

Part 5. Capabilities Assessment

Within the SEUALG region, local governments have a diverse and strong capability to accomplish hazard mitigation. The purpose of this section is to analyze gaps and potential capability weaknesses for local level jurisdictions in the region. This assessment analyzes current capacity to mitigate the effects of natural hazards and emphasizes the positive capabilities that should be continued. The following areas were assessed to determine mitigation capabilities:

1. **Local Organizational and Technical Capability**
2. **Policy and Program Capability**
3. **Fiscal Capability**
4. **Political Willpower**
5. **Legal Authority**
6. **Political Willpower**

1. Local Organizational and Technical Capability

Only a handful of communities in the Southeastern region have fulltime professional staff of any kind. In many cases a limited tax base means that hiring full time professional staff in the smaller cities and towns is financially unfeasible. Often these smaller communities rely on local volunteers or elected and appointed officials to perform many of the tasks normally handled by professional staff. It is not uncommon for volunteer city council persons or planning commissioners to carry out assigned tasks of emergency management, grant writing or long range planning. Professional staff members at SEUALG (and each of the four counties to some degree) help provide some technical and planning assistance to these smaller communities. Staffing capacity and funding often limit this regional assistance. As funding allows, some communities are able to contract for professional services from private consultants (Table 5-1).

While a few of the cities have a full-time police and fire chiefs, most do not have staffs that are, for the most part, dedicated fulltime to other emergency management related tasks (Table 5-2). And even though each of the counties has an emergency manager, all of these individuals have other responsibilities in addition to core emergency management functions.

Table 5-1 State and Regional Hazard Mitigation Resources

Agency/Group	Description
Utah Div. of Emergency Services and Homeland Security	Training, technical assistance and funding.
Utah League of Cities and Towns	Training, technical assistance and planning assistance
Utah Geologic Survey	Technical assistance, plan review
Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments (SEUALG)	Technical assistance, plan review, Community Development Block Grants.
Southeastern Utah Health Department	Emergency preparedness and response. Homeland security planning.
Utah Association of Conservation Districts	Technical assistance and planning assistance.
Utah Highway Patrol	Situation and damage assessment -- provide transportation resources for movement of state personnel, supplies, and equipment to include air and ground reconnaissance, and traffic control.

College of Eastern Utah	Information resource in dealing with drought, winter storms, summer storms etc. in relation to agriculture, environment, water resources, etc. Assist with damage assessment related to agriculture
College of Eastern Utah San Juan Center	Information resource in dealing with drought, winter storms, summer storms etc. in relation to agriculture, environment, water resources, etc. Assist with damage assessment related to agriculture
University Extension Service (Utah State University)	Damage assessment related to agriculture
Army Corps of Engineers	Water and dam management within the county. Provide technical expertise
State Fire Marshal	Hazmat route utilization; HAZMAT technical assistance; situation and damage assessment.
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources	Technical assistance; debris removal from recreational facilities; facility improvements; situation and damage assessment.
State Radio Communications	Exercise readiness of warning systems and communication support.
Department of Agriculture	Assists with situation and damage assessment; coordination with USDA; HAZMAT technical assistance; state land use program.
Department of Workforce Services	Situation assessment and administration of disaster unemployment assistance programs.
State Historical Society	Project screening and situation assessment.

Table 5-2 Local Level Hazard Mitigation Capability

Jurisdiction	Professional Staffing (e.g. City Manger, Engineer, Planner)	Technical Capacity (In House)
Carbon County	County Emergency Management Coordinator, County Planner, Public Works, Road Department, Building Inspector	GIS Staffing and equipment
East Carbon City	City Clerk, Recorder, Police Chief, Fire Chief	None
Helper City	City Clerk, Recorder, Police Chief, Fire Chief	None
Price City	City Administrator, Public Safety, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Public Works	None
Scofield Town	Volunteer Fire Department	None
Sunnyside City	City Clerk, Recorder, Police Chief, Fire Chief	None
Wellington city	City Clerk, Recorder, Police Chief	None

Emery County	County Emergency Management Coordinator, Planner, Public Works, Road Department, Building Inspector	GIS Staffing and equipment
Castle Dale City	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Clawson Town	Volunteer\contracted consultant	None
Cleveland Town	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Elmo Town	Volunteer\contracted consultant	None
Emery Town	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Ferron City	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Green River City	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Huntington city	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Orangeville City	City Clerk, Recorder, Fire Chief	None
Grand County	County Administrator, Sheriff, Planner, Public Works, Building Inspector	Some GIS Capability
Moab City	City Manager\Planner, Police Chief, Fire Chief	Some GIS Capability
San Juan County	County Administrator, Sheriff, Public Works, Road Department, Building Inspector	Some GIS Capability
Blanding City	City Manager\Planner, Police Chief, Fire Chief	Some GIS Capability
Bluff Town	Volunteer\contracted consultant	None
Monticello City	City Manager\Planner, Police	None

2. Policy and Program Capability

Most of the municipalities in the Southeastern region have an adopted General Plan as required by state code. Although many communities have recently updated their General Plan, many are very outdated and have not been revised in years. Generally speaking, if these plans address natural hazards at all, it is usually limited to flood related hazards.

All of the municipalities have an adopted zoning ordinance. Again, often these ordinances are outdated and often are not consistent with the jurisdiction's General Plan. Most zoning ordinances do not address natural hazards in any way. A few communities have a "sensitive area" or "hazard area" overlay zone. All communities issue building permits and enforce local building codes. Often this service is contracted for with the county.

Of the nineteen municipalities and four counties, seventeen are participating in the National Flood Insurance Policy program (Appendix D). However, much of the flood map data is inaccurate and/or out of date.

Building Codes

International and national building codes have been adopted by all jurisdictions in the region. These codes are constantly in review for reasonable preparedness for disasters. Locally, building officials lobby for additions or exceptions to international and/or national building codes according to local conditions. Most insurance policies rely on the international and national building code standards for assurance.

The Insurance Services Office, Inc performs Building Code Effectiveness Grading Reports (BCEGS). The program implemented in 1995 assesses the building codes in effect in a particular community and how well the community enforces its building codes. The BCEGS program assigns each municipality a BCEGS grade of 1 to 10 with one showing exemplary commitment to building code enforcement. Insurance Services Inc. (ISO) developed advisory rating credits that apply to ranges of BCEGS classifications 1-3, 4-7, 8-9, 10. ISO gives insurers BCEGS classifications, BCEGS advisory Credits, and related underwriting information. The concept is that communities with effective, well-enforced building codes should sustain less damage in the event of a natural disaster, and insurance rates can reflect that. The prospect of lessening natural hazard related damage and ultimately lowering insurance costs provides an incentive for communities to enforce their building codes rigorously. FEMA also uses these scores in their competitive grant programs giving a higher ranking to those projects with lower scores. The following table highlights the BCEGS scores for Wasatch Front Region jurisdictions (Table 5-3).

Table 5-3 Building Code Effectiveness Grading Reports

Community	County	BCEGS Classification		Date
		Residential	Commercial	
Blanding	San Juan	4	4	2002
Carbon County	Carbon	4	4	2001
Emery County	Emery	4	4	2002
Ferron City	Emery	5	5	1998
Grand County	Grand	3	3	2001
Huntington	Emery	3	3	2001
Moab City	Grand	4	4	1997
Price City	Carbon	3	3	2001
San Juan County	San Juan County	4	4	2002

Community Ranking System

Communities that regulate development in floodplain are able to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In return, the NFIP makes federally backed flood insurance policies available for properties in the community. The Community Rating System (CRS) was implemented in 1990 as a program for recognizing and encouraging community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP standards. There are ten CRS classes. Class 1 requires the most credit points and gives the largest premium reduction. Class 10 receives no premium reduction. Refer to Table 5-4 for a list of the participating communities.

Table 5-4 Community Ranking System Scores for WFRC

Community Name	Entry Date	Effective Date	Class	% Discount for SFHA*	% Discount for Non-SFHA
Moab City, Grand County	04/01/01	04/01/01	9	5	5

* Special Flood Hazard Area

3. Fiscal Capability

Every county in the SEUALG region has very limited fiscal capability to implement hazard mitigation strategies. This is due to the four county planning areas having a small population and tax base. In Utah, almost 70 percent of the land area remains in federal control, with only about 21 percent privately owned. In the Southeastern region those percentages are typically much higher. Between federal and state ownership, counties in the southeast region are essentially “sharecroppers” of the land. The federal and state governments in turn, restore a small portion of these revenues to the local governments in the form of grants and subsidies.

Furthermore, the State of Utah spends more money than it takes in for three of the four counties (Carbon, 1.44; Emery, 1.51; and San Juan, 4.03) in the Southeast region. Only Grand County receives less in state funding than it sends to the state. In fact, San Juan County ranks as number three in the state for ratio of dollars spent to dollars received by the state (Carbon is ranked 15th and Emery 16th). In each case the majority of dollars are spent on K-12 education (See *Redistributing Utah’s Resources: Burdens and Benefits Around the State*. Research Report Number 657, May 2003, Utah Foundation).

Given the above information it is highly unlikely that counties in the Southeastern region could afford to provide the local match, without state support, for the available hazard mitigation grant programs. Considering the current budget situation at both the State and local government level, combined with the apparent increased reliance on local accountability by the Federal government, this is a significant and growing concern for our region.

Under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, FEMA has made special accommodations for "small and impoverished communities", who will be eligible for a 90% Federal share, 10% non-Federal cost split for projects funded through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. Unfortunately, according to the current Interim Final Rule for Section 322 of the Act, none of the counties in our region will qualify as a small and impoverished community. The definition is restricted to “communities of 3,000 or fewer individuals that is identified by the State as a rural community.”

4. Political Willpower

Most area residents are quite knowledgeable about the potential hazards that faces their community and through the pre-disaster mitigation planning process; they have become more familiar with the principles of mitigation. It is strongly believed that such efforts within the community have created a greater sense of awareness among local residents, and that hazard mitigation is a concept that they are beginning to readily accept and support.

Because of this fact, coupled with the region’s history with natural disasters, it is expected that the current and future political climates are favorable for supporting and advancing future hazard mitigation strategies.