participants gain important service and professional experience by helping resolve community and regional natural hazards issues.

In 2000, CPW and ONHW developed *Planning for Natural Hazards: Oregon Technical Resource Guide* for the DLCD (funded, in-part, by a FEMA HMGP grant). This guide provides tools that Oregon communities can use to plan for, and limit, the effects of threats posed by natural hazards. Development of this guide was a first step in addressing risk reduction and providing education to planners and policy makers in Oregon communities.

Formation of the Partnership

Through its public policy framework, Oregon has made progress toward reducing loss from natural hazards. The state's land use planning laws, building code requirements, emergency preparedness planning, hazards assessment, and other policies and programs have laid the groundwork for loss reduction and provide a sound foundation on which to build. However, efforts to change community and individual behavior toward managing risk are not well coordinated or funded, and tend to be a difficult "sell" to citizens and business owners, , thus limiting the effectiveness of disaster safety messages.

Building upon the statewide risk reduction momentum, a group of partners, including the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), Oregon Emergency Management (OEM), SAFECO Insurance Companies and ONHW, expressed interest in becoming the second *Showcase State for Natural Disaster Resistance and Resilience* in the nation, based on a model developed by the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) and tested in Rhode Island.

On December 12, 2000, the Governor signed an Executive Order making Oregon a *Showcase State*. Oregon partners developed the motto *Disaster Resistant by Design* to reflect the importance of planning in order to reach the goal of disaster resistance and resilience. A key goal of the *Partnership* was to establish disaster safety as a public value among a diverse group of partners. The next flood, earthquake, or wildfire cannot be avoided. However, Oregon is making a comprehensive and concentrated effort to reduce the effects of such natural forces on its economic, social, and environmental stability and sustainability. The *Partnership* is an important step toward statewide disaster resistance and resilience.

The current mission of the *Partnership* is:

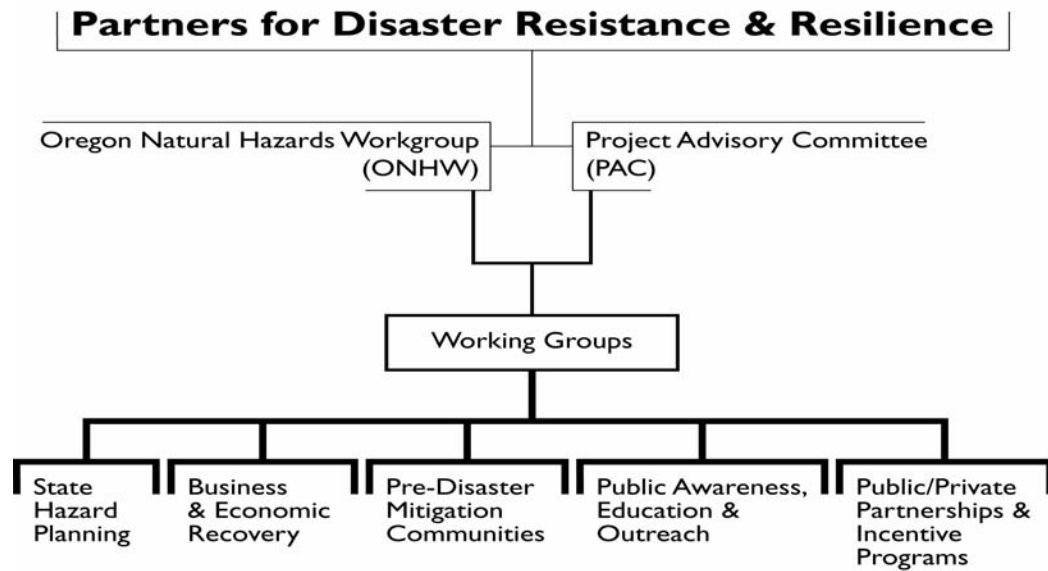
To develop and sustain partnerships that offer a comprehensive, cost-effective approach for states, communities, and organizations to bring together resources – both human and financial – to enhance community disaster safety and risk reduction statewide.

As part of the State's Interagency Hazard Mitigation Team (IHMT), DOGAMI and OEM continue to play leading roles in terms of state agency interest. Both agencies' missions include identifying natural hazards and reducing public safety

risks. SAFECO Insurance Companies and the Insurance Information Service of Oregon and Idaho (IISOI) led private sector interest in minimizing property damage and economic losses and expediting economic recovery after a disaster. The ongoing work at the University of Oregon's Community Service Center further bolstered the *Partnership's* activities. ONHW served as the lead and coordinating body to unite partners in working to increase natural disaster safety and risk reduction statewide. The goal has been to coordinate limited resources to generate activities that could not be accomplished by any one group or organization working alone. (ONHW 2002)

The *Partnership* is organized around a five-year strategic plan developed by ONHW that compartmentalizes the 14 elements of an IBHS Showcase State into five distinct working groups (WG): state hazard planning (WG1); business/economic recovery (WG2); pre-disaster mitigation communities (WG3); public awareness/education/outreach (WG4); and public/private partnerships and incentive programs (WG5). Each working group comprises various agencies and private organizations that work to meet the group's goals.

Figure 1: *The Partnership's* Organizational Framework



In addition to ONHW and working groups, the *Partnership* was guided by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), which included representatives from various stakeholder groups -- government officials, private sector representatives, and local community members. The PAC met quarterly over the first three years to guide the program.

Lessons Learned

Current events as well as research continue to demonstrate the importance of pre-disaster planning, and the crucial connection between preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Historically, and nationally, there has been a focus on emergency response and preparedness and limited attention given to holistic risk reduction (e.g.: mitigation and long-term recovery). Implementing and ultimately modifying the IBHS Showcase State model utilized in Rhode Island, has provided Oregon an opportunity to replicate the model in a state where there are dramatically different hazards, geography, politics, and demographics. Oregon's focus on mitigation is part of a paradigm shift highlighting a more holistic and coordinated statewide risk reduction strategy, thereby providing a more cost-effective approach to reducing disaster loss.

The *Partnership* offers a model for increased communication, coordination, and collaboration between diverse partners that can be used to increase the capacity of communities to reduce their risk of loss from natural hazards. At this juncture, there is a need to reflect on the *Partnership's* efforts to extract the lessons learned from the process to best determine its 'next steps', while providing other states with an insight into the process of building a more holistic and coordinated statewide risk reduction strategy. In fact, since 2000 ONHW has been involved in advising other states on how they can use elements of this model to augment their own current natural hazard mitigation work.

A Review of the Partnership's four Cs:

Communication, Coordination, Collaboration, and Capacity Building

The *Partnership* provides a comprehensive, cost-effective approach for partners to bring together resources – both human and financial – to enhance, develop, and deliver disaster safety and preparedness projects statewide. The *Partnership* fosters communication, coordination, and collaboration among private and public agencies; works with communities and organizations to determine needs, identify issues, and develop resources and ‘on the ground projects’ to build local capacity for risk reduction.

Communication

The *Partnership* has exerted tremendous effort to identify and communicate with the many different players in Oregon's risk reduction environment. Our communication efforts were multi-directional between key partners and stakeholders (e.g., state and federal agencies, local jurisdictions, insurance industry, etc.) in addition to being multi-dimensional focusing on various audiences (e.g., planners, elected officials, businesses, home owners) with various objectives (e.g., regulations, business operations, home safety). The purpose of focusing on communication was to bridge the gap between state and community, business and government, science and policy, and theory and practice. Often agencies and individuals operate in isolation and do not know what each other are doing. The first step of bridging the gap was to focus on increasing awareness about natural hazards and resources available to address them. Not until people or organizations are aware can they begin to increase their understanding, make different choices, and utilize the resources available to them, and ultimately change their behavior.

Communication about natural hazards was increased around the state by means of a newsletter that was sent to all elected officials, and the creation of a comprehensive web site about natural hazards. The *Partnership* found it difficult and very time consuming to form and sustain communication channels with as many different types of organizations/agencies as desired, specifically in the private sector, and to disseminate the overall disaster safety message, though considered important and supported by most partners. The *Partnership* was successful in communicating with the private sector when the message was focused and related to a specific activity or result.

Another communication-related issue is the fact that natural hazards are often not a priority with the majority of the public, state agencies, and businesses. Therefore, it was difficult to find ways to communicate with them. The *Partnership* learned that weaving natural hazard information into existing communication strategies is more successful than developing stand-alone awareness campaigns. For example, The *Partnership* supported a project to give people information when they obtain a building permit about ways they can retrofit their houses to make them less susceptible to earthquake damage.

Since 2000 ONHW, as the coordinating entity, has defined and redefined communication channels within the state and nationally. ONHW continues to utilize the leveraged communication strategy highlighted in the *Partnership's*

five-year strategic plan. It is important to note that communication between stakeholders is essential in order to pave the way for coordination. The better agencies and organizations are able to communicate, the better they will be at determining needs, identifying issues, resources, and ultimately developing strategies for holistic risk reduction.

Coordination

While many of the *Partnership's* efforts and projects have been recognized both within the State and nationally, funding coordination continues to be undervalued and challenging. Before the creation of the *Partnership*, one of the most significant needs in the natural hazard risk reduction arena was for a coordinating body to bring together the diverse partners involved in natural hazard risk reduction projects throughout Oregon.

As that coordinating body, ONHW was ultimately responsible for the bulk of *Partnership* activity. These activities included primary responsibility for coordinating the quarterly Project Advisory Committee meetings, the quarterly community training series, public outreach, partnership development, the Oregon Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, and other activities under each working group.

Because the *Partnership* comprises many different organizations, the coordinator must adapt to the schedules, styles, and agendas of the various players. For example, the ways that private businesses want and need to be involved greatly differ from those of state agencies or communities. Responding to these varied needs while coordinating and managing *Partnership* activities is very demanding. With the broad based funding no longer available for ONHW to continue these coordination efforts, the *Partnership* needs to look critically at the prioritized areas for activity and decide if and how other partner agencies and organizations can be involved to accomplish the long term goals.

Collaboration

Strong collaborative partnerships are necessary to achieve the goals of *The Partnership* and to ultimately reduce risk statewide and in local communities. This collaborative approach can generate activity that could not be as effectively accomplished by any single group/entity working alone. However, maintaining a true collaboration is time-consuming and requires someone to coordinate the various agencies, organizations, and private sector partners. Over the years of the *Partnership*, member agencies were hesitant to establish collaborative efforts, perhaps because of the additional time required, even though the benefits of working together were clear. The *Partnership* experienced the most success with collaboration when specific agencies had to work together to perform a specific task (e.g., product driven) that would directly benefit all agencies involved, such as joining together to write a grant.

We also found that a “champion” - someone who holds the belief that working together is important and is willing to engage in new activities – is vital to

collaboration. For example, the *Partnership* collaborated with State Farm and Safeco Insurance companies for two years on multiple projects; however, when the “champion” left, future of this collaborative relationship was in question. At the very least, it requires time and resources to establish a new relationship and build trust with the company. There is a need to institutionalize relationships to make long-term collaborations work. The task of collaboration needs to be written into job descriptions and organization goals and action items. High-level leaders need to work together so that decisions are made efficiently and support is given. Building trust among organizations/agencies is not an easy task – it takes patience, persistence, creativity, and commitment, and these require commitment of staff time and money.

One of the most successful collaborative efforts was as a result of FEMA’s Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part 201, which requires all states and communities to develop natural hazard mitigation plans. These planning and mitigation requirements are to be accomplished through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM). ONHW worked with the *Partnership*, Oregon Emergency Management (OEM), FEMA and local governments across the state to coordinate *Partnership* activities in a manner consistent with the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program’s new requirements. This effort yielded numerous successful plans, projects, and risk reduction activities throughout the state.

Capacity Building

Collaboration between the Oregon Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and the *Partnership* has helped achieve the broad goals of both programs, while increasing community capacity to reduce risk and address the requirements of the new Federal Rule. OEM, ONHW, and the *Partnership* have worked together to establish a collaborative approach to mitigation planning and activities that promote inter-governmental coordination, foster public-private partnerships, and build local capacity to develop risk reduction strategies and activities. This has led to an integrated, cost-effective and systematic approach at all levels of government and the private sector by bringing together resources – both human and financial – to prepare for and minimize natural disaster impacts.

The activities of both programs have provided measurable outcomes that serve to institutionalize disaster protection into long-range policies, procedures, programs, designs, and plans and to take immediate action in reducing costs associated with disasters. Oregon communities have become more disaster-resistant as this undertaking found ways to link various programs and partners with specific community needs. Project progress and successes were assessed through quarterly reporting methods.

Furthermore, the process aims to incorporate economic, environmental, cultural, and historical considerations into natural hazard mitigation planning while adhering to state and federal requirements for community mitigation planning. These requirements include the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (44 CFR 206), Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 7, and Senate Bill 360, among other federal and state requirements for mitigation planning. As a result of these coordinated planning efforts, Oregon

communities submitted 16 project proposals to FEMA's national competitive Pre-Disaster Mitigation program in 2005. Of the proposals submitted, 14 were selected for funding -- for potential total of more than \$14.5 million in federal funding for mitigation projects this year. Through the *Partnership*, ONHW leads the largest coordinated and collaborative pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation planning effort in the State. This planning initiative covers more than one-third of the geographic area of Oregon and nearly one-third of its counties. The following page provides an activity map for 2004 through 2004.

Local Activities

- **Community Plan Development**
 Worked with 20 jurisdictions to develop risk-reduction plans
 Clackamas County now has the first FEMA approved plan in the nation
- **Community Workshops & Trainings**
 Conducted over 35 workshops serving over 400 participants
- **Partnership & Grant Development**
 Helped 27 jurisdictions write grants for natural hazard mitigation

Statewide Activities

- Collaborative planning process linking state and local efforts
- Planning for Natural Hazards: Oregon Technical Resource Guide
- State of Oregon's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Guide
- Natural hazards resource website: www.OregonShowcase.org
- Quarterly newsletter sent to elected officials
- Technical resource CD's for communities

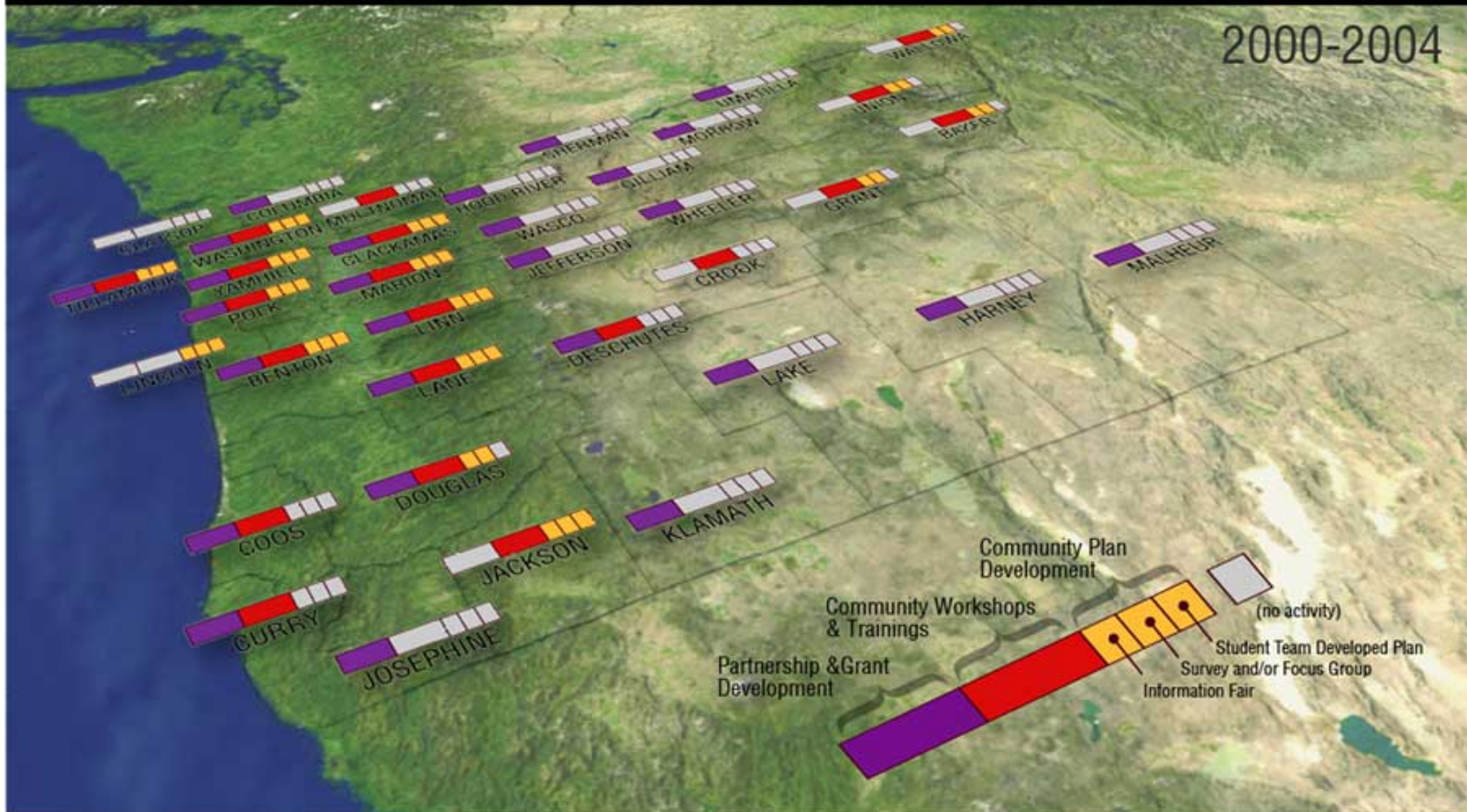
National Activities

- National Disaster Mitigation Roundtable sponsored by Congressman Earl Blumenauer
- Senior Advisor to FEMA on the development of their "How To" series on mitigation planning
- Technical assistance to 10 states regarding ONHW capacity building and planning model
- Regional Partnerships with City of Seattle and Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup



Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup

2000-2004



Specific Lessons Learned by Working Groups

Working Group 1 (WG1): State Hazard Planning

WG1 is comprised of agencies and organizations that oversee and/or implement statewide hazard planning programs such as the State Interagency Hazard Mitigation Team and the creation of the State Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (ONHW 2002).

Challenges

The most difficult aspects of WG1 have been to consistently maintain agency interest and involvement in natural hazard risk reduction efforts under the pressure of shifting priorities and shrinking budgets at partner agencies. Although state agencies recognize the need to plan for natural hazards, it is difficult for them to commit the time and resources (both human and financial) necessary to make this working group more effective and productive. Participants tended to have a myopic vision that limited the creativity and collaboration of the IHMT. They stated that it wasn't in "their job description" to increase mitigation efforts around the state.

Opportunities

This working group was successful in completing a State Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan that not only met federal criteria but also incorporated key aspects for building local capacity to develop plans and partnership. Thanks to the success of this project, agencies are excited about and committed to pursuing the activities defined in the plan. Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) continues to offer direction and vision to this WG and will be essential to its success. As exemplified by the increased engagement of this working group in the creation of the State Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, the working group has the opportunity to develop multi-agency, multi-objective, and multi-hazard projects, with specific deliverables, thereby increasing their effectiveness as a working group and a team. Under the *Partnership*, there are new grant opportunities arising for the State to seek. To sustain the *Partnership*, we need to investigate ways for each agency to appropriate \$7,500 per year out of its budget to place in a general fund to support *Partnership* communication, coordination, and collaboration efforts. If this had taken place, there would have been enough money to replace the private start-up grant (PERI funding) and provide much-needed leverage to qualify for federal funding.

Working Group 2 (WG2): Business and Economic Recovery

WG2 is composed of agencies and organizations that contribute to the business recovery and long-term economic stability of Oregon in dealing with natural hazard events (ONHW 2002).

Challenges

This working group had a difficult time organizing and completing activities because of difficulties involving and communicating with private partners. Natural hazard mitigation is not a top priority for many businesses because they do not see how it relates to their bottom line. Since few businesses were involved in the *Partnership*, it was difficult to develop a project that would attract more businesses. Some Chamber of Commerce members expressed interest in the

Partnership, but they did not follow through with participation. The challenge is to make a direct connection to business operations.

Opportunities

Over the past year, the *Partnership* has experienced an increase in requests for information and involvement from private vendors; however they have not agreed to become partners. A macro/micro approach through PDM planning activities is one strategy that could help find creative ways to involve these firms in promoting the *Partnership* while also promoting their businesses. At the macro level, the *Partnership* should focus on raising the awareness of businesses about the relationship between their bottom lines and natural hazard mitigation. Only when businesses are aware of the risk of natural disasters and the ways they can mitigate their effects will a change in behavior occur. Awareness campaigns could be run through community development corporations and other groups that deal with the economic development of the community.

At the micro level, the *Partnership* could work with a few specific non-profits or businesses in communities that are developing natural hazard mitigation plans to show them how they can reduce risk of damage from natural hazards and thus lower potential costs of recovery. These businesses would become examples for other businesses around the state. This working group will be more effective as a subset of Working Group #3, because of the need to focus efforts in a specific community.

Working Group 3 (WG3): Pre-Disaster Mitigation Communities

This Working Group is based on FEMA's Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part 201, which requires all states and communities to develop natural hazard mitigation plans. These planning and mitigation requirements for states and communities will be accomplished, in part, through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program. Working Group 3 consists of all those communities participating in the PDM program and developing a natural hazards mitigation plan (ONHW 2002).

Challenges

The most difficult aspect of WG3 is the amount of resources required to support its high level of activity. Communities need training, technical assistance, and consistent monitoring. Even though they have many resources available to them, some communities start their plan but have a hard time finishing it because other priorities arise that take precedence. . For example, communities have a difficult time committing to the training series because of high workloads and limited human resources. They might come for the first training and then do not attend others.

Opportunities

FEMA's requirement of completing local natural hazard mitigation plans prior to applying for FEMA mitigation project funds is a huge incentive for communities to develop a natural hazard mitigation plan. OEM and ONHW have been extremely successful in obtaining funding to build local capacity in developing natural hazard risk reduction plans. Additionally, as more communities successfully complete the PDM trainings, develop plans, and successfully implement mitigation projects, natural hazard awareness increases in the state. Those communities that have been through the process can become mentors to

other communities that are just beginning. This mentorship model is an effective way to build capacity within the state. Increased partnerships between communities and state agencies will be valuable when applying for grants as collaborative effort is critical in obtaining grant funding.

ONHW works with communities to identify and fund local individuals to serve as project leaders for plan development. The goal is to have the local champion or project lead work with the Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup and a local Community Organizer/or planning group. The Community Organizer is often a resident and/or government employee who has taken proactive mitigation measures in his/her own community and is able to communicate on a peer-to-peer level. In this capacity, the Community Organizer is able to illustrate that *everyone* can and should play a role in the mitigation planning process. For the past two federal fiscal years, ONHW through the *Partnership*, is leading both grant development and implementation of regional coordination of collaborative pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation planning efforts in the State. The 2006 planning initiative covers more than 1/3 of the geographic area of Oregon and nearly 1/3 of the counties, with half the grant funding going to community staff.

Working Group 4 (WG4): Public Awareness, Education, and Outreach

WG4 is comprised of agencies and organizations that can contribute to public awareness, education, and outreach efforts associated with natural hazard mitigation planning. Specifically, the group works to foster communication between various groups engaged in hazard awareness and outreach. Key activities in this WG are a natural hazards newsletter, an email listserv, and a natural hazards web site (ONHW 2002).

Challenges

As with most of the working groups, ONHW, the coordinating body of the *Partnership*, has shouldered most of the effort to maintain *Partnership* outreach and education initiatives. Some partner agencies write articles for the newsletter and informally spread the word about the *Partnership*. In addition to the amount of time communication consumes, long term funding of outreach efforts such as the newsletter and awareness campaign will continue to be a challenge.

Opportunities

To streamline outreach activities, the *Partnership* could closely align its outreach efforts with those of the state and other organizations such as OEM and Department of Land Conservation and Development. Partner agencies will need to take a more active role in education and outreach efforts. This working group will be more effective as a subset of WG #1 and #3, because of the need to focus efforts in a specific community.

Working Group 5 (WG5): Public/Private Partnerships & Incentives

WG5 works to establish new public/private partnerships, further integrate existing partners as well as develop incentive programs for natural hazard risk reduction activities (ONHW 2002).

Challenges

During the three years of the *Partnership*, ONHW was the sole organization working on partnership development, which is very time intensive. Partnership development often consisted of creating new partnerships instead of deepening

the involvement of those partnerships already established. It has been extremely difficult and frustrating to develop partnerships with key agencies only to have them dissolve because of personnel turnover. In most cases, partner involvement with the *Partnership* fluctuated depending on how much assistance/benefit the partner received. Incentive programs were very hard to develop because the *Partnership* does not have many private partner organizations that have the flexibility to offer incentives.

Opportunities

Although developing partnerships is difficult and time intensive, every year the number of partners grew. Specific projects with distinct roles for partners will help increase responsibility in the *Partnership* and will give partners tangible tasks and successes.

Incentives are one way to encourage partners to stay involved and complete natural hazard activities. The federal government is likely to continue to offer incentives to those communities that have FEMA-approved plans through allowing them to apply for greater project funding. The *Partnership* should continue to pursue private organizations for help with incentives.

Table 1: Working Group (WG) Challenges, Opportunities and Future Actions

Working Group	Challenges	Opportunities and Future Actions
1) State Hazard Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on more projects besides the State Natural Hazard Plan • Maintaining project momentum with shifting agency priorities • Securing state funding for sustaining <i>Partnership</i> coordination and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy of completing state mitigation plan on time may add to updating key aspects of the plan; develop specific projects with concrete tasks, and create action oriented meetings • Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) has continued to be a strong leader of the IHMT; use periodic meetings at OEM and IHMT to look for ways to implement state mitigation plan • Investigate ways that each agency could appropriate \$7,500 per year out of their budget to a general fund to support <i>Partnership</i> communication, coordination, and collaboration
2) Business and Economic Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty initiating activity to build momentum and gaining consistent involvement from private businesses • Lack of funding to support business economic recovery efforts • Engaging the insurance industry as a key partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased requests for information and involvement from private businesses; conduct more partnership meetings with private business groups Include business economic recovery in community mitigation strategies • Develop strategies - develop an awareness campaign that focuses on the financial benefits of planning for natural disasters.
3) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONHW dedicated large amounts of time to this working group • Sometimes difficult to maintain interest and attendance throughout the year at the quarterly trainings • Inconsistent funding schedule from FEMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdictions have successfully gone through the quarterly training series and can be called upon to provide feedback and mentor other communities; connect project lead in community who completed mitigation plan with someone new going through the process • As mitigation projects are successfully implemented, the interest in local planning may grow
4) Public Education, Awareness, and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONHW dedicated large amounts of time to this working group • Maintaining funding for the <i>Partnerships in Action</i> newsletter is difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key state agencies such as OEM and DLCD are helping to support outreach efforts; develop ways that other agencies can help with the task • Streamline outreach efforts by combining with state efforts, bolster on-line and alternative newsletter efforts
5) Public/Private Partnerships and Incentive Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very time intensive working group; the travel time and cost was substantial • Partnership development often consisted of creating new partnerships instead of further developing existing ones • Extremely difficult and frustrating to further develop partnerships due to turnover of key personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In every year of the <i>Partnership</i> the number of partners grew; hold summit of existing partners to look for ways to increase partnership coordination or to restructure involvement; revisit what each partner brings to the table • Incentives to engage will continue as FEMA continues to reward those who have developed complete plans

Part II: Next Steps

Drawing on lessons learned, the Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup hopes that *the Partnership* will find sustainable ways to evolve by wisely investing time and resources. This section of the report proposes some of next steps for the *Partnership* during this period of transition.

As the *Partnership* makes structural and programmatic changes, its purpose should remain the same-- to foster communication and collaboration among private and public agencies; work with communities and organizations to determine needs; identify issues and resources (both human and financial); and help develop strategies and build the capacity to address natural hazards and the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

Structure

The key to the *Partnership's* success is its ability to maintain a global vision of risk reduction, while executing projects with precision. To sustain this ability, the Partnership should consider these structural changes:

- **Realign working group architecture to streamline operations:** Instead of continuing with five working groups, consolidate all activity into two working groups – the state working group and the community working group. The State IHMT will continue to guide state-wide activity and a group composed of representatives of professional organizations and communities would take responsibility for the community working group.
- **Develop an Advisory Board to oversee Partnership activities:** The Advisory Board would take the place of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). Whereas the PAC consisted of approximately 20 people, the Advisory Board should consist of 5-7 key players representing the two defined working groups. Under this new structure, ONHW would still operate as the coordinating entity for the partnership, leveraging the ONHW Community Service Learning model to bridge activities and implement collaborative projects.

Strengthening the 4 Cs:

Coordination, Communication, Collaboration, and Capacity

A primary role of the *Partnership* is to link the skills, expertise, resources, and innovation of higher education, federal agencies, professional and trade organizations, and state agencies to local risk reduction strategies. Developing these linkages requires **communication, coordination, and collaboration** aimed at building local **capacity**. Following is a list of ways the Partnership can strengthen the 4 Cs.

- **Create a stronger communication network with federal partners and programs:** *Partnership* projects offer federal agencies and representatives a direct line to communities through outreach, training programs, and plan and project development. The *Partnership* should work with federal partners such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA, the US Geological Survey

(USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S Forest Service to develop a communication network.

- ***Establish a link to national organizations, associations, and professional organizations:*** The *Partnership* should create relationships with national organizations and associations to facilitate the sharing of information in both directions – from communities to the national organizations and vice versa. This would allow national organizations to better understand local perspectives on the challenges and opportunities regarding risk reduction, while local communities would gain access to national resources. Potential organization partners include: the National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, the Risk and Insurance Management Society, the Public Risk Management Association, National Emergency Managers Association (NEMA), the American Planning Association (APA), the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM), the National Firewise Communities USA Program, Small Business Development Centers at the national and regional levels, and the Institute for Business & Home Safety.
- ***Enhance its relationship with Oregon universities and continue to engage in applied research and service learning:*** the *Partnership* should develop relationships with other universities, in Oregon and nationally, to provide a critical link to regional and national university research centers and expertise, and offer professional development opportunities for students and visiting experts. The concept is to coordinate regional activities at existing or established universities or community/state organizations and to provide a direct link between service learning and risk reduction, using the University of Oregon’s Community Service Center (CSC) service learning programs as a model.

Community Assistance and Capacity Building

The *Partnership* should continue to address risk from a local community perspective and the reality that all the pieces of risk reduction, mitigation, and preparedness need to be woven into the local decision-making process and programs. The intent is to offer communities a seamless support network aimed at building their capacity to address risk reduction in a holistic and sustainable fashion. The *Partnership* can accomplish this by linking federal and state agencies, professional organizations, resources, and programs directly to communities, individuals, businesses, and organizations engaged in managing complex local risk issues. Five specific services that the *Partnership* can provide to enhance community assistance and build capacity to reduce risk have been identified. Based on the lessons learned during the first three years of the Partnership, services need to yield tangible deliverables.

- ***Regional, State & Community Needs Assessments***
 - Identify and evaluate community needs and opportunities for resource sharing to encourage and support state and local risk reduction. This includes the identification of social, political, environmental, financial, and other resource barriers and problems that impede incorporation of risk reduction policies, strategies, and programs into existing state and community programs. Assessments will be accomplished by the State’s Interagency Hazard Mitigation Team as part of the State’s Natural Hazard

Plan and/or the Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup and the University of Oregon.

- ***Communication and Coordination***
 - Place graduate level students in the defined region for one year's work at the Emergency Management offices or other agencies or organizations where they live and work in order to help improve risk reduction capacity statewide. This technical assistance component of the *Partnership* will be based upon the CSC-established Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program. Students would assist in the coordination and development of Citizen Corp, Senior Corp, and Americorp programs at the local level.
 - Continue development and enhancement of the website (www.OregonShowcase.org) as a regional information and resources clearinghouse relating to natural hazards planning, risk reduction, sustainability, and *Partnership* activities. This will allow partners and other interested parties across the region and the United States to share information and resources over the Internet.
- ***Community Plan, Policy, and Program Implementation Support***
 - Align communities with partners to build local capacity for disaster safety and risk reduction in order to develop a support network among communities and partners.
 - Give technical support to communities to develop and implement hazard risk reduction plans or policies by providing training programs, workshops, and hands-on assistance to communities.
- ***Regional Training, Work Sessions, and Capacity Building***
 - Implement existing and new training programs that benefit communities, agencies, and partners involved in natural hazard risk reduction. Leverage programs that bring in resources for environmental protection and enhancement, and which also provide hazard mitigation benefits (FEMA, USGS, EDA, Firewise, and related funding programs)
 - Training programs will improve the interface between scientists, decision makers, and citizens to facilitate informed use of technical resources, scientific information, tools, and products. (Training would utilize numerous resources including the FEMA "How-To series", Firewise, and other resources developed by ONHW and others)
- ***Resources Tools and Product Development***
 - Collaborate with public, academic, and private partners to develop and distribute multidisciplinary tools and products aimed at risk reduction.
 - Distribute resource manuals and CDs that assist communities in planning and preparing for natural hazards (e.g., *Technical Resource Guide*, *Natural Hazard Risk Reduction Plan Framework*, IBHS' *Open for Business* CD or print version, etc.).

Required Resources

Based upon the success of the current *Partnership* activity in Oregon, we believe a collaborative partnership approach and diversified funding strategy are necessary for the success of the proposed 'next steps concept'. Our hope is to continue to work with our core group of partners to develop grants and contracts to sustain future *Partnership* activities. This group, under the direction of ONHW, has secured more than \$1.8 million dollars in competitive Pre-Disaster Mitigation planning grant funds for seventeen counties under the *Partnership* umbrella. It is our intention to continue to develop a diversified funding strategy for the 'next steps concept' that seeks a financial commitment from a broad group including, but not limited to, FEMA, USGS, BLM, state partners, private foundations, and corporations.

However, maintaining funding for coordination of risk reduction continues to be a challenge. To illustrate this fact, as of October 14, 2005 Congress is proposing to provide \$50 million dollars in nationally competitive grant funds for mitigation in 2006. This represents a \$100 million dollar cut from the previous year and is only .00025% of the projected Gulf Coast response and recovery estimates (\$200 billion), yet research has shown that \$1 dollar in mitigation can yield \$10 in savings. We need to think of the disaster cycle as an equation. Every risk or vulnerability we mitigate today reduces our overall exposure by decreasing the pressure on the response side of the disaster cycle and lowering recovery costs from future events.

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