



State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan

2024-25 Annual Report

The following annual report provides a high-level summary of State, local, and Tribal hazard mitigation efforts that help to accomplish the goals listed in the 2023 State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan (SEHMP). Those goals are:

1. Reduce the impacts of natural hazards on Washington residents and our community lifelines, including State-owned or operated facilities
2. Prioritize effective and long-term partnerships across State, Federal, Tribal, and local stakeholders
3. Let the vulnerability assessments drive our mitigation strategy and prioritization of mitigation actions
4. Improve our understanding of multi-hazard environments
5. Embed cultural understanding into our mitigation work
6. Ensure improved and equitable access to hazards information
7. Champion and prioritize people-centered mitigation actions
8. Emphasize the role of sustainable development and climate adaptation in hazard mitigation
9. Strategically reduce the number of repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss properties in Washington
10. Ensure all counties and sub-county jurisdictions understand their risks and are eligible for mitigation funding opportunities

Working toward 2028

Goals addressed: 1 - 10

The interagency Hazard Mitigation Working Group (HMWG) officially kicked off the update to the 2023 State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan (SEHMP) in May of this year. Member agencies have expanded for this update and now include the following State agencies:

- Military/EMD
- Health
- Natural Resources
- Ecology
- State Patrol
- University of Washington
- Commerce
- Agriculture

- WaTech
- Office of the Insurance Commissioner
- Transportation
- Social & Health Services

Despite changes to federal priorities, climate-change related natural hazards (e.g., floods, wildfires) are still Washington’s most common disasters, so the members of the HMWG are still emphasizing climate resilience in their plan. Much of this will involve integrating the State Climate Resilience Strategy into the SEHMP (more on that below). The HMWG will also be doing more to integrate local and Tribal hazard mitigation plans into the SEHMP, such as ensuring risks and vulnerabilities identified by local and Tribal partners align with statewide resilience goals.

The 2023 SEHMP must be fully updated and approved by FEMA by September 30, 2028. Between now and then, the HMWG will be meeting quarterly to maintain momentum.

The Hazards Analysis & Resilience Planning Program (HARP) at EMD are coordinating the SEHMP update.

State Climate Resilience Strategy

Goals addressed: 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8

In 2024, the Department of Ecology and agency partners published the Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy to help communities, infrastructure, and natural and working lands prepare for the impacts of climate change. Throughout 2025, state agencies have shifted from planning to action: implementing new initiatives and ongoing work, strengthening collaboration across agencies, and navigating challenges from budget constraints and federal uncertainty.

Agencies developed 44 funding requests to support new actions proposed in the Climate Resilience Strategy. Following the recent Legislative Session, 27 of those received funding though few received their full asking amount. These actions include:

- Coordinating agency efforts to reduce wildfire smoke risks (led by Dept. of Health)
- Supporting local match for small, impoverished communities (led by EMD)
- Climate resilience research, tools, and on the ground support for Washington agriculture (led by State Conservation Commission)
- Post-fire recovery efforts (led by Dept. of Natural Resources)
- Roadside wildfire hazard risk reduction (led by Dept. of Transportation)
- Supporting local governments in assessing vulnerability and planning for resilience (led by Dept. of Ecology)

Given state budget issues and wavering federal support for resilience, leadership and collaboration across agencies are more important now than ever. In response, agencies proposed forming an interagency council, which launched in September 2025. Comprised of the Directors and Secretaries of the ten partner agencies involved in the Strategy’s development, the Council will establish shared priorities, support implementation, and guide adaptive management, including future required updates to the Strategy every four years.

The COHORT concludes its first biennium

Goals addressed: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

Washington’s Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team (COHORT) is an interagency team established in 2023 that works collaboratively with communities and Tribes to advance coastal resilience efforts across Washington’s Pacific Coast, Puget Sound, and Strait of Juan de Fuca. The team supports local- and Tribal-led efforts to understand coastal hazards issues, build consensus around paths forward, and develop and implement projects that advance holistic resilience goals. The team is staffed by the Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington Sea Grant, EMD, and Washington State University Extension. Ecology provides coordination, administrative, and funding support for the team with funding from the Climate Commitment Act (CCA).

The Washington Legislature directed Ecology to establish COHORT in 2023. This action followed on the heels of the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council’s (WCMAC) 2021 resilience recommendations and, prior to that, many years of local resilience initiatives, pilot efforts, and growing calls from community members for the state to provide communities and Tribes with additional capacity to address pressing coastal hazards and prepare for future impacts.

Below are some highlights from the COHORT’s first biennium:

- 350: COHORT conducted 350 outreach and engagement events with coastal community members, stakeholders, and Tribal staff across all 15 coastal counties.
- 5500: Through these engagement events, COHORT connected with more than 5500 individuals about coastal resilience issues, needs, and projects.
- 67: COHORT led or supported more than 67 unique projects that address coastal hazards issues and advance ecological and community resilience goals.
- \$85 million: COHORT helped communities and Tribes secure over \$85 million in federal funding for resilience projects and planning efforts.
- \$150 million: COHORT helped communities and Tribes prepare and submit proposals for projects totaling over \$150 million in requested federal funding. To date, 35 projects have received funding and 17 are awaiting funding decisions.
- 70 to 1: For each \$1 invested by the state in the COHORT program through the Climate Commitment Act, COHORT has helped secure more than \$70 in federal funding for Washington communities and Tribes.

Local and Tribal mitigation actions around WA

2024 Winter Storms Forum

Goals addressed: 2, 4, 6, and 10

In response to requests from local governments for improved winter weather preparedness, the State hosted a Winter Storms Forum in 2024. Designed to strengthen local readiness and resilience, the event brought together community leaders, including public utility representatives, city administrators, Tribal government staff, and state agency partners, to explore the science and response and recovery strategies related to winter storm events. Approximately 100 participants attended the forum, which featured a full day of discussions and presentations led by subject matter experts, fostering valuable knowledge-sharing and collaboration across sectors.

Tsunami Maritime Response and Mitigation Strategy for the Port of Neah Bay (Makah Tribe)

Goals addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10

This strategy evaluated the tsunami threat at the Port of Neah Bay, owned and operated by the Makah tribe. Utilizing site-specific mapping and modeling products developed by the Washington Geological Survey, discussions were held to evaluate the feasibility of more than a dozen respective tsunami response and mitigation actions. This strategy incorporated knowledge and expertise from port staff, tribal emergency management and first responders, and other critical response and mitigation partners (such as utilities personnel and members of the U.S. Coast Guard) to explore these actions in depth and discuss protective action guidance for the boating community.

Ocean Shores coastal erosion mitigation efforts

Goals addressed: 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10

The City of Ocean Shores secured \$920,000 from the State Department of Commerce and FEMA to address their erosion issues, laying the groundwork for long-term, sustainable solutions. Additional funding was also obtained to construct an interim cobble berm, which is a temporary measure to stabilize the shoreline and protect the community while the City pursues future investments in more resilient, nature-based coastal protection.

Local and Tribal Hazard Mitigation Planning

Goals addressed: 1-10

Multiple counties and Tribes completed a hazard mitigation plan update this year. All the county plans were multijurisdictional and included numerous cities, towns, and special purpose districts. These plans include:

- Adams County

- Chelan County
- Clallam County
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville
- Grays Harbor County
- King County
- Kitsap County
- Kittitas County
- Lewis County
- Pend Oreille County
- Quileute Tribe
- Shoalwater Bay Tribe
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Thurston County
- Walla Walla County

Ongoing local mitigation actions

The following are various hazard mitigation projects currently being implemented around Washington:

- City of Hoquiam: Aberdeen-Hoquiam flood protection
- Wenatchee Valley Fire District 1: Wildfire resilience, defensible space, and ignition resistance
- City of Seattle: Hiawatha Community Center seismic retrofit
- Mount Vernon School District: Mount Vernon High School seismic retrofit
- Town of Coupeville: Water main relocation
- Klickitat Valley Health: Goldendale climate resilience microgrid
- City of Walla Walla: Walla Walla municipal watershed resiliency plan
- City of Medical Lake: Backup power for critical infrastructure
- Cascadia Conservation District: Defensible space education in Chelan County
- City of Arlington: Prairie Creek drainage improvement
- Foster Creek Conservation District: Erosion control and re-seeding
- Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District: elevation of homes in flood control zone

Looking ahead: The continued importance of hazard mitigation plans (HMPs)

Since the start of the second Trump administration, the HARP program at EMD has received many questions about the current state of HMPs, including whether such plans still provide value given the many threatened, paused, or dismantled federal grant programs tied to HMPs.

HMPs provide value to communities whether they are tied to federal funding programs or not. The intent for developing an HMP was never solely to get access to federal grants. Developing an HMP has value beyond federal funding because the process is a well-vetted, reliable, and efficient method of community-based collective action toward resilience. It's a framework communities can use to bring together their partners in risk reduction, assess their risks and vulnerabilities, and develop a blueprint for long-term resilience. It's an opportunity for communities to discuss what is most important to them, what is putting them at risk, and what to do about it.

The information contained within an HMP has broad applicability, with use in capital improvement planning, climate resilience, land use and comprehensive plans, floodplain management, wildfire protection, public health, emergency response, and so on. Even in a hypothetical future without federal funding support for hazard mitigation projects, communities will still need to assess their disaster risks and find ways to reduce those risks long-term. The HMP process still gives communities a method for doing this.

Lastly, HMPs have always been a tool for risk-informed decision making. This is especially true during times of resource constraints. The challenges associated with reduced federal financial assistance and support for resilience are real and are currently impacting Washington jurisdictions. But it's important to remember that the HMP process can guide local resilience efforts to ensure limited resources are used to their greatest effect and public resilience dollars are put to their greatest use possible.

For more information about the ways Washington is implementing its SEHMP, please contact Kevin Zerbe, Hazards Analysis & Resilience Planning Program Supervisor, at kevin.zerbe@mil.wa.gov