



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 update to the Westmoreland County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was prepared in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). DMA 2000 requires states and local governments to prepare HMPs to remain eligible to receive pre-disaster mitigation grant funds and funds made available in the wake of federally declared disasters. Additionally, DMA 2000 effectively improves the disaster planning process by increasing hazard mitigation planning requirements for hazard events. DMA 2000 requires participating municipalities to (1) document their hazard mitigation planning process and (2) identify hazards; potential losses; and mitigation needs, goals, and strategies.

The Westmoreland County HMP represents the work of citizens, elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, and volunteer and non-profit groups to protect community assets, preserve economic viability of the community, and save lives. DMA 2000 regulations require formal updates and adoptions of local plans every 5 years to reassess risks and update local strategies to manage and mitigate those risks. To comply, Westmoreland County and its jurisdictions actively participated in updating the HMP. Extensive outreach efforts by Westmoreland County’s Department of Public Safety resulted in participation from the county and 39 of its municipalities. Upon completion and approval of the HMP, participating jurisdictions will continue to address and implement findings and recommendations based on this plan update.

Table ES-1 identifies municipal governments that actively participated in the HMP update process.

Table ES-1. Participating Jurisdictions in the 2020 Westmoreland County HMP Update

Jurisdictions				
• Westmoreland County	• Hempfield Township	• Lower Burrell, City of	• North Huntingdon Township	• South Greensburg Borough
• Arona Borough	• Hunker Borough	• Loyalhanna Township	• Oklahoma Borough	• South Huntingdon Township
• Cook Township	• Irwin Borough	• Manor Borough	• Penn Borough	• Southwest Greensburg Borough
• Derry Township	• Jeannette, City of	• Monessen, City of	• Penn Township	• Trafford Borough
• Donegal Township	• Latrobe, City of	• Mount Pleasant Borough	• Salem Township	• Unity Township
• East Vandergrift Borough	• Laurel Mountain Borough	• Mount Pleasant Township	• Scottdale Borough	• Washington Township
• Export Borough	• Ligonier Borough	• Murrysville, Municipality of	• Sewickley Township	• West Newton Borough
• Greensburg, City of	• Ligonier Township	• New Kensington, City of	• Smithton Borough	• Youngwood Borough

During the plan update process, Westmoreland County and its participating municipalities engaged in the following steps of the planning process steps:

1. Identified and prioritized hazards that may affect the county and its municipalities.
2. Assessed the county’s and each municipalities’ vulnerabilities to these hazards.
3. Identified mitigation actions that can reduce those vulnerabilities.
4. Developed a strategy for implementing those actions, including identifying the agency (or agencies) responsible for each implementation.



Throughout the planning process, the general public was offered an opportunity to comment on the existing HMP and provide suggestions for the updated version. The county hosted two Planning Team meetings that were open to the public, during which residents could provide input on the HMP.

The following were identified by the Planning Team as hazards that present the highest risk to the county and its municipalities:

- Flood, Flash Flood, and Ice Jam
- Illicit Drug Use
- Utility Interruptions
- Winter Storm
- Tornado, Windstorm
- Environmental Hazards
- Terrorism
- Extreme Temperatures
- Radon Exposure
- Hailstorm
- Landslide

This HMP also includes hazard profiles for the following hazards (listed in order of highest risk factor analysis ranking to lowest):

- Wildfire
- Drought
- Structural Fire
- Transportation Accidents
- Hurricane and Tropical Storm
- Earthquake
- Nuclear Incidents
- Subsidence and Sinkholes
- Lightning
- Dam Failure
- Avalanche

To mitigate the effects of those hazards, the Planning Team identified the following goals for hazard mitigation over the next 5 years:

1. **Goal 1:** Prevent injury/death and damage from natural and human-caused hazards in Westmoreland County.
2. **Goal 2:** Protect the citizens of Westmoreland County as well as public and private property from the impacts of natural and human-caused hazards.



3. **Goal 3:** To protect and restore existing natural resources including wetlands, floodplains, and riparian buffers.
4. **Goal 4:** To enhance awareness, understanding, and preparedness among local, county, state, and federal emergency management personnel to protect public health and safety.
5. **Goal 5:** To promote public awareness on the potential impacts of natural and non-natural hazards, and actions to reduce those impacts.

Objectives and actions to be implemented are discussed in the Mitigation Action Plan in Section 6.2 of this HMP.

Additionally, Planning Team members will meet annually to evaluate the status of plan implementation and prepare a summary report of HMP status and any needed updates. The mitigation evaluation will address changes as new hazard events occur, as the area develops, and as more information becomes available pertaining to hazards and their impacts. The evaluation will include an assessment of whether the planning process and actions have been effective, the plan's goals are being reached, and changes are needed. The public is encouraged to give feedback (1) by directly contacting the Westmoreland County Hazard Mitigation Plan Coordinator, (2) during recurring review meetings, and (3) during the 5-year revision process.

To request information or provide comments regarding this plan, please contact the Westmoreland County Emergency Management Agency. Contact information is provided below:

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