

## INTRODUCTION

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A mitigation plan addresses natural disasters that could affect a local community, whether it is flooding, tornadoes, high winds, winter storms, landslides or some other natural disaster. A mitigation plan is an administrative document that is issued to establish activities that should reduce or, when possible, eliminate long-term risk to human-life and property. The plan will also provide a community with a “comprehensive guide” for future mitigation efforts as they relate to the hazards that affect their county. By developing a mitigation plan, a community can identify their areas of risk, assess the magnitude of the risk and develop strategies and priorities to identify projects for reducing risk.

The Adams County Commissioners supported developing their All Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (Mitigation Plan) with funds received from Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Although this planning effort was specifically designed to address the creation of a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) compliant plan, there has been an on-going effort in publicizing the County’s activities in relation to mitigation and how the public can continue to get involved and support the County’s mitigation efforts.

The State of Ohio completed an analysis in 1998 that determined the hazards that affect the state as a whole. Adams County used this analysis for guidance when choosing their hazards. They include, but are not limited to:

- Flooding
- Tornadoes
- Severe Storms
- Erosion (Stream Bank and Landslides)
- Earthquakes
- Droughts

As part of the Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA2K, 42 USC 5165), communities that desire to remain eligible for Federal and State mitigation funds must have an approved mitigation plan in place.

According to the DMA2K, incorporated jurisdictions within a County must participate as well as representatives from the unincorporated areas. Townships are not required to participate because the county commissioners can represent them on mitigation projects. However, if a township would like to take an active part by submitting a hazard mitigation project, then their participation in the planning effort is crucial. Local participation is “key” to the successful implementation of these mitigation plans.

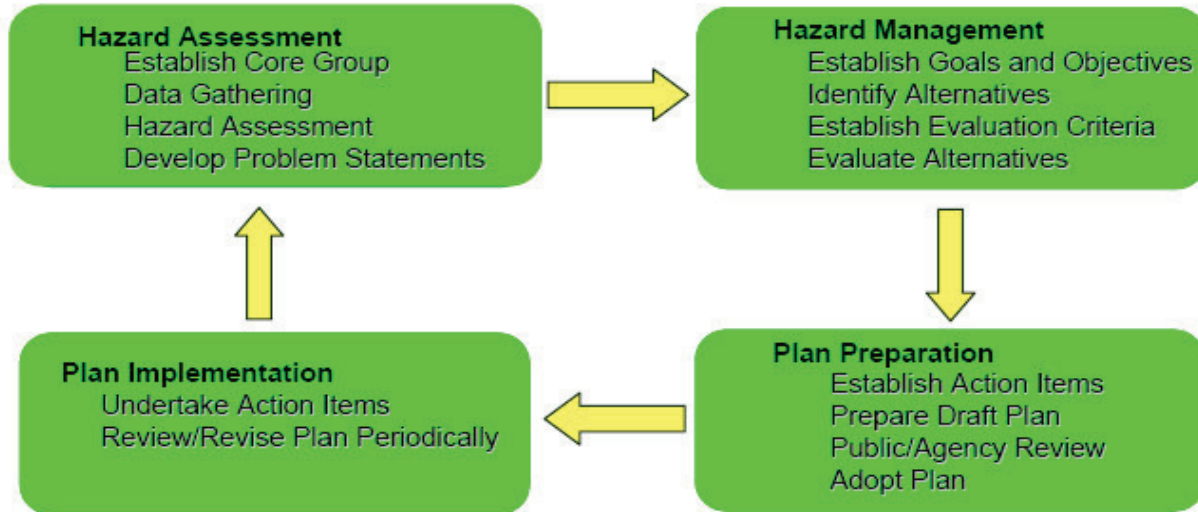
If a community chooses not to participate in the Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning effort, then the community will become ineligible for any future federal or state mitigation money. This mitigation money usually comes in the form of a grant such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) or the PDM Grant Program, which is to be used to implement mitigation strategies and activities. Examples of eligible activities that could be supported by mitigation dollars include: relocation, acquisitions, elevation, dry-floodproofing and wet-floodproofing, lightning prediction systems, interoperable siren system, stream restorations or any other activity potentially funded with mitigation dollars.

The mitigation planning process that Adams County followed was adapted from the State of Ohio’s Guidance Book, 2001, and the DMA2K Federal Guidelines. The planning process also involved evaluating several approved FEMA mitigation planning efforts from around the country

that the Core Group approved for their content and set-up, which met the needs of Adams County as well as satisfied the requirement of the reviewers, OEMA and FEMA.

The following flow diagram shows the typical Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Process that was followed:

#### NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS



In addition to the aforementioned process, the Core Group and the designated leaders of the group made sure that every community that participated in this planning effort was aware of their responsibilities as well as how they could represent their community the best. Some suggestions that were incorporated into the initial invitation to participate in the natural hazard mitigation planning effort included:

- Participate in the Core Group planning meetings representing the community's interests
- Supply any historic information (background) on natural disasters for the community to the Core Group
- Review and comment on the Draft Mitigation Plan
- Review and select mitigation activities developed by the Core Group for the community to implement
- Be an advocate for final adoption of the Mitigation Plan by the community

### 1.1 Planning Approach

In an effort to continue to meet the mission of protecting lives, property, economic viability and quality of life for the people of Adams County, the County Commissioners desired to create the Adams County Mitigation Plan for their community and its residents. Adams County authorized the engineering consulting firm URS Corp., Inc. to help them fulfill this task.

The approach undertaken in the creation of the Mitigation Plan for the County can be described as both comprehensive and collaborative. The comprehensive approach includes following the

interim final rule guidelines enacted under the DMA2K and FEMA suggested guidelines for the creation of a mitigation plan. Any additional items that Adams County and the Core Group chose to address as part of the comprehensive analysis of their community were addressed as well.

The collaborative portion of creating the plan included working with the different agencies within Adams County and coordinating with all participating jurisdictions. The County could not have a comprehensive plan without the coordination of several other agencies. Information was collected from agencies such as the Adams County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), the Regional Planning Commission, Adams Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the Farm Service Agency, American Red Cross, and all other agencies that were involved in planning efforts for the County.

## **1.2 Participating Communities**

Adams County has 7 incorporated villages within its borders. The incorporated areas of Adams County are the Village of Cherry Fork, Village of Manchester, Village of Peebles, Village of Rome, Village of Seaman, Village of West Union, and the Village of Winchester. 6 villages chose to participate in this planning effort. The Village of Manchester already has an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, but was present at the community meetings over the telephone. The Adams County EMA, in coordination with their consultant, developed a comprehensive survey for each of these jurisdictions to complete and return with mitigation planning information specific to their community. Each of these communities was also contacted for involvement in the selection of problem statements and mitigation alternatives. See Appendix A for a copy of the list of attendees from each community as well as the initial concept of how the groups would interact. See Appendix A for an example of the letter that was sent, via certified mail, to each of the jurisdictions unable to attend the Core Group meetings, as well as their completed surveys.

The process to create the Mitigation Plan started with the creation of a “Core Group” of decision makers and implementers. In order to lead the planning efforts effectively and on a countywide basis, other representatives were added. The Core Group included individuals from the following departments and agencies:

- Adams County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
- Regional Planning Commission,
- Adams Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- American Red Cross
- Chamber of Commerce-via phone interview
- Engineers Office
- Health Department
- All Municipalities-Mayors office or designee (Winchester, Seaman, Rome, Peebles, West Union and *Manchester*)
- County Commissioners Representative
- Adams County Floodplain Administrator
- Ohio EMA Liaison
- Ohio State University – Adams County Extension