

VERMONT STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING, MAY 2017

State Hazard Mitigation Plan Steering Committee Meeting
May 9, 2017 | 2-4 PM
Montpelier Room, National Life Building, Montpelier, VT

Members Attending:

- Chris Cochran, ACCD
- Bob Costantino, AHHS
- Paul Costello, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Brad Ferland, AOA
- Jennifer Fitch, BGS
- Greg Hanson, National Weather Service
- Jen Hollar, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
- Mike Kline, ANR
- Tara Kulkarni, Norwich University
- Steve Libby, Vermont River Conservancy
- Rose Paul, The Nature Conservancy
- Ben Rose, VEM
- Tim Schmalz, Agency of Agriculture
- Joe Segale, AOT
- Kip Potter, USDA-NRCS
- Gaye Symington, High Meadows Fund

Staff: Lauren Oates and Stephanie Smith, Vermont Emergency Management

Facilitators: Rebecca Sanborn Stone and David Hohenschau, Community Workshop

Agenda & Notes:

1. Welcome and Review of 2013 Plan– Lauren Oates, VEM

- a. Our goal: to collectively improve resilience to disasters and climate change. This will help us boost affordability, economic development, and protect the most vulnerable. Hazard mitigation seeks to break the cycle of disasters, decreasing the impact of areas that have repeated damage. Hazard mitigation involves steps long before disasters happen.
- b. The State Hazard Mitigation Plan is essential for allowing us to access funding as well as coordinating statewide efforts. Local jurisdictions have hazard mitigation plans that must directly reference the state plan.
- c. Examples of Vermont Hazard Mitigation work:
 - i. DHCD's Vermont Economic Resiliency (VERI) project
 - ii. Department of Health's work on reducing climate-related health impacts
 - iii. Forests, Parks and Rec's efforts to address impacts of the emerald ash borer
 - iv. Floodplain buyouts and restoration

- d. Previous plan (2013) represented major improvements, particularly:
 - i. Advances in hazard identification
 - ii. Improved state agency collaboration in planning and implementation
 - iii. Simplification (111 ideas reduced to 16 state priorities)
- e. 2018 planning process presents an opportunity for further improvements:
 - i. Whole systems approach to acknowledge and build on connections between projects and opportunities in hazard mitigation
 - ii. \$1million+ FEMA grant to complete major state projects (see sub-contract details in next section) that will advance hazard mitigation
 - iii. Focus on stakeholder engagement that will allow us to look beyond state government for collaborators and resources

2. 2018 Planning Process – Rebecca Stone

a. Process to Date

- i. Community Workshop & VEM staff have met with SHMPPC twice to launch process. Work to date includes:
 1. Visioning for planning process and final plan product.
 2. Network mapping, to identify stakeholders and groups with a role in hazard mitigation.
 3. Creating an engagement framework, to spell out opportunities and roles for stakeholder engagement, and officially launching the steering committee and appointing members.

b. Engagement & Communications Plan

- i. The Engagement Plan will include stakeholder engagement opportunities at four key levels:
 1. Steering Committee, made up of appointed public and private sector representatives
 2. Working Groups on applied hazard mitigation goals, with informal membership
 3. Targeted involvement for key individuals and stakeholder groups, as needed for planning purposes or as opportunities arise
 4. **Steering Committee decisions and input on Engagement Plan:**
 - a. Steering Committee approves the engagement framework and plan, and terms of references for the Steering Committee and Working Groups
 - b. Steering Committee approves the appointment of 19 members, as listed in prep materials.
 - i. Noted that Sam Lincoln of VT Forest, Parks and Recreation will not be joining the Committee.
 - ii. The Committee requests the addition of a member representing the business sector, to be selected and invited by VEM staff. Ideas include SBDA, Ski

Areas Association, lenders, and insurance representatives.

- iii. The Committee requests confirmation that existing members can represent the interests of local government (to confirm with VLCT); if not, the Committee requests the appointment of a local government representative
 - c. Steering Committee members expressed interest in involving numerous other stakeholder groups, which the Committee decided would be appropriate for Working Groups or targeted involvement: utilities, FEMA, first responders, CVOEO / Mobile Home Project, public works directors, EPSCOR, ASCE.
5. Proposed SHMP process branding would center around “Vermont Stronger” name and identity, building off the well-known “Vermont Strong” identity and research on climate and resilience messaging.
- a. **Steering Committee decisions and input on branding & messaging:**
 - i. Steering Committee supports the “Vermont Stronger” identity, with removal of “storm” reference from the tagline.
 - ii. Steering Committee suggests adding emphasis on improving and *enhancing* statewide conditions, as oppose to just protecting.

c. Proposed Hazards & Criteria for Inclusion – Lauren Oates

- i. A first step in the planning process is to identify the hazards for which we will plan. The proposed criteria include whether the hazards are natural, whether or not they affect Vermont and Vermonters, and whether it’s VEM’s job to mitigate them.
- ii. Proposed hazards are primarily those addressed in the 2013 plan. The changes recommended by VEM staff involve removing hazards that are not natural and separating out hazards that had been previously grouped.
- iii. VEM staff offered several clarifications about the hazard identification process:
 - 1. Hazards must be included in the plan if they are natural and affect Vermont, but we do not need to address each at the same level.
 - 2. Funding may still be available for hazards not included in the plan if they are caused by a different natural hazard (such as an earthquake triggering nuclear plant failure) or if they are included in other plans.

3. The plan is about statewide hazard mitigation – not just VEM’s responsibilities – but we may not need to address hazards that are clearly under another agency’s jurisdiction.

iv. **Steering Committee decisions and input on hazard criteria and inclusion:**

1. The Steering Committee agreed to accept criteria #1 and #2. The Committee spent significant time discussing criterion #3 (whose responsibility the hazard is) and agreed to return to consideration after reviewing the hazards and determining whether or not the criterion matters.
2. The Steering Committee agreed to include all hazards marked green in the hazard table, which clearly met all criteria for inclusion.
3. The Steering Committee agreed to exclude all hazards marked red in the hazard table, which consisted of non-natural hazards.
4. The Steering Committee agreed to include infectious diseases and invasive species. The Committee postponed a decision on sinkholes and dam failure, given time constraints.

d. **Hazard Mitigation Goals and Working Group Launch — Rebecca Sanborn Stone**

- i. VEM staff proposed having three applied goals, which each has a working group tasked with developing strategies, and overarching goals that apply to all working groups.
- ii. VEM staff and Community Workshop proposed launching three working groups that directly map to FEMA’s local hazard mitigation strategies: Local Plans & Regulations, Structures & Infrastructure, and Environment & Natural Systems
- iii. FEMA includes an additional strategy area – on education and outreach – which can be included as a charge or recommendation to all working groups.
- iv. **Steering Committee decisions and input on branding & messaging:**
 1. The Steering Committee agreed to the formation of the three working groups listed above and to the proposed applied goals, with suggested wording changes:
 - a. Being more specific about “preserve and restore” language in goal #3
 - b. Including language about adaptation in addition to reducing vulnerability in goal #2
 2. The Steering Committee wanted to ensure that vulnerable populations and topics related to people and communities are covered in the working groups and will ensure

3. Next Steps

- a. Community Workshop and VEM will incorporate Steering Committee feedback into the Engagement Plan, including appointment of a business sector representative and clarification on local government representation
- b. Community Workshop and VEM will launch three working groups
- c. VEM will send a Doodle poll to schedule upcoming meetings for the Steering Committee. VEM will copy Steering Committee members on Working Group launch information, and will ask for interested Committee members to represent working groups.
- d. Community Workshop & VEM will ask the Steering Committee to offer additional ideas on stakeholders, including potential working group participants or targeted opportunities.