

Workshop aims to break the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction

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On April 19, 2022, the West Virginia Emergency Management Division (WVEMD) hosted a workshop at the West Virginia Conference Center in South Charleston for state and local agencies to head off disasters or, as one presenter said, solve problems before they become problems.

Specialists from FEMA Region 3 engaged with state and local officials on how to create plans to reduce or eliminate the impacts of emergencies caused by hazards such as floods, landslides, fires and cyberattacks.

The workshop offered guidance, strategies and resources to help agencies prepare to update state and regional hazard mitigation plans for 2023.

In addition to staff from state Emergency Management and the West Virginia FEMA Integration Team (WVFIT), participants included members of the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Division of Forestry, the State Resiliency Office, regional Planning and Development Councils, state Floodplain Managers, West Virginia University GIS Technical Center, the National Flood Insurance Program, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

James Young, Disaster Field Coordinator for the WVFIT said, "It was encouraging to see so many local, state and federal partners come together to discuss mitigation planning."

"This collaborative effort will help to identify priority mitigation projects that can reduce future risk and improve resiliency in the state," he said.

The presence of so many stakeholders is a crucial element of the planning process as it allows for exchanging ideas and establishing the State's vision and priorities for mitigating disaster risk moving forward.



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"Making a plan without the right tools is like making spaghetti without a pot," said WVEMD Planner and Hazard Mitigation Officer Tim Keaton. "You have to get the right people at the table."

[Learn more about Hazard Mitigation Planning.](#)

Casey Garnett, a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Community Planner based in Charleston, W.Va., was one of the

Photo: Casey Garnett, a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Community Planner based in Charleston, W.Va., was one of the presenters helping state and local officials update West Virginia's Hazard Mitigation Plan at an April 19 workshop in South Charleston, W.Va. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)

Tim Keaton, Hazard Mitigation Planner with the West Virginia Emergency Management Division, served as

Photo: Tim Keaton, Hazard Mitigation Planner with the West Virginia Emergency Management Division, served as host of the April 19 State Mitigation Planning Workshop in South Charleston, W.Va. The state organized the event to help state and local officials discuss the essentials of mitigation planning, collaboration and guidance from subject matter experts. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)

In discussing the threats officials should consider when drawing up mitigation plans, Jeremy Jones, Deputy

Photo: In discussing the threats officials should consider when drawing up mitigation plans, Jeremy Jones, Deputy State Fire Manager with the West Virginia Division of Forestry, noted that wildfires in the Mountain State are more numerous than many would expect. The agency was one of about a dozen represented at an April 19 State Mitigation Planning Workshop in South Charleston, W.Va. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)



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