

## Frequently Asked Questions Squaxin Island Tribe Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

### **Question: What is the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000?**

*Answer: The federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000, commonly known as the Stafford Act amendments, was approved by Congress on October 10, 2000. This act requires tribal, state, and local governments to develop hazard mitigation plans as a condition for receiving federal grant assistance, reinforcing the importance of pre-disaster infrastructure mitigation planning to reduce disaster losses. The Act is aimed to streamline the administration of federal disaster relief to promote mitigation activities.*

### **Question: What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

*Answer: A Hazard Mitigation Plan is prepared by local governments in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390). These plans act as a pathway to federal funding afforded under the Robert T. Stafford Act. These plans meet statutory requirements that include:*

- *Organizing resources*
- *Assess Risk*
- *Engaging the public*
- *Identifying mitigation actions*

### **Question: What is meant by "mitigation"?**

*Answer: Hazard mitigation is any sustained action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce long-term risks to human life and property. Sustained action means an action that is long-term in its impact. This is an essential component of emergency management, along with preparedness, response, and recovery.*

### **Question: Who is involved?**

*Answer: The DMA stated that any "local government" can be involved if they elect to do so. They identify "local government" as "Any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; any county, municipality, city, town, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency, or instrumentality of a local government; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity."*

### **Question: What is the Planning Team?**

*Answer: A Planning Team is made up of selected stakeholder representatives from within the planning area that will oversee this plan update process. This Planning Team makeup can include the following representation:*

- *Tribal Government and Tribal Members*
- *Academia and Businesses*
- *State or County Emergency Management*
- *Municipal planning partners, including Special Purpose Districts (e.g., fire, power or water providers)*

The Planning Team will meet regularly throughout this process to provide guidance on implementation of the planning effort. The team will determine the goals and objectives for the plan, the public involvement strategy, review the risk assessment, and provide input on the assembly of the plan.

**Question: What hazards may be included?**

*Answer: The 2024 edition of the Tribal Hazard Mitigation Plan may include:*

- *Climate Change*
- *Drought*
- *Earthquake*
- *Flood*
- *Landslide*
- *Severe Weather/Storms*
- *Wildfire*

*Climate change will not be assessed for impact in the same manner as other hazards. Rather, there will be discussion on the potential impact of climate change on the other hazards of concern. By guidance, this planning effort must map the extent and location of all hazards of concern utilizing the best available data and science. This planning effort previously identified the natural hazards that have the potential to impact the planning area. Maps are currently being produced as part of this planning process. As these maps become available, they will be presented to the public via various mediums.*

**Question: Does the State of Washington have a State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

*Answer: Yes. The State of Washington is required to respond to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. In fact, if the state does not have a plan, no local governments within the state are eligible for any of the grants to which these programs are associated. By law, the local plans are to be consistent with the recommendations of the state plan. However, as a Tribal entity, the Tribe has the ability to pursue a disaster declaration directly through FEMA, rather than through the State. Completion of this plan by the Tribe is, however, a requirement for program assistance, just as it is a requirement for the State.*

**Question: How does it affect me?**

*Answer: As a Tribal Member or citizen within a participating jurisdiction, you will be able to reap the benefits of the risk reduction actions identified by the Tribe. Sometimes these can be a direct impact to your property in the form of reduced insurance premiums and reduced risk if you live in a high hazard area. Most of the time, these benefits are secondary. By reducing risk exposure, your tribal government does not have to expend as many resources on preparedness, response, or recovery from the impacts of natural hazards.*

**Question: How will it affect my community?**

*Answer: By participating in this planning effort and adopting the updated plan, the Tribe will be eligible to pursue funding under many of the FEMA hazard mitigation grant programs. These programs provide millions of dollars of grant funding annually for risk reduction measures identified in these plans.*

**Question: Why should I get involved?**

*Answer: The law specifies that this be an “open public process” where the public is given the opportunity to provide comments on all phases of the plan’s development. For purposes of a Tribal plan, the Tribe has the option of defining what it constitutes as ‘public’. As a Tribal Member or citizen of the Tribe, you have the potential to be most severely impacted as a result of natural hazards. When these events occur, homes are damaged, functionality of critical facilities is interrupted, services are interrupted, and the economy is impacted; all having a direct impact on the Reservation. The principal goal of this plan is to reduce risk. It is not possible to identify and implement risk reduction strategies without the support of the property and business owners targeted by these strategies. Therefore, there must be public support for these initiatives in order for there to be any successful implementation of the recommendations of this plan.*

**Question: What can I do to support this process?**

*Answer: Participate! When you see a notice for a public meeting, attempt to attend. If you get mailed a questionnaire or have access to a computer, take the survey. Review the Tribe’s website periodically to obtain an update on the process. And most importantly, spread the word! Tell your friends, family, and neighbors about this process. This plan is very important to the health and welfare of the citizens of the Squaxin Island Tribe. If you don’t understand something, or want to provide input, contact Kelly Guy, the SIT’s Emergency Manager at (360) 463-8505, or Beverly O’Dea, Consultant at (253) 301-1330 for more information.*

**Question: When will the plan be finished? And... will it be available to the public?**

*Answer: It is anticipated that this planning process will take approximately 9 months to complete up to submittal to FEMA for their review and approval. This schedule is contingent upon many factors that can impact schedule and timeline. The timeline for submittal will be continuously updated throughout the process as planning milestones are completed*

**Question: How can I get a copy of the Hazard Mitigation Plan once it is finished?**

*Answer: Once the draft plan is assembled and is considered to be ready for public review and comment, it will be posted to the Hazard Mitigation Plan website. There will be announcements on the Tribe’s website and announced at various public forums, including Tribal Council Meetings. The plan will be available for review and comment for 14 days. We welcome your input!*

**Have questions? Contact us - we’d love to hear from you!!**

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