

# Plan Methodology

Because of the similarity in hazards that pose threats to the various communities within Skagit County, a decision was made early in the plan development process that the **Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan** should meet three basic goals to serve the needs of the citizens of Skagit County, local Indian Tribes, and governmental jurisdictions and agencies.

- 1. That the plan be multi-jurisdictional thereby satisfying the natural hazards mitigation planning requirements as specified in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 for all communities within Skagit County.*
- 2. That the plan be developed following the process outlined by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as well as the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System so that the plan coordinates with and compliments Community Rating System programs that exist now or may exist in the future within Skagit County.*
- 3. That the plan be written in such a way so as to also serve as the Skagit County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis.*

The **Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan** was written using the best available information obtained from a wide variety of sources. Throughout the plan development process, a concerted effort was made to gather information from participating Indian Tribes, municipal and county agencies and staff as well as stakeholders, business and industry, and the citizens of Skagit County. **A concerted effort was made to solicit information from local agencies and individuals with specific knowledge of certain natural hazards and past historical events, as well as planning and zoning codes and ordinances and recent planning decisions.**

The natural hazard mitigation strategies contained within this plan are the result of a lengthy and extensive planning process involving Indian Tribes, all local jurisdictions, special purpose districts, and a cross-section of the business community and citizens of Skagit County.

## **Establishment of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee**

With the awarding of a Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Grant to Skagit County Dike District #12, the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee was formed to assist Skagit County Dike District #12 in meeting the requirements of the planning grant process and to keep the mitigation-planning project on schedule. This committee was charged with the following responsibilities:

- Establish plan development goals and objectives.
- Establish a time line for completion of the plan.
- Insure that the plan meets the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as well as National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System requirements.

- Solicit and encourage the participation of Indian Tribes, municipalities, special purpose districts, stakeholders, and citizens in the plan development process.
- Assist local planning officials, special purpose district commissioners, and others in gathering information for inclusion in the plan.
- Organize and oversee the public involvement process.
- Gather all pertinent information to be included in the plan.
- And finally ... write the plan.

### **Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee Members**

- Charles Bennett, Commissioner, Skagit County Dike District #12
- John Shultz, Attorney for Skagit County Dike District #12
- Margaret Fleek, Planning Director, City of Burlington
- Ann Marie Gutwein, Programs Manager, Skagit County Public Works Department
- Delores McLeod, Administrative Assistant, Skagit County Public Works Department
- Karla Strand, Administrative Assistant/Coordinator, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management
- Mark Watkinson, Coordinator, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management

***The Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee will disband when this plan is completed and the Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Grant is terminated.***

To maintain continuity between the requirements of the planning grant and the plan development process, each member of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee is also a member of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee.

### **Input from the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee**

The Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee convened the fourth Wednesday of each month beginning in January 2003, and concluding in September 2003 as a means to gather and share information, assess vulnerabilities, identify critical facilities, assist in developing mitigation strategies, and provide continuity throughout the plan development process to insure that jurisdictional-specific natural hazards vulnerability information and mitigation strategies were incorporated into the plan.

### **Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee Members**

#### **Community Representatives**

##### Skagit County Flood Control Committee

Charles Bennett, Chairperson; Commissioner, Skagit County Dike District #12

##### Building Department/Code Enforcement

Ed Frank, Building Official, City of Anacortes

Ardell McCombs, Building Official, City of Sedro-Woolley

Bill Dowe, Building Official, Skagit County Planning and Permit Center

Tim Devries, Plans Examiner, Skagit County Planning and Permit Center

### Land Use Planning/Zoning

Margaret Fleek, Planning Director and Community Rating System Coordinator, City of Burlington  
Roxanne Michael, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Mount Vernon  
Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner, Skagit County Planning Department  
John Doyle, Town Planner, Town of La Conner, Community Rating System Coordinator

### Emergency Management/Public Safety

Tom Sheahan, Director, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management  
Karla Strand, Administrative Assistant/Coordinator, Skagit County Department of  
Emergency Management  
Mark Watkinson, Coordinator, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management,  
Chief Mark Anderson, Skagit County Fire Chief's Association  
Chief Bud Bowers, Skagit County Law Enforcement Chief Executive Officer's Group

### Environmental Protection/Public Health

John Hadman, Environmental Health Specialist, Skagit County Health Department  
Jeffrey A. Hegedus, Environmental Engineer, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

### Public Works/Engineering

Ann Marie Gutwein, Programs Manager, Skagit County Public Works  
Delores McLeod, Administrative Assistant and Community Rating System Coordinator, Skagit  
County Public Works  
Joe Hemmerich, Public Works Director, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe  
Tom McLeod, Public Works Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

### Public Information

Dan Berentson, Public Information Officer, Skagit County Commissioners Office

### Parks/Recreation

Jon Aarstad, City Administrator, City of Burlington  
Larry Otis, Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation Director

***The Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee will remain a semi-active group following the formal adoption of this plan. This committee will meet on a semi-annual basis in February and July of each year as a means to network and maintain contact with each other. In addition, the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee will also provide direction and oversight and otherwise assist with the annual plan evaluation process.***

### **Input from Stakeholders and Citizens**

In order to facilitate better coordination and communication between the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee as well as stakeholders and citizens of the community, a larger planning group was formed and named the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended

Planning Committee. Information was gathered from these stakeholders and citizens via a series of five (5) meetings beginning in March, 2003 and concluding in July, 2003. Burlington was chosen as the meeting location for all public meetings because of its central location within the county. Written meeting announcements were mailed to all members of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended Planning Committee in advance of all meeting dates. In addition, these meetings were also advertised in the Skagit Valley Herald prior to the meeting date in an attempt to solicit information from the general public. These meetings helped to identify common concerns related to natural hazards as well as short-term and long-term mitigation activities and/or projects to reduce risk from natural hazards.

**Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended Planning Committee**

**Stakeholders**

Information regarding hazard identification, vulnerability assessment, and mitigation strategies for inclusion in this plan was also requested from the following agencies and organizations:

- |                                                   |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Economic Development Association of Skagit County | Anacortes School District            |
| Skagit Council of Governments                     | Burlington-Edison School District    |
| Burlington Chamber of Commerce                    | Concrete School District             |
| Crown Pacific                                     | Conway School District               |
| Shell Oil Refinery                                | La Conner School District            |
| Western Washington Agricultural Association       | Mount Vernon School District         |
| Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland                 | Sedro-Woolley School District        |
| Anacortes/San Juan Chapter, American Red Cross    | All Skagit County Dike Districts     |
| Skagit Valley Chapter, American Red Cross         | All Skagit County Drainage Districts |
| Skagit County Public Utility District #1          | All Skagit County Fire Districts     |
| Port of Anacortes                                 | All Skagit County Hospital Districts |
| Port of Skagit County                             | All Skagit County Sewer Districts    |
| Skagit Valley College                             | All Skagit County Water Districts    |
| La Conner Regional Library District               |                                      |

In addition, the following citizens were specifically invited to participate in the public process to develop the **Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan**. These citizens were selected because of their specific knowledge of certain natural hazards and past historical events as well as local land use plans and codes and recent planning decisions. The members of the public are primarily floodplain residents and the owners or managers of flood-prone properties.

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Andy Hansen, Hamilton        | Ed Mason, Sterling                |
| Carol Ehlers, Fidalgo Island | Chris Jennings, West Mount Vernon |
| Wally Shaver, Cape Horn      | Rob Eakins, Avon                  |
| Carl Johnson, Fir Island     | Mary Hedlin, La Conner            |
| Larry Kunzler, Sedro-Woolley |                                   |

**Hazard specific research**

The Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee, in close cooperation with the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, compiled information and collected data for nine natural hazards: avalanche, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, land movement, severe

storms, tsunami/seiche, and volcanic activity. Information was obtained from local historical records, and a wide variety of local, state, and federal agencies as well as the above referenced stakeholder interviews and public workshops. In addition, a great deal of information was obtained from existing plans and numerous sources via the Internet.