

## Custer County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Custer County, in collaboration with local municipalities, districts, and other community organizations, is updating the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan develops community mitigation strategies, to work towards reducing the risks posed by hazards. The plan must be updated and approved by FEMA every five years to keep it current and to maintain eligibility for hazard mitigation grant assistance.

### ***What is hazard mitigation?***

The term "Hazard Mitigation" describes actions that can help reduce or eliminate long-term risks caused by hazards, such as wildfires, drought, floods, and severe winter storms. Hazard mitigation is best accomplished when based on a comprehensive, long-term plan developed *before* a disaster strikes.

As the costs of disaster impacts continue to rise, governments and citizens must find ways to reduce hazard risks to our communities. Oftentimes after disasters, repairs and reconstruction efforts are completed in such a way as to simply restore damaged property to pre-disaster conditions. These efforts may "get things back to normal," but the replication of pre-disaster conditions often results in a repetitive cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

Hazard mitigation breaks this repetitive cycle by producing less vulnerable conditions through pre- and post-disaster repairs and reconstruction. The implementation of such hazard mitigation actions now, by state and local governments, means building stronger, safer, and smarter communities that will be able to reduce future injuries and damages.

### ***Project Benefits***

Mitigation is an investment in a community's future safety and sustainability. Recent cost-benefit studies have proven mitigation to be cost effective for communities, with mitigation projects returning \$6 for every \$1 spent. Mitigation planning helps communities take action now, before a disaster, to reduce impacts when a disaster occurs. Hazard mitigation planning helps residents, business owners, elected officials, and municipal departments think through how to plan, design, build, and establish partnerships for risk reduction.

HMP COMPONENTS



Consider the critical importance of mitigation to:

- Protect public safety and prevent loss of life and injury.
- Reduce harm to existing and future development.
- Maintain community continuity and strengthen the social connections that are essential for recovery.
- Prevent damage to a community's unique economic, cultural, and environmental assets.
- Minimize operational downtime and accelerate recovery of government and business after disasters.
- Reduce the costs of disaster response and recovery and the exposure to risk for first responders.
- Help accomplish other community objectives, such as capital improvements, infrastructure protection, open space preservation, and economic resiliency.

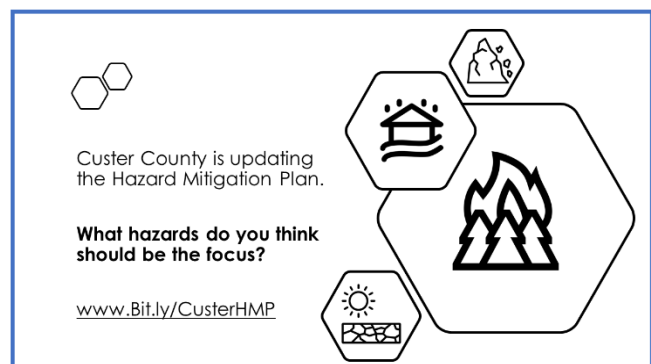
Additionally, Custer County's communities will benefit from this project by:

- Ensuring eligibility for all sources of hazard mitigation grant funds made available through FEMA.
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of vulnerabilities as well as support for specific actions to reduce losses from future disasters.
- Ensuring community policies, programs, and goals are compatible with reducing vulnerability to all hazards and identifying those that are incompatible.
- Building partnerships with diverse stakeholders, increasing opportunities to leverage data and resources in reducing workloads, as well as achieving shared community objectives.
- Expanding the understanding of potential risk reduction measures to include: local plans and regulations; structure and infrastructure projects; natural systems protection; education and awareness programs; and other tools.
- Informing the development, prioritization, and implementation of mitigation projects. Benefits accrue over the life of these projects as losses are avoided from each subsequent hazard event.

### ***How to Get Involved:***

Residents, organizations, and businesses are encouraged to contribute to the planning process. Over the next few months, the planning team will be reaching out to the public to provide input on hazards and their mitigation.

*What hazards do you think the county should focus on?* [www.Bit.ly/CusterHMP](http://www.Bit.ly/CusterHMP)



Your input is important to developing an actionable plan, and there will be several opportunities for public engagement and comment. The updated plan is anticipated to be ready for public review next spring (2022), with multiple opportunities for community involvement.

If you would like to be added to our project's email distribution list, please provide your email through the following form: <https://forms.gle/gPsQ58yVgMsVByAa7>

A copy of the current 2017 Custer County Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found @ <https://www.custercounty-co.gov/emergencymanagement>

For more information, contact Custer County's Director of Emergency Management, Adrian Washington ( 719.269.7952 | [adrian@custercountygov.com](mailto:adrian@custercountygov.com) )