

# VILLAGE OF KONGIGANAK HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (HMP)

May 2015

Newsletter 2

*This newsletter discusses the preparation of the Village of Kongiganak Hazard Mitigation Plan. It has been prepared to inform interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the project and to solicit comments. This newsletter can also be viewed on the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Website at: <http://ready.alaska.gov/plans/localhazmitplans>*

## HMP Development

The Village of Kongiganak was one of 21 communities selected by the State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) for a Hazard Mitigation Planning (HMP) development project. The plan identifies natural hazards that affect the community including earthquake, flood and erosion, ground failure, severe weather, volcano ashfall, and tundra/wildland fire. The HMP also identifies the people and facilities potentially at risk and potential actions to mitigate community hazards. The public participation and planning process is documented as part of the project.

## What is Hazard Mitigation?

Across the United States, natural disasters have increasingly caused injury, death, property damage, and business and government service interruptions. The toll on individuals, families, and businesses can be very high. The time, money, and emotional effort required to respond to and recover from these disasters take public resources and attention away from other important programs and problems.

People and property throughout Alaska are at risk from a variety of hazards that have the potential for causing human injury, property damage, or environmental harm.

The purpose of hazard mitigation is to implement projects that reduce the risk severity of hazards on people and property. Mitigation programs may include short-term and long-term activities to reduce hazard impacts or exposure to hazards. Mitigation could include education, construction, or planning projects. Hazard mitigation activity examples include relocating buildings, developing or strengthening building codes, and educating residents and building owners.

## Why Do We Need A Hazard Mitigation Plan?

A community is only eligible to receive grant money for mitigation programs by preparing and adopting a hazard mitigation plan. Communities must have an approved mitigation plan to receive grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for eligible mitigation projects.

## The Planning Process

There are very specific federal requirements that must be met when preparing a HMP. These requirements are commonly referred to as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, or DMA 2000 criteria. Information about the criteria may be found on the Internet at: <http://www.fema.gov/mitigation-planning-laws-regulations-guidance>.

The DMA 2000 requires the plan to document the following topics:

- ❑ Planning process
- ❑ Community Involvement and HMP review
- ❑ Hazard identification
- ❑ Risk assessment
- ❑ Mitigation Goals
- ❑ Mitigation programs, actions, and projects
- ❑ A resolution from the community adopting the plan

FEMA has prepared a Local Planning Review Guide (available at:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=4859>). It explains how the HMP meets each of the DMA2000 requirements. FEMA has prepared and “Mitigation Planning Guidance” and “How to Guides” (available at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources>). The Village’s Hazard Mitigation Plan will follow those guidelines.

The planning process kicked-off on January 23, 2015 by establishing a local planning committee and holding a meeting. The planning committee examined the full spectrum of hazards listed in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and identified six hazards the HMP would address.

After the first public meeting, Village planning staff and AECOM began identifying critical facilities, compiling the hazard profiles, assessing capabilities, and conducting the risk assessment for the identified hazards. Critical facilities are facilities that are critical to the recovery of a community in the event of a disaster. After collection of this information, AECOM helped to determine which critical facilities and estimated populations are vulnerable to the identified hazards in Kongiganak.

A mitigation strategy was the next component of the plan to be developed. Understanding the community’s local

capabilities and using information gathered from the public and the local planning committee and the expertise of the consultants and agency staff, a mitigation strategy was developed. The mitigation strategy is based on an evaluation of the hazards, and the assets at risk from those hazards. Mitigation goals and a list of potential actions/projects were developed as the foundation of the mitigation strategy.

Mitigation goals are defined as general guidelines that explain what a community wants to achieve in terms of hazard and loss prevention. Goals are positively stated future situations that are typically long-range, policy-oriented statements representing community-wide visions. Mitigation actions and projects are undertaken in order to achieve your stated objectives. On April 2, 2015, the local planning committee identified projects and/or actions for each hazard that focus on six categories: prevention, property protection, public education and awareness, natural resource protection, emergency services, and structural projects. A representative sample of the mitigation actions identified as a priority by the planning team are listed below, and explained in more detail in the plan.

The selected projects and/or actions will potentially be implemented over the next five years as funding becomes available. A maintenance plan was also been developed for the hazard mitigation plan. It outlines how the community will monitor progress on achieving the projects and actions that will help meet the stated goals and objectives, as well as an outline for continued public involvement.

The draft plan is available in the Tribal office for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to Jessica Evans (listed below) and be received no later than May 22, 2015. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their preliminary approval and returned to Kongiganak’s Tribal Council.

### The Planning Committee

The plan was developed with the assistance from the community’s planning committee consisting of a cross section from the community. Planning Team members who helped with developing the plan include Team Leader, Tracy Lewis, with assistance from Roland Andrew, Daniel Azean Sr, Gabriel Andrew, Leroy Igkurak, Benjamin Loranzo, Chester Lewis, and Jessica Evans with AECOM.

Sample of the Village of Kongiganak’s Mitigation Actions. Review the draft HMP for a complete list.		
Harden utility headers located along river embankments and on hillsides to mitigate potential flood, debris, and erosion damages.	Elevate residential, public, or critical facilities at least two feet above the base flood elevation, on gravel pads or pilings.	Construct debris basins to retain debris in order to prevent downstream drainage structure clogging.
Complete a ground failure (avalanche, landslide, permafrost etc.) location inventory; identify (and map) threatened critical facilities, residential buildings, infrastructure, and other essential buildings.	Improve and/or elevate boardwalks in order to protect against flooding roadways and ground failure. Replace GeoTrack bridge with boardwalk bridge.	Place tundra mats along trails that are frequently flooded or muddy, causing degradation and inability to access subsistence resources.
Develop gravel protection along hillsides to prevent problematic erosion.	Develop water and wastewater plant protection or sustainability plan.	Identify and pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation actions.
Identify, develop, implement, and enforce mitigation actions such as fuel breaks and reduction zones for potential wildland fire hazard areas.	Update fire-fighting equipment. Obtain equipment that can be carried on four wheelers (or trailers) and backpacks.	Investigate benefits of, and potentially join the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce monetary losses to individuals and the community
Identify critical facilities and vulnerable populations based on identified (and mapped where applicable) high hazard areas.	Reinforce buildings and homes against high winds to reduce damage to roofs and shaking.	Develop prioritized list of mitigation actions for threatened critical facilities and other buildings or infrastructure.

*We encourage you to learn more about the Village of Kongiganak’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed and to allow you every opportunity to voice your opinion regarding this important project. If you have any questions, comments, or requests for more information, please contact:*

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