

Goal 7

Areas Subject to Natural

Disasters and Hazards

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Overview

Goal 7 of Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals requires that local governments mitigate risk of harm to people and property from natural hazards through comprehensive plans. This requirement was created specifically for those areas within the state of Oregon that have a higher propensity of natural disasters.

Due to the geography, climate, and topography of Wasco County, there are a number of natural hazards that may detrimentally affect people and property. The 2012 and 2019 Natural Hazards Mitigation Plans inventory natural disasters that could potentially impact Wasco County. Severe weather, drought, wildfire, flood, earthquake, landslide and volcano eruption are all natural hazards that have the potential to occur, and cause localized and widespread disaster throughout Wasco County. The Comprehensive Plan addresses Goal 7 through limitations to development so that risk to people and property within these areas can be reduced.

Historical Perspective:

Environmental Protection District (EPD) Overlay Zones were created in the County in conjunction with partners like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Oregon’s Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), to restrict development on lands susceptible to flood and landslide natural hazards. Wasco County has, to date, fourteen EPDs. EPD 1 supports administration of the FEMA floodplain, and EPD 2 governs areas identified by the DOGAMI as geological hazard zones.

Local jurisdictions are also required to maintain an approved Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP). Local and federal approval of this plan ensures that the county will remain eligible for pre- and post-disaster mitigation project grant funding.

The Wasco County NHMP is the result of the collaborative effort between the County, The Dalles, citizens, special districts, public agencies, non-profit organizations, the private sector, and other regional organizations. The primary intent of the NHMP is to develop a comprehensive community-level mitigation strategy to prepare the county for the long term effects resulting from natural hazards. The NHMP is the best overall comprehensive source of information pertaining to hazard identification in susceptible areas.

Wasco County also has a Community Wildlife Protection Plan. Its primary purpose is to identify and prioritize wildfire hazards and to develop a strategy to reduce these hazards. Chapter 10 of the Wasco County Land Use and Development Ordinance addresses Fire Safety Standards for all new development in the designated fire zones in the county, as established in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

**Statewide Planning
Goal 7**

**To protect people and property
from natural hazards.**

Local governments shall adopt comprehensive plans (inventories, policies and implementing measures) to reduce risk to people and property from natural hazards.

Excerpt from
OAR 660-015-0000(7)

Cross Reference

Additional policies related to this goal: Goal 4, Goal 5, Goal 6, and Goal 14

Wasco County Goal 7

Areas Subject to Natural Hazards

To protect life and property from natural disaster and hazards.



Figure 1. Disasters and Donuts event. The purpose of this event was to involve the public to help with updates to the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. (10/30/2017)

Policies

7.1.1 Mitigate flood hazards through active management of water resources, soil and water conservation techniques, and flood plain identification.

Implementation for Policy 7.1.1:

- a. All implementing ordinances applicable to the County shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.
- b. Updated mapping of identified floodplains (floodway and flood fringe areas) based on channel migration data from federal or state agenciesⁱ, or other approved sources shall be used to delineate areas within Wasco County that are protected by the Environmental Protection District Flood Hazard Overlay zone (EPD-1)ⁱⁱ.
- c. The County shall continue to meet the minimum participation requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in identified flood hazard areasⁱⁱⁱ.
- d. The County shall encourage communities within flood hazard areas to develop floodplain management strategies that exceed the minimum NFIP standards with the end goal of enhanced flood control, protection, and standing within the NFIP Community Rating System^{iv}.
- e. Lands within identified flood plains shall be excluded from intensive development^v.
- f. Development standards within flood hazard areas should be updated periodically to reflect best practices for minimizing risk and damage to people and property^{vi}.
- g. Encourage sustainable and resilient construction techniques for development in identified flood plain areas to help mitigate the impact of flood events^{vii}.

7.1.2 Mitigate geologic hazards through active management of development and landform alterations in identified geologic hazard prone areas.

Implementation for Policy 7.1.2:

- a. All implementing ordinances applicable to the County shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.
- b. Updated mapping of identified geologic hazard areas based on data from federal, state, or local agencies shall be used to delineate areas within the County that fall within the Environmental Protection District Geologic Hazard Overlay zone (EPD-2)^{viii}.

- c. Lands delineated as geologic hazard areas should be evaluated as to the degree of hazard present, and appropriate limitations on development shall be imposed in the Environmental Protection District Geologic Hazards Overlay zone (EPD-2).
- d. Only those activities which are associated with non-intensive recreational or agricultural pursuits shall be allowed upon lands inventoried as high risk geologic hazard areas^{ix}.
- e. An on-site investigation and written report by a certified engineering geologist or an engineer who certifies they are qualified to evaluate soils for suitability shall be required before development will be allowed in a geologic hazard area.

7.1.3 Mitigate wildfire hazards through enhanced fire safety development standards^x.

Implementation for Policy 7.1.3:

- a. All implementing ordinances applicable to the County shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- b. Fire protection agencies and other applicable organizations shall be provided an opportunity to comment on development applications prior to approval.
- c. All physical development shall be required to implement applicable Fire Safety Standards in a timely manner.
- d. All applications for physical development in areas identified as high risk for wildfire shall require a County approved wildfire mitigation plan prior to approval.
- e. Encourage sustainable and resilient land use planning techniques for development in areas identified as high risk for wildfire^{xi}.

7.1.4 Mitigate drought hazards through development standards that encourage water and soil resource conservation.

Implementation for Policy 7.1.4:

- a. All implementing ordinances applicable to the County shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- b. Support best management practices for identified problems to maintain and improve land and water resource qualities^{xii}.

- c. The adequacy and quality of the ground water supplies shall be a major consideration of all development.
- d. Discourage residential development in areas with known water resource deficiencies and in areas adjacent to critical surface water sources relied upon for public drinking water.
- e. Encourage the coordination and development of a countywide water conservation plan^{xiii}.

7.1.5 Support Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan action items through coordination and resource allocation^{xiv}.

Implementation for Policy 7.1.5:

- a. Work with key partners, including the NHMP steering committee, to develop and promote public outreach materials related to natural hazards.
- b. Keep relevant plans, including the NHMP and Community Wildfire Protection Plan, updated.
- c. Support partners developing training and recommendations for water conservation and drought management.
- d. Accomplish defensible space around structures and support implementation of Fire Safety standards.
- e. Encourage the creation of a Wildfire Coordinator or local Natural Hazard Planner position.
- f. Continue to properly administer the National Flood Insurance Program.
- g. Support removal of fish passage barriers and improvement of waterway ecology^{xv}.
- h. Update the County Landslide Ordinance.

ⁱ Using Wasco County LIDAR data, FEMA will provide updated FIRMs by 2023.

ⁱⁱ Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are produced by FEMA's Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program. Maps for unincorporated Wasco County were effective on September 24, 1984.

ⁱⁱⁱ Private homeowners insurance does not cover flooding. In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which makes available flood insurance to communities that adopt and enforce flood plain management ordinances that meet or exceed the Federal Emergency Management Agency's requirements for reducing flood risk.

^{iv} The NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) provides lower flood insurance premiums to communities that go beyond meeting the minimum NFIP standards. The CRS program offers credit points for a community's participation in approved activities (public information, mapping and regulations, flood damage reduction activities, and warning and response), that apply to a community's CRS class rating. A community's CRS rating (class 1-10) determines the overall flood insurance premium reduction.

^v Intensive development is broadly defined by FEMA as development that is susceptible to damage and, in turn, creating further damage to nearby resources, from flooding.

^{vi} Best practices for flood mitigation are recommended by FEMA.

^{vii} The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers natural resource conservation programs that help communities reduce erosion, improve water quality, and reduce damages from flooding and other natural disasters.

^{viii} Mapped geological hazards are provided by DOGAMI's SLIDO and incorporated into Wasco County's Comprehensive Plan Zoning Map as EPD-2.

^{ix} Non-intensive activities and uses have minimal structural development that could be susceptible to damage in the case of a landslide.

^x The wildfire safety protections were developed during the Community Wildfire Protection Plan effort.

^{xi} Sustainable and resilient land use planning techniques are detailed in FEMA's Mitigation Ideas , the Wasco County NHMP (2019), and the CPAW (2018) recommendations and include techniques undergrounding electrical utilities, defensible space around structures, and encouraging fire- resistant construction techniques like non-combustible materials and fire resistant roofing.

^{xii} The Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District has resources on water conservation.

^{xiii} Wasco County 2040 efforts resulted in policies in Goal 6 to increase educational materials for the public on water conservation.

^{xiv} The Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan lists several action items for the Planning Department to address. This list is included in the implementation strategies of 7.1.5.

^{xv} The removal of fish passage barriers is a Soil and Water Conservation District specific action item included in the NHMP meant to reduce flood risk.

References

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