

CHAPTER 2

PLANNING PROCESS

PLAN UPDATE

The Central Shenandoah Hazard Mitigation Plan (CSHMP) undergoes a comprehensive update every five years. The first version was completed in 2005, with subsequent updates in 2010-13, 2019-20, and 2024-26. Each update cycle incorporates additional stakeholders, enhanced data sources, and emerging best practices to strengthen regional mitigation efforts. Appendix C contains detailed documentation of the planning process and participation.

This updated CSHMP differs from the previous plan in the following ways:

- **Expanded Stakeholder Engagement.** This update included additional stakeholders from regional organizations, higher education, the private sector, and non-profit organizations, either as Steering Committee members or through targeted consultation. The plan also incorporated social media alongside traditional outreach methods such as television and print news to reach a wider audience.

- **Special Districts.** This plan also incorporates 3 special districts: James Madison University, the Maury Service Authority, and the Bath County Service Authority. Each special district participates as full planning partners alongside the region's 21 local jurisdictions.

- **Updated Data.** The plan incorporates the latest federal, state, regional, and local datasets to strengthen the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Capabilities Assessment. Examples of new data resources include FEMA's National Risk Index, spatial data on National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) claims, and DCR's Dam Inventory.

PLANNING PROCESS

The plan was developed through a three-phase planning process designed to identify regional hazards and develop effective mitigation strategies to reduce their impact on the community.

PHASE 1: THREAT AND HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

The first phase conducted a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) to evaluate the region's vulnerability to natural and human-caused hazards. This assessment analyzed the potential impacts these hazards could have on the population, critical infrastructure, natural environment, and local economies across all participating jurisdictions.

PHASE 2: CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT

To understand the region's ability to mitigate the impacts of the hazards identified in the THIRA, the second phases evaluated the capabilities of communities within the Central Shenandoah planning district. This assessment examined the extent to which local governments can implement hazard mitigation strategies and identified opportunities for enhancing these capabilities.

PHASE 3: MITIGATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Building upon the findings of the THIRA, the third phase focused on developing mitigation strategies at the regional and local levels. This phase identified specific mitigation actions designed to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from the hazards identified in the first phase.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The CSHMP planning process was strengthened through community engagement that incorporated diverse perspectives from emergency management professionals, local government representatives, and area residents. Three complementary engagement approaches ensured comprehensive stakeholder input throughout plan development:

STEERING COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

A Steering Committee of regional emergency management leaders provided strategic guidance and technical expertise throughout the planning process. The Committee met four times to review findings, assess vulnerabilities, and shape mitigation strategies. Members also completed a risk rating survey that informed the THIRA by evaluating hazards based on potential impact and current preparedness levels.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

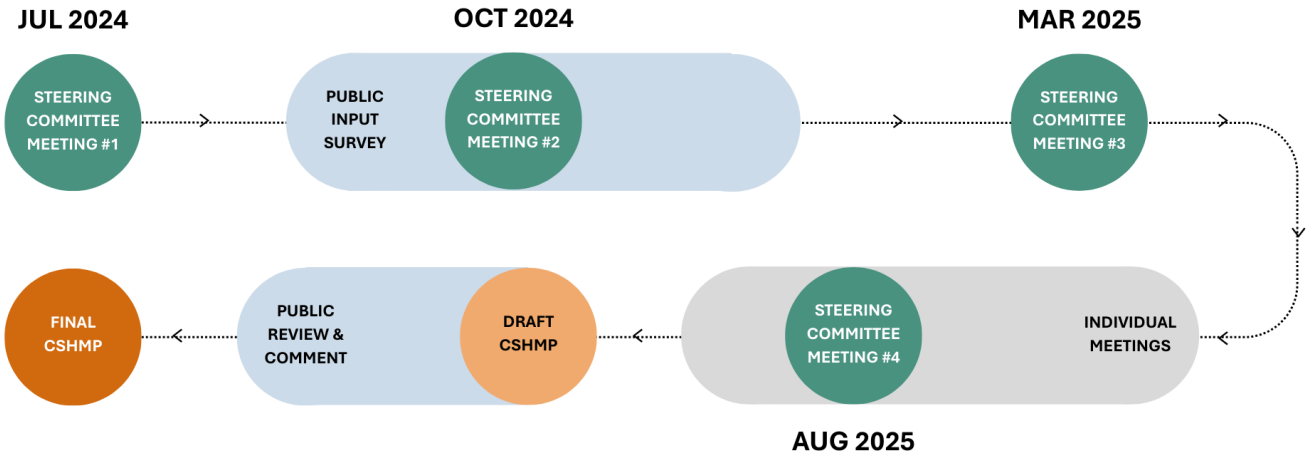
Emergency management staff from all 21 participating localities updated the inventory of critical facilities within their jurisdictions and collaborated directly with CSPDC staff to develop, review, and finalize locality-specific mitigation strategies tailored to each community's needs and priorities.

PUBLIC INPUT AND ENGAGEMENT

The CSPDC provided multiple opportunities for regional residents to inform both the risk assessment and mitigation planning processes. Public participation was facilitated through a community-wide input survey that gathered resident perspectives on local hazards and concerns. Additionally, the CSPDC leveraged existing regional coordination efforts, hosted public meetings, and participated in state-level planning initiatives to raise awareness of hazards affecting the region and to solicit broader community input that shaped the final plan.

TIMELINE

This update spanned nearly two years, from the summer of 2024 through the early spring of 2026. Throughout the process, CSPDC staff consulted with VDEM Region 3 and 6 All-Hazards Planners and *Launch! Consulting* for technical assistance. The process began with a steering committee kick-off meeting on July 16, 2024. The timeline graphic below illustrates the key milestones and activities completed during the planning cycle.



PLAN PARTICIPATION

This plan update included 21 localities, 3 special districts, and approximately 30 non-governmental organizations from across the region. A comprehensive list of plan participants can be found in Appendix C. Each locality and special district represented in the plan had at least two representatives on the CSHMP Steering Committee. Participants provided input through multiple channels, including 4 steering committee meetings, individual meetings with CSPDC staff, critical facility list updates, a risk rating survey, a public input survey, a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) survey, and general correspondence via phone or email. Table 2.1 summarizes participation by activity for each locality and special district. The following sections briefly describe each activity in the planning process.

Table 2.1. Plan Participation

Locality/District	Meeting #1 (7/16/24)	Meeting #2 (10/23/2024)	Meeting #3 (3/10/2025)	Meeting #4 (8/8/2025)	Individual Meeting	Critical Facilities Lists	Risk Rating Survey	Public Input Survey	NFIP Survey	Phone/Email
Augusta County	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/9/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bath County	✓	-	-	✓	4/14/2025	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Highland County	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/14/2025	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Rockbridge County	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/5/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rockingham County	-	✓	✓	✓	6/12/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Buena Vista	✓	-	✓	-	6/11/2025	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
City of Harrisonburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/28/2025	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
City of Lexington	-	✓	-	-	5/23/2025	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
City of Staunton	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/11/2025	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Waynesboro	✓	-	✓	✓	6/6/2025	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Town of Bridgewater	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/2/2025	✓	✓	✓	N/A	-
Town of Broadway	✓	-	-	-	7/28/2025	-	-	✓	N/A	✓
Town of Craigsville	✓	✓	✓	-	7/16/2025	✓	-	-	N/A	-
Town of Dayton	✓	✓	-	✓	5/6/2025	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓
Town of Elkton	✓	✓	✓	-	6/5/2025	✓	-	✓	N/A	✓
Town of Glasgow	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	N/A	✓
Town of Goshen	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/12/2025	✓	-	-	N/A	-
Town of Grottoes	✓	✓	-	-	5/21/2025	✓	-	✓	N/A	-
Town of Monterey	✓	-	-	-	7/22/2025	-	✓	✓	N/A	-
Town of Mount Crawford	✓	-	✓	✓	5/13/2025	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓
Town of Timberville	✓	✓	✓	-	5/12/2025	✓	-	✓	N/A	-
James Madison University	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/27/2025	-	-	N/A	N/A	✓
Maury Service Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
Bath Co. Service Authority	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8/19/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1

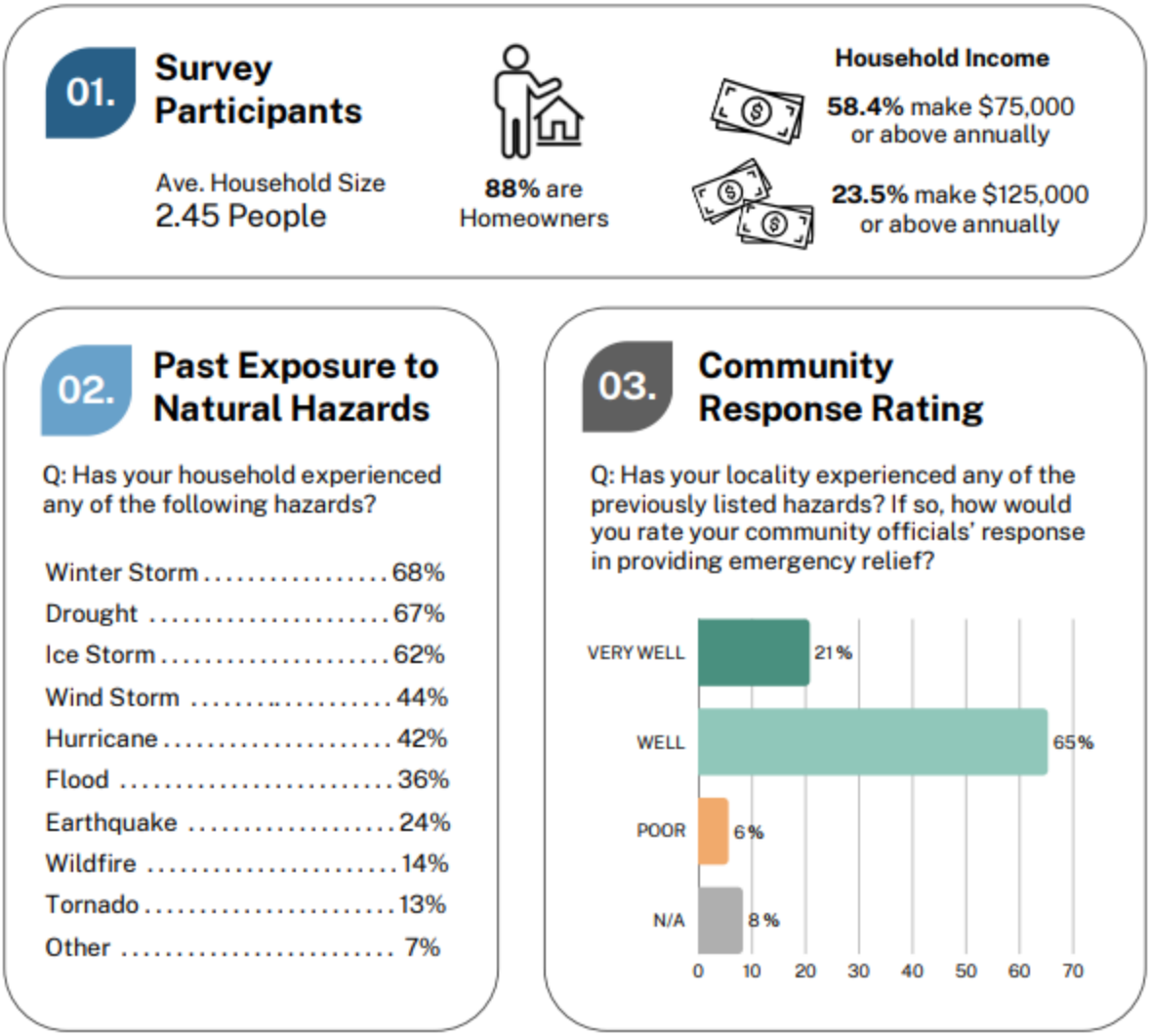
- On July 16, 2024, CSPDC held the kick-off meeting for the Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Staff presented an overview of the planning process and regulatory requirements. *Launch! Consulting* then facilitated a hazard ranking activity where steering committee members voted for the top 15 threats and hazards from 31 options and shared comments on local events related to each hazard.

RISK RATING SURVEY

- Following the kick-off meeting, CSPDC and *Launch! Consulting* distributed a risk rating survey to steering committee members. The survey asked respondents to rate the 15 selected hazards based on impact and mitigation criteria. Approximately 30 members completed the survey, informing hazard-specific profiles in the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA).

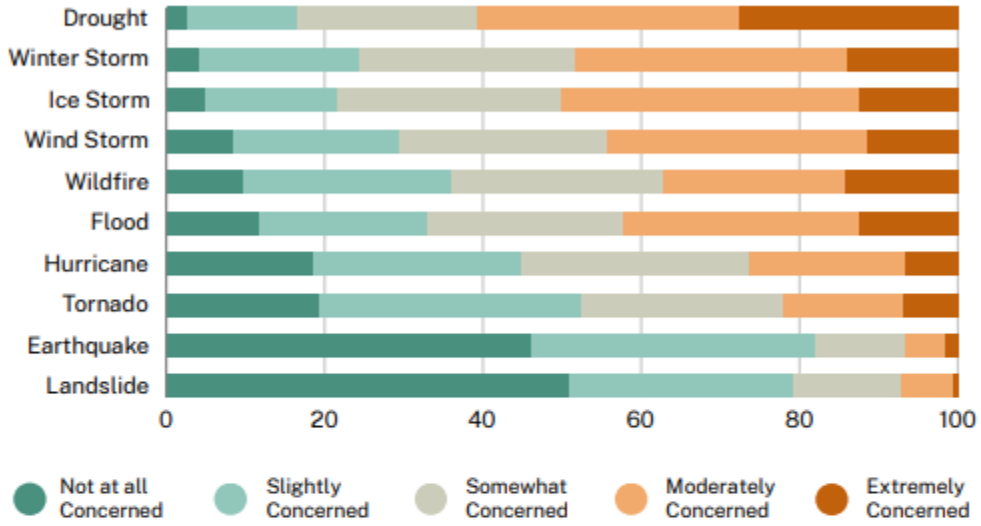
PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

- On September 15, 2024, the CSPDC opened a 16-question public input survey, promoted through television news, print media, social media, local government websites, and flyers. The survey closed on December 15, 2024, with 458 responses. A full summary is available in Appendix D.



04. Natural Hazard Concern Levels

Q: How concerned are you about the following hazards affecting your area?



05. Community Preparedness

64.5%

of respondents believed their community was **somewhat prepared** or **very prepared** to effectively respond to a disaster.

13.5%

of respondents were **not sure** how prepared their community would be to effectively respond to a disaster.

06. Top 5 Actions for Localities to Consider

1) Improve the damage resistance of utilities

2) Upgrade infrastructure (e.g., elevating roadways, improving drainage systems)

3) Protect and strengthen essential facilities

4) Enhance stream maintenance programs and/or projects

5) Replace inadequate or vulnerable bridges or causeways

07. Preferred Communication Channels



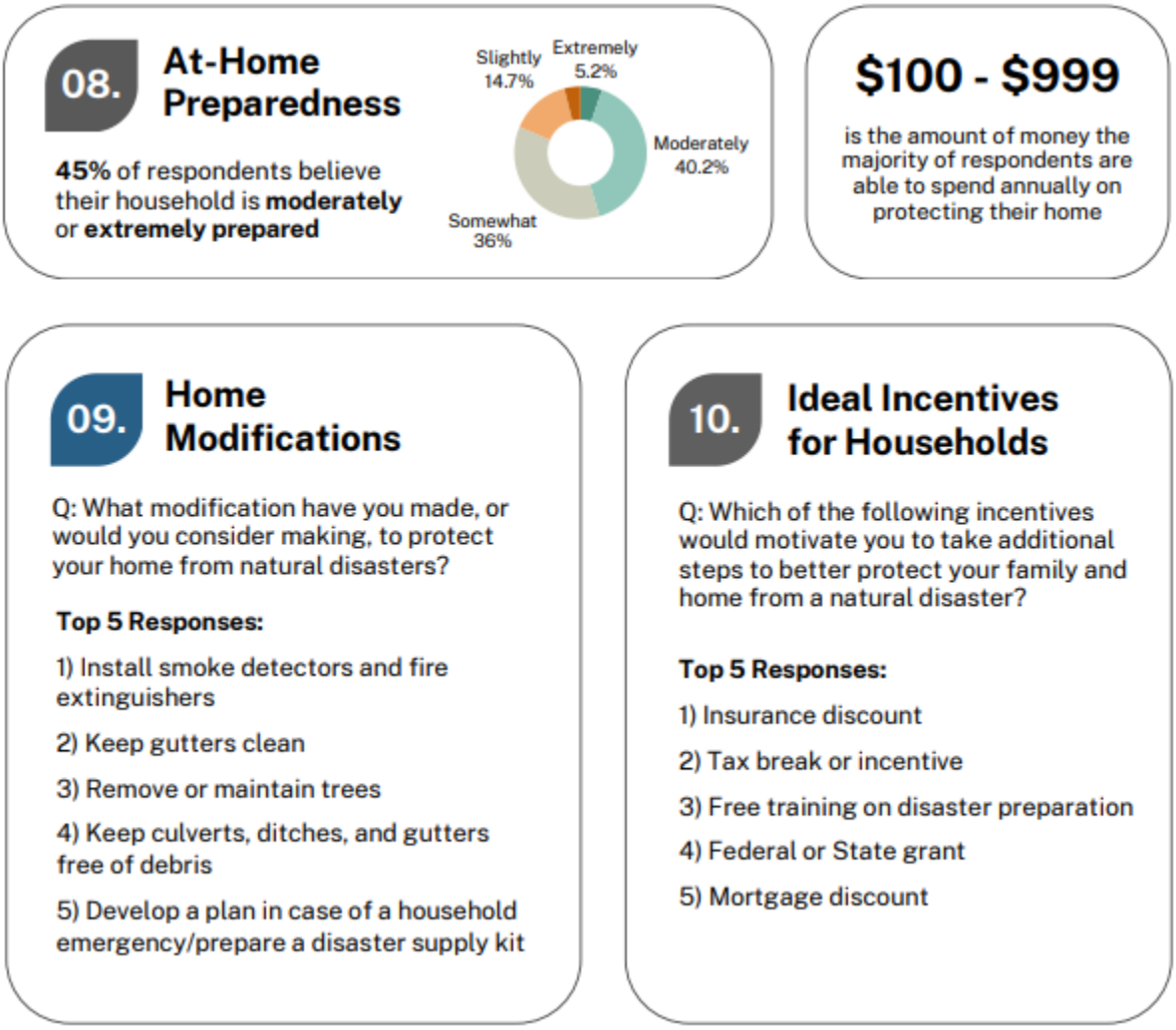
Social Media (68%)



Email (51%)



TV/Radio News (47%)



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

- On October 23, 2024, the CSPDC held the second steering committee meeting. Staff shared preliminary findings from the public input survey; *Launch! Consulting* presented an initial hazard ranking based on developed profiles; and CSPDC staff outlined the critical facilities to be included in the plan's risk assessment.

CRITICAL FACILITY INVENTORY

- Following the second meeting, the CSPDC asked attendees to review and update critical facility spreadsheets for each locality. By January 2025, nearly all participating localities and special districts had returned updated lists for inclusion in the THIRA.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3

- On March 10, 2025, the CSPDC held the third steering committee meeting. Staff provided updates on the plan and THIRA revisions. FEMA and VDEM representatives then conducted a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) workshop and provided technical assistance to attendees.

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

- Between April and August 2025, the CSPDC met individually with participating localities and special districts to review existing strategies, clarify project statuses, and develop new mitigation actions. In September and October 2025, CSPDC staff emailed revised action language to attendees for review.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4

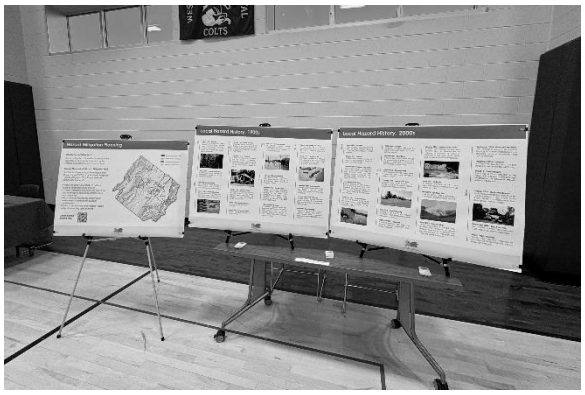
- On August 8, 2025, the CSPDC held the final steering committee meeting. Staff presented THIRA revisions, the overall ranking of the 12 hazards included in the plan, and common themes from individual meetings. Staff then facilitated an activity for attendees to review and provide feedback on regional mitigation goals and strategies.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) SURVEYS

- Between August and October 2025, the CSPDC sent NFIP surveys to floodplain managers in the region's 10 cities and counties. These surveys, updated every 5 years with the plan, identify existing floodplain management activities and capacity constraints. All 10 localities completed surveys, which can be found in Appendix G.

ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the planning process, CSPDC staff actively participated in regional coordination efforts, public meetings, and state planning initiatives to raise awareness of hazards affecting the region and integrate hazard mitigation strategies into complementary planning efforts. These activities ensured alignment between the CSHMP and other emergency management, environmental, and community planning documents while fostering collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors.



Hazard History Display for Western State Hospital's Safety Day



Urban Karst & Stormwater Management Workshop

Table 2.2. Additional Engagement	
August 28, 2024	Staff presented an overview of hazard mitigation planning at the Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce meeting.

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January 29, 2025	Staff participated in a virtual feedback session for the Commonwealth of Virginia HMP update, providing regional input.
February 26, 2025	Staff attended an all-day Hazard Mitigation Working Group meeting for the Commonwealth of Virginia HMP update, aligning regional and state actions.
May 8, 2025	Staff attended the Harrisonburg-Rockingham LEPC meeting.
May 29, 2025	Staff attended the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro LEPC meeting.
June 5, 2025	Staff attended the Rockbridge Area LEPC meeting.
June 10, 2025	Staff attended the Highland County LEPC meeting.
June 16, 2025	Staff attended a public open house for the City of Waynesboro's comprehensive plan update, providing input on environmental considerations.
June 25, 2025	Staff attended a public open house for the City of Staunton's comprehensive plan update, providing feedback on draft goals and objectives.
July 10, 2025	Staff attended the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro LEPC meeting.
July 14, 2025	Staff completed a survey for the City of Staunton's Flood Resiliency Plan.
July 18, 2025	Staff participated in an Environmental Stakeholder Workgroup meeting for the City of Waynesboro's comprehensive plan update.
July 22, 2025	Staff participated in a virtual feedback session for the Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan, providing regional input.
August 27, 2025	Staff created a hazard history display for the Safety Day event hosted by Western State Hospital (Staunton).
September 9, 2025	Staff attended the Highland County LEPC meeting.
October 19, 2025	Staff participated in an Environmental Stakeholder Workgroup meeting for the City of Waynesboro's comprehensive plan update.
October 24, 2025	Staff kicked off the CSPDC's regional Flood and Stormwater Resilience Plan, which is intended as a companion document to the CSHMP.
October 28, 2025	Staff hosted an Urban Karst and Stormwater Management workshop at the Waynesboro City Council Chambers, with approximately 35 professionals from across the region in attendance.