

Chapter 23.80. NATURAL HAZARDS

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23.80.010. Natural Hazards.

Natural hazard areas may be defined as areas subject to natural events that are known to result in death or to endanger works of man, such as stream flooding, wildfire, ground water, erosion and deposition, landslides, earthquakes, weak foundation soils and other hazards unique to local or regional areas.

Deschutes County is fortunate to have only a few areas of geologic or topographic hazard. The major fault which runs through the County (Brothers Fault) is believed by State geologists to be stable. Landslides are scarce and seem to be largely located in the national forest, although some potential exists in the Hampton Butte area should development occur there. Rockfalls have been noted in rimrock areas but this again is rare. Some potential for flash flooding exists near Millican and Brothers; however, little conflicting development is anticipated in those areas. The two most likely hazards in the County are stream flooding and wildfire. Floods have done significant damage along the Little Deschutes River and Whychus Creek and the Deschutes and Dry Rivers also have similar potential.

Undoubtedly, the most obvious natural hazard is wildfire. Each year, several fires occur locally. Some are nature-caused (lightning) but many are man-caused. The subdivisions scattered throughout the timbered areas, particularly in the Lodgepole Pine area, increase not only the risk of people being hurt or killed but also increase the likelihood of a fire. Inadequate access, inappropriate building materials, insufficient fire-fighting equipment and personnel, a naturally dry climate all pit to wildfire being a serious threat to residents of Deschutes County. Probably, the least understood natural hazard is drought. Central Oregon is a semi-arid climate subject to many years without adequate precipitation. Planning which does not consider the effects of these dry years could create serious problems. Further discussion of water occurs in the Water Resources Chapter of the Plan. The State's goal is seen as appropriate for this area.

(Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 200; Ord. 92-051, 1992; Ord. 88-031, 1988; PL-20, 1979)

23.80.020. Goal.

To protect life and property from natural disasters and hazards. In order to accommodate the new population anticipated for Deschutes County in a safe and beneficial manner, a number of policies have been prepared for implementation.

(Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 200; Ord. 92-051, 1992; Ord. 88-031, 1988; PL-20, 1979)

23.80.030. Policies.

1. Review. Provision shall be made in County land use regulations to assure proposed developments will receive a review of potential natural hazards (stream flooding, flash flooding, landslides, wildfires, etc.) and that sufficient authority exists to modify or deny applications where such hazards exist.
2. Flooding.
 - a. The flood hazard areas of Deschutes County are subject to periodic inundation which may result in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base, all of which adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.

- b. These flood losses are caused by the cumulative effects of obstructions in areas of special flood hazards, which increase flood heights and velocities, and when inadequately floodproofed, elevated or otherwise protected from flood damage, also contribute to the flood loss.
- c. In order to accomplish the purposes of this plan, the Zoning Ordinance shall provide for:
 - 1. Restricting or prohibiting uses which are dangerous to health, safety and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increase in erosion or in flood heights or velocities.
 - 2. Requiring that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction.
 - 3. Controlling the alteration of natural flood plains, stream channels and natural protective barriers, which help accommodate or channel floodwaters;
 - 4. Controlling filling, grading, dredging and other development which may increase flood damage; and
 - 5. Preventing or regulating the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert floodwaters or may increase flood hazards in other areas.
- d. No structures shall be allowed in areas except areas of shallow flooding. Fill should be allowed in the flood plain only to the extent that it is necessary to allow for utility facilities and stream bank stabilization which cannot be located outside of the flood plain. All uses which could have any effect upon the hazards set forth above shall be conditional uses and subject to rigorous review to insure that use of the flood plain is only a last resort to allow necessary facilities and some beneficial use of pre-existing lots of record.
- e. No new parcels shall be created which would allow the construction of new dwelling units in the flood plain.
- f. Only variances to dimensional standards of a lot or setback restrictions shall be considered. No use variance or variances to the minimum standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall be allowed.
- g. The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Insurance Administration in a scientific and engineering report entitled "The Flood Insurance Study for Deschutes County", with accompanying Flood Insurance Maps, is hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this Ordinance. The Flood Insurance Study is on file at the Deschutes County Community Development Department Planning Division.
- h. The Flood Plain Zone shall include all areas designated as "Base Flood" areas by the Flood Insurance Study for Deschutes County. When Base Flood data has not been provided in accordance with the Flood Insurance Study for Deschutes County, the basis for establishing the Flood Plain Zone shall be based upon any base flood information or floodway data reasonably available from a federal, state or other source.
- 3. Drought. Plans (public and private) shall consider and reflect the effect of drought on the proposed projects.
- 4. Fire.
 - a. Design public use areas, such as parks, recreation sites and picnic areas, so that fires starting in them cannot escape to development or to surrounding wildlife.
 - b. In timber, rangeland or other appropriate areas subdivisions and other types of development should plan for fire truck access to within 16 feet of lakes, ponds, streams or other water sources.
 - c. For easy resident evacuation and ready access for fire and emergency equipment all new subdivision or other major land development shall provide at least two different ingress-egress routes.
 - d. To accommodate heavy firefighting equipment, cul-de-sacs shall be limited to 600 feet in length and terminated by a paved turnaround not less than 38 feet in diameter, unless another equally protective alternative is provided which is acceptable to the County and fire fighting agencies responsible for fire control in that area.

- e. Bridges shall be constructed to meet the requirements of the appropriate fire district, as to width and weight standards, so as to assure access for heavy firefighting equipment.
- f. All existing roads shall be maintained by either the appropriate public or private agency or by the development residents unless an adequate alternative route is provided so as to not deny access beyond the subdivision for firefighting equipment.
- g. To avoid delays in responding to fire calls all roads, streets, and buildings shall be designated by name or number clearly visible from the main travel roadway, before occupants move in. This will include the installation of street and road signs of durable and permanent materials at all intersections in the subdivision.
- h. The Uniform Building Code provides adequate fire protection for residential construction but the County should adopt the Uniform Fire Code to assure adequate fire protection for commercial and industrial construction and support establishment of fire protection facilities in accordance with recommendations of the National Board of the Fire Underwriters in appropriate areas.
- i. When subdivision or developments are created in the County, a minimum width for a fuel break, as determined by the local fire authority, shall be required by the County to be constructed and maintained around all buildings or structures, so as to reduce structural exposure to flames and radiant heat.
- j. During preliminary subdivision review, the Planning staff, in coordination with the fire district and/or other firefighting agencies, shall indicate whether or not the development plan has adequately provided for fire protection. Annexation to or contract with a fire district or creation of a new fire district or private firefighting agency may be required conditions for development approval.
- k. All development in Deschutes County shall comply with all applicable state and federal rules, regulations and standards.

Additional standards for firefighting facilities can be found in the Public Facilities and Services Chapter. (Ord. 2002-005 §1, 2002; Ord. 2000-017 §1, 200; Ord. 92-051, 1992; Ord. 88-031, 1988; Ord. 80-203, 1980; PL-20, 1979)