

SECTION 2: THE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 Overview of the Planning Process

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) developed the initial State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) over a period of several years. Subsequently, WEM has updated the plan over the last five years. The Plan is a multi-agency effort with WEM serving as the lead agency for the planning process. Mitigation staff from WEM led the development effort and conducted the bulk of the research and writing of plan drafts, worked with state and federal agencies, reviewed local plans for information to include in the State Plan, convened meetings of the Wisconsin Silver Jackets Hazard Mitigation Team (WSJHMT), managed the plan review process, and facilitated adoption by the state agency heads.

2.1.1 Initial Plan Development

In response to the 1993 Midwest Flood, WEM formed the Interagency Disaster Recovery Group (IDRG) that was an informal group with the responsibility to coordinate recovery and mitigation efforts and included both state and federal agencies. The IDRG assisted local governments during the disaster recovery phase by providing technical assistance when possible, preventing duplication of efforts and funding among the participating agencies, identifying and prioritizing mitigation projects, and identifying funding options for implementation of long-term mitigation projects whether through the individual agencies or by “packaging” funding among the different programs. As a result of the success of the ad-hoc group, the IDRG continued to meet in response to subsequent major disasters in the state up until late 2003.

The successes of the IDRG made clear the need to formalize a group and designate a permanent State Hazard Mitigation Team as an expansion of the IDRG with policy-making authority. To that end, The Adjutant General sent letters in March 2000 to ten state agencies requesting they attend a meeting to discuss the formation of the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT), development of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, and each agency’s roles and responsibilities in these efforts. The original agencies invited to participate on the SHMT had responsibilities in the areas of natural resources, environmental regulation, planning and zoning, building codes, infrastructure regulation and construction, insurance, public information/education, economic development, and historic preservation.

An overview of Wisconsin’s disaster history and hazard mitigation programs was provided along with an introduction to hazard mitigation planning at a meeting held on April 12, 2000. At the meeting agencies were requested to designate a representative from their agency as a member of the SHMT. The team member would act as a liaison between the SHMT and their respective agency and have access to technical expertise within the agency to facilitate decision making and policy interpretation related to the agency in the areas of planning, regulations, programs, policies, and functions. Agency representatives were designated and the first official meeting of the SHMT was held on May 17, 2000. Members of the team represented eleven state agencies.

Several agencies had more than one representative on the SHMT. Many of the members of the IDRГ were also members of the SHMT.

The SHMT team met frequently during the development of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Meeting agendas, attendance sheets, meeting summaries, and handout materials are all on file at WEM. A summary was prepared after each meeting and distributed to SHMT members with any items that needed follow-up or action noted.

The Plan was finalized in July 2001, and was submitted to the state agency heads in August for agency concurrence. The head of each agency represented on the SHMT signed a State Agency Concurrence acknowledging that they had reviewed and concurred with the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. By signing the concurrence they agreed to continue to support and participate in the Plan updates, and implement the actions identified in the Plan. The Plan was placed on WEM's website. The State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan was formally submitted to FEMA Region V on October 26, 2001. A letter dated January 21, 2002, from FEMA advised that the plan met Section 409 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and the requirements of 44 CFR Part 206.405. The letter also included recommendations for the next update of the plan.

2.1.2 2004 Plan Update

On February 26, 2002, 44 CFR Part 201 established criteria for state and local hazard mitigation planning as authorized by Section 322 of the Stafford Act, as amended by Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Beginning November 1, 2004, states were required to have an approved Standard State mitigation plan in order to be eligible to receive FEMA mitigation funds through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program as well as other disaster assistance. The regulations also included criteria for an Enhanced State mitigation plan. With the approval of an Enhanced Plan, the amount of assistance provided through the HMGP would increase from 7.5% (now 15%) to 20%. Failing to meet this requirement would have a significant financial impact on both the state and local governments following a disaster.

The regulations and planning requirements were discussed extensively at the next regularly scheduled SHMT quarterly meeting held on May 10, 2002. It was obvious that changes would be required to the State Plan in order to meet the new requirements, and that WEM would need the assistance of the SHMT members in meeting the requirements.

In July 2002 WEM requested FEMA Region V to review the SHMP for compliance with the new planning requirements. FEMA provided specific comments in a letter dated November 4, 2002. Based on those comments, mitigation staff developed a strategy and timeline for completing the major components of the plan. The review comments were discussed with the SHMT.

In December 2003, the IDRГ and the SHMT, which up to this point were functioning as two separate groups with some members on both teams, merged to form the Wisconsin Hazard

Mitigation Team (WHMT). Additional members from federal, state, and local organizations were added to the team.

The 2004 Wisconsin Hazards Mitigation Plan was submitted to FEMA for review and on December 9, 2004, WEM was notified that it met the required criteria for a Standard State Mitigation Plan. The Plan would be approved upon formal adoption by the state. The head of each state agency represented on the WHMT signed a State Agency Concurrence acknowledging that they had reviewed and concurred with the State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan. By signing the concurrence they agreed to continue to support and participate in the plan updates, and implement the actions identified in the Plan. The concurrences signed by each agency represented on the WHMT, including the WEM Administrator, represent formal adoption of the plan. The Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved December 14, 2005.

2.1.3 2008 Plan Update

On February 16, 2006, the WHMT met and discussed the strategy for the three-year update. WEM reported that the Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan for Wisconsin was approved December 14, 2005. This increased the HMGP to 20% from 7.5% (now 15%) in future declarations.

For the 2008 Plan update, numerous meetings were held with the WHMT and documentation of the planning process includes meeting agendas, meeting summaries, handout packets, follow-up letters, and e-mails. Copies of the documentation are on file at WEM and can be provided upon request.

The State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan 2008 update was developed by WEM with the assistance and use of information provided by other state and federal agencies. The 2008 Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved on December 9, 2008 with the Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan approved on June 15, 2009.

2.1.4 2011 Plan Update

For the 2011 update of the State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan a new approach was used that involved WEM Mitigation staff meeting with individual agencies to review past contributions and gather new information. The approach worked much better than the large-group-meeting and questionnaire formats that were used in the past. This approach led to better developed mitigation action items. Individual meetings were held with most of the members of the WHMT, although a few agencies did not respond, so their contributions were updated using information from other, related agencies and from their websites. There were two meetings with the entire team.

During the 2011 Plan update, the Risk Assessment underwent a complete overhaul. The methodologies were updated, new information was gathered on hazard events (including hail as a new hazard), and the first phase of the State Structure Inventory was included.

Additionally, the Plan was rearranged and made more concise to remove duplication across sections. The Mitigation Strategy was reorganized such that the Action Items were organized by Lead Agency instead of by Goal. This was done for two reasons: first, it was easier for each agency to find their contribution; second, many of the Action Items meet more than one of the State Hazard Mitigation Goals, so organizing them by goal was somewhat misleading. Several appendices were added including a brand new Rural Electric Cooperative Annex and Loss Avoidance Studies.

The 2011 SHMP was adopted by WEM on December 2, 2011 and approved by FEMA Region V on December 6, 2011.

2.1.5 2016 Plan Update

In 2015, the WHMT became a chapter of the national US Army Corps of Engineers' Disaster Risk Management program, the Silver Jackets. The name was changed to the Wisconsin Silver Jackets Hazard Mitigation Team (WSJHMT). The core agencies include:

- U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Wisconsin Emergency Management
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- US Geological Survey
- National Weather Service

The Charter also identifies the rest of the WSJHMT members as supporting agencies. The Charter does not change how the WHMT operates as a team, but formalizes what the team had been doing for the past fifteen or more years.

For the 2016 State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan update, WEM Mitigation staff used the same update process as utilized in 2011, meeting individually with each agency to review past contributions and gather new information. Mitigation actions and capabilities were reviewed and updated. Staff discussed new mitigation actions with the WSJHMT members. The WSJHMT met five times during this plan update cycle. Meeting attendance, rosters, and minutes are on file with WEM and are distributed to all team members. Copies are available upon request.

For this update, the plan was reorganized, and there were some significant changes made to the Risk Assessment. As in the previous update, in this update duplication was reduced by combining several sections, deleting several appendices, and creating several new appendices or sections to reflect the state of the mitigation program in the state. The Risk Assessment was eliminated and combined with the State's Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). The 2016 THIRA included 13 natural, technological, and human-caused hazards, which has become Appendix A to the State Plan.

The 2016 Enhanced Plan was adopted by WEM and approved by FEMA Region V on December 2, 2016.

2.1.6. 2021 Plan Update

As the lead agency in the development of the SHMP, WEM works with other state, federal, and local agencies to develop and implement the strategies outlined in this document and obtain interagency feedback on the success or failure of those strategies. The SHMP was developed and updated with the support and assistance of WSJHMT as described previously in this section.

Team members provide a variety of expertise and perspective to the planning process, including emergency management, natural hazards, land-use planning, agriculture, building codes, transportation, and infrastructure (see Appendix E for full membership). Agencies have key expertise in subjects from building codes, planning, coastal management, transportation, infrastructure, floodplains, buildings/housing, forestry, and beyond. The purpose of the WSJHMT is to:

- Assist with the revision and update of the State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Review previous hazard mitigation planning and identify progress made on actions
 - Review and update goals, objectives, and strategies for the update of the Plan
 - Assist with development of plan maintenance process
- Provide ongoing monitoring of state hazard mitigation efforts after adoption and FEMA approval of the State Plan
- Assist in the review of the State Plan, and in revising the plan every five years

As hazard mitigation planning continuously involves multiple government agencies and other organizations, it is assumed the role of other entities will increase in the future. The Plan will be adjusted accordingly during the five-year update cycle.

Implementation of the SHMP will be most effective if it is integrated with other planning efforts and initiatives. The state has made efforts at integration by identifying opportunities where mitigation can be integrated into existing plans, reports, programs, and/or initiatives. Integration and coordination with other agencies and organizations is described in more detail in Section 6, Comprehensive State Hazard Mitigation Program.

Section 6, provides information and describes how WEM helps educate stakeholders about Wisconsin's hazards, assist stakeholders in developing plans, and obtain mitigation ideas and suggestions for the State Plan through a variety of activities and mechanisms. In this manner, WEM received input from different levels of government, local officials, business representatives, private organizations, and other interested parties including the public.

This educational process also has resulted in WEM's partners using mitigation in their programs and plans over time. These discussions and/or meetings have involved reviews of current programs and policies that promote or could potentially promote mitigation initiatives. Many of

the mitigation successes since the 1993 floods have been as a direct result of these meetings and discussions. The lessons learned through these programs and activities have contributed to the development of the State Plan and have been integrated into their own plans, programs, and procedures. The State Capability Assessment in Section 3, Mitigation Strategy, includes a detailed description of where and how mitigation is integrated into specific agency plans, policies, programs, and initiatives.

The 2021 plan also meets the requirements for the Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) Grant Program. WEM Mitigation Staff have been consulting with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) since early 2020 to discuss dam safety risks and how the State Hazard Mitigation Plan could meet the requirements of the HHPD program. WEM and DNR staff have participated in outreach with communities with dams that meet the HHPD requirements, reviewed Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) associated with the high hazard dams and expanded the dam risk assessment associated with this plan. Additionally, WEM has consulted with various members of the WSJHMT throughout each plan update, which includes members of the Wisconsin Dam Safety Program, on the Mitigation Strategy (Section 3) and outreach to communities for subapplication funding (this Plan has incorporated dam safety mitigation actions into the Mitigation Strategy since 2011). WEM worked closely with the Dam Safety Program to incorporate data about high-risk dams and other relevant data to expand the risk assessment in Appendix A.

Over the years, WEM has worked to identify partners interested in participating in the state's mitigation efforts. Integration of other federal, state, and local agencies; business and industry; and private non-profit organizations into the state mitigation program has been an ongoing process that also has helped to educate WEM's partners concerning the importance of mitigation.