

## **Chapter 3. Planning Process**

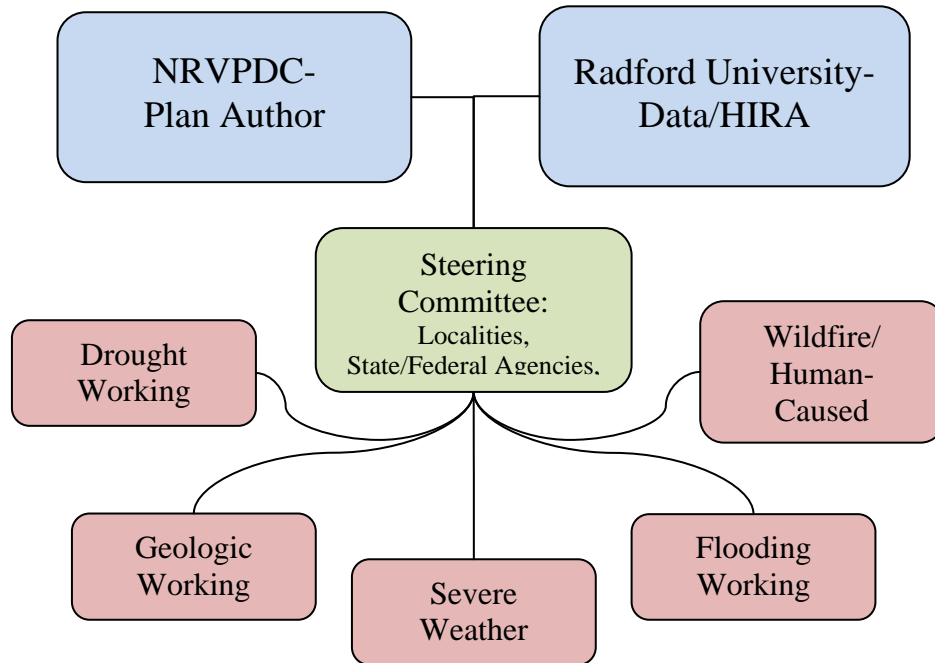
### **3.1 Planning Team**

Since 2009, the NRVPDC has been working with Radford University to update the *New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan*. The NRVPDC is responsible for organizing and coordinating the steering committee and working groups. Additionally, the NRVPDC is responsible for the required public involvement process for plan adoption. Radford University's Geography Department, under the leadership of Dr. Bernd Kuennecke, has been collecting, analyzing, and producing data for the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. The Radford team has developed unique and in-depth analysis of several hazards of particular concern in the region (i.e., rockfall, landslide, and flooding).

The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee is comprised of a dedicated group of professionals from across the region. Participants on the committee include participating locality staff, representatives from state and federal agencies, and other interested local stakeholders. Nichole Hair, planning staff from the Town of Christiansburg, has served as the steering committee chairperson for this project. The steering committee oversaw the progress of the HIRA development, the work being done by the working groups, and the public involvement process. In addition to these supervisory duties, the steering committee provided valuable input on the plan development and identifying regional projects to include in the plan.

The working groups met once in most cases, twice in the case of geologic hazards, to provide expert input on the HIRA information and on the development of the mitigation objectives and strategies. Local topical experts were invited to the working groups and steering committee members were also encouraged to attend these meetings.

Figure 3-1 below illustrates the organizational structure of the planning team.



**Figure 3-1. NRV Planning Team Organization**

### 3.2 Planning Process

The original New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan was drafted in 2004 and approved by FEMA in 2005. In 2009, Radford University received FEMA funds to partner with the NRVPDC to conduct the five-year update of the Plan. A regional kick-off meeting was held at the New River Valley Competitiveness Center on June 30, 2009. At this meeting, the NRVPDC and Radford University reviewed the process for updating the plan, as well as outlining how the old plan would be improved upon via more in-depth data and mapping.

The steering committee continued to meet monthly from July 2009 to November 2009. All meeting agendas and sign-in sheets for steering committee and working group meetings are provided in Appendix 1. From January 2010 to July 2010, working groups came together to focus on one hazard at a time. Prior to each meeting, local topical experts were identified and invited to participate in the meeting. The meetings all followed a standard agenda. First the data was presented and participants had an opportunity to comment and provide input on the data and/or mapping. Second, the previously determined mitigation goals were reviewed and discussion was open for any changes or modifications to the goals based on the data provided. Following this review, the group then brainstormed mitigation objectives and strategies to include in the plan. The final component of each working group meeting was a capabilities and resources assessment. Participants were asked to identify local resources and partners that could or should participate in the proposed mitigation strategies.

Following the completion of the working group meetings in July 2010, the steering committee resumed their monthly meetings. These meetings provided the steering committee the opportunity to review and approve the data/mapping, conduct plan review, identify regional projects, and oversee the public involvement process.

### 3.3 Plan Participation

Localities are required by FEMA to meet standards of participation in plan development. Meeting these standards makes them eligible to apply for and receive mitigation funding. For the NRV plan, participating localities were required to meet at least two of the optional requirements and both of the required standards. The following are the optional requirements: 1) attendance at a minimum of three steering committee and/or working group meetings, 2) submission of requested data, 3) review and comment on draft materials, 4) host opportunities for public involvement, or 5) link to the project website from the locality website. After a substantial number of the steering committee and working group meetings had been completed, NRVPCD staff worked with localities that had not been present at a minimum of three meetings to ensure that they had fulfilled the participation requirements. Most of the localities that had not been attending meetings were towns in Giles County that have limited staff time and resources. On August 18, 2010, NRVPCD staff traveled to Giles County to present the progress to date and discuss with these towns whether and how they could participate going forward.

In addition to meeting at least two of the previously discussed standards, all participating localities were required to adopt at least one specific project and formally adopt the plan. All adoption resolutions are included in Appendix 2.

Table 3-1 below indicates the participation of all localities in the region, as well as other active members of the steering committee. Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, the City of Radford, and the Towns of Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Glen Lyn, Narrows, Pearisburg, Pembroke, Pulaski, and Rich Creek have all elected to participate in the update of the plan. Table 3-2 below indicates plan participation in both the 2005 original plan and the 2010 update. The Town of Dublin has chosen not to participate in the regional plan due to staff limitations and indicating that they prefer Pulaski County to handle any necessary mitigation projects. While adopting the plan in 2005, the Town of Floyd has elected not to participate in the 2010 update of the regional hazard mitigation plan. The Town cited severe limits on town staff as well as an extremely limited town size, the smallest in the Commonwealth, as their primary reasons for not participating. Beyond those changes, no other changes in participation occurred between 2005 and 2010.

**Table 3-1. Plan Participation**

Steering Committee Member	Representing	Participation			
		Steering Committee	Working Group	Other Participation	Not Participating
Nichole Hair – Chairperson	Town of Christiansburg	X	X	X	
Lydeana Martin	Floyd County			X	
	Town of Floyd				X
Craig Whittaker	Giles County	X	X	X	
	Town of Glen Lyn				X
Jesse Parsell	Town of Narrows			X	

Steering Committee Member	Representing	Participation			
		Steering Committee	Working Group	Other Participation	Not Participating
Rick Tawney	Town of Pearisburg				
Perry Moore	Town of Pembroke				
Gary Eaton	Town of Rich Creek				
Jamie MacLean	Montgomery County	X	X	X	
Karen Drake	Town of Blacksburg	X		X	
Bobby Clark	Pulaski County	X	X	X	
	Town of Dublin				X
John Hawley	Town of Pulaski				
Andrew Foy	City of Radford	X	X	X	
Stan Crigger	VDEM	X	X		
Willie Richardson	VDEM	X	X		
Peter Corrigan	National Weather Service	X	X		
Todd Branscome	Radford University-Office of Emergency Preparedness		X		
Kevin Byrd	New River Valley Planning District Commission	X	X		
Jerry Stenger	University of Virginia-Climatology Office		X		
Gary Coggins	VDH- New River Health District		X		
Barry Robinson	VCE- Montgomery County		X		
David Spears	VDMME		X		
Robbie Coates	VDEM		X		
Jerry Higgins	Blacksburg, Christiansburg, VPI Water Authority				
Chuck Dietz	VDCR		X		
Brad Wright	VDOF		X		

**Table 3-2. Locality Participation 2005 and 2010**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>2005 Participation</b>	<b>2010 Participation</b>
Floyd County	Yes	Yes
Floyd, Town	Yes	No
Giles County	Yes	Yes
Glen Lyn, Town	No	No
Narrows, Town	Yes	Yes
Pearisburg, Town	Yes	Yes
Pembroke, Town	Yes	Yes
Rich Creek, Town	Yes	Yes
Montgomery County	Yes	Yes
Blacksburg, Town	Yes	Yes
Christiansburg, Town	Yes	Yes
Pulaski County	Yes	Yes
Dublin, Town	No	No
Pulaski, Town	Yes	Yes
City of Radford	Yes	Yes

All meetings of the steering committee and working groups were open to the public as an opportunity for interested businesses, non-profit agencies, and individuals to participate. Meeting dates and times were published in the NRVPCD's bimonthly newsletter, both in print and electronically, as well as on the project website. Periodic updates were also published in the newsletter. The NRVPCD newsletter and project website were the two primary means of communicating about the planning process to those interested parties not directly involved in the process.

At the beginning of the planning process several key businesses in the region, including electric and gas utilities and the operators of the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, were invited to participate on the steering committee. Representatives from some of these businesses participated in a single meeting, but chose not to continue participation. During the plan review phase, invitations were sent to local chambers of commerce and their members to review and provide comment on the plan. Additionally, a brief overview of the plan and the invitation to comment on the plan was included in chamber of commerce newsletters. Adjacent planning district commissions were individually invited to review the draft plan and provide comment. The steering committee developed a list of local non-profits that would be interested in the results of the plan and those non-profits were also invited to review and comment on the plan.

### **3.4 Plan Update**

For the five-year update for the New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan, the planning team and steering committee reviewed and updated each chapter of the plan. The general plan chapters, such as the Introduction, Community Profile, Planning Process, and Plan Maintenance chapters were drafted and provided to the steering committee for review. Each of the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) sections were revised based on current information and the updated analysis conducted by Radford University. The working groups discussed both

historical information focused on each hazard as well as brainstorming new mitigation objectives and strategies. These new strategies are included in each hazard section and in the mitigation strategy chapter. The Community Summaries chapter was updated through discussions with each community's representative to the steering committee. Through these discussions, new information was added where necessary and specific mitigation projects identified by the community were included.

The planning team reviewed numerous local documents to include in various sections of the updated plan, including but not limited to local comprehensive plans, emergency operations plans, and capital improvement plans. The information gleaned from these sources was included as data in the HIRA chapter, as well as providing some of the basis of the capabilities assessment section. The local comprehensive plans were particularly useful in determining proposed areas for future growth and areas where hazards may have the most impact. A summary of plans reviewed are presented in Table 3-3.

**Table 3-3. Plans Reviewed during Planning Process**

Locality	Emergency Operations Plan	Floodplain Management Plan	Stormwater Management Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Open Space Plan	Watershed Protection Plan	Capital Improvement Plan
Floyd County	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Floyd, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	X
Giles County	*	*	*	√	*	*	√
Glen Lyn, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Narrows, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Pearisburg, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Pembroke, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Rich Creek, Town	*	*	*	√	*	*	**
Montgomery County	√	*	*	√	√	*	√
Blacksburg, Town	*	*	*	√	√	*	√
Christiansburg, Town	√	*	*	√	*	*	**
Pulaski County	√	*	*	√	*	*	**
Dublin, Town	√	*	*	√	*	*	√
Pulaski, Town	*	*	√	√	*	*	**
Radford, City	*	*	*	√	*	*	**

\* Limited knowledge of and application of plan

\*\* Most plans are older and have not been updated

√ = Reviewed

X = Not available for review

### **3.5 Public Involvement**

Public input was solicited throughout the planning process. All steering committee and working group meetings were placed on the NRVPCD calendar published in the bi-monthly newsletter and were open to the public. A project website was created at: <http://www.nrvpcd.org/HazardMitigation/HazardMitigationPlanning.html>. This website allows the public to view not only parts of the plan, but also resources shared with the steering committee and working groups at meetings. This site also provides an input form for those members of the community to provide their input, even if they are unable to attend the public meetings.

Two rounds of public meetings occurred in conjunction with the drafting of this plan. In September 2010, the NRVPCD hosted a series of five public open house meetings for the public to review and comment on the data and mapping to be included in the plan. An open house was held in each of the four counties and the city to facilitate access for the public. At these open house meetings, a brief overview presentation was given at the top of the hour to provide participants a context for the material they were reviewing. The mapping to be included in the plan was displayed around the room for participants to examine and comment on. Comment sheets were provided as well as the project website address for participants to use for their comments. A second round of public meetings was held in February 2011 to provide community members the opportunity to comment on the entire plan before its official adoption by localities. Copies of the meeting announcements and press releases are included in Appendix 3.