

Gunnison County Planning Team

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Table of Contents

Gunnison County Planning Team	1
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Figures	5
List of Tables	5
Section One: Introduction.....	7
Hazard Mitigation Planning.....	7
Hazard Mitigation Assistance	7
Summary of Changes.....	8
Goals and Objectives	9
Participating Jurisdictions	10
Section Two: How to Use This Hazard Mitigation Plan.....	11
Introduction	11
How to Use This Document.....	11
Section Three: Planning Area Overview.....	13
Introduction	13
Location and Geography	13
Demographics	15
Housing.....	17
Employment and Economics	18
Section Four: Planning Process Summary.....	19
Introduction	19
Plan Update Process.....	19
Stakeholder and Public Involvement.....	21
Section Five: Risk Assessment Summary.....	23
Introduction	23
Hazard Identification.....	23
Hazard Assessment Summary Tables.....	25
FEMA National Risk Index.....	28
Historical Disaster Declarations.....	29
Hazard Profiles.....	30
Section Six: Mitigation Strategy.....	33
Introduction	33
Summary of Changes.....	33
Selected Mitigation and Strategic Actions.....	33
Participant Mitigation and Strategic Actions.....	34
Section Seven: Plan Implementation and Maintenance	35
Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan	35
Continued Public Involvement	36
Unforeseen Opportunities.....	36
Incorporation into Existing Planning Mechanisms.....	36
Section Eight: Participant Profiles	39
Purpose of Participant Profiles	39
Participant Profile Appendix	
Gunnison County	
City of Gunnison	
Town of Crested Butte	
Town of Mt. Crested Butte	

Table of Contents

Gunnison County Fire Protection District	
Mt. Crested Butte Water and Sanitation District	
Appendix A: Full Risk Assessment	
Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation	
Appendix C: Planning Area Profile	
Appendix D: Mitigation Strategy	
Appendix E: Hazard Mitigation Project Funding Guidebook	
Appendix F: Guide to Review and Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan	

List of Figures

Figure 1: Gunnison County Planning Area	14
Figure 2: Gunnison County Population, 1880-2020	15
Figure 3: Population by Age Cohort and Sex (2023)	15
Figure 4: Housing Age in Gunnison County	18
Figure 5: Project Timeline	Error! Bookmark not defined.

List of Tables

Table 1: Participating Jurisdictions	10
Table 2: School Inventory	16
Table 3: Health Facilities	16
Table 4: County & State ESL and Poverty At-Risk Populations	16
Table 5: County Racial Composition Trends	17
Table 6: Vulnerable County & State Housing Characteristics	17
Table 7: County Housing Characteristics	18
Table 8: Vulnerable Employment & Economic Characteristics	18
Table 9: Hazards Addressed in the Plan	23
Table 10: Loss Estimation for Gunnison County	25
Table 11: County Risk Assessment	27
Table 12: National Risk Index	28
Table 13: Presidential Disaster Declarations	29
Table 14: USDA Secretarial Disasters (2012-2025)	29
Table 15: State Emergency Declarations	30

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Section One: Introduction

Hazard Mitigation Planning

Hazard mitigation planning is a process in which hazards are identified and profiled; people and facilities at risk are assessed for threats and potential vulnerabilities; and strategies and mitigation measures are developed. Hazard mitigation planning enhances communities' and other governmental entities' ability to function effectively in the face of natural disasters. The process aims to reduce risk and vulnerability, thereby lessening impacts on life, the economy, and infrastructure.



FEMA definition of
Hazard Mitigation

“Any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazards.”

Severe weather and hazardous events occur more frequently in our daily lives. Pursuing mitigation strategies reduces risk and is socially and economically responsible for preventing long-term risks from natural and human-caused hazards.

Hazards, such as severe winter weather, avalanches, intentional attacks, landslides, floods, lightning, drought, and wildfires, are part of the world around us. These hazard events can occur during regular operations or due to human error. All jurisdictions participating in this planning process are vulnerable to a wide range of hazards that threaten the safety of residents and can damage or destroy public and private property, degrade the environment, or disrupt the local economy and overall quality of life.

This plan updated the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was approved in 2021. The plan update was developed in compliance with the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). By preparing this plan, Gunnison County has demonstrated a commitment to reducing risks from hazards and to helping decision-makers establish mitigation activities and resources.

Hazard Mitigation Assistance

On June 1, 2009, FEMA initiated the integration of the Hazard Mitigation Assistance program, which aligned specific policies and timelines of the various mitigation programs. These Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs present a critical opportunity to minimize the risk to individuals and property from hazards while simultaneously reducing the reliance on federal disaster funds.

Mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. Mitigation focuses on breaking the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. Mitigation lessens the impact disasters have on people's lives and property through damage prevention, appropriate development standards, and affordable flood insurance. Through measures such as avoiding building in damage-prone areas, stringent building codes, and floodplain management regulations, the impact on lives and communities is lessened.

- FEMA Mitigation Directorate

Separate legislative actions authorized each Hazard Mitigation Assistance program; each program differs slightly in scope and intent.

- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** To qualify for post-disaster mitigation funds, local jurisdictions must adopt a mitigation plan approved by FEMA. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds states, territories, Indian tribal governments, local governments, and eligible private non-profits following a presidential disaster declaration. The DMA 2000 authorizes up to seven percent of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds available to a state after a disaster to develop or update state, tribal, and local mitigation plans.
- **Flood Mitigation Assistance:** This program provides grant funds to implement projects such as acquiring or elevating flood-prone homes. Jurisdictions must be participating communities in the National Flood Insurance Program to qualify for this grant. Flood Mitigation Assistance aims to reduce or eliminate claims under the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities:** FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program provides pre-disaster funding to help states, tribes, and local governments reduce long-term risk from natural hazards. The program prioritizes projects that enhance community resilience, protect critical infrastructure, and support innovative and cost-effective mitigation strategies, with an emphasis on reducing future disaster losses.
- **Fire Mitigation Assistance Grants:** Section 404 of the Stafford Act allows FEMA to provide Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grants to any area that received a Fire Management Assistance Grant declaration, even if no presidential declaration was made. Fire Mitigation Assistance Grants help communities implement long-term mitigation measures after a wildfire.

See *Appendix E: Hazard Mitigation Project Funding Guidebook* for more information about these grant programs and other funding opportunities to help implement identified mitigation actions.

Summary of Changes

The hazard mitigation planning process changes during each update to best accommodate the planning area and specific conditions. Changes from the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan and planning process in this update included an updated plan layout, a greater effort to include all taxing authorities as participants, an in-depth funding guidebook, and changes to meet updated FEMA hazard mitigation plan policies. The plan was also updated to reflect changing priorities for each participating jurisdiction. Each local planning team identified and rated hazards by level of concern and reviewed mitigation actions. Each local planning team reviewed the mitigation actions from 2021 and updated the timeline, priority (high, medium, low), and status. Local

planning teams also added new mitigation actions to better align with changing priorities and concerns. An added component to this Hazard Mitigation Plan is the integration of Community Rating System planning aspects for Gunnison County.

Goals and Objectives

The potential for disaster losses and the probability of natural and human-caused hazards present a significant concern for the jurisdictions participating in this plan. The driving motivation behind this hazard mitigation plan is to reduce vulnerability and the likelihood of impacts on the health, safety, and welfare of all residents and visitors in the county. The Gunnison County Planning Team reviewed and approved goals, which helped guide the identification of broad-based and jurisdiction-specific mitigation strategies and projects to reduce their vulnerability and build stronger, more resilient communities if implemented.

The Gunnison County Planning Team reviewed and updated goals from the 2021 hazard mitigation plan. The goals and objectives for the 2026 plan update are as follows.

Goal 1: Reduce the potential impacts of hazards to life safety, private property, and the environment in the county.

Objectives

1. Improve public education and awareness of risk to hazards in the county, and acceptance of hazard mitigation actions.
2. Continue improving geospatial resources to support hazard mitigation in the county.
3. Minimize the vulnerability of existing and new development to hazards.
4. Reduce long-term vulnerabilities from high-hazard potential dams that pose an unacceptable risk to the public.
5. Reduce flood risk to life and property by strengthening local floodplain management practices, maintaining compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program, and improving standings in the Community Rating System.

Goal 2: Reduce the potential impact of hazards on community lifelines, local government assets, infrastructure, and critical support services.

Objectives

1. Understand and assess the vulnerability of existing and new critical infrastructure to hazards.
2. Minimize disruption to critical services during and after hazard events.

Goal 3: Reduce the potential impact of hazards on the county's economy, natural resources, historic treasures and interests, and other characteristics that add to the quality of life of the citizens and visitors of the county.

Objectives

1. Reduce the county's liability with respect to hazards.
2. Increase economic resiliency to disasters.

Participating Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions that participated in the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan are listed in the table below. These jurisdictions met all the requirements for participation by attending required meetings, assisting with data collection, identifying mitigation actions, reviewing plan drafts, and either adopting the plan by resolution or planning to do so.

Table 1: Participating Jurisdictions

Participating Jurisdictions
Gunnison County
City of Gunnison
Town of Crested Butte
Town of Mt. Crested Butte
Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Mt. Crested Butte Water & Sanitation District

Section Two: How to Use This Hazard Mitigation Plan

Introduction

This hazard mitigation plan was developed for anyone who lives, works, owns a business, owns land, or visits Gunnison County. Different sections of the plan will be helpful to different people. This section is designed to help guide readers to the most relevant information.

How to Use This Document

Jurisdiction that Participated in the Plan

I am a governing official from a participating jurisdiction and want to learn more about the hazards that could impact my jurisdiction, identify strategies to reduce vulnerability to those hazards, secure funding for those strategies, and keep the plan up to date. I would review:

- **Section Three Planning Area Overview and Appendix C Planning Area Profile:** To learn about demographics, at-risk populations, housing, employment, economics, social vulnerability, rural capacity index, state and federal areas, and historical sites.
- **Section Five Risk Assessment Summary and Appendix A Full Risk Assessment:** To learn about the hazards that could impact Gunnison County, where those hazards are likely to occur, how often they are likely to happen, the possible extent of the hazards, how climate change will impact the hazards, and countywide vulnerabilities.
- **Section Six Plan Implementation and Maintenance, and Appendix F Guide to Review and Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan:** To learn about plan maintenance and how to update your participant section.
- **Participant Profiles Appendix:** To learn jurisdictional-specific information about Gunnison County, local communities, and other local jurisdictions. Each participant section contains information about prioritized hazards, infrastructure critical to community lifelines, and mitigation strategies.
- **Appendix E Hazard Mitigation Project Funding Guidebook:** To learn about various federal, state, and other funding sources to help pay for identified mitigation strategies.

Resident, Landowner, Visitor, or Business

I am a resident, landowner, visitor, or business, and I want to learn about Gunnison County/my community and how to protect my family, home, and property from natural and human-caused hazards. I would review:

- **Section Three Planning Area Overview and Appendix C Planning Area Profile:** To learn about demographics, at-risk populations, housing, employment, economics, social vulnerability, rural capacity index, state and federal areas, and historical sites.

- **Section Five Risk Assessment Summary and Appendix A Full Risk Assessment:** To learn about the hazards that could impact Gunnison County, where those hazards are likely to occur, how often they are likely to happen, the possible extent of the hazards, how climate change will impact the hazards, and countywide vulnerabilities.
- **Participant Profile Appendix:** To learn jurisdictional-specific information about Gunnison County, local communities, and other local jurisdictions. Each participant section contains information about prioritized hazards, infrastructure critical to community lifelines, and mitigation strategies.

State or Federal Agency

I am with a state or federal agency and want to learn more about the planning process, hazard risks, and mitigation strategies across all jurisdictions in Gunnison County. I would review:

- **Section One Introduction:** To learn about the goals and objectives of the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- **Section Three Planning Area Overview and Appendix C Planning Area Profile:** To learn about demographics, at-risk populations, housing, employment, economics, social vulnerability, rural capacity index, state and federal areas, and historical sites.
- **Section Four Planning Process Summary and Appendix B Planning Process Documentation:** To learn about the planning process, who attended meetings, and who was invited to participate.
- **Section Five Risk Assessment Summary and Appendix A Full Risk Assessment:** To learn about the hazards that could impact Gunnison County, where those hazards are likely to occur, how often they are likely to happen, the possible extent of the hazards, how climate change will impact the hazards, and countywide vulnerabilities.
- **Appendix D Mitigation Strategy and Participant Profiles Appendix:** To learn about the mitigation strategies identified by each participating jurisdiction.

Section Three: Planning Area Overview

Introduction

To identify jurisdictional vulnerabilities, it is vital to understand the people and built environment of the planning area. The following section provides a summary of Gunnison County's characteristics. A more detailed profile broken down by community is covered in *Appendix C: Planning Area Profile*, including demographics, at-risk populations, employment, economics, and housing.

Location and Geography

Located in the mountains of central-western Colorado, Gunnison County sits between the Continental Divide, the Elk Range and Sawatch Range, and north of the San Juan Range. Much of the county includes the Gunnison Basin, which is home to the endangered Gunnison Sage Grouse.

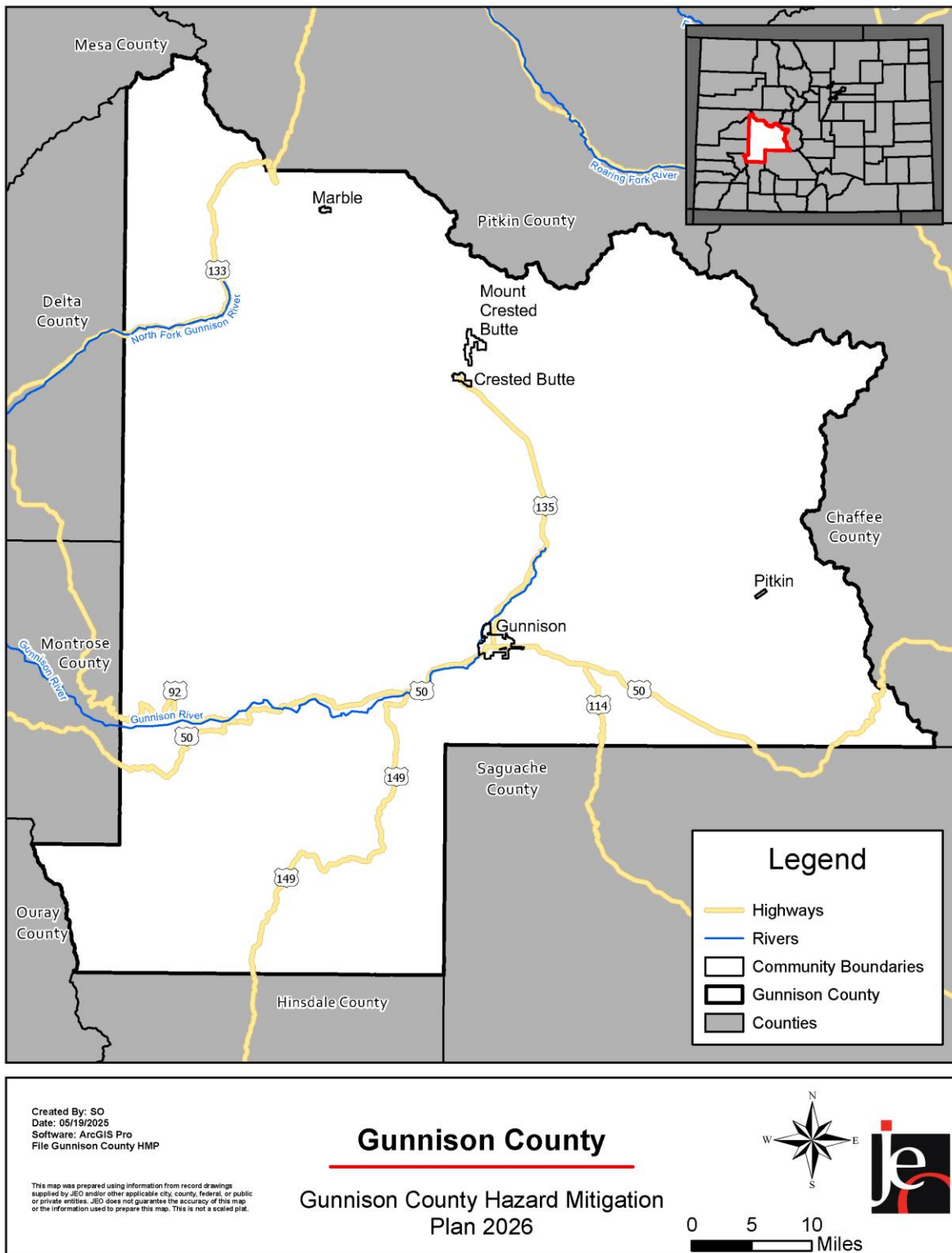
Gunnison County encompasses 3,260 square miles (21 square miles are water) and includes five incorporated municipalities:

- The City of Gunnison is located at an elevation of 7,710 feet and has a total area of 4.9 square miles.
- The Town of Crested Butte is located at an elevation of 8,865 feet and has a total area of 0.84 square miles.
- The Town of Marble is located at an elevation of 8,009 feet and has a total area of 0.36 square miles.
- The Town of Mt. Crested Butte is located at an elevation of 9,738 feet and has a total area of 2.05 square miles.
- The Town of Pitkin is located at an elevation of 9,229 feet and has a total area of .026 square miles.

The Gunnison River flows west through the county. Other major waterways include the East River, Taylor River, Lake Fork, Cebolla Creek, Cochetopa Creek, Tomichi Creek, Quartz Creek, Blue Mesa Reservoir, and Taylor Park Reservoir. The climate varies widely depending on elevation. The City of Gunnison receives significantly less snowfall, with an average of 49.7 inches per year, while the Town of Crested Butte receives an average snowfall of 197.5 inches per year.

The climate in the river basin is semiarid, but rainfall and temperatures vary widely depending on elevation. Average annual precipitation is approximately 11 inches. Snowfall levels are much higher, averaging 40-50 inches annually. Vegetation in the area includes sagebrush, spruce-fir, and aspen groves, depending on elevation. Major transportation routes include U.S. Highway 50 and State Highway 135. Figure 1 shows Gunnison County, incorporated communities, major transportation routes, major waterways, and locations within the state.

Figure 1: Gunnison County Planning Area

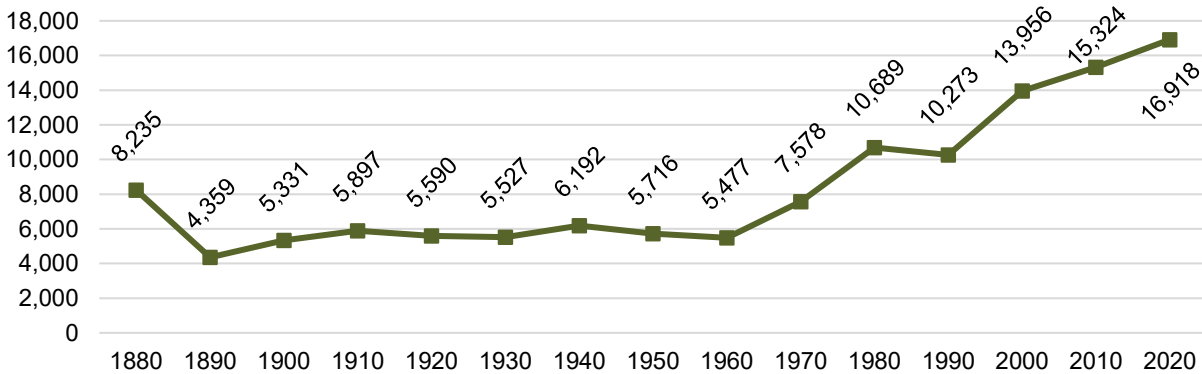


Gunnison County has a substantial amount of federally owned public land. Notably, the Gunnison National Forest covers large swaths of the county, surrounding Gunnison County from the north, east, and south. The area includes the Elk Mountains and the lower Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands can also be found throughout the central and southern portions of the county.

Demographics

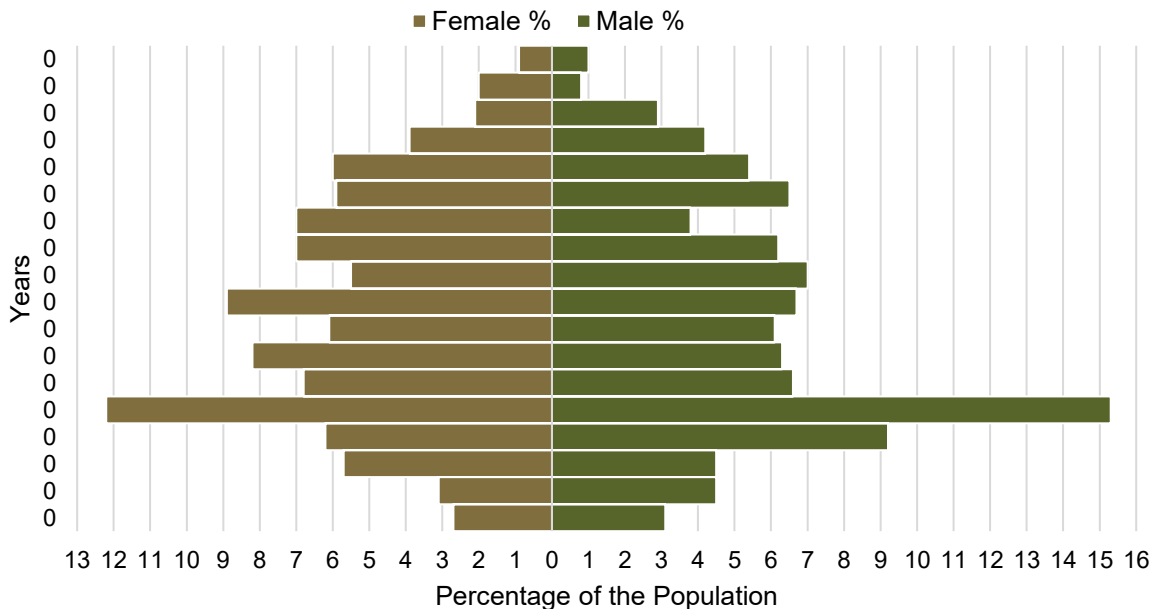
The U.S. Census Bureau collects specific demographic information for Gunnison County. The estimated population of the planning area is 17,158.¹

Figure 2: Gunnison County Population, 1880-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau²

Figure 3: Population by Age Cohort and Sex (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau³

1 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: S0101: Age and Sex." <https://data.census.gov/>.

2 United States Census Bureau. "2020 Census Bureau Decennial Census: P1: Race." <https://data.census.gov/>.

3 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: S0101: Age and Sex." <https://data.census.gov/>.

Community and regional vulnerability are affected by population growth or decline. Areas growing quickly may lack the resources to provide services to all residents in a reasonable timeframe, including snow removal, emergency storm shelters, repairs to damaged infrastructure, or even tracking the locations of vulnerable populations. Gunnison County has grown considerably since 1990, adding more than 6,000 residents. Additional population information broken down by community can be found in *Appendix C: Planning Area Profile*.

In general, specific populations may be more vulnerable due to difficulties with medical issues, age extremes, and communication issues caused by language barriers. Several at-risk populations have been identified in Gunnison County. These include:

- Medical and Care Facilities
- Schools
- Populations That Speak English as a Second Language
- Racial Minorities

Medical and care facilities would typically be identified as vulnerable population groups. Gunnison County has one hospital and three adult care homes.⁴ This adds additional vulnerabilities to the general population. The tables below and on the next page list the at-risk populations in Gunnison County. See *Appendix C: Planning Area Profile* for additional information about at-risk populations.

Table 2: School Inventory

School District	Total Enrollment (2024-2025)	Teachers (2024-2025)
Gunnison Watershed RE1J	1,284	149

Source: Colorado Department of Education^{5,6}

Table 3: Health Facilities

Hospital	Adult Care Homes	Assisted Living Homes
1	3	0

Source: Colorado Department of Health and Environment⁷

Table 4: County & State ESL and Poverty At-Risk Populations

Jurisdiction	Percent That Speaks English as a Second Language
Gunnison County	7%
State of Colorado	16.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau⁸

4 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. 2025. "Regulated Health Facilities". <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/find-and-compare-facilities>.

5 Colorado Department of Education. 2024. "PK-12 Membership Trend by District." <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent>.

6 Colorado Department of Education. 2024. "Count of Teachers by District, Ethnicity and Gender." <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/staffcurrent>.

7 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. 2025. "Regulated Health Facilities". <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/find-and-compare-facilities>.

8 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: S1601: Language Spoken at Home." <https://data.census.gov/>.

Table 5: County Racial Composition Trends

Race	2010	2010	2023	2023	% Change
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
White, Not Hispanic	14,152	92.4%	15,373	89.6%	2.8%
Black	48	0.3%	181	1.1%	-0.7%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	208	1.4%	50	0.3%	1.1%
Asian	100	0.7%	135	0.8%	-0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	0.0%	18	0.1%	-0.1%
Other Races	510	3.3%	306	1.8%	1.5%
Two or More Races	302	2.0%	1,095	6.4%	-4.4%
Total Population	15,324	-	17,158	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau^{9,10}

Housing

The U.S. Census Bureau provides information related to housing units and potential areas of vulnerability. Potentially vulnerable housing characteristics include vacant housing, rental properties, mobile homes, older housing, homes without internet, and homes with no vehicles available. The tables below show the characteristics of vulnerable housing in Gunnison County. Additional housing information by community can be found in *Appendix C: Planning Area Profile*.

Table 6: Vulnerable County & State Housing Characteristics

Housing Characteristics	Gunnison County	State of Colorado
Occupied Housing Units	7,903 (64%)	2,325,576 (91.4%)
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	0.3%	0.3%
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	0.7%	0.7%
No Telephone Service Available	0.9%	0.7%
Broadband Internet Subscription	93.3%	92.8%
No Vehicles Available	3%	5.1%
Mobile Homes	4.8%	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau^{11,12}

9 United States Census Bureau. "2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171): P1: Race." <https://data.census.gov>.

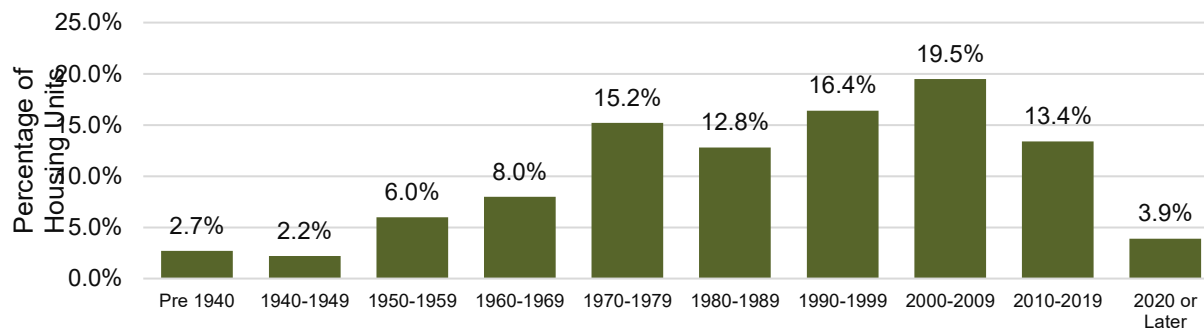
10 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." <https://data.census.gov/>.

11 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics." <https://data.census.gov/>.

12 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP02: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States." <https://data.census.gov/>.

Table 7: County Housing Characteristics

Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Renter-Occupied Housing Units
7,903 (64.4%)	4,445 (36%)	5,290 (66.9%)	2,613 (33.1%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau¹³**Figure 4: Housing Age in Gunnison County**Source: U.S. Census Bureau¹⁴

Housing Crisis

Gunnison County is a highly desirable place to visit and live, with scenic views and abundant recreational opportunities. Additionally, building new housing is extremely difficult due to the dramatic elevation changes. This has caused a housing shortage and a dramatic increase in the county's housing costs. The lack of available and affordable workforce housing has left local workers with few options, leading to employee shortages at local businesses. Those working in Gunnison County often have to commute into the county from other communities. Like many mountain communities, Gunnison County is also experiencing a very high vacancy rate at over 40% in the 2020 U.S. Census. This is likely due to the increasing number of second homes and short-term vacation rentals, which adds to the housing shortage.

Employment and Economics

The U.S. Census Bureau provides information related to employment and economic indicators. Low-income and unemployed populations may be more vulnerable to specific hazards, such as flooding and severe winter weather. Additional employment and economic information broken down by community can be found in *Appendix C: Planning Area Profile*.

Table 8: Vulnerable Employment & Economic Characteristics

Employment and Economic Characteristics	Gunnison County	State of Colorado
Percent of People Living Below the Poverty Line	7%	9.4%
Median Household Income	\$77,358	\$92,470
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau¹⁵

13 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics." <https://data.census.gov/>.

14 United States Census Bureau. "2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics." <https://data.census.gov/>.

15 United States Census Bureau. "2022 Census Bureau American Community Survey: DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics." <https://data.census.gov/>.

Section Four: Planning Process Summary

Introduction

The process utilized to develop a hazard mitigation plan is often as important as the final planning document. For this planning process, Gunnison County adapted FEMA's four-step hazard mitigation planning process to meet the needs of the participating jurisdictions. The following pages summarize the planning process during the plan update.

FEMA Planning Process Requirements

Requirement §201.6(b): Planning process. An open public involvement process is essential to the development of an effective plan. In order to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of natural disasters, the planning process shall include:

- (1) An opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval;
- (2) An opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process; and
- (3) Review and incorporation, if appropriate, of existing plans, studies, reports, and technical information.

Requirement §201.6(c)(1): The plan shall document the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved.

Plan Update Process

Once Gunnison County was awarded a FEMA grant for its hazard mitigation plan update, JEO Consulting Group, Inc. was contracted to assist, guide, and facilitate the planning process and plan assembly. To start the project, a meeting was held between Gunnison County Emergency Management staff and JEO Consulting Group, Inc. to discuss the planning process and a general schedule for the plan update (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Project Timeline



To participate in developing this plan update, jurisdictions were required to have at least one representative present at the Round 1 or Round 2 meetings, view meeting recordings, or attend a follow-up meeting with either JEO Consulting Group, Inc. or Gunnison County.

Round 1 Meetings: Hazard Vulnerability & Plan Integration

The Round 1 Meeting was intended to familiarize jurisdictional representatives (i.e., the local planning teams) and stakeholders with the plan update process, expected actions for the coming months, the responsibilities of participating, and to collect preliminary information to update the plan. After the meeting, the attendees conducted risk and vulnerability assessments based on local capabilities, prior hazard events, and potential exposure. In addition, local planning team members evaluated the potential integration of the hazard mitigation plan alongside other local planning mechanisms.

The Round 1 Meeting was a hybrid event, with participants and stakeholders able to join in person or via Zoom. The meeting was held on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District from 11:00 am to noon. The meeting was held as part of the Upper Gunnison Share Stewardship Council meeting, as many participants and stakeholders would already be in attendance. Virtual and in-person sign-in sheets are available in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*.

Round 2 Meetings: Mitigation Strategies, National Flood Insurance Program, & Plan Maintenance

The Round 2 Meeting was designed to identify and prioritize new mitigation measures, update previous mitigation actions from the 2020 hazard mitigation plan, update National Flood Insurance Program information, and determine when the plan would be reviewed and by whom. Attendees were also asked to review the information collected from the Round 1 meeting and add additional vulnerability and impact analysis.

The Round 2 Meeting was a hybrid meeting where participants, stakeholders, and the public could join in person or online via Zoom. The meeting was held on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at the Gunnison County Emergency Operations Center from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Virtual and in-person sign-in sheets are available in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*.

Public Review

Once the draft of the hazard mitigation plan was completed, a public review period was opened to allow local planning teams and stakeholders to review the plan, provide comments, and request changes. The public review period was open from May 6, 2026, through May 27, 2026. Participating jurisdictions were notified of this public review period by email. Jurisdictions and stakeholders may provide comments by phone or email to the Gunnison County Planning Team. A review of the comments and their sources is available in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*. All changes and comments were reviewed and incorporated into the plan as applicable.

Plan Adoption

Per FEMA requirements, each participant must formally adopt this multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan by adopting a resolution. This approval will create individual ownership of the plan by each participant. Formal adoption provides evidence of a participant's full commitment to implement the plan's goals, objectives, and action items. A copy of the resolution draft provided to participating jurisdictions is located in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*, along with any copies of adoption resolutions that have already been received.

FEMA Plan Adoption Requirement

Requirement §201.6(c)(5): For multi-jurisdictional plans, each jurisdiction requesting approval of the plan must document that it has been formally adopted.

Stakeholder and Public Involvement

To notify and engage the public in the planning process, a wide range of stakeholders, including State of Colorado agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and the general public, were contacted and encouraged to participate in the plan update. Lists of the notified stakeholders, agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions are available in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*.

Stakeholder Groups

48 stakeholder groups were identified, and invitations to participate in the planning process by attending meetings were emailed and mailed. The USFS, DHSEM, CPW, Paonia Dam, Western Colorado University, West Region Wildfire Council, CFRI, Colorado University, Gunnison High School, and High Country Conservation Advocates attended meetings. None of the stakeholders returned information about their prioritized hazards of concern or mitigation actions.

Neighboring Jurisdictions

Neighboring jurisdictions were notified and invited to participate in the planning process by attending meetings. The City of Delta and Delta County attended the Round 1 meeting. No neighboring jurisdictions attended a meeting. No comments or revisions were received from any neighboring jurisdictions.

Public Survey

The public was encouraged to participate in the planning process through an online survey. The survey was shared with the public using social media posts from the county, participants, and stakeholders. Copies of the survey and outreach documentation are available in *Appendix B: Planning Process Documentation*. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the top hazards of concern better and document specific locations where the public had concerns. In total, 37 members of the public responded to the survey. Due to the low response rate, the results are not included in the risk assessment portion of the plan as originally planned. From the limited responses, the top concerns were wildfire, drought, and communication disruption.

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Section Five: Risk Assessment Summary

Introduction

The ultimate purpose of this hazard mitigation plan is to minimize loss of life and property across Gunnison County from natural and human-caused hazards. The basis for the planning process is the county and local risk assessment. This section summarizes potential hazards, county vulnerabilities and exposures, probability of future occurrences, and potential impacts and losses. By conducting a county- and local-level risk assessment, participating jurisdictions can develop specific strategies to address the areas of concern identified through this process. This section summarizes the risk assessment for Gunnison County. The entire risk assessment is available in *Appendix A: Full Risk Assessment*.

Hazard Identification

Identifying relevant hazards for Gunnison County began with a review of the Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028. The Gunnison County Planning Team reviewed, discussed, and determined the list of hazards to be profiled in this hazard mitigation plan update. It was decided that the hazards addressed in the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan were still applicable and would be used for this plan update. It was also decided that human-caused hazards would be added to this plan update. The hazards for which a risk assessment was completed are listed below.

Table 9: Hazards Addressed in the Plan

Hazards Addressed in the Plan		
Avalanche	Flooding & Ice Jams	Lightning
Communication Disruption / Failure	Ground Subsidence & Expansive Soils	Mass Casualty Incident
Dam Failure	Hailstorm	Pandemic
Drought	Hazardous Materials Release	Severe Winter Storm
Earthquake	High Wind	Terrorism & Cyber-Attack
Extreme Cold	Landslide / Rockfall / Debris Flow	Wildfire

Hazards identified in the Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023 - 2028 that were not identified in the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan update include the following list.¹⁶

- Animal Disease Outbreak
- Extreme Heat
- Levee Incident
- Pest Infestation
- Erosion / Deposition
- Tornado

¹⁶ Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. 2023. "Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028". <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MPL0Oiy-yZDIMziTVYkR12s35FzG-G8/view>.

- Wildlife-Vehicle Collision

Gunnison County and the participating jurisdictions reviewed these hazards and were not included in this plan for various reasons. Specific reasons for omission are discussed in the hazard section below.

Animal Disease Outbreak

Animal agriculture is not a large portion of Gunnison County's local economy. In the 2022 Census of Agriculture, the county ranks 31 out of 63 Colorado counties in livestock products sold.¹⁷ Gunnison County and the local planning teams considered this hazard to be of very low concern and did not need to be profiled in the hazard mitigation plan.

Levee Incident

There are no known levees located in or upstream of the county.

Erosion / Deposition

Erosion and deposition can come from several sources, including water, wind, waves, or moving ice. The most common ways this occurs in Colorado are by water and wind. As outlined in the Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028, wind deposits for Gunnison County are absent.¹⁸ Erosion and deposition from water are addressed in this plan's flooding risk assessment.

Extreme Heat

Due to the county's higher elevation and low humidity, extreme heat is not a concern in Gunnison County. According to NOAA climate data, normal maximum temperatures don't exceed 80 degrees in June, July, and August.¹⁹ Because of these low maximum temperatures, extreme heat will not be profiled in this plan.

Pest Infestation

Gunnison County's primary concern regarding pest infestation is tree kill, which increases wildfire risk. Pests impacting wildfire risk are discussed in the wildfire risk assessment. Because of this, pest infestation will not be individually profiled in this plan.

Tornado

Since 1996, NCEI data have reported one tornado event in Gunnison County.²⁰ The tornado had an EFU rating due to no reported damage. Due to the lack of historical events and the unlikelihood of one occurring in the future, this hazard has not been profiled in this plan.

Wildlife-Vehicle Collision

While vehicle-wildlife collisions have occurred, the number was lower than for vehicle-only collisions, and damage per event was similar. The Mass Casualty Incident hazard covers any significant incident with a high number of fatalities.

17 U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2022. "Census of Agriculture County Profile".

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Colorado/cp08051.pdf

18 Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. 2023. "Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028". <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MPL0Oiy-yZDIMziTvYkR12s35FzG-G8/view>.

19 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Centers for Environmental Information. November 2024. "Data Tools: 1991-2020 Normals". <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/us-climate-normals/>.

20 National Centers for Environmental Information. May 2025. "Storm Events Database". [NCEI Storm Event Database](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents/).

Hazard Assessment Summary Tables

The following tables provide an overview of the data contained in the hazard profiles. These tables are intended to be a quick reference for people using the plan. Detailed descriptions of each hazard are available in *Appendix A: Full Risk Assessment*. There are five main data points used in these tables.

- **Number of Events:** This shows how often a hazard event occurs. The frequency of a hazard event will affect how a community responds. Severe winter weather may not cause much damage each time, but multiple storms can cumulatively affect housing and utilities. In contrast, a public health emergency may not occur often, but a single event can have massive impacts on the county.
- **Property and Crop Damage in Dollars:** This is the total dollar amount of all property and crop damage recorded in federal, state, and local data sources. The limitation of these data sources is that dollar figures are usually estimates and often do not include all damages from every event, but only officially recorded damages from reported events.
- **Total Years of Record:** This is the span of years in which data is available for recorded events.
- **Historical Probability:** This can be calculated based on the total years of record and the years in which an event occurred. An example of the historical probability estimate is found below:

$$\text{Annual Probability (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total Years with an Event Occurring (\#)}}{\text{Total Years of Record (\#)}} \times 100$$

- **Future Likelihood:** This is the probability that a hazard will occur in the future. Future likelihood considers historical probability, climate change, and future development. It is broken down into the four categories listed below.

Very Unlikely = Hazard is expected to occur once every 50+ years.

Unlikely = Hazard is expected to occur once every 10-50 years.

Likely = Hazard is expected to occur once every 5-10 years.

Very Likely = Hazard is expected to occur once every 1 to 5 years.

Table 10: Loss Estimation for Gunnison County

Hazard Type		Number of Events	Property Damage ¹	Crop Damage ²
Avalanche ¹⁴		3,826	N/A	N/A
Communication Disruption / Failure ⁷		2	N/A	N/A
Dam Failure ³		0	\$0	\$0
Drought ⁵		1,192 out of 3,136 Months	\$0	\$943,396
Earthquake ¹³		123	\$0	\$0
Extreme Cold ¹²		Average 19 Days a Year	N/A	N/A
Flooding &	Flash Flood	7	\$62,000	\$173,414

Section Five | Risk Assessment Summary

Hazard Type		Number of Events	Property Damage ¹	Crop Damage ²
Ice Jams ¹	Flood	13	\$561,500	
Ground Subsidence & Expansive Soils ²	Expansive Soils	0	\$0	\$0
	Ground Subsidence	0	\$0	\$0
Hailstorm ¹		1	\$0	\$455
Hazardous Materials Release	Fixed Site ¹¹	20	\$0	N/A
	Transportation ¹⁰	9	\$192,906	N/A
High Wind ¹	High Wind	66	\$210,500	\$9,604
	Strong Wind	13	\$64,500	
	Thunderstorm Wind	3	\$0	
Landslide / Rockfall / Debris Flow ^{2,7}	Debris Flow	2	\$0	\$0
	Landslide	11	\$71,083	
	Rockfall	0	\$0	
Lightning ²		12	\$51,661	\$0
Mass Casualty Events	Auto ⁷	1	N/A	N/A
	Aviation ⁸	1	N/A	N/A
Pandemic ⁹		5	N/A	N/A
Severe Winter Storm ¹	Blizzard	13	\$1,043,544	\$3,558,759
	Heavy Snow	245		
	Winter Storm	492		
	Winter Weather	905		
Terrorism & Cyber-Attack ^{4,7}		2	\$1,025,379	\$0
Wildfire ⁶		392	\$12,065,000	\$5,000
Total		6,164	\$15,348,073	\$4,690,628

1 – NCEI, 1996 – May 2025²¹

2 – SHEL DUS, 1960 – 2023²²

3 – Stanford University, 1890 – September 2025²³

4 – University of Maryland, 1970-2017.²⁴

5 – NCEI, 1895 – May 2025²⁵

6 – U.S. Forest Service, 1992 – 2020²⁶

7 – County Personnel

8 – National Transportation Safety Board, 1962 – September 2025²⁷

9 – CDPHE & CDC, 1993 – 2025²⁸

21 National Centers for Environmental Information. May 2025. "Storm Events Database". [NCEI Storm Event Database](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents/).

22 Arizona State University. 2023. "SHEL DUS". <https://cemhs.asu.edu/sheldus>.

23 Stanford University. September 2025. "National Performance of Dams Program". <http://npdp.stanford.edu/>.

24 University of Maryland and National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism. 1970-2017. "Global Terrorism Database". <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

25 National Centers for Environmental Information. 1895-May 2025. "County Time Series". [NCEI County Time Series](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents/).

26 U.S. Forest Service. 2022. "Spatial Wildfire Occurrence Data for the United States, 1992-2020". <https://www.fs.usda.gov/rds/archive/catalog/RDS-2013-0009.6>.

27 National Transportation Safety Board. 1962-September 2025. "Aviation Accident Database". <https://www.nts.gov/Pages/AviationQueryV2.aspx>.

28 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. October 2025. "Trends in United States COVID-19 Deaths, Emergency Department Visits, and Test Positivity by Geographic Area". https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_totaldeaths_select_00.

10 – Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, 1971 – 2025²⁹

11 – U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center, 1990 – July 2025³⁰

12 – NOAA, 1947 – 2025³¹

13 – U.S. Geological Survey, 1889 – July 2025³²

14 – Crested Butte Avalanche Center, 2014 – 2023³³

Table 11: County Risk Assessment

Hazard	Number of Events / Years of Record	Historical Probability	Future Likelihood
Avalanche¹⁴	3,826/11	100%	Very Likely
Communication Disruption / Failure⁷	2/10	20%	Unlikely
Dam Failure³	0/136	Less than 1%	Very Unlikely
Drought⁵	1,192/3,136 months	38%	Very Likely
Earthquakes¹³	123/137	23%	Very Likely
Extreme Cold¹²	Avg. 19 Days a Year	99%	Very Likely
Flooding & Ice Jams¹	20/29	34%	Very Likely
Ground Subsidence & Expansive Soils²	0/64	Less than 1%	Very Unlikely
Hailstorm¹	1/29	3%	Unlikely
Hazardous Materials Release^{10,11}	Fixed Site: 20/36 Transportation: 9/55	Fixed Site: 39% Transportation: 15%	Fixed Site: Likely Transportation: Likely
High Wind¹	82/29	83%	Very Likely
Landslide / Rockfall / Debris Flow^{2,7}	Landslide: 11/64 Rockfall: 0/64 Debris Flow: 2/89	Landslide: 9% Rockfall: <1% Debris Flow: 2%	Landslide: Likely Rockfall: Likely Debris Flow: Likely
Lightning²	12/64	100%	Very Likely
Mass Casualty Incident^{7,8}	2/55	3%	Unlikely
Pandemic⁹	5/108	3%	Unlikely
Severe Winter Storm¹	1,655/29	100%	Very Likely
Terrorism & Cyber-Attack^{4,7}	2/56	2%	Likely
Wildfire⁶	392/24	100%	Very Likely

1 – NCEI, 1996 – May 2025³⁴

2 – SHELDUS, 1960 – 2023³⁵

3 – Stanford University, 1890 – September 2025³⁶

4 – University of Maryland, 1970-2017.³⁷

5 – NCEI, 1895 – May 2025³⁸

29 U.S. Department of Transportation - Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. 1971-2025. "Incident Statistics". <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat-program-management-data-and-statistics/data-operations/incident-statistics>.

30 U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center. July 2024. "Chemical Pollution and Railroad Incidents, 1990-2025." <https://nrc.uscg.mil/>.

31 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ACIS. November 2024. "SC ACIS". 1947-2025. <https://scacis.rcc-acis.org/>.

32 U.S. Geological Survey. July 2024. "Search Earthquake Catalog". <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/search/>.

33 Crested Butte Avalanche Center. 2025. "View Avalanches". <https://cbavalanchecenter.org/view-observations/#/view/avalanches>.

34 National Centers for Environmental Information. May 2025. "Storm Events Database". [NCEI Storm Events Database](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents).

35 Arizona State University. 2023. "SHELDUS". <https://cemhs.asu.edu/sheldus>.

36 Stanford University. September 2025. "National Performance of Dams Program". <http://npdp.stanford.edu/>.

37 University of Maryland and National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism. 1970-2017. "Global Terrorism Database". <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

38 National Centers for Environmental Information. 1895-May 2025. "County Time Series". [NCEI County Time Series](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents).

6 – U.S. Forest Service, 1992 – 2020³⁹

7 – County Personnel

8 – National Transportation Safety Board, 1962 – September 2025⁴⁰

9 – CDPHE & CDC, 1993 – 2025⁴¹

10 – Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, 1971 – 2025⁴²

11 – U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center, 1990 – July 2025⁴³

12 – NOAA, 1947 – 2025⁴⁴

13 – U.S. Geological Survey, 1889 – July 2025⁴⁵

14 – Crested Butte Avalanche Center, 2014 – 2023⁴⁶

FEMA National Risk Index

FEMA's National Risk Index is an online tool that analyzes natural hazards and community risk factors to develop a risk measurement for each county in the United States. Eighteen natural hazards are given a score from very high to very low. The table below provides the National Risk Index ratings for Gunnison County. Risk Index scores are calculated using an equation that combines expected annual loss, social vulnerability, and community resilience scores. All values fall between 0 (the lowest possible) and 100 (the highest possible).

Table 12: National Risk Index

Hazard	Gunnison County
Avalanche	Relatively High (93.3)
Coastal Flooding	Not Applicable
Cold Wave	Relatively Low (44.8)
Drought	Very Low (29.2)
Earthquake	Very Low (47.4)
Hail	Very Low (12.6)
Heat Wave	No Rating (0.0)
Hurricane	Not Applicable
Ice Storm	Very Low (28.7)
Landslide	Relatively Moderate (83.5)
Lightning	Relatively Low (68.6)
Riverine Flooding	Relatively Low (60.8)
Strong Wind	Very Low (5.6)
Tornado	Very Low (7.8)
Tsunami	Not Applicable
Volcanic Activity	Not Applicable
Wildfire	Very Low (64.3)
Winter Weather	Very Low (5.3)
Overall Score	Very Low (23.67)

Source: FEMA⁴⁷

39 U.S. Forest Service. 2022. "Spatial Wildfire Occurrence Data for the United States, 1992-2020".

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/rds/archive/catalog/RDS-2013-0009.6>.

40 National Transportation Safety Board. 1962-September 2025. "Aviation Accident Database".

<https://www.nts.gov/Pages/AviationQueryV2.aspx>.

41 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. October 2025. "Trends in United States COVID-19 Deaths, Emergency Department Visits, and Test Positivity by Geographic Area". https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_totaldeaths_select_00.

42 U.S. Department of Transportation - Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. 1971-2025. "Incident Statistics".

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat-program-management-data-and-statistics/data-operations/incident-statistics>.

43 U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center. July 2024. "Chemical Pollution and Railroad Incidents, 1990-2025."

<https://nrc.uscg.mil/>.

44 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ACIS. November 2024. "SC ACIS". 1947-2025. <https://scacis.rcc-acis.org/>.

45 U.S. Geological Survey. July 2024. "Search Earthquake Catalog". <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/search/>.

46 Crested Butte Avalanche Center. 2025. "View Avalanches". <https://cbavalanchecenter.org/view-observations/#/view/avalanches>.

47 FEMA. "The National Risk Index". Accessed May 2025. <https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/map>.

Historical Disaster Declarations

Presidential Disaster Declarations

Presidential disaster declarations by county are available via FEMA from 1953 to July 2025. The following table describes the presidential disaster declarations within the county for the period of record. Gunnison County has received nine presidential disaster declarations.

Table 13: Presidential Disaster Declarations

Disaster Declaration Number	Declaration Date	Title	Incident Type
396	7/6/1973	Flooding & Landslides	Flood
3025	1/29/1977	Drought	Drought
719	7/27/1984	Severe Storms, Mudslides, Landslides & Flooding	Flood
2431	6/23/2002	Co-Wiley Ridge Fire – 06/23/02	Fire
1421	6/19/2002	Wildfires	Fire
3185	4/9/2003	Snow	Snowstorm
3224	9/5/2005	Hurricane Katrina Evacuation	Coastal Storm
4498	3/28/2020	COVID-19	Biological
3436	3/13/2020	COVID-19 Pandemic	Biological

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1953-July 2025⁴⁸

USDA Secretarial Disasters

Several U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretarial Disasters in Gunnison County have occurred since 2012. Table 15 lists these disaster events.

Table 14: USDA Secretarial Disasters (2012-2025)

Year	Type	Designation Number
2012	Drought, Excessive Heat, High Winds	S3260
2012	Freezing Conditions	S3307
2012	Drought	S3456
2013	Drought	S3539
2013	Drought	S3548
2013	Frost, Freezes	S3583
2017	Freeze	S4249
2017	Freeze	S4261
2018	Drought	S4309
2018	Drought	S4320
2019	Drought	S4468
2019	Drought	S4481
2020	Drought	S4648
2020	Drought	S4680
2020	Hard Freeze	S4696
2020	Drought	S4722
2022	Drought	S5147
2023	Drought	S5598

48 Federal Emergency Management Agency. July 2025. "Disaster Declarations". <https://www.fema.gov/openfema-data-page/disaster-declarations-summaries-v2>.

Year	Type	Designation Number
2023	Drought	S5635
2024	Drought	S5669
2025	Drought	S5975
2025	Drought	S6001
2025	Drought	S6005
2025	Drought	S6007
2025	Drought	S6026

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2012-2025⁴⁹

State Emergency Declarations

From 1980 to 2024, Colorado governors issued 19 emergency declarations in response to events affecting Gunnison County. The table below shows all declarations, the year they occurred, the hazard, and the affected locations.

Table 15: State Emergency Declarations

Year	Type	Location Affected
1984	Flooding	Delta, Dolores, Hinsdale, Saguache, Mesa, Montrose, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Pitkin, San Miguel, Gunnison, Eagle, Gunnison Counties, Town of Silt
1994	Wildfires	Statewide
1998	Landslides, Rockfalls	Archuleta, Garfield, Mesa, Gunnison, Rio Blanco Counties
2002	Wildfires	Statewide
2002	Drought	Statewide
2003	Snow Emergency	Statewide
2009	Severe Blizzard	Statewide
2009	Severe Spring Snowstorm	Statewide
2013	Winter Storm	Statewide
2014	Extreme Weather	Statewide
2017	Wildfire	Statewide
2018	Wildfire	Statewide
2020	COVID-19	Statewide
2020	Wildfire	Statewide
2021	Severe Winter Weather	Statewide
2022	Avian Influenza	Statewide
2022	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza	Statewide
2023	Extreme Cold	Statewide
2023	Wildfire	Gunnison County

Source: State of Colorado, 1980-2023⁵⁰

Hazard Profiles

Information from participating jurisdictions was collected and reviewed alongside hazard occurrence, magnitude, and event narratives from local, state, and federal databases. Profiles for each identified hazard in the plan were created to examine their risk and potential impact in Gunnison County. These complete profiles are available in *Appendix A: Full Risk Assessment*.

49 U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2025. "Disaster Designation Information" <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/disaster-designation-information/index>.

50 Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. 2023. "Colorado Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028". <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MPL0Oiy-yZDIMziTYkR12s35FzG-G8/view>.

Hazards of local concern or events that deviate from the norm are discussed in greater detail in each participant profile (see the *Participant Profiles Appendix* of this plan).

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Section Six: Mitigation Strategy

Introduction

The primary focus of the mitigation strategy is to identify action items to reduce the effects of hazards on existing infrastructure and property, aligned with the established goals and objectives of the hazard mitigation plan. These actions should consider the most cost-effective and technically feasible options to address risk.

FEMA Mitigation Strategy Requirements

Requirement §201.6(c)(3)(i): [The hazard mitigation strategy shall include a] description of mitigation goals to reduce or avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards.

Requirement §201.6(c)(3)(ii): [The mitigation strategy shall include a] section that identifies and analyzes a comprehensive range of specific mitigation actions and projects being considered to reduce the effects of each hazard, with particular emphasis on new and existing buildings and infrastructure.

Requirement: §201.6(c)(3)(ii): [The mitigation strategy] must also address the jurisdiction's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, and continued compliance with NFIP requirements, as appropriate.

Requirement: §201.6(c)(3)(iii): [The mitigation strategy section shall include] an action plan describing how the actions identified in section (c)(3)(ii) will be prioritized, implemented, and administered by the local jurisdiction. Prioritization shall include a special emphasis on the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost benefit review of the proposed projects and their associated costs.

Requirement §201.6(c)(3)(iv): For multi-jurisdictional plans, there must be identifiable action items specific to the jurisdiction requesting FEMA approval or credit of the plan.

Summary of Changes

The development of the mitigation strategy for this plan update includes adding new mitigation actions, updating the status or removal of past mitigation actions, and revising descriptions for consistency across Gunnison County.

Selected Mitigation and Strategic Actions

After establishing the goals, the local planning teams evaluated mitigation and strategic actions. These actions included the mitigation and strategic actions identified by each participating jurisdiction in the previous plan, as well as additional actions discussed during the update planning process. The Gunnison County Planning Team provided each participant with a link to the FEMA Mitigation Ideas document, to be used as a starting point for reviewing a wide range of potential mitigation actions. Participants were also encouraged to consider actions that may require FEMA grant assistance and to review their hazard prioritization section for potential mitigation and strategic actions. Gunnison County Planning Team members were also available to help local jurisdictions identify additional action alternatives. These suggestions helped participants

determine which actions would best assist their respective jurisdictions in alleviating damage in the event of a disaster.

During the update of previously identified actions and the identification of new actions, local planning teams prioritized each identified mitigation and strategic action as high, medium, or low. The listed priority rating does not indicate which actions will be implemented first. Generally, high-priority actions address a significant concern for the jurisdiction, pose few to no implementation challenges, and garner ample public and administrative support. Low-priority actions either address a minor concern for the jurisdiction, have many challenges in implementation, and/or may not have support from the public or administration at this time. Medium-priority actions may only have one or two of the items listed above. The priority of mitigation and strategic actions may change quickly as circumstances change.

The mitigation and strategic actions are the core of a hazard mitigation plan. The local planning teams were instructed that each hazard identified in the plan must have an action that addresses it. Mitigation and strategic actions were evaluated based on referencing the community's risk and capability assessments. Jurisdictions were encouraged to choose actions that were realistic and relevant to the concerns identified.

Not all the mitigation and strategic actions identified by a jurisdiction may ultimately be implemented due to limited capabilities, prohibitive costs, low benefit-cost ratio, or other concerns. These factors may not be identified during this planning process. Additionally, some jurisdictions may identify and pursue additional mitigation actions not identified in this hazard mitigation plan.

Participant Mitigation and Strategic Actions

Mitigation and strategic actions identified by participants of the HMP are found in the Mitigation and Strategic Actions Matrix in *Appendix D: Mitigation Strategy*. Additional information about selected actions can be found in the *Participant Profiles Appendix*. Each action includes the following details in the respective community profile.

- **Action:** General title of the action item.
- **Description:** Summary of what the action item(s) will accomplish.
- **Hazard(s) Addressed:** The hazards the mitigation action aims to address.
- **Estimated Cost:** General cost estimate for implementing the mitigation action for the appropriate jurisdiction.
- **Local Funding:** A list of potential local funding mechanisms to fund the action.
- **Timeline:** General timeline as established by planning participants.
- **Priority:** General description of the importance and workability in which an action may be implemented (high/medium/low).
- **Lead agency:** Listing of agencies or departments that may lead or oversee the implementation of the action item.
- **Status:** A description of what has been done, if anything, to implement the action item.

Implementation of the actions will vary between individual plan participants based on the availability of existing information, funding opportunities, limitations, and the administrative capabilities of communities. Establishing a cost-benefit analysis is beyond the scope of this plan. It could be completed before submitting a project grant application or as part of a five-year update. Completed, removed, kept, and new mitigation actions for each participating jurisdiction are available in the *Participant Profiles Appendix*.

Section Seven: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan

Each participating jurisdiction in the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan will monitor, evaluate, and update the plan during its five-year lifespan. Each participant's governing body will prioritize hazard mitigation projects with support and suggestions from the public and local business owners. Each local planning team will be responsible for plan maintenance, the frequency of review, and the public's involvement. This information can be found in each participant's profile under the Local Planning Team section. During the review, the local planning team can report on the effectiveness of the hazard mitigation plan and the status of projects. It can also include which implementation processes worked well, any difficulties encountered, how coordination efforts proceed, and which strategies could be revised.

FEMA Plan Maintenance and Update Requirements

Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(i): [The plan maintenance process shall include a] section describing the method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating, and updating the mitigation plan within a five-year cycle.

Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(ii): [The plan shall include a] process by which local governments incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate.

Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(iii): [The plan maintenance process shall include a] discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.

In addition, each local planning team will be responsible for ensuring that the plan's goals are incorporated into applicable revisions of their jurisdiction's relevant planning documents. The hazard mitigation plan will also consider any changes in planning documents and include the information accordingly in its next update. *Appendix F: Guide to Review and Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan* may also be used to assist with plan updates.

The FEMA-required update of this plan will occur at least every five years to reduce the risk of the plan expiring. Updates may be incorporated more frequently, especially in the event of a significant hazard. Gunnison County will start meetings to discuss mitigation plan updates at least nine months before the deadline for completing the plan update. The Gunnison County Emergency Management Department will review the goals and objectives of the previous plan and evaluate them to determine whether they are still pertinent and current. Among other criteria, they may want to consider the following.

- Do the goals and objectives address current and expected conditions?
- If any of the recommended projects have been completed, did they have the desired impact on the goal for which they were identified? If not, why was it unsuccessful (lack of

funds/resources, lack of political/popular support, underestimation of the time needed, etc.)?

- Have the nature, magnitude, and/or type of risks changed?
- Are there implementation problems?
- Are current resources sufficient to implement the plan?
- Were the outcomes as expected?
- Did the plan partners participate as initially planned?
- Are there other agencies that should be included in the revision process?

A private consulting firm or individual will be hired to help facilitate the plan update process if necessary.

Continued Public Involvement

To ensure continued support for the plan and input from the public and stakeholders, public involvement should remain a top priority for each participating jurisdiction. Every participant identified ways the public will be involved in the update process. These ways can be found in the individual participant profiles in the *Participant Profiles Appendix*. The list below shows how participants will include the public in the updated process.

- Social Media
- Websites
- Flyers
- Board/Council Meetings
- Newspapers

Unforeseen Opportunities

If new, innovative mitigation options arise that could impact Gunnison County or elements of this plan deemed important, a plan amendment may be proposed and considered separately from the annual review and other proposed plan amendments. Gunnison County, as the plan sponsor, allows jurisdictions to compile proposed amendments and send them to the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and subsequently to FEMA, for a plan amendment. Such amendments should include all applicable information for each proposal, including a description of changes, identified funding, responsible agencies, etc.

Incorporation into Existing Planning Mechanisms

The Gunnison County Planning Team utilized various plan integration tools to help communities determine how their existing planning mechanisms were related to the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Utilizing FEMA's *Integrating the Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan into a Community's Comprehensive Plan*⁵¹ guidance and FEMA's *2015 Plan Integration*⁵² guide, each jurisdiction engaged in a plan integration discussion. This discussion was facilitated by a Plan Integration Worksheet or questions created by the Gunnison County Planning Team. This provided

51 Federal Emergency Management Agency. November 2013. "FEMA Region X Integrating the Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan into a Community's Comprehensive Plan". <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/integrating-hazard-mitigation-local-plan.pdf>.

52 Federal Emergency Management Agency. July 2015. "Plan Integration: Linking Local Planning Efforts." https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/fema-plan-integration_7-1-2015.pdf.

participants with an easy way to notify the Gunnison County Planning Team of existing planning mechanisms and whether they are integrated with the hazard mitigation plan.

Each jurisdiction referenced all relevant existing planning mechanisms and provided information on whether these mechanisms addressed hazards and vulnerabilities. Summaries of plan integration are available in each participant's profile. In jurisdictions without existing planning mechanisms, especially smaller communities, the plan may serve as a guide for future activity and development.

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Section Eight: Participant Profiles

Purpose of Participant Profiles

Participant profiles contain information specific to jurisdictions participating in the Gunnison County Hazard Mitigation Plan planning effort. Participant profiles were developed to highlight each jurisdiction's unique characteristics that affect its vulnerability to hazards. These profiles may serve as a short reference for identified vulnerabilities and mitigation actions for a jurisdiction as it implements the mitigation plan. Information from individual jurisdictions was collected at public and one-on-one meetings and used to establish their section of the plan. Participant profiles may include the following elements:

- Community Fact Sheet
- Local Planning Team
- Capability Assessment
- Plans and Studies
- Future Development Trends
- Community Lifelines
- Hazard Vulnerability and Mitigation Strategy

Individual participant profiles are available in the *Participant Profile Appendix*. The location of the profiles is given below.

Participant Profile Appendix
Gunnison County
City of Gunnison
Town of Crested Butte
Town of Mt. Crested Butte
Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Mt. Crested Butte Water & Sanitation District