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 in 2002 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.

2003 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 2003 Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee was disbanded upon completion of the original plan and termination of the Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Grant in 2003. In an effort to maintain continuity, several members of the original Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee again came together in late 2007 to develop a strategy and time line for accomplishing the required 2008 update of the plan.

2008 Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee Members

• Charles Bennett, Commissioner, Skagit County Dike District #12
• Karla Strand, Administrative Assistant, Skagit County Dike District #12
• Margaret Fleek, Planning Director, City of Burlington
• Tom Karsh, Special Projects Administrator, Skagit County Public Works Department
• Mark Watkinson, Coordinator, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management

To accomplish the 2008 update of the plan, this committee was charged with the following responsibilities:

• Establish a time line for completion of the plan update process.
• Solicit and encourage the continued participation of Indian Tribes, municipalities, special purpose districts, stakeholders, and citizens in the plan update process.
• Encourage and assist the Samish Indian Nation to be included in the plan.
• Re-establish the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee.
• Determine what portions of the plan needed to be updated and oversee/approve all changes/updates included in the plan.
• 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.
Insure the plan is updated in accordance with the 2007 multi-hazard mitigation planning guidance and local mitigation plan requirements as identified in 44 CFR, Part 201.6 of the Interim Final Rule as well as National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System requirements.

Input from the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee

To maintain continuity, each member of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee is also a member of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee. Throughout the development of the original plan, the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee convened on a regular basis 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.

2003 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 Otos, Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation Director

It was originally intended that the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee would remain a semi-active group following the formal adoption of this plan, this task proved more difficult than was first planned. Meetings of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee were held on an annual basis to provide direction and oversight and otherwise assist with the annual plan evaluation and public meeting process. It is anticipated that the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee will maintain the same level of activity throughout the 2009-2013 plan cycle.

2008 Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee Members

Community Representatives
Skagit County Flood Control Zone District
Charles Bennett, Chairperson; Commissioner, Skagit County Dike District #12

Municipal Administrators
Jon Aarstad, City Administrator, City of Burlington
John Doyle, Town Administrator/Community Rating System Coordinator, Town of La Conner

Public Information
Dan Berentson, Public Information Officer, Skagit County Commissioners Office

Hospitals/Health Care
Karla Strand, Quality Resources Assistant, United General Hospital

Public Safety/Emergency Management
Bill Van Wieringen, Chief of Police, Burlington Police Department
Rich Phillips, Fire Chief, Town of Concrete
Mark Watkinson, Coordinator, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management
Building Department/Code Enforcement
Ed Frank, Building Official, City of Anacortes
Jim Sherwood, Building Official, City of Burlington
Rick Prosser, Building Official/Community Rating System Coordinator, City of Mount Vernon
Jack Moore, Building Official, City of Sedro-Woolley
Tim Devries, Building Official, Skagit County Planning and Development Services

Land Use Planning/Zoning
Charles O’Hara, Director of Planning and Community Development, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Ed Knight, Senior Planner, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Ted Gage, Planning Director, Samish Indian Nation
Ian Munce, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Anacortes
Margaret Fleek, Planning Director and Community Rating System Coordinator, City of Burlington
Rick Cisar, Planning Director, Town of Concrete
Jana Hanson, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Mount Vernon
John Coleman, City Planner, City of Sedro-Woolley
Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner, Skagit County Planning Department

Natural Resources/Environmental Protection
Mary Jo Newbury, Environmental Coordinator, Port of Skagit County

Public Works/Engineering
Chal Martin, Director of Public Works, City of Burlington
Tom Karsh, Special Projects Administrator, Skagit County Public Works
Delores McLeod, Community Rating System Coordinator, Skagit County Public Works
Joe Hemmerich, Public Works Director, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

Input from Stakeholders and Citizens

As part of the development of the original plan, a larger planning group (Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended Planning Committee) was formed 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. 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.
### 2003 Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended Planning Committee

#### Stakeholders

In developing the original version of the plan in 2003, 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
- Skagit Council of Governments
- Burlington Chamber of Commerce
- Crown Pacific
- Shell Oil Refinery
- Western Washington Agricultural Association
- Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
- Anacortes/San Juan Chapter, American Red Cross
- Skagit Valley Chapter, American Red Cross
- Skagit County Public Utility District #1
- Port of Anacortes
- Port of Skagit County
- Skagit Valley College
- La Conner Regional Library District
- Skagit County Public Utility District #1
- Anacortes School District
- Burlington-Edison School District
- Concrete School District
- Conway School District
- La Conner School District
- Mount Vernon School District
- Sedro-Woolley School District
- All Skagit County Dike Districts
- All Skagit County Drainage Districts
- All Skagit County Fire Districts
- All Skagit County Hospital Districts
- All Skagit County Sewer Districts
- All Skagit County Water Districts

In addition, the following citizens were specifically invited to participate in the public process to develop the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2003. 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
- Carol Ehlers, Fidalgo Island
- Wally Shaver, Cape Horn
- Carl Johnson, Fir Island
- Larry Kunzler, Sedro-Woolley
- Ed Mason, Sterling
- Chris Jennings, West Mount Vernon
- Rob Eakins, Avon
- Mary Hedlin, La Conner

### 2008 Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Extended Planning Committee

#### Stakeholders

As part of the 2008 update, information pertaining to wildland/urban-interface fires and the FIREWISE program was provided by the Skagit Conservation District. Mr. Al Craney, District Forester and Ms. Jennifer Hinderman, Firewise Program Coordinator contributed a significant portion of the updated material to the Fire hazard portion of the plan and also attended all public meetings to provide information to the public and answer questions, as needed.
In addition, information regarding hazard identification, vulnerability assessment, and mitigation strategies for inclusion in this plan was also requested from the following agencies and organizations:

- Skagit Council of Governments
- Skagit County Public Utility District #1
- La Conner Regional Library District
- Fidalgo Park and Recreation District
- Port of Anacortes
- Port of Skagit County
- Various Skagit County Dike Districts
- Various Skagit County Fire Districts
- All Skagit County Hospital Districts
- Anacortes School District
- Burlington-Edison School District
- Concrete School District
- Conway School District
- La Conner School District
- Mount Vernon School District
- Sedro-Woolley School District
- Skagit County Sewer District #1

2008 Skagit County Flood Control Zone District

After beginning the 2008 update of the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, members of the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee became aware of an existing document titled the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan that was originally completed in 1989 at the request of the Skagit County Public Works Department. It was further learned that the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan is in the process of being updated with completion scheduled for late 2009 or early 2010.

The update of the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan will be accomplished in coordination with the ongoing Skagit River General Investigation being conducted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and locally sponsored by Skagit County. The Skagit County Flood Control Zone District was recently restructured by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners on November 6, 2007 via Resolution Number R20070539. The membership of the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District is designed to broaden community participation in developing feasible flood control improvements that also benefit salmon recovery efforts.

The Skagit County Flood Control Zone District is comprised of three (3) technical committees; the Dike and Drainage District Technical Committee, the Environmental Technical Committee, and the Land Use Technical Committee. Each of these technical committees report to and make recommendations to a 15-member Advisory Committee which then reports to and makes final recommendations to the Board of Skagit County Commissioners. All meetings conducted by the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District as well those meetings conducted by the Advisory Committee and the individual technical committees are advertised and open to the public.

In order to promote and maintain continuity between the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan, Committee members of the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District were kept informed regarding the status of updating the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. In addition, all members of the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District were invited to attend the public meetings held as part of the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan update process.
**Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan**

As stated earlier, the *Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan* originally developed in 1989 at the request of the Skagit County Public Works Department is currently being updated. The *Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan* update is a grass roots process with support from numerous local stakeholders; the process is supported by staff from the Surface Water Management Section, Skagit County Public Works Department. Final recommendations will be forwarded to the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District Board of Supervisors (Skagit County Commissioners) by the 15-member Advisory Committee.

Upon completion, the *Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan* will become the definitive document regarding flood mitigation strategies for Skagit County. The *Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan* will be referenced in the *Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* so as to include the flood mitigation strategies identified within the *Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan*.

**Sauk River Erosion/Flood Hazard Management Plan**

The Sauk River flows in a northerly direction from the Skagit-Snohomish county line in eastern Skagit County and is a tributary to the Skagit River. The Sauk River is characterized by a very flat stream gradient and in many locations the Sauk River is typical of a braided stream as it flows through glacial gravel deposits on its way to the Skagit River. The banks of the Sauk River are subject to severe erosion during flood events and dramatic channel changes in excess of 1,000 feet have occurred during previous high flow flood events resulting in loss of homes and other structures as well as county roads.

In an effort to mitigate the effects of severe bank erosion along the Sauk River, the *Sauk River Erosion/Flood Hazard Management Plan* is currently under development and scheduled for completion in 2009. The plan is a joint project between Skagit and Snohomish Counties and includes diverse stakeholders including private property owners and the United States Forest Service who administers the Wild and Scenic River Act on the Sauk River.

Upon completion, the *Sauk River Erosion/Flood Hazard Management Plan* will be referenced in the *Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* so as to include the erosion mitigation strategies identified within the *Sauk River Erosion/Flood Hazard Management Plan*.

**Hazard Specific Research**

During the original development of this plan in 2003, the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Steering Committee worked in close cooperation with the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management to compile information and collect 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. A great deal of information was also obtained from existing plans and numerous sources via the Internet.
As part of the 2008 plan update process, the hazard specific information and data was fully reviewed and updated, as needed.

Since the original Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan was published in 2003, the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program and the Center for Tsunami Inundation Mapping Efforts completed a tsunami-modeling project for the eastern portion of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This project included the communities of Anacortes as well as Bellingham and Whidbey Island. Information and an accompanying tsunami inundation map for Skagit County were utilized in 2008 to completely revise the Tsunami and Seiche chapters of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Identification. Information regarding the possible effects of sea level rise due to climate change have been included in the Flood and Severe Storm chapters of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Identification.

**Tribal Mitigation Plan Requirements**

Effective October 1, 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will place new requirements on Tribal hazard mitigation plans. These requirements differ slightly than the requirements for local hazard mitigation plans. As it is unlikely that the 2008 plan update process will be completed in time to be approved by FEMA prior to October 1, 2008, these new requirements were incorporated into the plan at this time.

Because the **Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan** is a multi-jurisdictional plan, the Samish Indian Nation, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe have addressed these new requirements within their individual portions of the plan.

**National Flood Insurance Program Compliance**

Effective October 1, 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will require jurisdictions that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program to link their mitigation strategy with continued compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program. As it is unlikely that the 2008 plan update process will be completed in time to be approved by FEMA prior to October 1, 2008, this new requirement was incorporated into the plan at this time.

As previously stated, the **Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan** was originally developed in 2003 following the process outlined by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as well as the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) program so that the plan would fully coordinate with and compliment NFIP flood mitigation programs that exist now or may exist in the future within Skagit County.

Those jurisdictions that currently participate in the National Flood Insurance Program are:

- City of Anacortes*
- City of Burlington*
- Town of Concrete
- Town of Hamilton
- Town of La Conner*
- City of Lyman
- City of Mount Vernon*
- City of Sedro-Woolley
- Samish Indian Nation*
- Skagit County Government*

* National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System participating jurisdiction
In addition, the Town of Concrete, the Town of Hamilton and unincorporated Skagit County each maintain a listing of “repetitive loss properties” that have been damaged as a result of previous flood events occurring within Skagit County. The Town of Concrete, the Town of Hamilton and unincorporated Skagit County have considered these properties in describing their vulnerability to flooding within their individual portions of the plan.

Because of the flood hazard that, to some extent, affects all incorporated municipalities within Skagit County as well as a majority of the unincorporated portions of Skagit County, continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program is integral to current and future mitigation efforts occurring within Skagit County. As a result, the mitigation strategy (in great part) for all of the above-listed jurisdictions is based upon continued participation and compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, the mitigation strategies for unincorporated Skagit County as well as the City of Burlington, the Town of La Conner, and the City of Mount Vernon, are also based upon continued participation in the NFIP Community Rating System.

**Procedure to Add a Community to the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan**

This procedure was developed by the Skagit Natural Hazards Planning Committee in cooperation with the Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division following the development and adoption of the original *Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* in 2003. This procedure has been incorporated into the plan as part of the 2008 plan update.

1. The community wishing to join the plan contacts the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management with the request to become a participant of the plan.

2. The Skagit County Department of Emergency Management provides the community with a copy of the approved plan, planning requirements and any other pertinent data.

3. The community reviews the plan and develops the portions of the plan that are specific to the community as directed by Skagit County Department of Emergency Management staff. This portion of the plan must meet the requirements of the current FEMA Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance including a public process.

4. The new community submits its portions of the plan to the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management and the new community plan is forwarded to the State Hazard Mitigation Program Manager for review and compliance with current FEMA Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance.

5. The State Hazard Mitigation Program Manager reviews the new community plan for compliance with current Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance in conjunction with the *Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*. If the new community plan does not meet the required standard, the State Hazard Mitigation Program Manager will work with the community to resolve issues until it does.

6. The State Hazard Mitigation Program Manager forwards the new community plan to FEMA Region X for review and approval.

7. Upon approval from FEMA Region X, the new community is considered part of the *Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* and will comply with the update schedule of the plan and the Skagit Natural Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee.