



Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

*Planning
for a
Disaster Resistant Community*

Prepared by:

Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20™ Task Force

Okanogan County
Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
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Okanogon County
Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Section One

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Okanogon County is threatened by a number of different types of natural, technological and societal or man-made hazards. These hazards endanger the health and safety of the population of the community, jeopardize its economic vitality, and imperil the quality of its environment. Because of the importance of avoiding or minimizing the vulnerabilities to these hazards, the public and private sector interests of Okanogon County have joined together to create the Okanogon County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force to undertake a comprehensive planning process that has culminated in the publication of this document: "The Okanogon County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan."

This is a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan, and the planning effort has been conducted through the coordinated, cooperative effort of many local governments including: Omak, Pateros, Conconully, Okanogon, Tonasket, Oroville, and Riverside. Other key participants, organizations and agencies have been: Okanogon Fire Districts #5 and #6, Omak and Okanogon Fire Departments, Omak Public Works department, the American Red Cross, Okanogon Public Health, Okanogon County Planning Department, and the United States Forest Service (U.S.F.S.). The Mitigation 20/20 task force has also actively engaged the community at large in the mitigation planning process, undertaking several efforts to solicit the community's opinions and recommendations regarding mitigation needs and the topics covered in the plan.

The Okanogon County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force has also reviewed studies to identify the hazards threatening the jurisdictions of Okanogon County and to estimate the relative risks posed to the community by those hazards. This information has been used by the Task Force to prioritize its planning efforts to assess the vulnerabilities of the facilities and neighborhoods of Okanogon County to the impacts of future disasters involving those hazards. With these vulnerabilities identified, the Task Force has worked to identify, justify and prioritize specific proposals for projects and programs that will avoid or minimize these vulnerabilities.

These proposed projects and programs to reduce the impacts of future disasters are called "mitigation initiatives" in this document. Mitigation initiatives have been developed, and will continue to be developed, by the Task Force for implementation whenever the resources and opportunities to do so become available. Implementation of this plan is essentially through implementation of the mitigation initiatives included in the plan, and with each implementation effort, the Task Force will continue to help make the participating communities more resistant to the human and economic costs of future disasters.

This document details the work of the Okanogon County Task Force over the past six months to develop the planning organization, and to coordinate the mitigation initiatives that have been proposed by the participating jurisdictions and organizations.

The plan is in the process of being reviewed by the State of Washington, Emergency Management Department, after which any suggested modifications will be made to the document. After that, the plan will be submitted to FEMA for approval. At the same time this

process is taking place, the draft plan will be submitted to the governing bodies and participating jurisdictions in the county for adoption. After these processes have been completed, the entire plan will be submitted to the Okanogan County Commissioners for approval and adoption.

This plan will continue to be updated and expanded in the future to ensure it addresses changing conditions in the participating jurisdictions, experiences with disasters that do occur, and any changes in the characteristics of the hazards that threaten the involved communities. This updating process and future editions of the mitigation plan issued will also be used to continue to inform and involve the general public and other interested groups to fully participate in making the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters. Finally, assuming there is funding available, the plan will be revised to include man-made and technological hazards in the near future.

Okanogan County
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Section Two
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Introduction

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force has been established to make the population, neighborhoods, businesses and institutions of the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters. The Task Force has been undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the vulnerabilities of the community to all types of natural hazards in order to identify ways to make the communities of the planning area more resistant to their impacts. This document reports the results of that planning process for the current planning period, as indicated in the attached table.

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force derives its name from its vision for creating a disaster-resistant future for the entire community, by having:

- *“20/20 hindsight into the mistakes of the past that made the community more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters,”*
- *“20/20 insight into how the community is currently vulnerable to the impacts of disasters,”*
- *“20/20 foresight on the means to make the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters,”*
- *“In order to create a disaster-resistant community by the Year 2020.”*

Purpose

The Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and its underlying planning process are intended by the Task Force to serve many purposes. These include the following:

Provide a Methodical, Substantive Approach to Mitigation Planning

The approach utilized by the Okanogan County Task Force relies on a step-wise application of soundly-based planning concepts in a methodical process to identify vulnerabilities to future disasters and to propose the mitigation initiatives necessary to avoid or minimize those vulnerabilities. Each step in the process builds upon the previous step, so that there is a high level of assurance that the mitigation initiatives proposed by the participants have a valid basis for both their justification and priority for implementation. One key purpose of this plan is to document that process and to present its results to the community.

Enhance Public Awareness and Understanding

The Task Force is interested in finding ways to make the community as a whole more aware of the natural hazards that threaten the public health and safety, the economic vitality of businesses, and the operational capability of important facilities and institutions. The plan identifies the hazards threatening Okanogan County and provides an assessment of the relative level of risk they pose. It also details the specific vulnerabilities of Okanogan County and many of the facilities that are important to the community's daily life. The plan also includes a number of proposals of ways to avoid or minimize those vulnerabilities. This information will be very helpful to individuals that wish to understand how the community could become safer from the impacts of future disasters. This information has been made available to the public, and all task force meetings have been open to public participation. At the outset of the planning process, members of the Okanogan County Emergency Management department visited the city council meetings of every city in the county, and presented the requirements of DMA 2000, and the county's plan to undertake this project. All cities, including the public, were invited to attend and participate in this process.

Create a Decision Tool for Management

The Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan provides information needed by the managers and leaders of local government, business and industry, community associations and other key institutions and organizations to take actions to address vulnerabilities to future disasters. It also provides proposals for specific projects and programs that are needed to eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities.

These proposals, called "mitigation initiatives" in the plan have been rated according to their relative impact and cost benefit. This approach is intended to provide a decision tool for the management of participating organizations and agencies regarding why the proposed mitigation initiatives should be implemented, which should be implemented first, and the economic and public welfare benefits of doing so.

Promote Compliance with State and Federal Program Requirements

There are a number of state and federal grant programs, policies, and regulations that encourage or even mandate local government to develop and maintain a comprehensive hazard mitigation plan. This plan is specifically intended to assist the participating local governments to comply with these requirements, and to enable them to more fully and quickly respond to state and federal funding opportunities for mitigation-related projects. Because the plan defines, justifies and prioritizes mitigation initiatives that have been formulated through a technically valid hazard analysis and vulnerability assessment process, the participating organizations are better prepared to more quickly and easily develop the necessary grant application materials for seeking state and federal funding.

Assure Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination of Mitigation-Related Programming

Okanogan County has taken a multi-jurisdictional approach, that is, all cities and jurisdictions have agreed to be part of the plan, as developed by the county. A key purpose of the planning process utilized by the Okanogan County Task Force is to ensure that proposals for mitigation initiatives are reviewed and coordinated among the participating jurisdictions. In this way, there is a high level of confidence that mitigation initiatives proposed by one jurisdiction or participating organization, when implemented, will be compatible with the interests of adjacent jurisdictions and unlikely to duplicate or interfere with mitigation initiatives proposed by others. All participating jurisdictions were solicited for mitigation initiatives, consistent with the findings of the hazard and vulnerability analysis. Some jurisdictions, although given the opportunity, did not submit any mitigation initiatives, and the report reflects that accordingly.

Create Jurisdiction-Specific Hazard Mitigation Plans for Implementation

A key purpose of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is to provide each participating local jurisdiction with specific initiatives that can be adopted and implemented pursuant to its own authorities and responsibilities. Therefore, Section 7 of the plan contains local mitigation initiatives for each separate participating and contributing jurisdiction. These initiatives can be adopted and implemented for the jurisdiction's own purposes, yet with implementation that is coordinated with other organizations making up the Okanogan County Task Force. This plan is also the mechanism by which all of the agencies, organizations and groups within or representing that jurisdiction can incorporate their own technical analyses and proposed mitigation initiatives.

In this way, the format of the plan and the operational concept of the planning process ensure that proposed mitigation initiatives are coordinated and prioritized effectively among jurisdictions, using a consistent, valid planning process, while nonetheless allowing each jurisdiction to adopt only the proposed mitigation initiatives that it actually

has the authority, the responsibility, and/or the capability to implement when resources are available.

Provide a Flexible Approach to the Planning Process

The planning process used by the Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force is very flexible in meeting the analysis and documentation needs of the planning participants. The planning participants have also included data and information unique to their communities and planning capabilities. In this way, the plan assists the Task Force by utilizing a full range of information in the technical analysis and the formulation of proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into this plan.

The following sections of the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan present the detailed information to support these purposes. The plan provides a description of the mitigation-related characteristics of each participating jurisdiction, such as its land uses and population growth trends, the mitigation-related policies already in-place, identified critical facilities present in the community, and if there are properties that have been repetitively damaged by past disasters. The plan then summarizes the results of the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment process. The plan also documents the structural and non-structural mitigation initiatives proposed by the participating jurisdiction to address the identified vulnerabilities. The plan further addresses the mitigation goals and objectives established by the Task Force and the actions to be taken to maintain, expand and refine the Okanogan County local mitigation plan and the planning process. Finally, the past efforts of the Task Force to engage the entire community in the mitigation planning process are documented.

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Section Three
THE TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

Introduction

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force is made up of a number of local government representatives, other agencies, and individuals from the community and other organizations. This section describes the local jurisdictions and organizations participating in the Task Force and discusses the organizational structure used to complete the planning process.

The Okanogan County Task Force solicited, both in writing, and by means of local presentations, the involvement in the mitigation planning by each local jurisdiction. In this solicitation, the jurisdictions were encouraged to identify agencies and organizations that should represent the jurisdiction, or else represent their jurisdiction personally on the task force. Member of the Okanogan County Emergency Management team presented the many benefits to local governments from participation in the mitigation planning. All of the cities in Okanogan County were contacted, and public presentations were made to the city councils of each of these cities, both to elicit support and participation by that city and its constituents, but also to explain to that jurisdiction the “multi-jurisdictional” approach, and advise that city of its right to prepare its own natural hazard mitigation plan. Each city was also told about the requirements of DMA 2000, and that one of the criteria for future FEMA funding in the case of a presidentially declared disaster would be the preparation of an approved mitigation plan. All cities choose to join with the county in a multi-jurisdictional approach, although not all cities participated in the planning process. Notices of these presentations were made in the local newspapers and radio announcements, in order to bring the public into the process. However, in spite of these efforts, there was little participation by individuals not associated with government or other organizations.

Participating Jurisdictions and Organizations

The approach to developing the Okanogan County mitigation plan uses the Mitigation 20/20™¹ software program for local hazard mitigation plan development. With the planning approach incorporated into Mitigation 20/20™, the local government jurisdictions making up the geographic planning area have been identified and, if they decided to participate, registered as participants in the planning process. Within each of the defined jurisdictions, any involved organizations, agencies, groups, etc., were registered in the program as representatives of that jurisdiction, and were responsible for actual development of mitigation initiatives on behalf of that jurisdiction. In the case of this mitigation plan, the defined jurisdictions are the incorporated municipalities within the planning area, as well as the county itself for the unincorporated area. Participating local government agencies are registered as organizations under the appropriate

¹ Mitigation 20/20 is a trademark of emergency response planning & management, inc. and is a copy written, proprietary computer program, with all rights reserved by emergency response planning & management, inc.

jurisdiction, as are other groups, associations, districts, regions and agencies, both public and private, which serve the jurisdiction or are headquartered in it.

In the case of Okanogan County, this planning has involved fifteen jurisdictions defined as participants in the planning. These jurisdictions are named in a report in this section entitled, "Participating Jurisdictions." These jurisdictions are defined as jurisdictions by reason of the geography and demographics of the county. Not all of these jurisdictions had active agencies and organizations which participated. Participation is defined as that jurisdiction having one or more persons having attended the task force meetings consistently, and contributed to the process, although submittal of actual mitigation initiatives was not required to constitute participation.

From these fifteen jurisdictions, a total of nineteen agencies and organizations have supported the planning process. (It is intended that the number of participating organizations and groups will continue to grow in future planning cycles.) The agencies and organizations currently participating in the Okanogan County local mitigation planning process are listed in the report contained within this section entitled "Member Organizations, by Jurisdiction."

The Mitigation 20/20™ planning process allowed individuals from each agency and organization within a participating jurisdiction to review the hazard and disaster history of their area, which was researched before the task force meetings began, and then to propose mitigation actions to implement to eliminate or minimize the identified vulnerabilities. The Okanogan County Task Force has initiated the planning process documented herein by focusing first on the most important facilities and neighborhoods in the participating jurisdictions. In future planning cycles, additional facilities and neighborhoods will be included in the analysis until all of the vulnerable areas of the communities have been addressed.

Investigation of each jurisdiction's important facilities was done by another individual, under contract to the county, who contacted each jurisdiction and requested data on the identity and valuation of that jurisdiction's critical facilities.

The Task Force Organizational Structure

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force encouraged participation by all interested local jurisdictions, agencies, organizations and individuals. The organization is intended to represent a partnership between the public and private sector of the community, working together to create a disaster resistant community. The proposed mitigation initiatives developed by the Task Force and listed in this plan, when implemented, are intended to make the entire community safer from the impacts of future disasters, for the benefit of every individual, neighborhood, business and institution. Although the number of initiatives is small, they do represent addressing the key vulnerabilities identified in the county, of which wild land fire the greatest.

The Task Force was organized into a single committee. Based upon the response from all the jurisdictions, the number of people, and the short time frame allowed, it was determined that a single committee of ten to fifteen people, based on average attendance, would meet the needs of the task force. The structure, based on this size, did not require formal by-laws or operating rules. Hence, the "steering committee" was the task force.

A table listing the designated representatives of participating organizations is included in this section.

The task force represents all of the local jurisdictions and key organizations participating in the planning process, and is the group that makes the official decisions regarding the planning process. The task force had the role of approving the proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the plan and for determining the priorities for implementation of those initiatives. Since this plan is new, none of the initiatives have been implemented, and no decision as to the termination of existing initiatives has been made.

An emergency management specialist/planner coordinated the actual technical analyses and planning activities that were fundamental to development of this plan. These activities included conducting the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment processes, as well as receiving and coordinating the mitigation initiatives that were proposed by the Task Force participants for incorporation into this plan. The coordinating process undertaken by the task force constituted a "peer review" of the proposed mitigation initiatives submitted for incorporation into the plan. Through the peer review, each proposed initiative was reviewed for its consistency with the goals and objectives established for the planning process and its relationship to identified hazards and defined vulnerabilities to those hazards. The peer review incorporated into the Okanogan County planning process also strove to assure the assumptions used by the organization to develop the proposal are reasonable, that the proposal would not conflict with or duplicate other proposed initiatives, that proposals are feasible and consistent with known requirements, and that the proposal, if implemented, would not cause harm or disruption to adjacent jurisdictions.

The planning effort normally begins with developing a community profile of each participating jurisdiction in Okanogan County to document the basic characteristics of their community that are relevant to controlling the impacts of disasters, after which jurisdictions then conduct vulnerability assessments of their key facilities, systems and neighborhoods within or serving their area to define, specifically, how these may be vulnerable to the impacts of all types of disasters. Finally, the jurisdictions and their organizations use the vulnerability assessments to formulate and characterize mitigation initiatives that they could implement if the resources to do so became available. However, in the case of Okanogan County, this vulnerability study had already been conducted for the number one identified hazard, which was wildland fire. In 2000, the National Fire Plan was developed, after a landmark wildland fire season. In 2003, Congress passed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, which put into place both a system of analysis of community fire vulnerabilities, the preparation of community fire plans, and finally, funding to reduce hazardous fuels. This act effectively partnered public and private interest, as well as federal, state, and local governments to fire the wildland fire problem. Fortunately, much of this work had already been done, or was underway, when Okanogan County began its work on the 20/20 task force. Hence, there was no need to duplicate these efforts, but rather build upon existing analysis and mitigation initiatives. More on this will be discussed in the mitigation initiative section.

Once these proposed initiatives were reviewed and coordinated by the task force, they were formally approved by vote in order to incorporate them into the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. It is hoped that they will be implemented by the sponsoring organization as soon as the resources and/or opportunity to do so becomes available. Once again, some of these initiatives have already been submitted to NFP and/or Western States, which are two funding sources currently working to reduce the wildland fire hazard in local communities. The

Okanogan County Natural Hazard Task Force sought to incorporate and dovetail into the efforts of those organizations and agencies already dealing with the wildland fire hazard in the county.

Support for the task force was provided by Scott Miller of the Okanogan County Emergency Management Department, who assisted the task force by scheduling meetings, coordinating the activities of the participating organizations, and by maintaining the master database used to create this plan. A record of all task force meetings was kept, including attendance rosters. Typically, meetings were held every other Monday, starting on May 3, 2004, and concluding at the end of October. A summary list of meeting dates can be found at the end of this document.

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force has benefited from the assistance and support of its many members that serve on its membership. A table listing the members is also included in this section. This table is entitled "Task Force Membership." The group intends to continue its efforts to engage more members of the community in the planning process, including more representatives of the private sector.

It must be emphasized that, as indicated above, this plan has been developed by the Task Force through a coordinated effort of all of the local jurisdictions within Okanogan County, as well as participating federal agencies. The list of participating agencies and organizations, given as an attachment to this section of the plan, indicates that organizations with public safety, hazard mitigation, land use planning and development, and other interests have been participants in the planning. This included representatives from Law Enforcement, Public Works, and both city and county planning departments. Because of the nature of this plan, city planners were approached and personally invited to attend and participate, of which a number did. They were considered to be the most appropriate link to their respective jurisdiction, and able to be a liaison between the county natural hazard plan, and their respective city comprehensive and growth management plan(s). The planning process mandated that adjacent jurisdictions within the Okanogan County mitigation planning area consult and coordinate with each other throughout the planning process, and especially during the process to establish the goals and objectives for the plan, as well as to review proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the plan.

Current Status of Participation in the Task Force

In addition to completing the community profile and vulnerability assessments for submittal to the Task Force, the participating jurisdictions and organizations were expected to use the results of these assessments to propose needed hazard mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The current status of these activities by the participating jurisdictions and organizations is provided in the table entitled "Organization Participation Status," which is included in this section.

Once the organizations from the participating jurisdictions completed their individual analyses, the support staff entered the information provided in the Mitigation 20/20™ computer software program. The support staff served the Task Force as a method to facilitate the work of the group and the preparation of this plan. Scott Miler can be contacted at Okanogan County Emergency Management Department at 509-422-7207 if additional information about this plan is needed.

The participating jurisdictions, organizations, and individuals in the Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force have all worked diligently to complete this plan, and will continue to do so in the future to create a truly disaster resistant community for the benefit of all its citizens.

Okanogan County
Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
Section Four
OPERATING PROCEDURES

Introduction

This section of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan describes the basic procedures that were used for conducting the planning process, which are described in the Task Force's operating procedures. Due to the small size of the Task Force, actual Bylaws were not needed and not adopted.

The Task Force's Operating Procedures

The planning process undertaken by the Task Force is generally described in the operating procedures of the group, which are enclosed in this section. The process described in the procedures mainly addresses how hazard mitigation initiatives were developed and processed. These procedures involved an organizational methodology for incorporating mitigation initiatives into the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The general technical analysis process is discussed in this section.

The planning process was started with the development of the Task Force as an organization and obtaining participation from the local government jurisdictions and key organizations and individuals. The planning work conducted to develop this document relied heavily on the expertise and authorities of the participating agencies and organizations, rather than on detailed scientific or engineering studies. The Task Force is confident that the best judgment of the participating individuals, because of their role in the community, using readily available information, achieved a level of detail in the Analysis that was more than adequate for purposes of local mitigation planning. As the planning process described herein continues, more detailed and costly scientific studies of the mitigation needs of the community can be defined as initiatives for incorporation into the plan and implemented as resources become available to do so.

Goals, Analysis, and Prioritization

At the outset, the Task Force defined the goals of the planning process, as well as the specific objectives within each goal that helped to focus the planning efforts.

Conducting the needed analyses, and then formulating proposed mitigation initiatives to avoid or minimize all of the known vulnerabilities of the community to future disasters was a significant effort, and especially difficult, given only six months to complete the task before the Federal deadline. Correspondingly, some more detailed studies and analysis were put off until the plan is to be revisited when the manmade/technological hazards are to be added to the plan. When it was determined early on that the primary natural hazard in the county has been, and still is, wildland fire, the priorities of the Task Force necessary focused in this area. The

approach used by the Okanogan County Task Force was intended to use this prioritization to continue, during each planning cycle, to assess more neighborhoods and facilities in each of the jurisdictions, to develop more proposed mitigation initiatives in line with this priority, and to strive to implement previously proposed mitigation initiatives, and finally, to further engage the public and the community in the planning process. It was discovered, for example, that there was no county wide fire prevention plan, but rather two local coordinating groups to oversee the development of community fire plans all over the county. Even so, there are areas of Okanogan County that are not covered by a Local Coordinating Group, and hence, do not have, nor expect to have in the near future, a community fire plan. The result is that these communities are at great risk, and have no access to funding, not being part of the planning process dealing with the wildland fire hazard in the county. Interestingly enough, in other states, such as Idaho, virtually every county in the state has its own fire plan, covering all lands in that state. Hence, the county has been behind the efforts of local jurisdictions, including state and federal agencies, and that is why preparation of a county wide fire plan is the number one mitigation initiative. It is expected that this process will require several years of ongoing effort before the planning process could be considered to be completely finished to include each jurisdiction, and truly in maintenance and updating mode.

Hazard Identification and Risk Estimation

The Task Force has identified the natural hazards that threaten all or portions of the county, using the model provided by the Washington State HIVA (2001), and the Risk Assessment Portion of the Washington State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Where possible, specific geographic areas subject to the impacts of the identified hazards were delineated. The Task Force also used general information to estimate the relative risk of the various hazards as an additional method to focus their analysis and planning efforts. The Task Force compared the likelihood or probability that a hazard will impact an area, as well as the consequences of that impact to public health and safety, property, the economy, and the environment. This comparison of the consequences of an event with its probability of occurrence is a measure of the risk posed by that hazard to the community. The Task Force compared the estimated relative risks of the different hazards it identified to highlight which hazards should be of greatest concern during the mitigation planning process.

Depending on the participating jurisdiction, a variety of information resources regarding hazard identification and risk estimation were studied. The Task Force attempted to incorporate consideration of hazard specific maps, including flood plain delineation maps, whenever applicable, and have attempted to avail themselves of GIS-based analyses of hazard areas and the locations of critical facilities, infrastructure components and other properties located within the defined hazard areas. Everything from records at the historical society to GIS maps of wildland fire history was looked at. Much of the information comes from sources on the internet, and even personal event history was incorporated.

Estimating the relative risk of different hazards was followed by the assessment of the vulnerabilities in the likely areas of impact to the types of physical or operational impacts potentially resulting from a hazard event.

Vulnerability Assessment

The first avenue is a methodical, qualitative examination of the vulnerabilities of important facilities, systems and neighborhoods to the impacts of future disasters. For the participating jurisdictions and organizations, this is done by the individuals most familiar with the facility, system or neighborhood through a guided, objective assessment process as defined by FEMA at a Risk Assessment Workshop put on by the Washington State EMD, mitigation division, in Ellensburg, on March 30, 2004. In this workshop, the standard FEMA procedures for risk assessment were outlined, including 1)hazard identification, 2)profiling of hazard events, 3) inventorying of assets, and 4) estimation of losses. This workshop was based upon FEMA documents 386-2 (Understanding you Risks), was followed in the preparation of this plan. In addition, FEMA documents 386-3 (Developing the Mitigation Plan), was also used.

The process outlined above ranks both the hazards to which the facility, system or neighborhood is most vulnerable, as well as the consequences to the community should it be disrupted or damaged by a disaster. This process resulted in identification of specific vulnerabilities that should be addressed by specific mitigation initiatives, some of which were proposed and incorporated into this plan. As an associated process, the Task Force also reviewed past experiences with disasters to see if those events highlighted the need for specific mitigation initiatives based on the type or location of damage they caused. Again, these experiences resulted in the formulation and characterization of specific mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan.

Evaluation of Hazard Mitigation Initiatives

This process enabled the Task Force participants to highlight the most significant vulnerabilities, again to assist in prioritizing subsequent efforts to formulate and characterize specific hazard mitigation initiatives to eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities. Once the highest priorities were defined, the Task Force participants identified specific mitigation initiatives for the plan that would eliminate or minimize some of those vulnerabilities.

This procedure involves describing the initiative, relating it to one of the goals and objectives established by the Task Force, and justifying its implementation on the basis of its economic benefits and/or protection of public health and safety, as well as valuable or irreplaceable environmental or cultural resources.

In characterizing a mitigation initiative for incorporation into the Task Force's plan, it is important to recognize that the level of analysis conducted by each organization involved has been intentionally designed to be appropriate for this stage in the planning process. That is, it is the interest of the Task Force to have a satisfactory level of confidence that a proposed mitigation initiative, when it is implemented, will be cost effective, feasible to implement, acceptable to the community, and technically effective in its purpose. To do this, the analyses conducted have been based on a straightforward, streamlined approach, relying largely on the informed judgment of experienced local officials and community members. The analyses have not been

specifically designed to meet the known or anticipated requirements of any specific state or federal funding agency, due largely to the fact that such requirements can vary with the agency and type of proposal.

Hence, “benefit to cost” ratio analysis was not done for each initiative due to time and funding constraints. It is anticipated that a detailed BCA analysis would be done prior to applying for funding for a specific mitigation initiative, when or if the resources to do so become available. Therefore, at the point when the organization proposing the initiative is applying for funding from any state or federal agency, or from any other public or private funding source, that organization will then address the specific informational or analytical requirements of the funding agency.

Development of the Local Mitigation Plan

Once the above procedure was completed by the agency or organization developing the proposed mitigation initiative, the initiatives were submitted to the support staff for review and inter-jurisdictional coordination. On receipt of an initiative, using the “peer review” process incorporated into the operating procedures, the Task Force first evaluated the merits of the proposal and the validity of the judgments and assumptions that went into its characterization, as well as considers its potential for conflict with other jurisdiction’s programs or interests. The support staff also checked to make sure that the proposal was consistent with the goals and objectives, and confirmed that it would not duplicate or harm a proposal submitted by another jurisdiction or agency.

Once the support staff had reviewed and coordinated the submitted initiatives, they were forwarded to the Task Force for formal consideration regarding incorporation into the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Task Force reviewed the proposed initiatives for consistency with the goals and objectives, and confirmed they would be beneficial for the community as a whole if and when implemented. The Task Force then voted to incorporate the proposed initiatives into the strategy.

During routine updates of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, each mitigation initiative included in the plan will be evaluated to determine if it is still valid or should be removed from the plan, or whether its implementation should be a priority or deferred until a later time. This approach is considered to define the “priority for implementation” of a specific mitigation initiative, in the judgment of the Task Force, intentionally to allow for the adjustment of implementation schedules to respond to changes in the community or environmental conditions expected in the near future. The Mitigation 20/20 process utilizes four categories of “priority for implementation” of an initiative:

- “Current” meaning that the Task Force recommends that the proposing agency or organization strive to implement the initiative as a part of their normal course of business,
- “Priority for Implementation” meaning that it is recommended that the proposing organization aggressively pursue implementation of the initiative, on an expedited schedule,
- “Deferred” meaning that action for implementation of the initiative can be postponed until additional resources or time are available, or

- “Terminated” meaning that, for a variety of reasons, an initiative should be removed from the mitigation plan and no action taken for its implementation.

In this way, the Okanogan County mitigation planning process first objectively prioritizes proposed mitigation initiatives using an objective, fixed set of criteria, but has the flexibility to adjust the implementation schedule of the initiatives to respond to unique or unanticipated conditions.

Approval of the Current Edition of the Plan

Initially, the Okanogan County Multi-jurisdictional Natural Mitigation Plan is to be submitted to the governing body of each of the participating jurisdictions for review, modification if needed, and approval or adoption. After this process is completed, the plan will be submitted to the Okanogan County Commissioners for adoption by the county as a whole.

Following adoption or approval of the plan by each jurisdiction’s governing body, the respective agencies and organizations will continue to implement the plan, to expand its scope, continue its analyses, and take other such continuing action to maintain the planning process. This includes action by the Task Force to routinely incorporate new mitigation initiatives into the plan.

Nevertheless, for the Okanogan County Natural Mitigation Plan, it is anticipated that approximately every two years, a plan document such as this, either draft or approval, will be printed and submitted to the governing bodies for review and formal adoption or approval. This document represents a “snapshot” of the ongoing planning process and will be prepared as a current document for use by the Task Force, the community, and state and federal authorities. This schedule is subject to change, based upon regulatory requirements, FEMA requirements, and/or Task Force funding or available personnel.

Implementation of Approved Mitigation Initiatives

Once incorporated into the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the agency or organization proposing the initiative becomes responsible for its implementation. This may mean developing a budget for the effort, or making application to state and federal agencies for financial support for implementation. This is the approach utilized by the Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force because only the jurisdiction or organization itself has the authorities or responsibilities to implement its proposed mitigation initiatives. The current status of implementation of mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan is that only some of the community fire plan initiatives have been implemented. Some other initiatives relating to the wildland fire hazard have been submitted to various agencies for funding, but have either been rejected, or are still awaiting final decision on approval and/or funding.

In this plan implementation process, the Okanogan County Task Force will continue to monitor the implementation status of initiatives, to assign priorities for implementation and to take other such actions to support and coordinate implementation of initiative by the involved organizations.

Benefits of the Planning Process

The procedure used by the Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force is based on the following important concepts:

- A multi-organizational, multi-jurisdictional planning group establishes specific goals and objectives to address the community's vulnerabilities to all types of hazards.
- The planning procedure utilizes a logical, stepwise process of hazard identification, risk evaluation and vulnerability assessment, as well as review of past disaster events, that was consistently applied by all participants through the use of common evaluation criteria.
- The process encouraged participants to propose specific mitigation initiatives that were feasible to implement and clearly directed at reducing specific vulnerabilities to future disasters.
- Proposed mitigation initiatives were characterized in a substantive manner, suitable for this level of planning, to assure their cost effectiveness. Initiatives were also coordinated among jurisdictions through a peer review process to assure that conflicts or duplications are avoided.
- The plan will be adopted, and then periodically reviewed by the participating jurisdictions' governing bodies to ensure that the mitigation actions taken by their organizations are consistent with each community's larger vision and goals, as well as their overall unique needs and circumstances. The adoption process will include instructing the jurisdictions' agencies and organizations to continue to refine, expand and implement the plan.

Okanogan County
Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Section Five

SUMMARY OF HAZARDS AND VULNERABILITIES

Introduction

This section of the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan summarizes the results of the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment processes undertaken by the Task Force members. The intent of this section is to provide a compilation of the information gathered and the judgments made about the hazards threatening Okanogan County as a whole, and the potential vulnerability to those hazards. In this section, information relevant to the entire planning area is compiled and an overview of the analyses is provided.

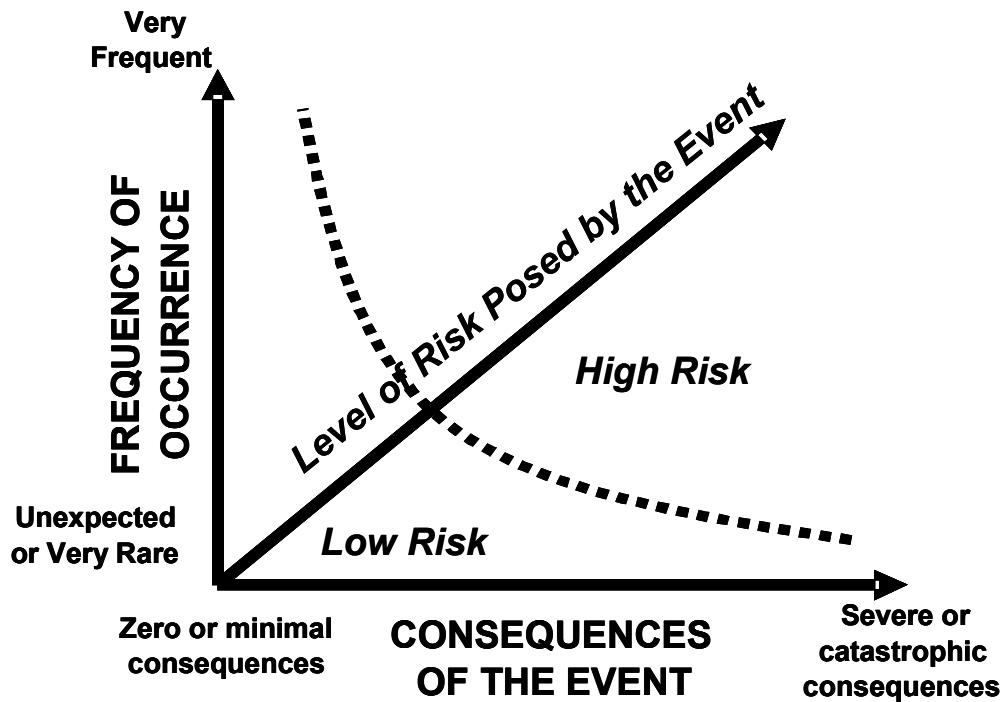
Since this plan is multi-jurisdictional, it should be noted that the priority hazards identified by the Task Force were the same in all jurisdictions, that is, wildland fire was the first priority in all participating jurisdictions, followed by winter storm, drought, and lightening. Since there was no difference in hazard identification/prioritization between jurisdictions, that is, from the larger planning area, individual hazard identification studies were not conducted.

Hazard Identification and Risk Estimation

As noted in Section 4, the process began with hazard identification. In this process, the Task Force identified the natural hazards that have the greatest potential to threaten the people and the county. These were taken from the Washington State HIVA (2001), and the Risk Assessment Data in the Washington State Hazard Mitigation Plan. These hazards included wildfire, severe winter storm (wind, lightening, high winds), drought, floods, landslides, earthquake, hail, volcano, and tsunami.

The estimate of risk is based on the judgment of the Task Force regarding the likely frequency of occurrence of the hazard event compared to its probable consequences. For purposes of this analysis, "risk" is defined as a relative measure of the probability that a hazard event will occur in comparison to the consequences or impacts of that event. That is, if a hazard event occurs frequently, and has very high consequences, then that hazard is considered to pose a very high risk to the affected communities. In comparison, if a hazard event is not expected to occur frequently, and even if it did, the consequences would be minimal, then that hazard is considered to pose a very low risk.

This relationship between frequency of occurrence and consequences of an event can be illustrated by the following graph:



This graph illustrates that some hazards can be defined as “low risk,” for they do not occur often enough and/or do not result in significant impacts even when they do. In comparison, other hazards may occur often enough and/or have sufficiently severe consequences when they do, that they must be considered “high risk.” Each of the hazards considered to be a threat to the jurisdiction can be qualitatively assessed for its probability of occurrence and its likely consequences, so that it can be indicated on the graph as falling either above or below a dotted line that can be considered to separate “high” and “low” risk hazards.

By considering the relative risk of the different hazards that threaten each participating jurisdiction, greater priority can be given to the “higher” risk hazards, in order to most effectively utilize the time and resources available for the mitigation planning process. In this way, the planning approach used for Okanogan County supports what can be termed “risk-based planning” because it facilitates the participants’ capabilities to focus on the highest risk hazards.

To do this, the Task Force derived a “relative risk score” using a qualitative process in which records, on a numeric scale, the likely frequency of occurrence, the extent of the community that would be impacted, and the likely consequences in terms of public safety, property damage, economic impacts and harm to valuable environmental resources. The numeric total of the assessments of each of these is considered in this plan to constitute the “relative risk score.”

In the process utilized in Okanogan County, all of the participating jurisdictions utilized the same numeric criteria to classify the risk that a defined hazard poses to each jurisdiction. Use of common evaluation criteria enabled the Task Force as a whole to make comparisons of the relative risk of one hazard type in relation to another, as well as to compare the total relative risk among all participating jurisdictions. In this way it was determined early on that the risks from various hazards were similar enough throughout the county as to make further individual jurisdictional hazard comparisons to be too minor for meaningful delineation.

These common risk estimation numeric factors were used by all participants in the planning are as follows:

RISK FACTOR	EVALUATION CRITERION	ASSIGNED VALUE
Area Impacted	No developed area impacted	0
	Less than 25% of developed area impacted	1
	Less than 50% of developed area impacted	2
	Less than 75% of developed area impacted	3
	Over 75% of developed area impacted	4
Probability of Occurrence	Unknown but rare occurrence	0
	Unknown but anticipate an occurrence	1
	100 years or less occurrence	2
	25 years or less occurrence	3
	Once a year or more occurrence	4
Health and Safety Consequences	No health or safety impact	0
	Few injuries/illnesses	1
	Few fatalities by many injuries/illnesses	2
	Numerous fatalities	3
Consequences to Property	No property damage	0
	Few properties destroyed or damaged	1
	Few destroyed – many damaged	2
	Few damaged – many destroyed	2
	Many properties damaged and destroyed	3
Consequences to Environmental Resources	Little or no environmental damage	0
	Resources damaged with short term recovery practical	1
	Resources damaged with long term recovery feasible	2
	Resources destroyed beyond recovery	3
Economic Consequences	No economic impact	0
	Low direct and / or low indirect costs	1
	Low direct and high indirect costs	2
	High direct and low indirect costs	2
	High direct and high indirect costs	3

In the process used in Okanogan County, a single, numeric value is selected from each of the five risk factors. The five values are then used to derive a total relative risk value for a particular hazard that is “weighted” for the probability of its occurrence. The total relative risk for a particular hazard is calculated by adding the selected numeric values for each of the “*Impact Area*,” “*Health & Safety*,” “*Property*,” “*Environment*” and “*Economy*” and multiplying this total by the numeric value selected for the “*Probability of Occurrence*,” or, in other words, by using this formula:

$$\left[\text{Area Impacted} + \text{Health and Safety Consequences} + \text{Consequences to Property} + \text{Consequences to Environmental Resources} + \text{Economic Consequences} \right] \times \text{Probability of Occurrence} = \text{Relative Risk}$$

The resulting numeric value for relative risk can vary from zero, meaning the identified hazard poses no estimated risk at all to the jurisdiction, up to a maximum of 80, which means that hazard poses a very substantial risk to the jurisdiction. The actual values selected for the

participating jurisdictions can be seen from the report entitled, "Hazard Identification", in an attachment to this section.

The "weighting" of the relative risk value by the "Probability of Occurrence" provided the Task Force with a more realistic basis to prioritize their subsequent planning work. While a postulated hazard event could result in catastrophic damages to the jurisdiction, perhaps it only has an extremely rare probability of occurrence. With this "weighted" approach, the actual risk from this hazard would have a low relative risk rating. In comparison, a hazard that occurs on a very frequent basis, say once every few years, but has lesser consequences, would result in a higher relative risk value due to its higher probability or frequency of occurrence. Therefore, local mitigation planners from the participating jurisdictions in Okanogan County have prioritized their efforts to focus on these higher risk hazards as they complete their vulnerability assessments and propose mitigation initiatives to address those vulnerabilities.

While many of these hazards are relevant to Okanogan County and the participating jurisdictions, some are not due to the geographic location and characteristics of the planning area. If in the hazard identification and risk assessment process, a specific hazard was assessed, and the relative risk estimate for that hazard is determined to be zero (meaning the hazard actually poses no identifiable risk to the jurisdiction), then that hazard was not considered further in the planning process, or in the subsequent assessments of vulnerability of the community to that hazard. Tsunami (storm surge), hurricane, and volcanic activity were not ranked as significant to the area by the Task Force, for they have been designated as posing zero risk to the specific jurisdiction.

In deriving these estimates of risk for each hazard, the participating jurisdictions have utilized any available information regarding the geographic areas that may be impacted by each identified hazard. Examples of such existing information resources that have been accessed in this manner include: FIR maps, wildland fire history maps prepared by the U.S.F.S., GIS maps provided by the Okanogan County Planning Department, Internet websites, historical records at the Okanogan County Historical society, NOAA, USGS, Washington State HIVA, Washington State Risk Assessment, Washington State Hazard Mitigation Plan, Okanogan County Emergency Management records, Department of Natural Resources, FEMA, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

It must be emphasized that in many cases, detailed information regarding the areas potentially impacted by a specific hazard, as well as its potential health and safety, property, environmental and economic impacts of that hazard, were not available. Further, was not the intent of the Task Force, nor were funding resources available, to conduct extensive new studies to obtain such information solely for the purposes of the development of this mitigation plan. Therefore, it was necessary to rely on the informed judgment of knowledgeable local officials to identify hazards and derive estimates of the risk each posed to the community. The Task Force believes that their experience with their own communities, as well as their capabilities to derive reasonable estimates of the geographic area at risk and the potential impacts of the hazard, was adequate for the purposes of this planning effort. Where the absence of hazard and risk-related data has been deemed by the jurisdiction to be a significant limitation on the effectiveness of this planning process, a proposed mitigation initiative to request funding to develop such data was incorporated into the mitigation plan by the involved jurisdiction. Overall, the "BAD" or Best Available Data method was used.

Identified Hazards for Okanogan County

For the Okanogan County mitigation planning area, the complete results of hazard identification and risk estimation process are summarized in reports entitled, "Okanogan Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment." This report describes the relative risk posed by various hazard categories to the county. The numeric criteria used by all jurisdictions for this analysis are defined above and at the bottom of each report, as well as in the text given above. In addition, the following paragraphs also provide some additional information regarding the analysis of natural hazards conducted for the development of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The highest risk hazards throughout the planning area, in descending order based on the relative risk ratings, are considered to be: 1-Wildland Fire, 2-Winter Storm, 3-Drought, 4-Lightening, 5-Riverine Flooding, and 6-High Winds associated with winter storms. See associated GIS maps.

Probability of Future Occurrence of the Identified Hazards

In the planning approach, the importance of attempting to predict the probability of future occurrences of the hazards identified by the participating jurisdictions is that these predictions are, perhaps, the most influential factor in estimating the risk posed by a hazard, as explained above. In this way, the probability of the future occurrence of each identified hazard is considered to be the most important tool which enabled the Task Force to prioritize its mitigation planning efforts based on the risk posed by the hazard. For some hazards, the probability of occurrence of future events has become well known for specific locations, such as the "100 year flood plain," where by definition, a flood event has a 1% chance of occurrence. However, for many other types of disasters, such defined frequency of future occurrences is not readily available or simply cannot be determined. Nevertheless, to allow for the estimation of the risk for each hazard, the representatives of the participating jurisdictions made their best estimate of the probability of the occurrence of each identified hazard. These estimates are given in the report, "Hazards Identified" which is included in an attachment to this section. The column on this report entitled "Probability of Occurrence" provides this information, and the numeric criteria utilized are explained both above in this text.

Recent Disaster Events

An important indication of the hazards threatening the community is the actual occurrence of disaster events, and the level of impact they have on the community. Assessment of past disasters can also be very informative regarding the types, locations, or scope of mitigation initiatives that would be needed to prevent similar damages from future events of the same type.

Since the year 2000, and every year following, Okanogan County, along with other counties in North Central Washington, has been plagued with wildland fires, which have destroyed tens of thousands of acres of forest and other property. The GIS maps of the ten year history of wildland fires shows that is not one area of the county which has not been affected by this. On any given week during the height of the fire season, there have been hundreds of fires started, of which the U.S.F.S., DNR, and local fire districts respond to. Only the largest fires every make the news, but, the numbers of fires is almost overwhelming. Since the passage of the Healthy Forest Initiative, at the Federal level, many steps have been taken to begin to address this hazard. However, the threat of major devastation is prevalent in Okanogan County today. Every

year several thousand firefighters are brought in to the county, along with local resources, to fight the fires that inevitably come. It is no surprise that wildland fire is the number one hazard countywide.

The Task Force assessed as many past disaster events as feasible with the resources available for the planning process. Each of the participating jurisdictions has attempted to gather information regarding the costs of past disaster events for the last ten years to support preparation of this plan. For the wildland fire history, even the last five years provides convincing evidence of this major hazard.

The costs given in the report, "Hazard Events," are a sum of the estimated: 1] direct damage costs to the jurisdiction, i.e., the costs for structural damage, 2] the indirect costs caused by the event, i.e., the costs of lost wages, 3] costs for local emergency response operations, and 4] local disaster recovery costs. In order to facilitate a uniform basis for reporting costs, all of the participating jurisdictions use a common definition of economic costs of the event, as follows:

<i>Type of Cost</i>	<i>Definition of Cost</i>
Direct Damage	The total estimated costs for physical damages to structures and systems occurring in the jurisdiction. (For example, damaged homes, downed power lines, damaged roads, etc.)
Indirect Damage	The total estimated costs for non-physical damages that occurred in the jurisdiction as a result of the event. (For example, lost revenue, lost wages, etc.)
Response Costs	The total estimated costs for emergency response operations that were incurred by local agencies and organizations serving the jurisdiction during the event. Excludes costs incurred by state or federal agencies, but includes costs by local government agencies, volunteer groups, or private sector organizations incurred during emergency operations within the jurisdiction or for the jurisdiction's benefit. The time period covered by these costs is from any pre-event preparation through the completion of operations for protection of life, health and safety, and the stabilization of structural or physical damage to facilities and systems to prevent or minimize further destruction.
Recovery Costs	The total estimated direct costs for local recovery operations, excluding costs incurred by state and federal agencies, but including all estimated costs by local public and private sector agencies and organizations. The applicable time period for these costs begins with the completion of emergency response operations through completion of all public and private recovery operations. Examples of local recovery costs could be debris removal from public and private property, cleaning of contaminated structures, etc.

In many cases, information on the exact costs of disaster to local governments and other organizations in the participating jurisdictions is not readily available. Therefore, when necessary, local disaster costs have been estimated by representatives of the jurisdiction using their best estimate of the costs and/or any other reasonable source of readily available data.

Of course, one of the fundamental purposes of this plan is to reduce disaster costs for future events. The information presented in this table of the costs of recent events is considered to be a source of historical information for use in measuring the success of mitigation measures based on the level of damages experienced from similar events in the future

Land Use Trends and Potential Vulnerability

Okanogan County has a population of 39,500, and, as such, is not subject to the requirement of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The last comprehensive plan for Okanogan County, which includes studies of land use trends, and recommendations for land use planning, was completed in 1964, and was only intended to be used until 1984. Although plans are currently underway to prepare a new county comprehensive plan, it is expected to take two years to complete this process. Hence, there is no county-wide plan from which to apply the hazard information. Further, local jurisdictions, with the exception of flood plans, are similarly behind in their local comprehensive plans, which would again, through zoning and other methods, be able to address natural hazards. Only a few small studies, such as those applying to possible annexations, or areas immediately outside city boundaries, were available. It is expected that the subject of natural hazards, and mitigation, will be a major part of the upcoming process in developing the Okanogan County Comprehensive plan. However, that is in the future, and there are no other existing policies or documents which could have been of use in the preparation of the Okanogan County Mitigation Plan. Being a rural county, having a planning department in a local city is a relatively new position, and often is filled by a contract planner, or person that fills the position for several cities. Because this job wears many hats, the task of long term land use planning is pushed aside for the more immediate priorities, such as variances, water supply, and annexations.

The Task Force recognizes that its efforts, particularly to identify various hazards to the participating jurisdictions, is a key factor in guiding the careful use of land to minimize future vulnerabilities to disaster. When needed and desired by a specific jurisdiction, modifications to the plans, ordinances, codes and similar policies can be proposed as mitigation initiatives for incorporation into this plan in future revisions.

The Vulnerability Assessment Process

The Okanogan County Task Force has included a multi-layered approach to assessing the vulnerability of the participating jurisdictions to future disasters. The various vulnerability assessments were built on the identification of hazards in the community and the risk that the hazards pose to the community. Local planners will be able to use the hazard identification and risk estimation results to prioritize their future mitigation efforts, knowing the facilities and neighborhoods that most need to be assessed for their specific vulnerability.

Number and Value of Properties at Risk

The results of the jurisdiction hazard identification and risk estimation, discussed above, are used to determine which of the hazards threatening the jurisdiction. The results of this assessment process are given for all participating jurisdiction in the report, "Estimated Value of Structures at Risk, Wildland fire Hazard," which is given in an attachment to this section.

Critical Facilities

Some facilities and systems in the community are very important to the health, safety and welfare of the community. Therefore, high priority is given to assessing their vulnerabilities to future disasters and proposing mitigation initiatives to address identified vulnerabilities. For purposes of this plan, these facilities are considered to be "critical facilities," and, as a part of the planning process, the participating jurisdictions have identified selected facilities to warrant this designation as "critical." The Washington State Emergency Management Agency provided a list to us of typical critical facilities.

The participating jurisdictions have conducted vulnerability assessments for designated critical facilities. These vulnerability assessments are being utilized by the authorities responsible for these facilities to evaluate the need for proposing mitigation initiatives to address the defined vulnerabilities, if any, and include any proposed initiatives in the Okanogan County mitigation plan. A report of the critical facilities assessed is provided as an attachment to this section.

Given the large numbers of facilities that should be assessed for their vulnerabilities, the participating jurisdictions have attempted to identify and assess those of most concern, such as critical facilities. As the planning process continues, the participating jurisdictions will continue to add more facility vulnerability assessments to the database, and will consider those with highest vulnerabilities as warranting proposing of mitigation initiatives.

Summary

It must be emphasized that the fundamental reason for undertaking the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment process is to highlight vulnerabilities that need to be addressed by the development of proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the Okanogan County Natural hazard mitigation plan. Because of the numerous communities and facilities, spread out over a large area in Okanogan County, that need be assessed for their vulnerability to disasters, this component of the mitigation planning process can be expected to be continued in future updates of the plan until all necessary facilities, systems and neighborhoods have been assessed and their mitigation needs addressed.

Okanogan County

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Section Six

MITIGATION GOALS AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This section of the Okanogan County Natural Mitigation Plan describes the goals and objectives established by the Task Force, and the completed and anticipated actions for implementation and maintenance of this plan in an ongoing effort to achieve these goals.

Goals and Objectives for the Mitigation Plan

The Okanogan County Mitigation 20/20 Task Force has established a number of goals and objectives to guide its work in the development of this plan. The goals and objectives help to focus the efforts of the group in the mitigation planning effort to achieve an end result that matches the unique needs, capabilities and desires of the participating jurisdictions.

The goals and objectives selected by the Task Force for the planning process are those listed in an attachment of this section, in a report entitled “Goals and Objectives for the Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Process.” In the Mitigation 20/20 planning approach, the goals are established for both the entire planning area and all of the participating jurisdictions in a process that can be described as follows: After reviewing the initial hazard and risk assessment data, the Task Force began to formulate concise overall goals and objectives. Since the hazards were county wide, one of the first questions was whether or not the mitigation initiatives and prioritization should also be county wide.

The goals selected by the Task Force are related to the broad mitigation needs and capabilities of the communities involved, rather than addressing a specific hazard type or category. Therefore, the Okanogan County mitigation goals and objectives, by definition, are “multi-hazard” in scope and can be described as statements of the desired “mitigation-related capabilities” that will be present in each participating jurisdiction in the future as the goals are achieved. These county wide mitigation goals are consistent with and based upon the Washington State Hazard Mitigation Plan goals (2004). The five state goals are 1) protect life, 2) protect property, 3) promote a sustainable economy, 4) protect the environment, and 5) increase public preparedness for disasters.

Using a “Goal-based” Planning Process

The goals established by the Okanogan County Task Force are considered to be broad, general guidance that define the long-term direction of the planning. As indicated in the list of goals and objectives attached to this section, each goal statement has one or more objectives that provide a more specific framework for actions to be taken by the Task Force and its participants. The objectives define actions or results that can be placed into measurable terms by the Task Force, and translated into specific assignments by the jurisdictions for implementation.

The objectives selected by the Task Force were intended to create a specific framework for guiding the development of proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the plan. Whenever feasible, the planning participants have attempted to associate each proposed

mitigation initiative with an objective statement the initiative is intended to achieve. By associating a mitigation initiative with a specific objective, the proposed initiative is also, of course, intended to help achieve the broader goal statement to which the objective corresponds. Proposing mitigation initiatives that are consistent with the selected objectives is a principal mechanism for the Task Force participants to achieve the stated goals of the mitigation planning program.

As the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is reviewed and updated by the Task Force, the goals and supporting objective statements are also reviewed to ensure they are still applicable to meeting the unique needs, interests and desires of the community.

Addressing Known Risks and Vulnerabilities

In addition to developing proposed mitigation initiatives to achieve the established goals and objectives, an important emphasis of the Okanogan County Task Force was to include proposed mitigation initiatives in its plan that would address known vulnerabilities of important facilities and communities to the impacts of future natural disasters. Basically, because the goals and objectives have been established to make the communities of the planning area more “disaster resistant” by reducing known vulnerabilities to future disasters, it was important in the plan to document those initiatives that are intended to address identified vulnerabilities of facilities, systems and neighborhoods.

A logical consequence of having determined the hazards and amount of risk from each to the participating jurisdictions, the involved agencies and organizations have the information at hand with which to propose initiatives addressing both known vulnerabilities and established goals.

Mitigation Planning for Critical Facilities

Another indication of the stepwise approach to goal-based mitigation planning in Okanogan County is that critical facilities in the participating jurisdictions have been identified and, when applicable, their vulnerabilities to future disasters assessed. A number of mitigation initiatives have been proposed that are intended to benefit these designated critical facilities and these are listed, where applicable

Modification to Other Policies, Plans and Programs

Finally, it is the intention of the Task Force to continue to improve the existing policy framework for the participating jurisdictions so that they will be able to more effectively manage the community’s vulnerabilities to future disasters. Any shortfalls in the number of policies addressing identified higher risk hazards can be addressed by implementing non-structural initiatives intended to modify or enhance current plans, policies and programs. This plan enables organizations proposing initiatives to associate them, if applicable, with the plans or policies to be changed. The proposed modifications to the listed policies and programs are additional documentation of the Task Force’s efforts to achieve its established goals and objectives

Plan Implementation and Plan Maintenance Procedures

This portion of Section six discusses the manner in which the Okanogan County Natural Mitigation Plan will continue to be implemented and maintained over time. “Plan implementation” is considered as the implementation of the proposed mitigation initiatives now

included in the plan. “Plan maintenance” is considered to be the process by which the Okanogan County Task Force will continue to update, improve and expand the mitigation planning process. It also includes the technical analyses needed for the process to propose more mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the plan. “Plan maintenance” further includes the group’s activities to monitor implementation of the plan, to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented mitigation initiatives, and to continually strive to engage the community in the planning process.

Plan Implementation Responsibility and Schedules

As noted above, implementation of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is basically through implementation of the approved mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan. As these initiatives are implemented over the years, the facilities, systems and neighborhoods of the participating jurisdictions will become less vulnerable to the impacts of future disasters, and the communities of Okanogan County will become increasingly more disaster resistant.

Pursuant to the planning process, the individual agencies and organizations that originally proposed the mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan are responsible for their implementation when the resources or opportunity to do so become available. As a practical matter, in most cases, this means that the proposing agencies identify the most feasible funding source (e.g., a state or federal grant program, the agency’s budgetary process, etc.), make application to the funding source or otherwise allocate funds, and, upon receipt of funding, take the necessary steps to actually implement the project, whatever that may entail (e.g., design, permitting and construction, etc.). In other cases, this may mean that, should a unique opportunity for implementation of an initiative arise, e.g., upon receipt of unexpected funds, immediately after a disaster event, etc., the agency can proceed with implementation of the initiative.

While the actual responsibility for implementation of a mitigation initiative remains the responsibility of the sponsoring agency, the Task Force as a multi-jurisdictional, cooperative organization has a substantial involvement in plan implementation, and under the current approach, can and will assist with the coordinating and scheduling of the implementation of approved mitigation initiatives.

As a part of the planning process, on an annual basis, approved mitigation initiatives included in the plan will be re-evaluated as to their continuing value and the need for their implementation. The purpose of this re-evaluation is to assure that a proposed mitigation initiative remains a valuable component of the plan, and whether any unique or unanticipated conditions warrant extra efforts to implement the initiative.

Four categories of priority for implementation are to be assigned by the Task Force. These are “current,” meaning that the sponsoring agency or organization should seek to implement the initiative as a part of their normal operations or activity scheduling. “Priority for implementation” means that, due to unique circumstances, the implementation of a mitigation initiative should be moved forward. (For example, assume that the proposed mitigation initiatives included in the plan with the highest priority score are for flood-related vulnerabilities, because this reflects the most normal concern for the planning area. However, also assume that long-range weather forecasts are for drought conditions, not flooding. This circumstance may warrant attempting to implement any drought-related mitigation initiatives included in the plan as soon as feasible.

Therefore, in this case, drought-related initiatives would be given the classification “priority for implementation” until drought conditions have passed.)

The third priority for implementation classification with the current approach is “deferred” implementation. This means that the initiative is still a valid proposal, but that under present circumstances, its implement should be deferred until a future date, allowing the participating agencies to focus on higher priority initiatives. The fourth and final classification is “terminated,” which means that, upon re-evaluation, the Task Force believes the initiate to not longer be needed or beneficial, and that it should be removed from the Okanogan County plan.

For approved mitigation initiatives that are considered “current” priority or “priority for implementation,” the Task Force assigns a recommended implementation schedule, which is intended to encourage the organization to attempt to meet that schedule. For the upcoming planning cycle, this schedule is given in a report entitled, “Initiative Implementation Schedule, by Jurisdiction,” which is included in this section. As appropriate, it is planned that the organizations sponsoring the listed initiatives will attempt to seek the resources or opportunities for implementation on the schedule listed here. As such, this schedule constitutes the recommended timeline for implementation of the Okanogan County Local Mitigation Plan.

Plan Maintenance and Monitoring of Plan Implementation

Mitigation planning is a dynamic process that must be continually adjusted to account for changes in the community and to further refine the information, judgments and proposals documented in the local mitigation plan. The process used by the Okanogan County Task Force to maintain the plan consists primarily of four functions.

The first is to continue to expand and improve the mitigation plan by accomplishing additional technical analyses, such as vulnerability assessments, evaluation of the policy framework of the participating jurisdictions, and post-event analysis of disasters, etc. The second is to continue to expand participation in the planning process by soliciting the involvement of additional agencies from the participating jurisdictions, by implementing public information programs, and by inviting expanded participation by the private sector. The third is to routinely monitor implementation of the initiatives in the plan until each is completed and in-place, and to assess their actual effectiveness following the next relevant disaster event. The fourth is to issue an updated plan document for use by the participating jurisdictions, to inform the community, and when appropriate for submittal to state and federal agencies for approval pursuant to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. This portion of Section 7 of the plan describes these four activities by the Task Force to maintain the Okanogan County Local Mitigation Plan.

The technical analyses conducted by the participating jurisdictions will be an ongoing effort to continually assess the hazards threatening the community, the vulnerabilities to those hazards, and the adequacy of the participating jurisdictions’ policy and program framework to control those vulnerabilities. When indicated, the technical analysis also includes formulating proposed mitigation initiatives to eliminate or minimize the identified vulnerabilities. Therefore, the extent to which all of the vulnerabilities of the important facilities and neighborhoods in the planning area have been identified is a direct indicator of the mitigation planning remaining to be done. Participating jurisdictions have completed part of their vulnerability assessments based on the availability of jurisdiction staff and available time, while giving priority to assessing critical facilities. In future planning cycles, the Task Force will continue to assess the vulnerabilities of facilities and neighborhoods, emphasizing finishing vulnerability assessments of critical facilities. Vulnerability assessments are fundamental to identifying needed mitigation initiatives to propose

for incorporation into the plan, and as this process is continued, additional mitigation initiatives will be proposed for incorporation into the plan.

Another technical analysis important to maintenance of the plan is the expanded and refined evaluation of the policy and program framework of the participating jurisdictions and the adequacy of this framework to control the vulnerabilities of the community. The emphasis of the plan maintenance activity during the upcoming planning cycle will be to evaluate the effectiveness of hazard specific local ordinances and the adequacy of their enforcement. The Task Force will emphasize continued or expanded analysis of the policy and program framework of local jurisdictions.

The second type of activity to continue to maintain the Okanogan County Mitigation plan will be to continue to expand participation in the Task Force and the mitigation planning process. Gaining additional participation in the planning is also part of the public information and community outreach component of the county approach to plan development.

The third category of plan maintenance activities that will be undertaken by the Okanogan County Task Force will be to monitor the implementation of mitigation initiatives by the participating jurisdictions and their agencies. The Task Force will support the efforts of local jurisdictions to fund the initiative, to conduct required studies, and to obtain any needed permits, as well as to complete design, needed studies and purchasing or construction.

As a part of monitoring the implementation of mitigation initiatives, following a disaster and as a part of the post-event analysis that the Task Force will conduct, the effectiveness of completed mitigation initiatives, or any pre-existing mitigation initiatives, in reducing the human and economic impacts of the event can be estimated. As time passes and disaster events occur, this will enable the Task Force to accumulate a database of "mitigation success stories" with regard to the value of the property losses avoided and the number of fatalities, injuries or illnesses prevented.

Monitoring of the effectiveness of plan implementation and maintenance also involves assessing the effectiveness of the mitigation goals and objectives established for the planning process. As noted above, the Task Force established general goals and a number of specific objectives to guide the participants in the mitigation planning process, and these are given in the attached report, "Goals and Objectives for the Local Planning Process." The Task Force's attempts to address the established objectives, with the intent of achieving the associated mitigation goals for the community, is a key measure of the effectiveness of the continuing plan maintenance and plan implementation.

As these initiatives are implemented, and monitored for their effectiveness in future disasters, the Task Force will be able to determine the overall success of their mitigation planning effort. In future planning cycles, these goals will be reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure they are still relevant to the unique needs of the community and continue to address current and expected conditions.

The fourth category of plan maintenance activities is to actually incorporate the results of all technical analyses, including the development of new mitigation initiatives, into the plan and to publish another, updated edition of the Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan as needed or required.

Plan Updating, Review, and Approval

As noted in a report attached to this section entitled “Upcoming Planning Cycle Schedules”, the new planning period is to begin on June, 2005. In addition to the start date for the planning cycle, this planning timeline also documents the intended deadlines for completion of key activities. The planned date for release of the next edition of the Okanogon County Mitigation Plan is intended to be June 2006.

At the conclusion of the planning cycle, a draft of the updated mitigation plan will be prepared and distributed for public comment and input. A draft will be given to all jurisdictions, as well as placing the draft in a public in key public libraries, and advertising in local newspapers. Each update will then be provided to appropriate state and federal agencies for review, comment and/or approval by June, 2006.

Formal plan approval by the governing bodies of the participating jurisdictions will be next planned for approximately three months, after issuance of an updated plan document, with county approval two months after approval of last jurisdiction.

Implementation through Existing Plans and Programs

One of the methods to most effectively implement the Okanogon County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is to propose and implement initiatives that will modify other community plans, policies and programs. Particular highlights of the Task Force’s efforts to implement the mitigation plan through other plans and programs are shown in the interface and coordination with ongoing Community Fire Planning and Healthy Forest Initiative Act programs. A county-wide fire plan would seamlessly integrate with those plans already in place, as well as address those areas not presently covered by a fire plan. In this way, those unprotected areas would be eligible for NFP funding for fuels reduction programs.

Continued Public Involvement

The Task Force will continue efforts to develop and implement a year-round program to engage the community in the mitigation planning process and to provide them with mitigation-related information and education. These efforts will be to continually invite public comments and recommendations regarding the mitigation goals for the community, the priorities for the planning, and the unique needs of each community for mitigation-related public information.

Future activities of the Task Force will be to continue to engage the community in the planning process through the presentation of a specific topic or program related to or relevant for, hazard mitigation.

The Next Planning Cycles

As given in this section, the Okanogon County Task Force has established a schedule and procedure for both plan implementation and plan maintenance that is expected to be very helpful in improving and expanding the mitigation planning process. Initially, the planning efforts by the jurisdictions will seek to build on the analyses and proposals included in this edition of the mitigation plan, primarily by completing more vulnerability assessments, evaluations of plans and programs, and proposing additional mitigation initiatives. Eventually, after a number of planning cycles with ongoing new analyses, all important facilities and vulnerable neighborhoods within all of the participating jurisdictions will have been evaluated and the

mitigation planning effort can enter more of a normal maintenance and implementation mode. During these continuing efforts, the Task Force will prioritize its efforts towards completing the assessment of critical facilities, as well as focusing on facilities and neighborhoods in known hazard areas.

In addition to these activities for plan maintenance, the Task Force has established a recommended schedule for implementation of the proposed priority initiatives included in this edition of the plan. It is expected that the agencies and organizations that sponsored these initiatives for the plan will, during the next planning cycles, take advantage of timely opportunities and available resources to implement them on the desired schedule, if it is possible to do so.

The Okanogan County Local Mitigation Plan is a dynamic document, reflecting a continuing and expanding planning process. The efforts of the Task Force will continue into the future, striving to make all of the jurisdictions of Okanogan County truly disaster resistant communities.

Okanogan County

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

Section Seven

COMPILATION OF PROPOSED MITIGATION INITIATIVES

This section of Okanogan County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan contains the compilation of the proposed mitigation initiatives that have been formulated as the result of the planning efforts by the Task Force. These mitigation initiatives form the fundamental mechanism for the implementation of the local mitigation plan. That is, when the resources and opportunity to do so become available, the sponsoring organization implements an initiative to address the vulnerabilities of the facilities, systems and neighborhoods that have been identified through the mitigation planning process. After each successful implementation of an initiative, the benefited community will become that much more resistant to the impacts of future disasters.

Initiatives Incorporated into the Mitigation Plan

The compilation is provided in five formats, as given in the data tables included in this section of the Okanogan County Mitigation Plan. The first is a summary of all the mitigation initiatives currently proposed by participating agencies and organizations for future funding and implementation. This list is the complete compendium of proposed, specific mitigation actions incorporated into the mitigation plan based on the evaluation process undertaken by the participating jurisdictions and organizations. The proposed initiatives discussed in this section are the “specific mitigation actions and projects being considered to reduce the effects of each hazard” pursuant to §201.6(c)(3)(ii) of the federal regulations.

It is important to note that this report lists the proposed initiatives by their “sponsoring organization.” Under the approach used for development of this plan, the sponsoring organization is the group designated to implement the specific initiative, should the resources or opportunities to do so become available. Under the Mitigation 20/20™ approach, every single mitigation initiative incorporated into the plan is associated with a sponsoring organization that has the responsibility, authority, or capability to implement the initiative at the appropriate time.

Under the Mitigation 20/20 planning process, as specified in the procedures given in Section 4 of the plan, each proposed mitigation initiative is subjected to a review and analysis by the Task Force. The purpose of this review and analysis is to ensure that an initiative proposed by a participating organization is based on an adequate level of technical analysis, that all needed information about the proposal is presented, that any assumptions utilized are reasonable and logical, that the proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Task Force, and that it is addressing identified vulnerabilities of the community or shortfalls in the communities’ mitigation policy framework. The Task Force will then review the proposal for any other concerns, such as its consistency with other community-based plans, programs and political policies, and if appropriate, formally approve the proposal and its incorporation into the plan.

Priority Status for Plan Inclusion and Implementation

The second format provided for describing the mitigation initiatives included in the plan is entitled, “Implementation Priority Status for Mitigation Initiatives”, and is provided as an

attachment in this section. This report lists the mitigation initiatives and their current status as “approved,” “pending,” or “completed”. An approved mitigation initiative is one that has been fully processed by the Task Force, and the Task Force has voted to incorporate it into the plan, as noted above. A pending initiative is one that has been proposed by a participant in the planning process, but as of the time of the preparation of this document, it had not been fully processed by the Task Force. Of course, a completed mitigation initiative is one that has been implemented by the responsible agency or organization.

This second report also provides four other status options for the Task Force: “current,” “priority for implementation,” “deferred,” and “terminated.” In the first case, a “current” initiative is one that the Task Force desires the proposal sponsor to pursue within the normal course of business activities, and many proposed mitigation initiatives are classified in this manner. However, on a periodic basis, the Task Force can re-prioritize initiatives, based upon current judgment of conditions in the community, (such as a recent disaster event, a pending drought, etc.), and the likelihood of obtaining resources for initiative implementation. All of these factors may vary over time. While generally it would be expected to consider the priority score assigned to each initiative, which is explained in the next paragraph, the priority for implementation could differ somewhat from strict application of the score, due to the importance of current conditions and unanticipated circumstances in the community. Therefore, a “priority for implementation” initiative is one that the Task Force is recommending be implemented by the sponsoring organization as soon as resources are available. A “deferred” initiative is one that the Task Force believes implementation of which would be most effective at a later time, and that the time and efforts of the sponsoring organizations are better spent on other “current” or “priority for implementation” initiatives. A “terminated” initiative is one that, based on a current review, has been removed from the plan.

An Implementation Priority for Mitigation Initiatives Report is provided as an attachment to Section 5, Progress in Plan Implementation. A desired implementation schedule for any mitigation initiative considered as “current” or “priority for implementation” has also been assigned. This schedule has been given in the report in Section 7 of the plan entitled, “Desired Implementation Schedule for Approved Initiatives, by Jurisdiction.”

Priority Ranking for Proposed Mitigation Initiatives

The third report, "Initiatives Listed by Priority Score," lists all of the mitigation initiatives currently in the Okanogan County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, in the order of their priority scores. The priority scores are based on 10 separate prioritization criteria used by all of the planning participants to allow the Okanogan County Task Force to compare various mitigation initiatives. The specific priority scores are based on a numeric classification system explained in the following table:

Priority Criterion \ Numeric Score	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> ← Lowest Priority Highest Priority → </div>				
	0	1	2	3	4
Total Population Benefited	Less than 10,000 people benefited	10,000 to 25,000 people benefited	25,000 to 75,000 people benefited	75,000 to 150,000 people benefited	150,000 or more people benefited
Percentage of Population Benefited	Less than 5% benefited	5% to 25% benefited	25% to 50% benefited	50% to 75% benefited	More than 75% benefited
Cost of Initiative	More than \$1,000,000	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	\$250,000 to \$500,000	\$1 to \$250,000	No Cost (\$0)
Cost Impact of Initiative	More than \$1,000,000	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	\$250,000 to \$500,000	\$1 to \$250,000	No Cost Impact (\$0)
Health and Safety Considerations	No benefit	Benefits up to 1,000 people	Benefits 1,000 to 50,000 people	Benefits 50,000 to 250,000 people	Benefits more than 250,000 people
Benefit to Cost Ratio	Less than 1.0	Between 1.0 and 2.0	Between 2.0 and 3.0	Between 3.0 and 4.0	Greater than 4.0
Consistency with Other Plans and Programs	Not in any other documents or is in conflict	May have inconsistencies; Needs study	Is in at least 1 document and not inconsistent	Is in at least 2 documents or consistent	In at least 3 documents or highly consistent
Feasibility of Implementation	Very difficult to accomplish	Difficult to accomplish	Somewhat difficult to accomplish	Not difficult to accomplish	Easily accomplished within a year
Probability of Community Acceptance	Would be strongly opposed by nearly all	Would be strongly opposed by most	Would be somewhat controversial	Would directly benefit those affected; no other adverse reaction	Would be endorsed by the entire community
Probability of Receiving Funding	High probability for grant funding	Funding from local budget or grants	Could be accomplished with local matching funds	Only potential source is a mitigation grant	No potential funding sources can be readily identified

It is possible to see from this table that the minimum priority rank for a proposed initiative would be zero, while the maximum would be forty. As noted above, this priority ranking may differ from the "priority for implementation" assigned to a specific mitigation initiative based on unanticipated conditions or situations occurring at a certain time, which could change with such conditions. The priority ranking given through application of the ten criteria in the above table will remain constant through time because of the inherent characteristics of the proposed initiative, unless those characteristics are also modified.

All of the initiatives are listed by the priority score assigned to each as a result of the common process to characterize and prioritize mitigation initiatives that is used by all participants in the planning process. This priority score is a long-term characterization value directly associated with each specific initiative based on its own merits at the time it was first proposed by the individual participant. The priority score is intended to serve as a guideline for the Task Force regarding the relative desirability of implementation of a specific mitigation initiative in relation to the other proposed initiatives incorporated into the plan.

Initiatives by Hazard

The last report attached to this section describes the proposed initiatives included in the plan to address the hazards that have been identified as threatening the participating jurisdictions. These reports are entitled “Initiatives by Hazard,” and present the mitigation initiatives that have been proposed to address the identified hazards posing the most risk to Okanogan County and its jurisdictions, as calculated using the Mitigation 20/20™ approach. As described in Section 6 of this plan, the most highly-ranked hazards are wildland fire, winter storm, drought, lightening, floods, and high winds. The report reflects the attention that the participating jurisdictions have given to the highest risk hazards in formulating mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the Okanogan County Mitigation Plan and for implementation when the resources and opportunities to do so become available. This report is also another example of how the planning approach used by Okanogan County has effectively used the hazard identification and risk estimation process to guide formulation of proposed initiatives.

Potential Funding Sources

Each initiative incorporated in the Okanogan County Mitigation Plan has been associated, where appropriate, with one or more potential funding sources. This is done during the process to characterize and prioritize a mitigation initiative. The Task Force maintains and updates this funding resource database as a part of the mitigation planning process. Each initiative can be associated with up to three possible funding sources. For the proposed mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan, the report attached to this section, “Potential Funding Sources for Initiatives,” provides the most current information regarding the likely funding source as perceived by the sponsor of the proposed initiative. It is the expectation of the Task Force that the agencies and organizations that sponsored a specific initiative would utilize the information given in this report to pursue funding opportunities to implement the initiative.