

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, and 2004.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

<i>Requirement §201.4(c)(1)</i>	<i>[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>
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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

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 2007 State Hazard Mitigation Plan revision was developed utilizing input from:

- Review of the 2004 Plan;
- A Hazard Mitigation Team that met on a periodic basis;
- Information obtained during preparation of the county plans; and
- One-on-one meetings with State officials.

Maine Hazard Mitigation Plans: 2007 Status

	Approval Month	Approval Year	# of Total Communities	Status	Revision Due	Comments
State Hazard Mitigation Plan	Oct. 26	2004	490 of 490 Statewide	FEMA APPROVED	Oct 07	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	Preliminary revision budget drafted
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	2009	
Farmington	Jan 06	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Fort Fairfield	Sep 20	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Greenbush	Mar 21	2006	1	FEMA APPROVED	2011	
Holden	Mar 25	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
Howland	Sep 28	2005	1	FEMA APPROVED	2010	
			Total: 435 of 490			
University Plans						
UMaine System Plan			7 of 7 campuses	FEMA APPROVED	2012	

Who was Involved in the Current Planning Process and How Other Agencies Participated

All pertinent persons (including their titles and 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 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, there have been many requests for grant monies, but no comments on the planning efforts. 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 county plan appendices.

How the Planning Team Reviewed Each Section of the Plan

The Planning Team met on several occasions to review the Plan. At its meeting of May 14, 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.

COORDINATION AMONG AGENCIES

<i>Requirement §201.4(b):</i>	<i>The [State] mitigation planning process should include coordination with other State agencies, appropriate Federal agencies and interested groups.</i>
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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 three disasters declared in the first half of 2007, there was a great deal of coordination on mitigation issues between state and federal officials. The operation of FEMA’s Joint Field Office (JFO) in Scarborough in 2007 provided an excellent venue 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 workshops on hazard mitigation and disaster assistance.

How Interested Groups Were Involved

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

In the future, as resources become available, outreach to businesses and non-profit organizations will be done through their professional associations as coordination efforts continue. Again, more detailed maps showing vulnerable areas would be very useful documentation in this outreach. Additionally, it would be invaluable to have “case studies” which showcase mitigation projects that have actually helped local businesses to thrive after hazard effects have been reduced.

How Coordination Has Changed Since Approval of Last Plan

Since approval of the 2004 State Hazard Mitigation Plan, coordination between State and Federal agencies has improved. Coordination has taken place at various workshops, through Federal/State participation in the plan review process, and through close working relationships established as a result of the State’s three 2007 disaster declarations.

Between 2003 and 2005, MEMA was heavily involved in the preparation of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and the 16 county plans. Following completion of these plans, MEMA shifted its attention to outreach to the general public as well as State and Federal agencies.

PROGRAM INTEGRATION

<i>Requirement §201.4(b):</i>	<i>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>
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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 has now 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.

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 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 explore greater use of the 406 program to implement more mitigation projects, and 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 needs far exceed available funding.** 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 about \$150 million. Over the past five years, Maine received about \$1.5 million annually in HMGP funding. Assuming that no new future projects came to light, it would take about 100 years to address all of the previously identified needs! Therefore, especially in light of the three disasters declared in 2007, 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. 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).
- 4. 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.