

OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE



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MEDIA CONTACT:

Kuri Gill, Grants and Outreach Coordinator, Oregon Heritage

503-383-6787

Kuri.gill@oregon.gov

www.oregonheritage.org

Community Disaster Resilience Planning for Heritage Resources model and guidebook available now

Oregon Heritage, in partnership with UO School of Planning, Public Policy and Management's Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE), the City of Cottage Grove and several local nonprofits worked over the last year to develop a new model for heritage resource disaster planning. The [initiative](#) resulted in organizational plans for five heritage organizations, a [community-wide plan](#) for the city and a [guidebook](#) so the process can be duplicated in other communities.

Heritage resources like historic downtowns, museums, historic districts, cemeteries, genealogical libraries, etc. are valuable community assets. They are also wonderful resources to assist communities in recovery from disasters. The effort to strengthen these organizations' resilience following a disaster is critical. According to Kuri Gill, grants and outreach coordinator with Oregon Heritage, it was time to try something new. "After working for years with heritage organizations on disaster planning and response, we discovered some challenges. Remaining focused on disaster planning and preparation when organizations are trying to keep the doors open and the lights on is tough." It seemed that a community plan with coordinated goals would help drive the work and make it easier to access resources. The next step was to find the right team to pull off a pilot project.

Oregon Heritage coordinates the Oregon Heritage All-Star Community program, which recognizes communities that support, promote and coordinate their heritage resources. Cottage Grove is one such community, that also has an award-winning preservation plan which includes the community's heritage resources. Since they were already coordinating heritage organizations and incorporating them into city planning, the city was an ideal pilot partner.

Oregon Heritage, then reached out to IPRE. They had worked together on past projects including a historic theaters study. IPRE has produced excellent community planning projects and disaster resilience work through its Community Planning Workshop (CPW). This project is a good example of the power of university-community partnerships, explains Robert Parker, director of strategic and technical solutions, for IPRE. "Oregon Heritage has long worked to support preservation of Oregon's heritage, the CPW provided need capacity to bring the guidebook to completion," said Parker. "The project supported the mission of Oregon Heritage, of heritage organizations in Cottage Grove, and provided our graduate students a robust learning platform on emergency management and resiliency in the middle of a global pandemic."

Cottage Grove heritage nonprofits that committed to the project included: Bohemia Gold Mining Museum, Cottage Grove Genealogical Society, Cottage Grove Historical Society, Cottage Grove Museum, and Downtown Cottage Grove Inc. Representatives of each organization participated in several workshops and listening sessions to develop plans for their individual organizations. They also participated in the development of the community plan. According to Amanda Ferguson, City of Cottage Grove planner, the results were worth the effort. “I am so pleased that Cottage Grove was chosen to participate in this disaster planning process. Our Heritage Partners learned so much about disaster resilience, and are now much better prepared to respond to small and large issues within their organizations and as part of a greater heritage community. This plan will give the City a path forward to help guide community resilience efforts while positioning us to better preserve our own resources.”

“We are grateful to IPRE, the City of Cottage Grove, and our nonprofit partners for taking the leap with us,” notes Gill. “We know it will support Cottage Grove’s disaster resilience and now there is a guide for other communities to benefit the same way.” The project was also funded in part by the Oregon Cultural Trust.

A series of free, online workshops are being offered for those who want to learn more.

- Fire Recovery and Community Disaster Resilience Planning for Historic Cemeteries – November 17, 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. [Register](#) to receive Zoom meeting information.
- Disaster Preparedness and Resilience for Collecting Organizations – December 2, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. [Register](#) to receive the Zoom meeting information.
- Disaster Resilience for Main Streets – December 10, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. [Register](#) to receive Zoom meeting information.
- Disaster Preparedness and recovery for Historic Properties & Districts - TBA

To access the model plans, the guidebook, supporting materials, and the workshops visit the Oregon Heritage website at www.oregonheritage.org. For more information about Oregon Heritage contact [Kuri Gill](#) at 503-383-6787.

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