



Section 3: Capability Assessment

A Capability Assessment is an evaluation of the County’s governmental structure, political framework, legal jurisdiction, fiscal status, policies and programs, regulations and ordinances, and resource availability. Each category is evaluated for its strengths and weaknesses in responding to, preparing for, and mitigating the effects of the profiled hazards. The Capability Assessment has two components: an inventory of the County’s and municipalities’ mission, programs, and policies; and an analysis of its capacity to execute these functions or components. A Capability Assessment is an integral part of the hazard mitigation planning process. Here, the County and municipalities identify, review, and analyze what they are currently doing to reduce losses and to identify the framework necessary to implement new mitigation actions. This information will help the County and municipalities evaluate alternative mitigation actions and address shortfalls in the mitigation plan.

The evaluation of the categories listed above – political framework, legal jurisdiction, fiscal status, policies and programs, and regulations and ordinances – allows the mitigation planning team to determine the viability of certain mitigation actions. The Capability Assessment analyzes what Snyder County and its municipalities have the capacity to do, and provides an understanding of what must be changed to mitigate loss.

Throughout the planning process, the mitigation planning team considered the County’s 21 municipalities. Pennsylvania municipalities have their own governing bodies, pass and enforce their own ordinances and regulations, purchase equipment, and manage their own resources, including critical infrastructure. These capability assessments, therefore, consider the various characteristics and capabilities of municipalities under study.

Legal And Regulatory Capability

Municipalities have the authority to govern more restrictively than state and county minimum requirements, assuming they are in compliance with all criteria established in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and their respective municipal codes. Municipalities can develop their own policies and programs, and implement their own rules and regulations to protect and serve their local residents. Local policies and programs are typically identified in a comprehensive plan, implemented via a local ordinance, and enforced through the governmental body or its appointee.

Municipalities regulate land use via the adoption and enforcement of zoning, subdivision and land development, building codes, building permits, floodplain management, and/or storm water management ordinances. When effectively prepared and administered, these regulations can lead to hazard mitigation. For example, the adoption of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Pennsylvania Floodplain Management Act (Act 166 of 1978) established minimum floodplain management criteria. A municipality must adopt and enforce these



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minimum criteria to be eligible for participation in the NFIP. Municipalities have the option of adopting a single-purpose ordinance or incorporating these provisions into their zoning, subdivision and land development, or building codes, thereby mitigating the potential impacts of local flooding. The Capability Assessment details the existing county and municipal legal capabilities to mitigate the profiled hazards. It identifies the county's and the municipalities' existing planning documents and their hazard mitigation potential. Hazard mitigation recommendations are, in part, based on the information contained in the assessment.

Building Codes

Building codes are important in mitigation because they are developed for regions of the country in consideration of the hazards present in that area. Consequently, structures that are built according to applicable codes are inherently resistant to many hazards, such as strong winds, floods, and earthquakes, and can help mitigate regional hazards, such as wildfires. In 2003, Pennsylvania implemented the Uniform Construction Code (Act 45), a comprehensive building code that establishes minimum regulations for most new construction, including additions and renovations to existing structures. Snyder County's municipalities adhere to this law's standards. Snyder County is a member of the Central Keystone Council of Governments, which administers the Uniform Construction Code for Snyder County's municipal governments. (See Table 3-1)

Zoning Ordinance

Article VI of the MPC authorizes municipalities to prepare and enact zoning to regulate land use. Its regulations can apply to: the permitted use of land; the height and bulk of structures; the percentage of a lot that may be occupied by buildings and other impervious surfaces; yard setbacks; the density of development; and the height and size of signs. A zoning ordinance has two parts, including the zoning map that delineates zoning districts and the text that sets forth the regulations that apply in each district. Currently, there is no County zoning ordinance. Five Snyder County municipalities utilize local zoning ordinances. (See Table 3-1)

Subdivision Ordinance

Subdivision and land development ordinances include regulations to control the layout of streets, the planning of lots, and the provision of utilities. The objectives of a subdivision and land development ordinance are to: coordinate street patterns; assure adequate utilities and other improvements are provided in a manner that will not pollute streams, wells and/or soils; reduce traffic congestion; and provide sound design standards as a guide to developers, the elected officials, planning commissions, and other municipal officials. Snyder County and 10 of its municipalities have subdivision ordinances. Article V of the MPC authorizes municipalities to prepare and enact a subdivision and land development ordinance. Subdivision and land development ordinances provide for the division and improvement of land. (See Table 3-1)



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Floodplain Ordinance/NFIP

Flood plain management is the operation of programs or activities that may consist of both corrective and preventive measures for reducing flood damage, including but not limited to such things as emergency preparedness plans, flood control works, and flood plain management regulations. The Pennsylvania Floodplain Management Act (Act 166) requires every municipality identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)¹ and permits all municipalities to adopt floodplain management regulations. It is in the interest of all property owners in the floodplain to keep development and land usage within the scope of the floodplain regulations for their community. This helps keep insurance rates low and makes sure that the risk of flood damage is not increased by property development.

The NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) provides discounts on flood insurance premiums in those communities that establish floodplain management programs that go beyond NFIP minimum requirements. Under the CRS, communities receive credit for more restrictive regulations, acquisition, relocation, or flood proofing of flood-prone buildings, preservation of open space, and other measures that reduce flood damages or protect the natural resources and functions of floodplains.²

The CRS was implemented in 1990 to recognize and encourage community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP standards. Section 541 of the 1994 Act amends Section 1315 of the 1968 Act to codify the Community Rating System in the NFIP, and expands the CRS goals to specifically include incentives to reduce the risk of flood-related erosion and to encourage measures that protect natural and beneficial floodplain functions. These goals have been incorporated into the CRS and communities now receive credit toward premium reductions for activities that contribute to them.³

Under the CRS, flood insurance premium rates are adjusted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from community activities that meet the three goals of the CRS:

- Reduce flood losses:
 - Protect public health and safety
 - reduce damage to property
 - prevent increases in flood damage from new construction

¹ The U.S. Congress established the National Flood Insurance Program with the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968.

² Federal Emergency Management Agency. Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration. *National Flood Insurance Program*. Program description, August 01, 2002, <http://www.fema.gov/doc/library/nfipdescrip.doc>.

³ *Ibid.*



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- reduce the risk of erosion damage
- protect natural and beneficial floodplain functions;
- Facilitate accurate insurance rating; and
- Promote the awareness of flood insurance.

There are 10 CRS classes. Class 1 requires the most credit points and gives the largest premium reduction; Class 10 receives no premium reduction. CRS premium discounts on flood insurance range from five percent for Class 9 communities up to 45 percent for Class 1 communities. The CRS recognizes 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories: Public Information, Mapping and Regulations, Flood Damage Reduction, and Flood Preparedness⁴.

Snyder County and its 21 municipalities have a flood plain ordinance and participate in the NFIP. None of the municipalities participate in the CRS program. (See Table 3-1)

Storm Water Management Plan/Storm Water Ordinance

The proper management of storm water runoff can improve conditions and decrease the chance of flooding. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), there are no storm water management plans for any of the watersheds in Snyder County. Monroe Township and Penn Township have developed storm water management ordinances. These ordinances, however, were not developed in conjunction with the guidelines established in the Pennsylvania Storm Water Management Act (Act 167).

Act 167 confers on counties the responsibility for development of watershed plans. The Act specifies that counties must complete their watershed storm water plans within two years following the promulgation of these guidelines by the DEP, which may grant an extension of time to any county for the preparation and adoption of plans. Counties must prepare the watershed plans in consultation with municipalities and residents. This is to be accomplished through the establishment of a Watershed Plan Advisory Committee. The county must also establish a mechanism to periodically review and revise watershed plans so they are current. Plan revisions must be done every five years or sooner, if necessary.

Municipalities have an obligation to implement the criteria and standards developed in each watershed storm water management plan by amending or adopting laws and regulations for land use and development. The implementation of storm water management criteria and standards at the local level is necessary, since municipalities are responsible for local land use decisions and planning. The degree of detail in the ordinances depends on the extent of

⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency. Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration. *National Flood Insurance Program*. Program description, August 01, 2002, <http://www.fema.gov/doc/library/nfipdescrip.doc>.



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existing and projected development. Municipalities within rapidly developing watersheds will benefit from the watershed storm water management plan and will use the information for sound land use considerations. The watershed storm water management plan is designed to aid the municipality in setting standards for the land uses it has proposed. A major goal of the watershed plan and the attendant municipal regulations is to prevent future drainage problems and avoid the aggravation of existing problems. This stability then contributes to confrontation on the solution of existing problems. (See Table 3-1)

Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a policy document that states objectives and guides the future growth and physical development of a municipality. The comprehensive plan is a blueprint for housing, transportation, community facilities and utilities, and land use. It examines how the past led to the present and charts the community's future path. There is no statute that requires Pennsylvania communities to have a comprehensive plan; however, Article III of the Municipalities Planning Code enables communities to prepare a comprehensive plan. The MPC does require, however, that a comprehensive plan must consider many factors that influence a community. These factors include location, character, and timing of future development. The plan must also be reviewed and updated every 10 years. *Snyder County's Comprehensive Plan* was developed in 2001.

Four municipalities in Snyder County have comprehensive plans, including Monroe Township, Penn Township, Selinsgrove Borough, and Shamokin Dam Borough. These outdated comprehensive plans range in date from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s.

Articles III and XI of the MPC authorize municipalities and counties to participate in intergovernmental cooperative planning and implementation efforts. Multi-municipal planning efforts, permitted in Acts 67 and 68 of 2000, are increasingly popular. In Snyder County, Chapman and Union Townships have prepared a joint comprehensive plan to address flood impact and several other regional planning issues. (See Table 3-2)

Capital Improvements Plan

The *Capital Improvements Plan* is a multi-year policy guide that identifies needed capital projects and is used to coordinate the financing and timing of public improvements. Capital improvements relate to streets, storm water systems, water distribution, sewage treatment, and other major public facilities. A *Capital Improvements Plan* should be prepared by the respective county's planning commission and should include a capital budget. This budget identifies the highest priority projects recommended for funding in the next annual budget. The Capital Improvements Plan is dynamic and can be tailored to specific circumstances. There are no Capital Improvements Plans in Snyder County or any of its municipalities. (See Table 3-2)



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Emergency Operations Plan

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, Title 35, requires all political jurisdictions in the Commonwealth to have and Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), an Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC), and an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Snyder County's EOP is an all-hazards plan, complies with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and is the basis for a coordinated and effective response to any disaster that may affect lives and property in Snyder County. The EOP, or portions thereof, would be implemented when emergency circumstances warrant it. Snyder County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was adopted in 2004 and revised in 2005. All 21 municipalities in Snyder County have adopted the County EOP as their own. (See Table 3-2)

Post Disaster Recovery Plan/Post Disaster Recovery Ordinance

A *Disaster Recovery Plan* (DRP) is a comprehensive set of measures and procedures that ensure essential, mission-critical resources and infrastructures are maintained or backed up by alternatives during various stages of a disaster. The DRP is another step to ensure the preparedness and ability to respond quickly and effectively to restore the community's fundamental needs. It addresses the public sector's responsibilities, including: temporary shelter; refuse disposal; overall damage assessment; restoration of utility services; reconstruction priorities; financial assistance; and dealing with demands. Neither Snyder County nor any of its municipalities have a post-disaster recovery plan or a post-disaster recovery ordinance. (See Table 3-2)

Administrative And Technical Capability

Snyder County's 21 municipalities include six boroughs and 15 townships. Each of these municipalities conducts their daily operations and provides various community services according to local needs and limitations. Some of these municipalities have formed cooperative agreements and work jointly with their neighboring municipalities to provide services such as police protection, fire and emergency response, infrastructure maintenance and water supply management. Others choose to operate on their own. They vary in staff size, resource availability, fiscal status, service provision, constituent population, overall size, and vulnerability to the profiled hazards.

County Planning Commission

In Pennsylvania, planning responsibilities traditionally have been delegated to each county and local municipality through the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

A planning agency acts as an advisor to the governing body on matters of community growth and development. A governing body may appoint individuals to serve as legal and engineering advisors to the planning agency. In addition to the duties and responsibilities authorized by



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Article II of the MPC, a governing body may, by ordinance, delegate approval authority to a planning agency for subdivision and land development applications. A governing body has considerable flexibility, not only as to which powers and duties are assigned to a planning agency, but also as to what form an agency will possess. A governing body can create a planning commission, a planning department, or both.

The Snyder County Planning Commission was created on August 21, 1965, by an action of the Snyder County Board of Commissioners. A Snyder County Planning Department was created by the Snyder County Board of Commissioners on July 14, 1998 to assist the Snyder County Planning Commission and the Snyder County Board of Commissioners. The purpose of the Snyder County Planning Commission is to receive and make recommendations on public and private proposals for development, and to prepare and administer planning regulations. Subdivisions are also reviewed and approved by the Snyder County Planning Commission, which works in conjunction with the municipal planning commissions, where applicable. (See Table 3-3)

Municipal Planning Commission

The MPC conveys the planning authority and sets the ground rules a municipality must follow. There are seven municipalities in Snyder County with their own planning commission: Beavertown Borough, Middlecreek Township, Monroe Township, Penn Township, Selinsgrove Borough, Shamokin Dam Borough, and Spring Township. (See Table 3-3)

Municipal Engineer

A municipal engineer performs duties as directed in the areas of construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of streets, roads, pavements, sanitary sewers, bridges, culverts, and other engineering work. The municipal engineer prepares plans, specifications and estimates of the work undertaken by the township. Three municipalities in Snyder County have an engineer, including Middleburg Borough, Monroe Township, and Selinsgrove Borough. Snyder County also retains the services of a certified, licensed engineering firm. (See Table 3-3)

Personnel Skilled In GIS or HAZUS

Snyder County's Comprehensive Plan highly recommended the establishment of a GIS Department. The GIS Department was established in 2002 and has focused on the County's standardized address project. This project establishes effective Enhanced 911 services to the entire County.

The County's GIS personnel have also received HAZUS training. HAZUS, a software program developed by FEMA, estimates potential losses from disasters and uses the GIS system. Further development of Snyder County's GIS Department includes the formulation and coordination of databases. Snyder County's GIS Department produces maps of county



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information with additional layers of information to be made available in the future. (See Table 3-3)

Emergency Management Coordinator

Emergency management is a comprehensive, integrated program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery for emergencies/disasters of any kind. No public or private entity is immune to disasters, and no single segment of society can meet the complex needs of a major emergency or disaster on its own.

A municipal emergency management coordinator is responsible for emergency management – preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation within his/her respective authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). The responsibilities of the emergency management coordinator are outlined in PA Title 35 §7503:

- Prepare and maintain a current disaster emergency management plan;
- Establish, equip, and staff an emergency operations center;
- Provide individual and organizational training programs;
- Organize and coordinate all locally available manpower, materials, supplies, equipment, and services necessary for disaster emergency readiness, response, and recovery;
- Adopt and implement precautionary measures to mitigate the anticipated effects of a disaster;
- Cooperate and coordinate with any public and private agency or entity;
- Provide prompt information regarding local disaster emergencies to appropriate Commonwealth and local officials or agencies and the general public; and
- Participate in all tests, drills and exercises, including remedial drills and exercises, scheduled by the agency or by the federal government.

Snyder County and all its municipalities have an emergency management coordinator. (See Table 3-3)

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental cooperation is one manner of accomplishing common goals, solving mutual problems, and reducing expenditures. The adoption of Snyder County's *Emergency Operations Plan* by all 21 municipalities is an example of intergovernmental cooperation. (See Table 3-3)



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Fiscal Capability

Fiscal capability is important to the implementation of hazard mitigation activities. Every jurisdiction must operate within the constraints of limited financial resources. The following information pertains to various financial assistance programs pertinent to hazard mitigation.

State and Federal Grants

During the 1960s and 1970s, state and federal grants-in-aid were available to finance a large number of programs, including streets, water and sewer facilities, airports, and parks and playgrounds. During the early 1980s, there was a significant change in federal policy, based on rising deficits and a political philosophy that encouraged states and local governments to raise their own revenues for capital programs. The result has been a growing interest in “creative financing.”⁵ (See Table 3-4)

Capital Improvement Financing

Because most capital investments involve the outlay of substantial funds, local government can seldom pay for these facilities through annual appropriations in the annual operating budget. Therefore, numerous techniques have evolved to enable local government to pay for capital improvements over a time period exceeding one year. Public finance literature and state laws governing local government finance classify techniques that are used to finance capital improvements. These techniques include: revenue bonds; lease-purchase, authorities and special districts; current revenue (pay-as-you-go); reserve funds; and tax increment financing.⁶ (See Table 3-4)

Wyoming Valley Flood Mitigation Project

The Wyoming Valley is a heavily developed area and extends into Snyder County. It is located in the northeast to north-central portion of Pennsylvania, approximately 90 miles northeast of Harrisburg. Snyder County activities associated with the Wyoming Valley Mitigation Project include those in Union Township, Selinsgrove Borough, Monroe Township, Penn Township, and Shamokin Dam Borough. The valley contains a mix of urban residential, commercial, and industrial facilities, as well as several active and abandoned coal mines.

The area was plagued with recurring floods from the Susquehanna River for many years until a series of federally authorized flood protection measures were constructed in the 1930s, 1940s,

⁵ So, Frank S., and Judith Getzels, eds. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, 2nd ed. (International City Management Association: Washington, D.C. 1988), 451.

⁶ Kurtz, Thomas. *Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook*, 4th ed. (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development: Harrisburg, September 1997), 11.



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and 1950s. The existing flood damage reduction system is composed of four projects located in: the Boroughs of Kingston and Edwardsville; the Boroughs of Swoyersville and Forty Fort; the Borough of Plymouth; the Township of Hanover; and the City of Wilkes-Barre.

In June 1972, Tropical Storm Agnes topped the existing flood protection system by as much as five feet. In December 1972, the *Wyoming Valley Flood Control, Susquehanna River, Pennsylvania* document recommended that the existing flood protection system should be modified to protect against an Agnes-level flooding. In 1981, a more detailed Phase I General Design Memorandum (GDM)/Feasibility Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement were completed. These recommended that the existing flood protection system should be raised to protect against an Agnes-level flooding. Section 401(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662) authorized the construction of the project recommended in the 1981 Phase I GDM.⁷

The Wyoming Valley Flood Mitigation Project funded the development of a Flood Warning and Response System (FWRS). The FWRS is limited to about 110 miles of the main stem of the Susquehanna River, specifically the flood prone areas of Luzerne, Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder, and Montour Counties. The stated objective is to provide accurate and timely warnings to maximize response time for flood plain residents and emergency managers, and to provide a powerful planning tool for flood prone areas. The goal of the FWRS is to provide a comprehensive warning and response system that provides accurate and timely flood forecasts to maximize response time for residents and emergency management response officials. In addition, the FWRS provides local officials with a powerful management and planning tool for flood-prone areas.

This project funded a FWRS for project-area communities in Snyder County. Existing mitigation funds are available for future projects. These funds are administered by Luzerne County.

Incur Debt through General Obligation Bonds

Some projects may be financed with general obligation bonds. With this method, the jurisdiction's taxing power is pledged to pay interest and principal to retire debt. General obligation bonds can be sold to finance permanent types of improvements, such as schools, municipal buildings, parks, and recreation facilities. Voter approval may be required.⁸ (See Table 3-4)

⁷ Pennsylvania Corps of Engineers. Intent to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Proposed Wyoming Valley Inflatable Dam in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Federal Register: August 2, 1995, Volume 60, Number 148, Page 39371-39372. From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access, wais.access.gpo.gov.

⁸ So, Frank S., and Judith Getzels, eds. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, 2nd ed. (International City Management Association: Washington, D.C. 1988), 451



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Councils of Government

A council of government is a general, multi-purpose, cooperative organization. A joint authority is only a hollow framework until organized as a joint sewer authority or joint transit authority, for instance. Councils of Government (COGs) are a special kind of Act 180 organization. COGs are general or multipurpose organizations established to enable a group of municipalities to work together on mutually-beneficial projects. A COG has a broad responsibility; it may study and propose new joint programs and projects and is almost always composed of elected officials.⁹

The Central Keystone Council of Government, organized in 2002, claims 10 municipalities in Snyder County as members, including: Adams Township, Beavertown Borough, Center Township, Chapman Township, Freeburg Borough, Middleburg Borough, Middlecreek Township, Monroe Township, Spring Township, West Beaver Township, and West Perry Township. The current projects of the Central Keystone COG are Joint Code Enforcing and Joint Purchasing.

Snyder County is a member of the SEDA COG, whose members consist of 11 counties. Two current projects are the Municipal and Regional Planning Agency and the Local Development District. (See Table 3-4)

Municipal Authorities

Municipal authorities are most often used when major capital investments are required. In addition to sewage treatment, municipal authorities have been formed for water supply, airports, bus transit systems, swimming pools, and other purposes. Joint authorities have powers to receive grants, borrow money, and operate revenue generating programs. Municipal authorities are authorized to sell bonds, acquire property, sign contracts, and take similar actions. Authorities are governed by authority board members, which are appointed by the elected officials of the member municipalities.¹⁰

Municipal authorities in Snyder County include the water and public sanitary sewer utilities. (See Tables 3-4, 3-5)

⁹ Kurtz, Thomas. *Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook, 4th ed.* (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development: Harrisburg, September 1997), 11.

¹⁰ Kurtz, Thomas. *Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook, 4th ed.* (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development: Harrisburg, September 1997), 13, 23.



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Sewer Authorities

Sewer authorities include multi-purpose authorities with sewer projects. They sell bonds to finance acquisition of existing systems or for construction, extension, or system improvement. Sewer authority operating revenues originate from user fees. The fee frequently is based on the amount of water consumed and payment is enforced by the ability to terminate service or imposition of liens against real estate. In areas with no public water supply, flat rate charges are calculated on average use per dwelling unit.¹¹

Water Authorities

Water authorities are multi-purpose authorities with water projects, many of which operate both water and sewer systems. The financing of water systems for lease back to the municipality is among the principal activities of the local government facilities financing authorities. An operating water authority issues bonds to purchase existing facilities or to construct, extend, or improve a system. The primary source of revenues is user fees based on metered usage. The cost of constructing or extending water supply lines can be funded by special assessments against abutting property owners. Tapping fees also help fund water system capital costs. Water utilities are also directly operated by municipal governments and by privately owned public utilities regulated by the PA Public Utility Commission. The PA Department of Environmental Protection has a program to assist with consolidating small water systems to make system upgrades more cost effective.¹²

Circuit – Riding Program (Engineer)

The Circuit – Riding Program is an example of intergovernmental cooperation. This program offers municipalities the ability to join together to accomplish a common goal. The circuit rider is a municipal engineer who serves several small municipalities simultaneously. These are municipalities which may be too small to hire a professional engineer for their own operations, yet needs the skills and expertise the engineer offers. Municipalities can jointly obtain what no one municipality could obtain on its own. (See Table 3-4)

Political Capability

Political capability refers to a jurisdiction's incentive or willingness to accomplish hazard mitigation objectives. Local decision makers may not rank hazard mitigation as a high priority task if there are other, more immediate political concerns. Unfortunately, it often takes a

¹¹ Snyder County Planning Commission. "Local Government Officials Directory 2006,"40-41. http://www.snydercounty.org/snyder/lib/snyder/Directory_-_2006x.pdf.

¹² Snyder County Planning Commission. "Local Government Officials Directory 2006,"40-41. http://www.snydercounty.org/snyder/lib/snyder/Directory_-_2006x.pdf.



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disaster to get people thinking about hazard mitigation. Responding to and recovering from a disastrous event can exhaust local resources, thereby elevating hazard mitigation to the forefront.

Cooperation among planning commission officials, emergency management officials, and other officials is essential to achieve hazard mitigation objectives. Maintaining open lines of communication and sharing up-to-date information is key.

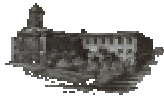
Many long-time Snyder County residents and business owners remember the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Agnes in June 1972. Most residents can recall the January 1996 flood and subsequent loss of life. Additionally, the damaging effects of Tropical Depression Ivan in September 2004 are still fresh in the minds of Snyder County residents. Given these relatively recent flood events and the severity of Tropical Storm Agnes, the political capability of Snyder County is not an issue when planning for and implementing local hazard mitigation activities, provided the activities are generally accepted by the public and perceived as cost-effective.

Institutional Capability

Snyder County's 21 municipalities include 15 townships and 6 boroughs. Each municipality conducts daily operations and provides various community services according to local needs and limitations. Some of these municipalities have formed cooperative agreements and work jointly to provide services, such as solid waste disposal and water supply management. These municipalities vary in staff and size, resource availability, fiscal status, service provision, constituent population, and vulnerability to the profiled hazards. In fact, the Capability Assessment indicates that 14 of the 21 municipalities do not have a local planning commission.

According to the *Snyder County Strategic Plan*, a majority of the County is considered rural. Generally speaking, the municipalities in the eastern part of Snyder County are more developed. The differing character and landscape of the County also lead to a varying degree of available resources. This may leave the more rural areas in the west with less staff and a more limited supply of available resources than those in the eastern part of the County. This is not to say, however, that hazard mitigation is not an important priority in rural areas.

In addition to the institutional capability of the municipal government structure described here, the County is capable of engaging in hazard mitigation activities. The County has its own mitigation goals and objectives, staff, resources, budget, and equipment. As such, it can mitigate the profiled hazards. When partnered with local municipalities, the state, the federal government, local councils of government, watershed groups, environmental groups, or other entities, the results can be very positive.



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**Table 3 - 1
Legal and Regulatory Capability**

Region	a. Building code	b. Zoning ordinance	c. Subdivision ordinance or regulations	d. Floodplain Ordinance	e. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	f. Stormwater Management Plan (Act 167)	g. Stormwater Management Ordinance
Snyder County Government	S	-	C	-	-	-	
Adams Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Beaver Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Beavertown Borough	S	-	L	L	L		-
Center Township	S	-	C	L / 88	L		-
Chapman Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Franklin Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Freeburg Borough	S	-	L	L	L		-
Jackson Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
McClure Borough	S	-	L	L	L		-
Middleburg Borough	S	L / 95	C	L	L		-
Middlecreek Township	S	-	L	L	L		-
Monroe Township	S	L / 88	L	L / 01	L		L
Penn Township	S	L / 97	L	L	L		L
Perry Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Selinsgrove Borough	S	L / 76	L	L / 01	L		-
Shamokin Dam Borough	S	L / 88	L	L	L		-
Spring Township	S	-	L	L	L		-
Union Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
Washington Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
West Beaver Township	S	-	C	L	L		-
West Perry Township	S	-	C	L	L		-



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**Table 3 - 2
Legal and Regulatory Capability**

Place an **S** for State, a **C** for County, or an **L** for Local Municipality. If the date the ordinance, code, or regulation was adopted or updated is available or known, include that in the appropriate block.

Region	h. Comprehensive plan	i. A capital improvements plan	j. Emergency Operations Plan (Title 35)	k. A post-disaster recovery plan	l. A post-disaster recovery ordinance
Snyder County Government	C / 01	-	C	-	-
Adams Township	-	-	C	-	-
Beaver Township	-	-	C	-	-
Beavertown Borough	-	-	C	-	-
Center Township	-	-	C	-	-
Chapman Township	L*	-	C	-	-
Franklin Township	-	-	C	-	-
Freeburg Borough	-	-	C	-	-
Jackson Township	-	-	C	-	-
McClure Borough	-	-	C	-	-
Middleburg Borough	-	-	C	-	-
Middlecreek Township	-	-	C	-	-
Monroe Township	L / 86	-	C	-	-
Penn Township	L / 02	-	C	-	-
Perry Township	-	-	C	-	-
Selinsgrove Borough	L / 76	-	C	-	-
Shamokin Dam Borough	L / 84	-	C	-	-
Spring Township	-	-	C	-	-
Union Township	L*	-	C	-	-
Washington Township	-	-	C	-	-
West Beaver Township	-	-	C	-	-
West Perry Township	-	-	C	-	-

*Chapman and Union Townships have a joint comprehensive plan.



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Table 3 - 3
Administrative and Technical Capability

Place an **S** for State, a **C** for County, an **L** for Local Municipality, or a **Y** for Yes

Region	a. County Planning Commission	b. Municipal Planning Commission	c. Municipal Engineer	d. Personnel skilled in GIS and/or HAZUS	e. Emergency Management Coordinator	f. Intergovernmental Cooperation
Snyder County Government	C	-	C	C	C	Y
Adams Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Beaver Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Beavertown Borough	C	L	-	-	L	Y
Center Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Chapman Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Franklin Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Freeburg Borough	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Jackson Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
McClure Borough	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Middleburg Borough	C	-	L	-	L	Y
Middlecreek Township	C	L	-	-	L	Y
Monroe Township	C	L	L	L	L	Y
Penn Township	C	L	L	C	L	Y
Perry Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Selinsgrove Borough	C	L	L	L	L	Y
Shamokin Dam Borough	C	L	L	-	L	Y
Spring Township	C	L	-	-	L	Y
Union Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
Washington Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
West Beaver Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y
West Perry Township	C	-	-	-	L	Y



Snyder County Hazard Mitigation Plan

**Table 3 - 4
Fiscal Capability**

Identify whether your political jurisdiction has access to, or is eligible for the following financial resources for hazard mitigation. Place a **Y** for Yes, an **N** for No, or an **E** for Eligible.

Region	a. State and Federal Grants	b. Capital improvements financing	d. Authority to levy taxes for specific purposes	e. Incur debt through general obligation bonds	f. Municipal Authorities*	g. Member of a Council of Government (COG)	g. Circuit - Riding Program (Engineer)
Snyder County Government	E	E	—	E	—	Y	
Adams Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Beaver Township	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Beavertown Borough	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Center Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Chapman Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Franklin Township	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Freeburg Borough	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Jackson Township	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
McClure Borough	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Middleburg Borough	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Middlecreek Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Monroe Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Penn Township	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Perry Township	E	E	Y	E	Y	N	E
Selinsgrove Borough	E	E	Y	Y	Y	N	E
Shamokin Dam Borough	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Spring Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E
Union Township	E	E	E	E	Y	N	E
Washington Township	E	E	Y	Y	—	N	E
West Beaver Township	E	E	E	E	—	N	E
West Perry Township	E	E	E	E	Y	Y	E

*See Figure 3-5 for a list of municipal authorities.



Snyder County Hazard Mitigation Plan

**Table 3 - 5
Snyder County Municipal Authorities**

Municipal Authorities		
Municipality	Water	Public Sanitary Sewer
Adams Township	Adams Township Municipal Authority	None
Beaver Township	Private Well Water and Beavertown Municipal Authority	On Lot Sewage Disposal and Beavertown Municipal Authority
Beavertown Borough	Beavertown Municipal Authority	Beavertown Municipal Authority
Center Township	Penns Creek Municipal Authority	Penns Creek Municipal Authority
Chapman Township	None - Private Well Water	Union-Chapman Regional Authority
Franklin Township	Middleburg Municipal Authority	On Lot Sewage Disposal and Middleburg Municipal Authority
Freeburg Borough	Freeburg Municipal Authority	Freeburg Municipal Authority
Jackson Township	Kratzerville Municipal Authority	None - On lot Sewage Disposal Systems
McClure Borough	McClure Municipal Authority	McClure Municipal Authority
Middleburg Borough	Middleburg Municipal Authority	Middleburg Municipal Authority
Middlecreek Township	Kreamer Municipal Authority	Kreamer Municipal Authority
Monroe Township	Aqua Pennsylvania	Hummels Wharf Municipal Authority
Penn Township	Penn Township Municipal Water & Sewer Authority and Pennsview Water Company	Penn Township Municipal Water & Sewer Authority
Perry Township	Mt. Pleasant Mills Municipal Authority	Mt. Pleasant Mills Municipal Authority
Selinsgrove Borough	Selinsgrove Borough Municipal Authority	Eastern Snyder County Regional Authority (<i>Conveyance & Treatment</i>)
Shamokin Dam Borough	Shamokin Dam Borough	Eastern Snyder County Regional Authority
Spring Township	Spring Township Municipal Authority	Spring Township Municipal Authority
Union Township	None - Private Well Water	Union-Chapman Regional Authority
Washington Township	—	—
West Beaver Township	—	—
West Perry Township	Richfield Area Joint Authority	Richfield Area Joint Authority

