

SECTION 2 – THE PLANNING PROCESS

Due to the highly variable weather and geographic conditions, Maine has for centuries been vulnerable to many natural hazards. Usually able to resolve the problems caused by weather events, the April 1987 Flood proved overwhelming, and the State requested assistance. *The Maine Hazard Mitigation Plan* was prepared to refine mitigation techniques and to make the state eligible for federal disaster relief in 1987. The Plan was updated in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2004 and 2007.

The “Great Ice Storm of 1998” had brought representatives together from most State agencies to share the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) at Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for some twenty-eight days and nights. They were members of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and much of their experience, along with reports from the towns and counties, informed the “collective knowledge” that is still used as a “worst case scenario” for planning purposes

<i>Documentation of the Planning Process</i>	
<i>Requirement §201.4(c)(1). [The State must include a] description of the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how other agencies participated.</i>	
<i>Element</i>	<i>A. Does the plan provide a narrative description of how the new or updated plan was prepared?</i>
	<i>B. Does the new or updated plan indicate who was involved in the current planning process?</i>
	<i>C. Does the new or updated plan indicate how other agencies participated in the current planning process?</i>
	<i>D. Does the updated plan document how the planning team reviewed and analyzed each section of the plan?</i>
	<i>E. Does the updated plan indicate for each section whether or not it was revised as part of the update process?</i>

A. How the Plan was Prepared

Between 2003 and 2005, the planning staff of MEMA focused its energies on the preparation of a State Hazard Mitigation Plan and the provision of technical and planning assistance to the State’s 16 counties as they developed their plans. The work involved numerous meetings with state, county and local officials, as well as the general public. As shown in the table on the next page, the State Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA on October 26, 2004. All of the 16 county plans, as well as six local plans and one covering the University of Maine System, were approved by FEMA between November 4, 2004, and February 22, 2007.

With the State and all of the counties covered by approved plans, the State’s efforts shifted from plan preparation to public education, mapping, and partnering with other agencies to implement key strategies contained in the 2004 Plan and to begin the process of preparing changes for the 2007 State Hazard Mitigation Plan revision.

The 2010 State Hazard Mitigation Plan revision was developed utilizing input from:

- The use of a planning consultant for portions of the research and drafting effort;
- Review of the 2007 Plan;
- Review of FEMA and MEMA records related to Federal Disaster Declarations and Emergency Declarations;

- Review of MEMA records on dams;
- Review of materials, reports and data provided by other agencies;
- Review of information on agency websites;
- One-on-one meetings with State officials
- A Hazard Mitigation Team that met on a periodic basis; and
- Information obtained during preparation of the county plans. It should be noted that the Maine Emergency Management agency was heavily involved in the preparation of the County (Multi-jurisdictional) Mitigation Plans, as well as six local plans and one covering the University of Maine System, were approved by FEMA between November 4, 2004, and February 22, 2007. The status of these plans is shown in the table on the next page. MEMA drew on the experience and analysis contained in these plans. Most of these plans will have to be revised during the time period covered by this plan.

Maine Hazard Mitigation Plans: as of December, 2009

	Approval Month	Approval Year	# of Total Communities	Status	Revision Due	Comments
State Hazard Mitigation Plan	Oct. 26	2007	490 of 490 Statewide	FEMA APPROVED	Oct 10	In revision
County (Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans)						
Androscoggin	Apr 29	2005	14 of 14	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Aroostook	May 19	2005	47 of 67 plus UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2010	Includes Jan 07 – “Plan 2”
Cumberland	Dec 23	2005	27 of 27	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Franklin	Feb28	2005	20 of 21 plus UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Hancock	Jul 25	2005	37 of 37	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Kennebec	Apr 29	2005	29 of 29	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Knox	Jan 18	2005	18 of 18	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Lincoln	Aug 04	2005	19 of 19	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Oxford	Apr 15	2005	36 of 36	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Penobscot	Mar 14	2006	55 of 60 plus UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2011	
Piscataquis	Nov 30	2006	19 of 19 plus 100 UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2011	
Sagadahoc	Oct 10	2006	10 of 10 plus 1 UT	FEMA APPROVED	2011	
Somerset	Sep 12	2006	32 of 32 plus 83 UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2011	
Waldo	Nov 04	2004	26 of 26	FEMA APPROVED	2009	
Washington	Feb 22	2007	42 of 46 plus UTs	FEMA APPROVED	2012	
York	Oct 20	2005	29 of 29	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Town Hazard Mitigation Plans						
Bradley	Dec 17	2004	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
Farmington	Jan 06	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
Fort Fairfield	Sep 20	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
Greenbush	Mar 21	2006	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
Holden	Mar 25	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
Howland	Sep 28	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED		Will be joining county plan
			Total: 435 of 490			
University Plans						
UMaine System Plan	Dec	2006	7 of 7 campuses	FEMA APPROVED	2011	

B., C. Who was Involved in the Current Planning Process and How Other Agencies Participated

All pertinent organizations involved in the planning processes are listed in the summary of meetings contained in the Appendix. Unless otherwise noted in captions or footnotes, their specific contributions are detailed in the type of meeting or TELCOM described there.

All the agencies listed in the “Summary of Key Meetings” were involved and assisted in preparing the Plan by:

- Providing natural hazard information specific to their organizations
- Reviewing draft sections of the Plan and commenting
- Identifying goals and actions for the new Plan

Additionally, the MEMA website profiles both natural and human-caused hazards in the State. While there is no tally of the number of “hits” the website receives, frequent calls and emails from the public indicate that it is known and well used. To date, Most of the inquiries have focused on projects. The citizens who are most concerned about lessening the impacts of hazards tend to be on the town or county planning committees. Their names, titles and communities are found on the sign up sheets in the individual county plan appendices.

D. How the Planning Team Reviewed Each Section of the Plan

In 2007, most members of the Team expressed concern that, given their workloads and other commitments, as well as understaffing, the State’s hiring freeze and requested cuts, they would not have time to meet on a regular basis. They agreed that MEMA would draft Sections 1, 2, and 5 of the Plan and provide Team members with an electronic copy. They also agreed that MEMA should work individually with Team members and appropriate State officials to draft sections of the risk assessment (Section 3) and mitigation strategies (Section 4) related to their areas of expertise. Team members would then be given a copy of the final drafts of Sections 3 and 4 for their review and comment.

Accordingly, this is the approach that was taken in the preparation of the 2010 revision. MEMA was assisted in its efforts to meet with agencies and draft sections of the plan by a planning consultant who also helped prepare the 2007 revised plan.

E. How Changes in the Plan are Shown

Not Applicable.

Coordination among Agencies	
<i>Requirement §201.4(b): The [State] mitigation planning process should include coordination with other State agencies, appropriate Federal agencies and interested groups.</i>	
<i>Element</i>	<i>A. Does the new or updated plan describe how Federal and State agencies were involved in the current planning process?</i>
	<i>B. Does the new or updated plan describe how interested groups (e.g., businesses, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties) were involved in the current planning process?</i>
	<i>C. Does the updated plan discuss how coordination among Federal and State agencies changed since approval of the previous plan?</i>

A. How Federal and State Agencies Were Involved

As indicated in the previous discussion under Documentation of the Planning Process, State agencies were involved through their participation on the Planning Team and through individual meetings and contacts with MEMA and its consultant. Perhaps more important from a coordination standpoint is that with numerous disasters declared in the last three years, there was a great deal of coordination on mitigation issues between state and federal officials. The operation of FEMA's Joint Field Offices (JFOs) since 2007 provided excellent venues for this cooperation. The results of this coordination work included:

- **Awareness of issues:** A greater awareness of some of the issues facing Maine, such as increased flood flows resulting from upstream development in a given watershed (enhanced awareness has helped in the development of mitigation strategies);
- **Opportunities for mitigation:** A greater awareness of the need to use the 406 program for mitigation purposes;
- **New initiative:** The establishment of a series of workshops by the Maine Department of Transportation for local officials on the use of geosynthetics in road and ditch work; and
- **GIS Information:** A greater awareness of the need for more GIS-based mapping and the continued close cooperation between State agencies in the sharing of GIS data.

Federal officials were also involved through their participation in various MEMA-sponsored conferences and exercises on hazard mitigation and disaster assistance.

B. How Interested Groups Were Involved

Interested groups were involved in the preparation of county and local plans and through participation in MEMA workshops.

Outreach to businesses, non-profit organizations and professional associations such as the Maine Municipal Association and Associated General Contractors will continue. Again, more detailed maps showing vulnerable areas would be very useful documentation in this outreach. Additionally, based on conference feedback, the case study approach is the best way to showcase mitigation projects. More of these should help local businesses to thrive, and should continue to save tax dollars after hazard effects have been reduced.

C. How Coordination Has Changed Since Approval of Last Plan

Since approval of the 2007 State Hazard Mitigation Plan, coordination between State and Federal agencies has improved. Coordination has taken place at various workshops, through Federal, State and local participation in the plan review process, and through close working relationships established as a result of the State's last 10 disaster declarations.

Since completion of the 16 county plans, MEMA has placed a major emphasis on outreach to the general public as well as State and Federal agencies.

Program Integration	
<i>Requirement §201.4(b) (The State mitigation planning process should) be integrated to the extent possible with other ongoing State planning efforts as well as other FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives.</i>	
Element	A. Does the new or updated plan describe how the State mitigation planning process is integrated with other ongoing State planning efforts?
	B. Does the new or updated plan describe how the State mitigation planning process is integrated with FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives?

A. Integration with Other State Planning Efforts

Since flooding is the State’s primary hazard, most mitigation planning efforts have been integrated with those of the State Planning Office (SPO). It is the SPO that oversees the State’s Growth Management Program, Map Modernization (flood mapping) projects, the Coastal Zone Management Program, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and the Community Rating System communities.

MEMA has also worked closely with and supported the mapping efforts of the Maine Geological Survey (MGS). MEMA initially provided funds to MGS to map landslide hazards in four inland communities. Through the Joint Field Office, FEMA also funded an expansion of the demonstration program to fund inland mapping of all communities in York and Cumberland Counties that are seaward of the ancient marine limit.

B. Integration with FEMA Mitigation Programs

Since a pre-requisite of FEMA funding is the existence of approved local and state plans, the three programs that are most integrated to the plans are: pre-disaster mitigation competitive (PDM-C) grant program; the hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP); and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program. Going forward, the projects identified in the local plans will continue to be linked to the overarching goals of the State Plan, especially with regard to flooding, which is the State’s number one hazard. MEMA will also continue to explore greater use of the 406 program to implement more mitigation projects, and continue to target mitigation assistance to the areas of greatest need. MEMA, the State Planning Office, and other State agencies will also continue to work with and support FEMA’s map modernization program which, in turn, will lead to better flood plain management through better maps, education, and state support of local code enforcement officers.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The following is a partial list of some of the planning issues and challenges facing Maine. These issues have arisen from MEMA’s experience managing FEMA programs (PDM-C, HMGP, and FMA), working with the Joint Field Office, and assisting counties and municipalities with the preparation of hazard mitigation plans.

- 1. Mitigation versus resources/capabilities.** The approved mitigation plans listed on page 2 include roughly 1,500 mitigation projects. Assuming an average of about \$100,000 per project (some are much more) the total need is over \$180 million. However, resource constraints for the vast majority of the towns prevent most communities from applying. It has become clear to State officials that the 406 Program must be better utilized to meet mitigation needs.

2. **Smaller towns lack planning expertise.** Approximately 56% of Maine's 490 local jurisdictions have populations under 2,500. None are known to have the engineering, planning or other staff expertise needed to prepare nationally competitive applications for FEMA's PDM-C program. Most of the projects identified by smaller towns are road-related mitigation projects that probably would not compete well against more pressing national needs.
3. **Lack of local match.** With economic conditions worse than they were three years ago, and the existence of a State-imposed spending cap (LD 1), towns are limited in how much they can raise.
4. **County plans have raised local expectations.** When the county multi-jurisdictional plans were prepared, local officials were informed that in order to be eligible for HMGP and PDM-C funds, their participation in the planning process was required. As a result, many town officials drove many miles during evening hours to participate in the development of their county plan. They anticipated that their involvement in the development of the plan would someday help their community address its most pressing mitigation issues. Few realized the extent to which mitigation needs statewide exceed available funds (and therefore, how slim their community's opportunities for FEMA funding would be).
5. **Mapping.** There is a need to prepare detailed GIS storm inundation maps, particularly along the coast. Completion of LIDAR-based flood hazard maps are essential to providing the tools to local officials for better managing flood hazard areas.