

Cottage Grove Historical Society Disaster Resilience Plan



June 2020

Final Plan

*Photos courtesy of the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum,
Cottage Grove Museum and City of Cottage Grove*

Prepared for
Cottage Grove Historical Society
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Territorial Acknowledgement

The City of Cottage Grove is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, whose relationship with this land continues to this day. Kalapuya descendants continue to make important contributions in their communities, in Cottage Grove, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

We offer gratitude for the land itself, for those who have stewarded it for generations, and for the opportunity to study, learn, work, and be in community on this land. We acknowledge that the City of Cottage Grove's history, like many others, is fundamentally tied to the first colonial developments in the Willamette Valley.

We express our respect to the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this territory, as well as to all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.

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About the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement

The Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE) is a research center affiliated with the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of IPRE is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.

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Cottage Grove Historical Society Disaster Plan

This document provides a disaster resilience plan for the Cottage Grove Historical Society, developed as a part of the Disaster Resilience Plan for Heritage Resources in Cottage Grove. Emergencies are unplanned events that can significantly impact the Historical Society's ability to steward heritage resources and serve the broader Cottage Grove community. This plan considers how the Historical Society can better prepare for, respond to, and recover from various emergencies. This plan is intended to guide leadership by considering:

1. What the organization does
2. Current levels of disaster preparedness
3. What the Historical Society needs to accomplish key activities
4. Actionable recommendations to increase resilience

Summary

The Disaster Resilience Plan for the Cottage Grove Historical Society is the result of a partnership between the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Oregon Heritage Program and the City of Cottage Grove. The goal of the Plan is to increase organizational knowledge and provide a framework for decision-making about the Historical Society's heritage resources in the case of a disaster in Cottage Grove. As an Oregon All-Star Heritage Community, Cottage Grove was an ideal place to pilot this project. Participating heritage organizations included the Cottage Grove Museum, Cottage Grove Genealogical Society, Bohemia Gold Mining Museum, Cottage Grove Historical Society, and Main Street Cottage Grove.



The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus occurred midway through development of this Plan. The lived experience of a global pandemic inevitably shaped the outcomes of the resilience goals and strategies detailed in this plan. The crisis provided a unique opportunity to measure the response of heritage organizations and their unique coping strategies identified in the planning process, alongside statewide mandates in response to COVID-19.

Resilience Goals

The project team developed five goals to improve the resilience of the Cottage Grove Historical Society. A complete framework, including strategies and action items, is provided at the end of this Plan.

- Goal 1:** Increase accessibility to institutional knowledge by creating and documenting formal policies and protocols using the Emergency Response Plan template.
- Goal 2:** Identify, diversify, and cross-train members of heritage organizations in essential roles.
- Goal 3:** Diversify and secure the location, physical storage, and maintenance of heritage resources.
- Goal 4:** Expand opportunities for education and diverse partnerships that provide expertise, increased capacity, and increased community investment in heritage assets.
- Goal 5:** Increase and diversify current and future funding sources to strengthen the economic resilience of the Historical Society.

Background

The Cottage Grove Historical Society (Historical Society) was founded in the 1970s, after it was deemed necessary to branch out from the Cottage Grove Museum. The Cottage Grove Museum building was deemed unsafe by the fire marshal at the time to store both the artifacts and the documents, as that presented a fire hazard. The Historical Society formed to steward all historic documents and the McFarland Cemetery, while the Cottage Grove Museum kept all historic artifacts.

The Historical Society moved into the same space as the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum when it was located in the Main Street District. When the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum needed to move to a larger space, they offered to allow for some room in the back of the building for the Historical Society as well. They have been at 308 S 10th St in Cottage Grove ever since.

The Historical Society works to preserve the stories from Cottage Grove's history. The official mission statement is "*... to preserve and celebrate the history and heritage of the Cottage Grove area and to stimulate interest and knowledge for generations to come.*" They meet this objective with maintenance of their library and hosting of community events to preserve and share the history of those who have lived in Cottage Grove.

Risk Profile

This section highlights vulnerabilities that the organization faces from natural and human-caused hazards. The following findings assist in shaping the recommended resilience strategies for the Historical Society.

- **The Historical Society has begun digitizing some records, which are stored on-site and updated infrequently.** With limited capacity, the Historical Society has digitized some of its historic documents, available on the website and stored on a CD in the library. One external hard drive exists off site, but it is only updated every year or two with no set update cycle.
- **The Historical Society maintains assets that are subject to degrading.** The Historical Society keeps film, cassettes, and VHS- all of which naturally degrade over time. Given that these assets have a set lifespan, the Historical Society has a limited amount of time to preserve the documents stored on tape.
- **The Historical Society has no established policies, procedures, or protocols to mitigate damage in the event of an emergency.** In the last eight years, however, the Historical Society has had no record of an event that impeded the organization's ability to operate. There is no experience on which to base policies, procedures, or protocols. There is a fire extinguisher onsite, but no training for new volunteers on where it is, or physical changes made to help prepare for hazards.
- **The organization has a limited volunteer base and no paid staff.** The Historical Society currently has eight board members and six volunteers. Capacity is limited, and preservation projects are more time intensive than appropriately trained volunteers have to give.
- **The Historical Society has an established and clear communication style within the board.** This allows for the board to reach out to each other easily and trust one another for decisions that need to be made. In a hazard, this allows for them to adjust easily based on the needs of the organization and the availability of board members.
- **The Historical Society keeps highly vulnerable paper assets on-site.** Many of the assets that the Historic Society keeps are paper documents - whether books, newspaper clippings, or others.

Several unique and irreplaceable items are stored on the bottom shelf of bookshelves, inches away from the ground. This proximity to the ground increases damage risk in cases such as flooding which puts the documents in closer proximity to the hazard itself.

- **The Historical Society building is updated and up to code.** Due to instability of the second floor in the Dance Barn, the building has since been renovated and brought back up to code. The renovations included a seismic retrofit, hurricane and earthquake ties, and new beams. Additionally, the building is ADA accessible and equipped with emergency lighting and fire extinguishers. Even with an updated building, the lack of fire suppression systems and a recent incidence of vandalism cause concern for the volunteers.

People, Places, and Things

“People, places, and things” is used as a framework to outline what each heritage organization needs to accomplish what they do. “People” are those individuals needed for day-to-day operations and includes the organization’s main audience and any collaborative partnerships. “Places” include the buildings, facilities, and open spaces needed to carry out an organization’s functions. Finally, “things” are the physical assets each organization stewards.

People

The Cottage Grove Historical Society is a nonprofit governed by a six-member Board of Directors, who contribute an average of nine hours/volunteer each month. Key roles of the executive board members include:

- **President:** Runs meetings, sets goals, appoints committee chairs, acts as a volunteer librarian, helps run Facebook page, and manages membership drive and business members.
- **Vice President:** Provides backup and support for president, organizes history show on local radio, acts as liaison between Historical Society and Cottage Grove Museum.
- **Treasurer:** Performs accounting and financial management, writes the newsletter, creates exhibits, and maintains website.
- **Secretary:** Takes minutes at board meetings, assists with presentations at Magnolia Gardens Assisted Living facility.

The Historical Society uses volunteers as librarians at the research library, for program delivery, and for special events. They partner with other local organizations such as Bohemia Gold Mining Museum and Partners in History, which is a network of local history-focused organizations in Cottage Grove.

The Historical Society has a strong membership program, with 60 to 75 members. The membership is an annual program that provides a quarterly print newsletter, 10% off items in the giftshop including books, and advanced notice of events and activities held by the Historical Society.

Places

The Historical Society is located in the Red Barn Building, sharing a space with the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. Rent is paid directly to Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. This space includes all their records, other than a digital backup of select portions of their library which is kept off-site. The items in the library are organized by what type of material they are (VHS, cassettes, paper, books, etc.) and arranged on approximately seven-foot high selves in their space in the back of the building – with various unique items

on the bottom-floor shelf. An additional space managed by the Historical Society is the McFarland Cemetery, a historic cemetery that acts as both a place and an asset for this organization. These spaces are maintained entirely by volunteers.

Things

The Historical Society shares the stories of Cottage Grove and the people who have lived there in many forms. This happens through documents such as newspaper clippings, self-published and bound books, old directories, binders organized by street and block, and various handwritten objects, as well as digital assets including CDs, cassettes, VHS, photographs, and film. About 40% of these documents are unique items and do not have a backup or alternative record in any capacity.

It is unclear what percentage of these resources are digitized. The digitized assets are kept on two external hard drives, one that is kept on-site and is updated on a more frequent basis, the other that is off-site and is updated every one or two years. Storage on the Historical Society's computer is also linked to a cloud database, and various assets have been stored on the website as well.

Essential Functions

The Cottage Grove Historical Society perceives the preservation and education of stories as the most important part of the organization. The Historical Society stewards records of stories in various forms, including Cottage Grove's historic McFarland Cemetery. The Historical Society regularly adds new material to their library for research. These activities are not important to the budget but are moderately important to bring in new people. Of the Historical Society's operating budget, 50% of revenue comes from member dues, 30% from donations, and the final 20% comes from grants. Volunteer expertise is the most important resource that allows the Historical Society to fulfill their essential functions.

Business Operations

The Historical Society's library and archives are open to the public Thursday-Saturday from 1pm to 4pm. On the third Saturday of every month, presentations are hosted at the Cottage Grove Community Center. Summer is the peak season for the Historical Society for general visitation. Additionally, the Historical Society sends a quarterly newsletter to members. These activities are moderately important to reserving their budget, and moderately important to bringing in new people.

Impacts

In the case of a hazard event, the Historical Society is most likely to experience impacts in visitation and tourism, funding, and ability to carry out essential functions. The ability to carry out essential functions is the most impactful out of these three. Essential functions are carried out by volunteers and board members. Should a hazard, such as COVID-19, has the ability to make it more difficult for volunteers to spend their time with the Historical Society, that would stop the ability to do things such as publish the quarterly newsletter. The inability to publish the quarterly newsletter may result in loss of membership and member donations (50% of the revenue). Lack of volunteering ability as well as physical damage to places could also make the Historical Society unable to host educational events.

Changes to tourism and visitation because of a hazard would likewise impact the Historical Society. While the assets could still exist either in the space or in personal sheds and garages, not having the library open stops the Historical Society from being able collect revenue on donations, book sales, and fulfill the mission of making the knowledge in the library available to the public.

Current Coping Strategies

The Historical Society has a well-founded and established sense of trust between board members. When sudden events come up, if one member is required to decide, this does not cause tension with the Board. All board members share their phone numbers, and they call each other to confirm decisions. Board decisions are typically made by a full board vote, but there is some flexibility in this policy. As a small board with strong relationships, various board members often could make decisions for the Board in emergency situations.

While there is a fire extinguisher by their door, not all board members knew where it was when prompted. The organization is in the process of digitizing their assets as a coping strategy, but that is a work in progress. The primary coping strategies that have been established by the Historical Society is around board communication and decision making in the case of a hazard.

Partners in History and other collaborations also provide a platform for resource and knowledge-sharing between the Museum and many other nonprofits. These partnerships can potentially provide much needed community support in the event of a disaster.

In Response to COVID-19

- ❑ **While the Historical Society made a transition to online engagement, they found that their typical audience is older and not accustomed to online engagement.** The Historical Society adjusted to the events of COVID-19 by using Facebook and email to keep in contact with their members and other audiences, with month-by-month emails going to all stakeholders. The Board conducted the first board meeting after closing doors entirely by email, and the second with Zoom. While the transition seemed to be effective, there are stakeholders left out of meetings and other activities due to the unfamiliarity of the online communication platforms.
- ❑ **The Historical Society expects modest financial impacts because of COVID-19.** While the impact of COVID-19 has closed the doors to visitors and stopped events, it has not stopped the release of the newsletter. The Historical Society has likewise used this time to create online content for the website and for Facebook for further outreach. While potential fundraising, donations to the library, and purchases in the giftshop could be impacted, the online shop is still open, and one book was purchased in the first few weeks of COVID-19.
- ❑ **The Historical Society experienced an uptick in memberships after the initial impact of COVID-19.** After the first month of COVID-19 in March 2020, the Historical Society had more memberships than usual for that point in the year.
- ❑ **While volunteer hours are down, the board is still active.** The board for the Historical Society has used this time to apply for a few grants and create online content.
- ❑ **The Dance Barn building that contains both the Historical Society and the Bohemia Mining Museum is being monitored.** While there is no security system or formal monitoring schedule, there is someone there from either the Historical Society or the Bohemia Gold Mining Museum to do various paperwork and check on the building.
- ❑ **Initial response to COVID-19 was internally focused.** Other organizations were not contacted at the onset of the outbreak to explore ways that the organizations could collaborate and partner. After several weeks, a new normal was established and it became more feasible to reach out to other organizations.
- ❑ **The largest concern with COVID-19 and recovery is the unknown timeline.** While the events of COVID-19 were not traumatic enough to change any policy, being uncertain of when to schedule the next events made the day-to-day procedures uncertain. The Historical Society is waiting on an

update, possibly from the City, on when it will be safe to reopen the library to the public and how to proceed with rescheduling events. This relies on reopening procedures given at the county and state level, leaving the ambiguity of the long-term schedule a difficult thing to figure out for the volunteers of the Historical Society.

Resilience Action Plan

This section identifies specific strategies and actions for the Museum to prepare for and respond to an event. This is provided in a framework that translates key findings to main goals, each with strategies and actionable items. These goals are nested within a broader resiliency framework that includes the following four core principles:

- **Diversity and Redundancy:** A variety of components that make a system stronger. Several components perform the same function and can absorb and adapt to unexpected changes.
- **Manage Connectivity:** Managing the relationships and links between heritage organizations and community partnerships. Strengthening systems of information sharing.
- **Broadening Participation:** Including a variety of people from different perspectives and background to information practices and decision-making.
- **Encouraging Learning:** Reflecting on existing knowledge and having a commitment to incorporating new ideas and trying new ways of operation.

Each strategy aligns with a step in the emergency management cycle. These steps are indicated by a color-coded key shown in the figure to the right. For a full description of the cycle, please see the Disaster Resilience Plan for Heritage Resources in Cottage Grove - Chapter 2: Cultural Resilience Framework.

Key	
	Mitigation
	Mitigation and Preparation
	Preparation and Response

Goal 1: Increase accessibility to institutional knowledge by creating and documenting formal policies and protocols using the Emergency Response Plan template.

Strategy 1A: Record procedures for mission-driven activities to ensure institutional knowledge is maintained. (Mitigation)

- 1A1 Record procedures for preservation and research activities.
- 1A2 Record procedures for educational programs.
- 1A3 Record procedures for annual events, volunteer outreach, and other visitation related activities.

Strategy 1B: Develop and update an emergency-response communication plan. (Preparation and Response)

- 1B1 Complete the Emergency Response Plan, including a phone tree, identifying a response team and contacts, and creating a "chain of command" for emergency events.
- 1B2 Share the Emergency Response Plan with the Board of Directors, key volunteers, and other partners as needed. Post in several accessible locations, as well as keeping an updated digital copy.
- 1B3 Establish an outreach strategy to communicate plans for reopening after periods of closure.
- 1B4 Attend semi-annual meetings as an All-Star Heritage Community with the City of Cottage.

Strategy 1C: Create and share disaster response protocol both on-site and on a digital platform. (Preparation and Response)

- 1C1 Regularly use the incident report log in the Emergency Response Plan to record current and future incidents, including: 1) Building failures or damage, 2) Damage to heritage resources, 3) Medical emergencies of staff, board, or volunteers, 4) Actions taken in response to the incident.
- 1C2 Create a facilities directory that includes location of emergency response supplies, first aid kits, contact information, and evacuation routes.
- 1C3 Train staff, board, and volunteers on utility shut-offs, emergency response protocols, and communications strategies outlined in the Emergency Response Plan.

Goal 2: Identify, diversify, and cross-train members of heritage organizations in essential roles.

Strategy 2A: Cross-train heritage organization members in essential roles. (Mitigation)

2A1 Cross-train 2+ members in financial and accounting management skills.

2A2 Cross-train 2+ members in grantwriting skills.

2A3 Cross-train 2+ members in technological skills.

Strategy 2B: Clarify and diversify decision-making on business responsibilities in the event of a disaster. (Preparation and Response)

2B1 Establish a pathway for communication between the City of Cottage Grove and heritage organizations to provide guidance for business operation plans during an emergency, either as a representative who acts as a liaison or a central place to source information such as an email list-serve or Facebook page.

2B2 Create a procedure for emergency response business operations within each heritage organization.

2B3 Create spending thresholds for disaster situations that can be made without being approved by the entire board.

Strategy 2C: Develop and cross-train All-Star Heritage members in emergency management practices. (Preparation and Response)

2C1 Representatives from each heritage organization participate in FEMA's Incident Command Series online training course.

2C2 Representatives from each Heritage Organization attend City of Cottage Grove's annual Emergency Preparedness Fair.

Goal 3: Diversify and secure the location, physical storage, and maintenance of heritage resources.

Strategy 3A: Clarify responsibility of and increase resources for building maintenance. (Mitigation)

- \$ 3A2 Install security systems in buildings that house heritage resources.
- 3A3 Create and enact routine check-ins on the status of buildings during weekends, slow seasons, and closures.
- \$ 3A4 Secure funds for updates to the buildings' electrical, plumbing, ventilation systems, fire alarm and suppression systems, sprinkler systems, and/or seismic updates.

Strategy 3B: Diversify the location of heritage assets to lessen the spread of disaster impacts. (Mitigation)

- \$ 3B1 Move the digital back-up of heritage assets to an online platform (Google Drive, Dropbox, iCloud, etc.)
- 3B2 Duplicate digitized items on CDs, thumb drives, hard drives or servers and move at least one copy to a separate physical location.
- 3B3 Move irreplaceable heritage assets to the building's most secure location.
- 3B4 Establish the Cottage Grove Armory as secure off-site storage and move priority heritage assets to the space.

Strategy 3C: Update the storage of heritage assets. (Mitigation)

- \$ 3C1 Secure funds to purchase fireproof and/or waterproof display cases, filing cabinets.
- \$ 3C2 Secure funds to purchase archival boxes.
- \$ 3C3 Secure funds to purchase a high-quality scanner to increase the capacity for digitizing heritage assets.

Strategy 3D: Create a procedure for the inventory of individual organizations' heritage assets. (Mitigation)

- 3D1 Create a procedure for tracking existing inventory, including items loaned to other heritage partners.
- 3D2 Transfer paper records of inventoried items to online system.
- 3D3 Include image/description-based components in the inventory to ensure that damaged assets can still be identified after a hazard.
- 3D4 Establish a procedure for a routine inventory of heritage resources, including adding new items, and noting those in poor or vulnerable conditions.

Strategy 3E: Create policies and protocols for the physical maintenance of buildings (Mitigation and Preparation)

\$

3E1	Conduct annual building checks with the fire marshal to adhere to fire safety codes and regulations.
3E2	Create building closing procedures.
3E3	Annual maintenance to fire extinguishers, disaster preparedness kits, and supply of first aid kits.
3E4	Adhere to best practices for hazard mitigation: items off the floor, securing shelves, etc.

Goal 4: Expand opportunities for education and diverse partnerships that provide expertise, increased capacity, and increased community investment in heritage assets.

Strategy 4A: Establish new partnerships that can provide expertise in preservation techniques and practices. (Mitigation)

4A1 Contact local Tribes for accurate representation and stewardship of resources.

4A2 Partner the University of Oregon to provide expertise and resources in historic preservation.

4A3 Partner with other cultural heritage organizations such as Oregon Black Pioneers, the Oregon Historical Society, Maxwell Heritage Interpretive Center, or Portland Chinatown Museum to provide expertise and resources in historic preservation.

Strategy 4B: Maintain and create new partnerships that provide support for organizational capacity-building. (Mitigation)

\$

4B1 Identify and attend Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings to support partnership building and heritage preservation of underrepresented groups.

4B2 Partner with the University of Oregon to provide technical assistance and expertise in grantwriting.

4B3 Partner with local schools to increase the volunteer base for digitizing of records, allowing for students to build transferrable skills.

Strategy 4C: Increase community awareness and investment in the disaster resilience of heritage resources. (Mitigation)

4C1 Partner with local schools to increase the volunteer base for assistance with the maintenance of organizational websites, and social media accounts, allowing for students to build transferrable skills.

4C2 Increase media presence of heritage resources and work of heritage organizations.

4C3 Publicize annual events and regular visitation hours of heritage organizations through Travel Lane County

4C4 Establish new collaborative events, such as seasonal parties or silent auctions

Goal 5: Increase and diversity current and future funding sources to strengthen the economic resilience of the Historical Society.

Strategy 5A: Identify and participate in passive revenue collection. (Mitigation, Preparation)

5A1	Identify and partner with local businesses that operate a community rewards program for nonprofit organizations.
5A2	Set up heritage organizations to receive benefits from micro-donation programs such as Amazon Smile.
5A3	Strengthen or create membership programs in order to spread donation contributions across the year to provide revenue in slow seasons.
5A4	Create annual virtual fundraising for disaster preparedness projects using platforms like Facebook or GoFundMe.
5A5	Identify opportunities for pooled funding and resources, such as volunteer or interning networks through the Elkton Community Education Center's summer tour program

Strategy 5B: Develop a contingency plan for organizational operations to support economic resilience. (Preparation, Response)

5B1	Create and maintain contingency plans for in-person events.
5B2	Identify Main Street as the central point of contact for economic resilience and recovery resources: marketing, support for grant applications, support for online platforms and online messaging.

Strategy 5C: Identify and catalog relief funds for nonprofit organizations and/or heritage resources to provide aid during response and recovery phases. (Preparation, Response)

5C1	Identify grants and funding sources that can support the heritage organizations through periods of closure.
5C2	Identifying foundations, charities, and government programs that each heritage organization qualifies for in order to diversify revenue stream.