

SECTION 10

PLAN MAINTENANCE

This section discusses how the Smoky Mountain Region Mitigation Strategy and Mitigation Action Plan will be implemented and how the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be evaluated and enhanced over time. This section also discusses how the public will continue to be involved in a sustained hazard mitigation planning process. It consists of the following three subsections:

- ◆ 10.1 Implementation and Integration
- ◆ 10.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Enhancement
- ◆ 10.3 Continued Public Involvement

44 CFR Requirement

44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(i):

The plan shall include a plan maintenance process that includes a section describing the method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating and updating the mitigation plan within a five-year cycle.

44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(ii):

The plan maintenance process shall include a process by which local governments incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate.

10.1 IMPLEMENTATION AND INTEGRATION

Each agency, department, or other partner participating under the Smoky Mountain Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is responsible for implementing specific mitigation actions as prescribed in the Mitigation Action Plan. Every proposed action listed in the Mitigation Action Plan is assigned to a specific “lead” agency or department in order to assign responsibility and accountability and increase the likelihood of subsequent implementation.

In addition to the assignment of a local lead department or agency, an implementation time period or a specific implementation date has been assigned in order to assess whether actions are being implemented in a timely fashion. The counties in the Smoky Mountain Region will seek outside funding sources to implement mitigation projects in both the pre-disaster and post-disaster environments. When applicable, potential funding sources have been identified for proposed actions listed in the Mitigation Action Plan.

The participating jurisdictions will integrate this Hazard Mitigation Plan into relevant city, county, and tribal government decision-making processes or mechanisms, where feasible. This includes integrating the requirements of the Hazard Mitigation Plan into other local planning documents, processes, or mechanisms, such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate. Opportunities to integrate hazard mitigation into other planning mechanisms will be considered when mechanisms are under review or in the process of an update. The members of the Smoky Mountain Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (planning committee) will remain charged with ensuring that the goals and mitigation actions of new and updated local planning documents for their agencies or departments

are consistent, or do not conflict with, the goals and actions of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and will not contribute to increased hazard vulnerability in the Smoky Mountain Region.

Since the previous six plans were adopted (Cherokee County and Haywood County in 2006 and Graham County, Jackson County, Swain County, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in 2011), and the initial regional plan was adopted in 2012, each County, participating jurisdiction and the Tribe have worked to integrate the hazard mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms where applicable/feasible. Examples of how this integration has occurred have been documented in the Implementation Status discussion provided for each of the mitigation actions found in Section 9. Specific examples of how integration has occurred include:

- ◆ Integrating the mitigation plan into reviews and updates of floodplain management ordinances;
- ◆ Integrating the mitigation plan into reviews and updates of County/Tribal emergency operations plans;
- ◆ Integrating the mitigation plan into review and updates of building codes; and
- ◆ Integrating the mitigation plan into the capital improvements plan through identification of mitigation actions that require local funding

Opportunities to further integrate the requirements of this Plan into other local planning mechanisms shall continue to be identified through future meetings of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, individual county meetings, Tribal staff meetings and the annual review process described herein. Although it is recognized that there are many possible benefits to integrating components of this Plan into other local planning mechanisms, the development and maintenance of this stand-alone Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is deemed by the Smoky Mountain Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee to be the most effective and appropriate method to implement local hazard mitigation actions at this time.

10.2 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ENHANCEMENT

Periodic revisions and updates of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan are required to ensure that the goals of the Plan are kept current, taking into account potential changes in hazard vulnerability and mitigation priorities. In addition, revisions may be necessary to ensure that the Plan is in full compliance with applicable federal and state regulations. Periodic evaluation of the Plan will also ensure that specific mitigation actions are being reviewed and carried out according to the Mitigation Action Plan.

The Smoky Mountain Region established monitoring, evaluation and enhancement procedures during the 2012 plan development. Over the past five years, the participating jurisdictions have been independently implementing, monitoring and evaluating their own mitigation action plans. Progress made in implementing actions has been documented in Section 9: Mitigation Action Plan where each action contains a narrative about the implementation status of the action as of 2017. Further, plan update procedures were followed accordingly. The jurisdictions did waiver slightly from the monitoring and evaluation process defined in the original version of the plan, but still made significant process in implementing their mitigation action plans. During the 2017 update of this plan, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee determined that the procedures for the upcoming five-year monitoring and evaluation process will remain as defined and will be re-evaluated during the next plan update process.

When determined necessary, the Smoky Mountain Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee shall meet in March of every year to monitor and evaluate the progress attained and to revise, where needed, the activities set forth in the Plan. The findings and recommendations of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee shall be documented in the form of a report that can be shared with interested City, County, and Tribal Council members. The Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee will also meet following any disaster events warranting a reexamination of the mitigation actions being implemented or proposed for future implementation. This will ensure that the Plan is continuously updated to reflect changing conditions and needs within the Smoky Mountain Region which includes the counties of Cherokee, Graham, Haywood, Jackson and Swain and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The Cherokee County Emergency Management Coordinator will be responsible for reconvening the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee for these reviews.

Five Year Plan Review

The Plan will be thoroughly reviewed by the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee every five years to determine whether there have been any significant changes in the Smoky Mountain Region that may, in turn, necessitate changes in the types of mitigation actions proposed. New development in identified hazard areas, an increased exposure to hazards, an increase or decrease in capability to address hazards, and changes to federal or state legislation are examples of factors that may affect the necessary content of the Plan.

The plan review provides Smoky Mountain county/Tribal officials with an opportunity to evaluate those actions that have been successful and to explore the possibility of documenting potential losses avoided due to the implementation of specific mitigation measures. The plan review also provides the opportunity to address mitigation actions that may not have been successfully implemented as assigned. The Cherokee County Emergency Management Coordinator will be responsible for reconvening the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee and conducting the five-year review.

During the five-year plan review process, the following questions will be considered as criteria for assessing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Plan:

- ◆ Do the goals address current and expected conditions?
- ◆ Has the nature or magnitude of risks changed?
- ◆ Are the current resources appropriate for implementing the Plan?
- ◆ Are there implementation problems, such as technical, political, legal or coordination issues with other agencies?
- ◆ Have the outcomes occurred as expected?
- ◆ Did County/tribal departments participate in the plan implementation process as assigned?

Following the five-year review, any revisions deemed necessary will be summarized and implemented according to the reporting procedures and plan amendment process outlined herein. Upon completion of the review and update/amendment process, the Smoky Mountain Region Hazard Mitigation Plan will be submitted to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management (NCDEM) for final review and approval in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Disaster Declaration

Following a disaster declaration, the Smoky Mountain Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be revised as necessary to reflect lessons learned, or to address specific issues and circumstances arising from the event. It will be the responsibility of the Cherokee County Emergency Management Coordinator to reconvene the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee and ensure the appropriate stakeholders are invited to participate in the plan revision and update process following declared disaster events.

Reporting Procedures

The results of the five-year review will be summarized by the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee in a report that will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan and any required or recommended changes or amendments. The report will also include an evaluation of implementation progress for each of the proposed mitigation actions, identifying reasons for delays or obstacles to their completion along with recommended strategies to overcome them.

Plan Amendment Process

Upon the initiation of the amendment process, representatives from the Smoky Mountain counties and the Tribe will forward information on the proposed change(s) to all interested parties including, but not limited to, all directly affected County/Tribal departments, residents, and businesses. Information will also be forwarded to the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management. This information will be disseminated in order to seek input on the proposed amendment(s) for no less than a 45-day review and comment period.

At the end of the 45-day review and comment period, the proposed amendment(s) and all comments will be forwarded to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee for final consideration. The Planning Committee will review the proposed amendment along with the comments received from other parties, and if acceptable, the committee will submit a recommendation for the approval and adoption of changes to the Plan.

In determining whether to recommend approval or denial of a Plan amendment request, the following factors will be considered by the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee:

- ◆ There are errors, inaccuracies, or omissions made in the identification of issues or needs in the Plan.
- ◆ New issues or needs have been identified which are not adequately addressed in the Plan.
- ◆ There has been a change in information, data, or assumptions from those on which the Plan is based.

Upon receiving the recommendation from the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, and prior to adoption of the Plan, the participating jurisdictions will hold a public hearing, if deemed necessary. The governing bodies of each participating jurisdiction will review the recommendation from the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (including the factors listed above) and any oral or written comments received at the public hearing. Following that review, the governing bodies will take one of the following actions:

- ◆ Adopt the proposed amendments as presented;
- ◆ Adopt the proposed amendments with modifications;

- ◆ Refer the amendments request back to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee for further revision; or
- ◆ Defer the amendment request back to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee for further consideration and/or additional hearings.

10.3 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

44 CFR Requirement
44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(iii): The plan maintenance process shall include a discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.

Public participation is an integral component to the mitigation planning process and will continue to be essential as this Plan evolves over time. As described above, significant changes or amendments to the Plan shall require a public hearing prior to any adoption procedures.

Other efforts to involve the public in the maintenance, evaluation, and revision process will be made as necessary. These efforts may include:

- ◆ Advertising meetings of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee in local newspapers, public bulletin boards and/or County and Tribal office buildings;
- ◆ Designating willing and voluntary citizens and private sector representatives as official members of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee;
- ◆ Utilizing local media to update the public on any maintenance and/or periodic review activities taking place;
- ◆ Utilizing the websites of participating jurisdictions to advertise any maintenance and/or periodic review activities taking place; and
- ◆ Keeping copies of the Plan in public libraries.

10.4 EVALUATION OF PREVIOUS MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND UPDATE PROCESS

Over the past five years, the participating jurisdictions have been independently implementing, monitoring and evaluating their own mitigation action plans. Progress made in implementing actions has been documented in Section 9: Mitigation Action Plan where each action contains a narrative about the implementation status of the action as of 2017. That said, the jurisdictions did waiver slightly from the monitoring and evaluation process defined in the original version of the plan, but still made significant process in implementing their mitigation action plans. During the 2017 update of this plan, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee determined that the procedures for the upcoming five-year monitoring and evaluation process will remain as defined above and will be re-evaluated during the next plan update process.

SECTION 10: PLAN MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

The five-year comprehensive update process began as early as 2015 when lead points of contact from each of the four participating counties began having conversations about the updating process. These conversations were facilitated by the NCEM Area Coordinator and Mitigation Staff in Raleigh, NC, and included discussion about the need to apply for a grant to update the plan. Once the grant was obtained, early conversations in 2016 centered around more detailed components of the planning process such as which county would lead the process and would the counties seek consultant assistance for updating the plan. These early conversations led to a successful update and will be used in future updates of the plan.