

VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN DISASTER RESILIENCE

REPORT & MESSAGING GUIDE



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“MESSAGES THAT BEGIN WITH WHAT PEOPLE CARE ABOUT CAN BE A POWERFUL TOOL FOR
OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES IN OPINION AND FINDING COMMON GROUND”
FEMA Flood Risk Communication Toolkit for Community Officials (2020)

Communicating the Value of Heritage

This Communications report and accompanying messaging guide is developed for the core group of heritage advocates who will use this playbook to make informed decisions about communicating the value of heritage for disaster resilience and recovery. They give voice to people past and present about places that represent home, define community, and make Oregon, Oregon. Their stories will influence elected leaders, residents, business owners, visitors, the media, and others in the community who determine the fate of historic places and cultural resources to a value that supports planning for the protection of heritage resources.

This communication's playbook assumes the primary reader is a cultural resource professional or volunteer whose goal is to communicate to other preservation professionals, government agencies and this public the value of incorporating Oregon's cultural heritage into planning for disaster preparedness and recovery. With that premise, the information provided is intended to engage and influence community members and decision-makers to advocate for the inclusion of cultural heritage resources into all manner of local disaster and emergency plans.

Conversely, it is critical that institutional and community planning efforts, be it for comprehensive plans, preservation plans, strategic plans, master plans, or capital improvement plans, incorporate the potential for disaster to heritage assets into plan goals, objectives, and actions.

The messaging tools provided in this publication can be used for information sharing in a variety of ways. However the information is used, it must be tailored specifically to each audience. The words used and the examples illustrated must demonstrate an awareness and interest in the audience's individual needs and the larger community in which they live. This is relevant not only when communicating with property owners, but also with individuals and institutional organizations that serve as stewards of Oregon's heritage resources.

Our Value Statement

Oregon's cultural heritage is for today's and future generations an irreplaceable resource to be treasured, protected, and recovered from the destructive forces and future conditions of a changing climate and the resulting disasters.

Goal

Establish and advance the whole community's understanding of and support for disaster resilience and recovery of heritage assets.

Objectives

- Increase the number of cultural heritage spaces and places that are prepared for disaster
- Increase public awareness for disaster in heritage communities
- Enhance accessibility to and communication regarding heritage resources to support their recovery.

Background

In working with heritage organizations in Oregon to meet the goals established in the 2020-2025 Oregon Heritage Plan^A, Oregon Heritage laid out as one of its strategic priorities promoting the value of heritage, “with the public and decision makers to inspire awareness, funding, and respect for long-term preservation of Oregon’s heritage.”^A

Communicating the value of heritage to local communities remains imperative.

In 2019 the agency launched its first *Value of Heritage Message Platform*.^B Specifically designed for use by volunteers at cultural heritage sites, this communication tool provides sample messages to share with community members about the work of heritage organizations and why that work matters.



The Message, The Medium, and Mary

The historic courthouse square in downtown Dayton, Oregon and its Friday Nights music, market and kids’ event was created to¹ “build community, create a sense of place and strengthen the local economy.” *The message?* “Bringing community members together in our historic downtown helps create a vibrant community.” A demonstration of the success of that message is 83-year-old Mary Baker, who, on a rainy Friday evening took her usual seat in the front row at the park with an umbrella in hand and a smile on her face. Soon others ventured out and as the rain stopped, the event went on, just as Mary’s presence ensured it would.

As Dayton’s Main Street Coordinator recalled, ***“While [the community] may not know we have 41 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, they know they like the feeling of where they are. It’s both the people and the place that make Downtown Dayton’s vibrant***

¹ *People Seek Authentic Community*, Oregon Heritage Exchange, November 4, 2019, <https://oregonheritage.wordpress.com/2019/11/04/people-seek-authentic-community/>

A. [2020-2025 Oregon Heritage Plan](#)

B. [Value of Heritage Message Platform](#)

Why a Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery?

Oregonians have become much more informed about the impacts of climate-related disasters on our communities. How do we as preservationists and heritage advocates translate that understanding into a value that supports planning for the protection of heritage resources? That is the task taken on by Oregon Heritage, the State of Oregon's primary agency for coordination of heritage activities in Oregon.

In 2020, disastrous wildfires stretched across Oregon, from Santiam Canyon to the Southern part of the state, and from the Oregon coast to the Clackamas River. It was the worst Oregon fire season in recorded history. The most destructive fires burned not only the wildland urban interface, but also drove strong winds into city centers. In Talent and Phoenix, through the McKenzie River Valley, and at the Warm Springs Reservation, thousands of homes, commercial buildings, and public structures were lost. Important natural and cultural resources were threatened at Warm Springs, while historic downtown buildings in Talent and Phoenix succumbed to flames.

Hanscom Hall: Bonnie Morgan's Loss Strengthens her Commitment to Talent's Heritage

In September of 2020, Oregon was ravaged by the Almeda Fire, destroying nearly 2,800 structures across the state leaving the communities of Phoenix and Talent especially devastated. While losing multiple historic resources, Talent also lost their first building ever listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), Hanscom Hall. The 100-year-old historic property, owned by local artist Bonnie Morgan, served the community in multiple capacities over the decades including as a post office, restaurant, pottery shop and temporary city offices. In 1996, Morgan listed the property on the NRHP and used tax credits to rehabilitate the building as a commercial rental property. The blaze left only a few timbers and ashes in its wake.

Fortunately, flames spared the poured concrete walls of the adjacent 1924 Malmgren Garage, also owned by Morgan. "All wood elements, the roof, and non-masonry interior walls were destroyed, leaving the exterior shell, concrete floor and other non-combustible portions of the structure. Adjacent wood frame properties to the north and south, including the National Register-listed Hanscom Hall were completely destroyed."² Among so much devastation, the Garage remnants increased in community value as a symbol of the area's history and resilience. The structural remains represent one of the oldest commercial buildings in Talent and continues to reflect its original construction, despite a gutted interior. To reflect its inherent value, a local pizza shop printed T-shirts and glasses with the building's image and the words, "**Talent Stronger.**"

While not listed in the NRHP, Malmgren Garage is designated as a local landmark. After the Almeda fire, Morgan is working to have the building listed in the National Register, which will also qualify her for historic tax credits to have the building restored using the original materials that were spared from the fire. Morgan sees it this way. "The Almeda fire devastated our community. That the Garage remains increases its architectural and community value. It's one of the few remaining original historic structures and its now a symbol of Talent's resilience."

² Kramer, Malmgren Garage Historic Preservation Certificate Application, Part 1, 2021.

Why a Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery?

During the 2021 fire season, the Bootleg fire destroyed the sacred ancestral homeland of the Klamath Tribes. The fire started on July 6 and rapidly spread across the Fremont-Winema National Forest, the land of the Klamath Tribes.



National Register listed Hanscom Hall, Talent, Oregon- Before and After Alameda Fire

Don Gentry, chairman of the Klamath Tribes, shared with a reporter, *“Our people still use these areas to hunt, gather, and pray with each other. How will the trees, animals, water tributaries, and ecosystem fully recover?”* The loss experienced by the Tribes is less about buildings and structures and more about the ecological and cultural damage - to the elk wintering ranges, the headwaters of Klamath Lake tributaries, and consequently the “First Foods” these areas produce - the backbone of tribal culture according to the Tribes’ beliefs and traditions. Gentry summed it up in this way, *“We’ll survive this. But a big part of who we are, since we’re so connected to the land, has been lost.”*



Bootleg Fire during the blaze across the Klamath Tribal lands.



After containment.

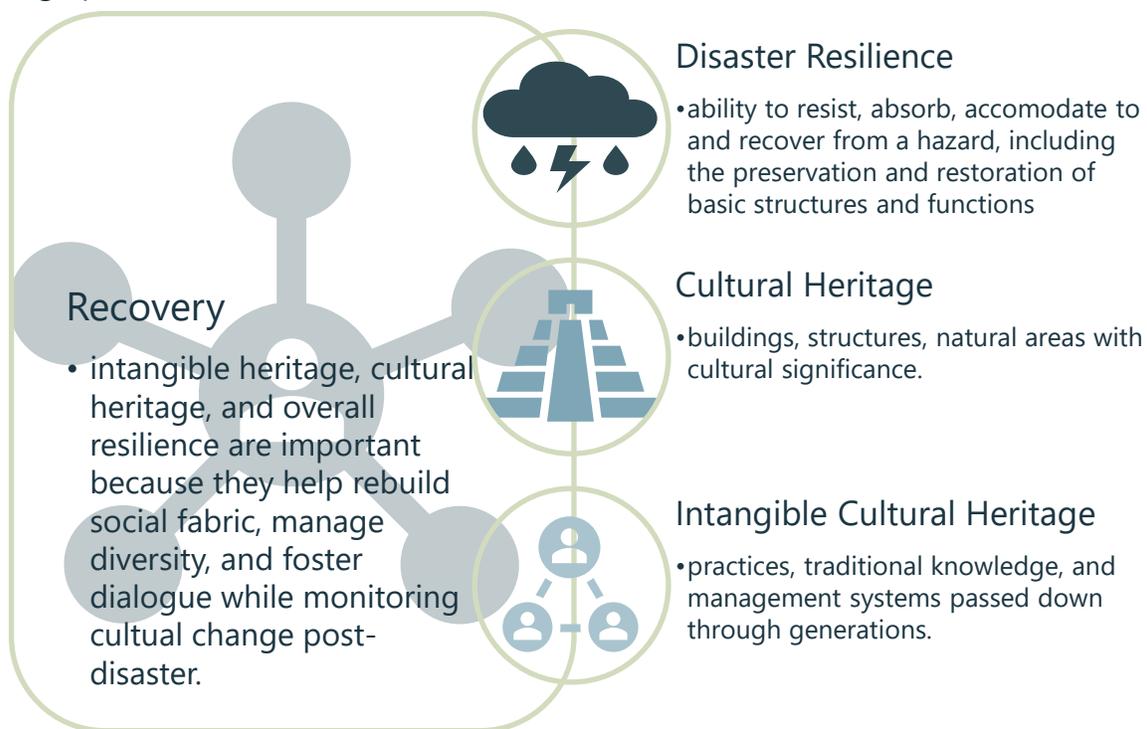
While community leaders like Bonnie Morgan and Don Gentry speak to the community and cultural losses associated with disaster, what their stories also communicate is the value of heritage, the importance of resilience, and the commitment to their community.

That is what this publication provides—messages, stories, and symbols of disaster resilience and recovery associated with places and peoples whose identity is characterized by Oregon’s built and natural heritage. How heritage professionals and historic property stewards communicate the necessity of heritage-based disaster planning before disaster strikes is the core message. But how Oregonians have recovered their heritage post-disaster, is as compelling a story.

What is Disaster Resilience?

As defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, **Disaster Resilience** is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to reset, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

Incorporated into those basic structures and functions, as argued by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is cultural heritage. As the examples of Talent and the Klamath Tribes demonstrates, heritage is not just limited to tangible resources. Cultural Heritage includes buildings, structures, and natural areas recognized as having cultural significance. Intangible cultural heritage includes practices, traditional knowledge and management systems transmitted from generation to generation. This intangible heritage is particularly important in recovery for its power in rebuilding the social fabric, managing cultural diversity, fostering dialogue and monitoring cultural change post-disaster.³



Establishing the value of heritage assets in disaster prone areas is not only essential for the long-term preservation of Oregon's cultural heritage, it has demonstrated ability to contribute to rebuilding community identity and reinforcing cultural connections to place. Thus, Oregon Heritage has produced this second communication tool, *A Value Statement and Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery*.

³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Bank, 2018, *Cultural in City Reconstruction and Recovery*, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30733>



OREGON'S CULTURAL HERITAGE LINKS US TO THE PAST, AND IT INFLUENCES HOW WE
THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE. IT INSPIRES US... IT TEACHES US... IT IS RICH, DRAMATIC
AND SOMETIMES TRAGIC

Oregon Heritage Vitality 2010, Oregon Heritage Commission

A Value Statement and Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

In the 2010 report *Oregon Heritage Vitality 2010: The Challenge of the Past for Oregonians Today and Tomorrow*, the Oregon Heritage Commission identified eight challenges facing the heritage community. One of those was the absence of a statewide strategy for messaging the characteristics and value of Oregon heritage to Oregonians.

In reviewing the 2020-2025 Oregon Heritage Plan (Heritage Plan) the need to communicate the value of heritage remains a high priority. Communication is implied in both *Goal #1 Include More Voices* and *Goal #3 Promote the Value of Heritage*. Most recently, Oregon Heritage has applied these Heritage Plan goals to COVID-19 disaster recovery. As Oregon's historic communities reopened and established post-pandemic priorities for economic, social and cultural recovery, Oregon Heritage has offered heritage-based disaster recovery strategies. These recovery strategies provide a useful template for informing the heritage value statement and crafting the message platform for disaster resilience and recovery.

Methodology

The methodology for developing a value statement began with the review of existing planning documents, reports, newsletters and other communication tools used by the State and some local governments regarding heritage, historic preservation, disasters, hazard mitigation and emergency management. Oregon Heritage and Oregon Emergency Management Agency planning documents interchangeably reference heritage and disaster preparedness and resilience.

Other states and localities were also referenced as examples of effective heritage-based communication tools. Federal agency resources on disaster communication including FEMA, NOAA, the National Park Service, and the Small Business Administration were reviewed. Finally, international programs on disaster risk reduction, risk perception and communication and cultural heritage valuation served as resources.

A stakeholder team was convened to provide guidance and case study examples in heritage and disaster risk communication. Those team members provided input on the development of a heritage-based disaster communication survey sent out to heritage leaders statewide. This survey, *Establishing Community Value for Cultural Heritage Resilience Planning and Recovery*. Identified several priorities for disaster communication to heritage-based organizations and communities.

After assessing these responses, a messaging platform was developed specific to the priority audiences identified and includes sample documents for use by heritage advocates in sharing the value of historic places in both recovery from disasters and planning for greater disaster resilience. The messaging, while important, must be delivered by means that resonate with the communication highlighted in the next section.

A Value Statement and Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

Communication Techniques

▼ Meetings with Elected and Public Officials

- Review websites, bios, social media or print media that speaks to their interests
- Be ready with bulleted talking points that show how heritage fits their interests
- Have ready visually appealing photos of historic places or artifacts
- Present a PowerPoint on the economic, social or cultural values of heritage

▼ Letters of Support

- Request community leaders to sign-on to letters requesting that heritage be included in disaster planning
- Draft a petition for heritage advocates to sign and present to officials requesting that disaster resilience for heritage resources be included in citywide planning documents

▼ Print, Radio, and Television Media

- Draft a letter to the editor pointing out why historic places matter to disaster recovery
- Shape public opinion and behavior through a regular column or guest editorial
- Offer to host a regular broadcast on the local access channel
- Provide public service announcements for radio and television that promote heritage disaster resilience during Preservation month, National Preparedness Month, National Wildfire Awareness Month or National Hurricane Preparedness Week

▼ Press Kits and News Releases

- Provide local reporters with brief summaries of efforts to protect and prepare heritage resources
- Provide photos and compelling stories about disaster recovery for historic places
- Ensure access to state and national heritage partners to provide their take on heritage disaster resilience

▼ Community Publications and Newsletters

- Write newsletter articles about disaster planning efforts for historic sites
- Present at member meetings of historical societies, garden clubs, neighborhood associations, Rotary or other civic organizations
- Get information into church bulletins or onto community center information boards

A Value Statement and Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

▼ Brochures, Fliers, and Door Hangers

- Relatively inexpensive to produce, these communication tools can reach audiences at libraries, grocery stores, or even individual residences which might not otherwise learn about disasters that affect the community's historic sites
- Produce these pieces in different languages and for those who may be visually impaired in order to reach your whole community

▼ Public Programs

- Invite heritage experts in heritage-based disaster resilience to meet with your local leaders
- Partner with a bookstore to sponsor an author book signing about climate impacts
- Develop an exhibit that depicts heritage sites recovering from disasters
- Launch a lecture series showcasing other communities who've successfully incorporated disaster planning for heritage resources

▼ Strategic Use of Social Media

- Social Media audiences can skew younger, so photos, videos, and using hashtags on Instagram, Twitter and TikTok are most effective with youth
- YouTube, Facebook, Pinterest, or LinkedIn skew older and more professional, so offer links to articles and webinars with more in-depth information on disaster risk to heritage assets
- Produce a video (you can use your mobile device with a good camera) to highlight recent disasters and damages to historic places and post with a link to a webpage that discusses heritage values in your community

▼ Festivals, Fairs, and Farmer's Markets

- Set up an informational booth or table (always ask if the organizers would be willing to donate the space)
- Partner with the City's emergency management office to staff their booth and provide information on disaster risk to heritage
- Host contests with prizes, surveys, or provide treats to young people and get the word out about historic sites in your community worthy of protecting against disaster



▼ Website

- Develop a webpage on preparing heritage resources for disasters
- Host a GIS-based online StoryMap sharing the location of historic sites vulnerable to disasters
- Invite website visitors to take an online survey on their favorite historic places
- Provide a portal for uploading photos of past or current disasters

A Value Statement and Message Platform for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

Some additional tips, as with any effective public engagement, make sure that your communication tools include a contact name, phone, email and QR code for community members to learn more about your educational effort. Additionally, your public education must reach the whole community. Individuals who are visually impaired or don't speak English need to understand the value of heritage to their community identity. Having resources in Braille, Spanish, Filipino, Punjabi, or any language representative of the people in the community is a basic but important step that influences the success of the important gathering process. Many cultures place emphasis on teaching about the importance of certain types of historic properties and cultural resources through oral history and tradition, rather than relying upon traditional written source materials. In addition, by using infographics, photos and illustrations along with words, you'll be much more effective at getting your key message across to those who have difficulty with reading.



Infographic: Society for American Archaeology Poll and American Alliance of Museums Report⁴

Lastly, one of the best tips for effective communication is telling the story. To engage the public, you've got to start where they are, not where you are.⁵ In valuing heritage in the disaster preparedness and recovery process, basic questions need to be asked and answered to sufficiently assess community values and priorities. The messaging platform supplements this communication's playbook as an effective way to start developing messages of disaster resilience for heritage in your community. Personalizing that story to reflect disaster consequences to a specific building, cultural tradition, family member or business is the most compelling way to influence your local leader, the media, or a neighbor to action.

⁴ <https://www.saa.org/education-outreach/public-outreach/public-perceptions-studies> and <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/01/19/museums-as-economic-engines/>

⁵ Quote from Anthony Leiserowitz, Director of Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. "The public in the United States does speak with a single voice. They have very different perspectives...If you want to engage the public effectively, you've got to start where they are not where you are."

As a heritage advocate, begin with your own story but place it within the larger community context of why heritage matters. Determine if, why and how your community already values heritage. This can be done via an online or in-person survey, through recorded oral histories, social media posting responses or by reading articles in the local newspaper. The stories and anecdotal experiences around place not only personalize someone's connection to heritage and historic places, but it also informs the fuller community's heritage story. From the story comes the message.

Questions to Determine Community Awareness of Heritage Value

1. How much do appointed or elected officials and citizens know about heritage resources in disaster-prone areas?
2. Do officials and citizens understand that steps can be taken to reduce damage to heritage resources from disasters?
3. Is there a difference between the perceived risk by the community and the actual risk to heritage resources in the event of a disaster? What examples can you provide?
4. Do elected and appointed officials understand how local, State, and Federal levels each support the protection of heritage resources? What examples do you have of their action or inaction?
5. Who in the community will be affected by the disaster adaptation actions implemented to protect heritage resources?
6. Which members of the community will most benefit from disaster adaptation actions?
7. Who in the community may resist and why?
8. Is there a heritage-related office, department or organization in your community? How can they collaborate with you?

What is the Message?

The Fireman's Story

After a night of intense flames in the McKenzie River area of Oregon's Willamette Valley, it was rumored that the National Register listed Goodpasture covered Bridge was destroyed in the Holiday Farm wildfire on September 8, 2020. But a news report came out on the saving of this valued community icon. One of Lane County Oregon's most treasured local landmarks and the second longest covered bridge in the state, Goodpasture was saved by local firefighters. In the KEZI television broadcast, Fire Captain David Sherwood stated simply, **"It is a treasure of the McKenzie. The importance of it I think will ring true for many years to come because of its standing now. I just hope people can use that as a symbol of inspiration to continue to be in this community."**⁷



FEMA Tips in Disaster Risk Communication

▼ TIP #1 Relate to your Audience

- Determine from your audience the places and experiences most important to them; does heritage play a role? What do they envision for their community in 10, 20, or 50 years? Again, it's about the community's beliefs and values, so start the conversation by discussing what matters most to them.

▼ TIP #2 Avoid Jargon

- Speak plainly and limit discussions on technical topics. Share with the audience what is most at risk from disasters -- their homes, their businesses, their cherished spaces, their community identity. Importantly, don't lead with data. Showing disaster statistics and sea level rise charts and graphs isn't a compelling introduction to the message of heritage-based disaster resilience.

▼ TIP #3 Tell Stories

- Charts aren't compelling, but stories of personal experience are, so be prepared with those stories. Better yet, if possibly, have those individuals personally share their stories. Sharing disaster resilience and recovery stories allows people to make the emotional connections so important to believing that disaster risks to their community's heritage are real.

▼ TIP #4 Answer Questions Honestly

- When you don't have all the answers to the questions, admit it and follow up. While you may have prepared with facts, information, and compelling stories, you'll never have all the answers to the community's questions. Take those opportunities to learn from your community members and decision-makers what's important to them and use it as a reason to conduct follow-up, whether one-on-one or through another public event.

Crafting the Message

While there are several ways to craft a compelling message, there are a few methods specific to creating the sense of urgency necessary to compel individuals to plan for a more disaster-resilient future for their communities and their heritage. At the same time, some tips for wordsmithing the message are also helpful for communications in general. One example is the messaging umbrella.

The Message: 5 Words That Say It All

A 5-word messaging umbrella can quickly convey your takeaway message to your defined audience. It's not your organization's tagline, but it does speak to the actions you're wanting to drive that audience to accomplish. Each word provides the nuance specific to the audience you're addressing. It requires knowing as much about the emotional as the demographic characteristics of your audience.

FEMA has been particularly effective at developing succinct messaging umbrellas -- "Where it Rains, it Floods" and "Turn Around, Don't Drown." One that is particularly appealing to those working with historic places and communities is "Protect the Life You've Built." While not specifically addressing heritage, this National Flood Insurance Program campaign has found its way into many historic communities and was crafted for a variety of audiences. From San Juan, Puerto Rico to Cascade County, Montana, insurance agents, homeowners and local floodplain managers have used the message in many ways to promote the purchase of flood insurance for the protection of homes, businesses, and communities.

"Protect the Life You've Built." The term protect is a powerful one. Preservation advocates use it daily. FEMA does as well. Life is universally relevant and impactful. And the stated audience, you, makes it personal. Even more so when it's connected to the action of having built.

Just as the message was customized for specific localities - "Protect the Life You've Built in New York City... in Atlanta... in Louisiana... in Texas" - it's possible to customize it for a place, a district or a cultural practice. Protect the Life You've Built in Oregon. Protect Your Heritage.... Protect Portland's Old Town.... Protect Main Street Oregon City... Protect Our Petroglyphs...

So, let's begin crafting your message of Heritage's Value in Disaster Resilience. Use the messaging platform as a springboard, but remember to personalize it, to tell the story in a way that relates to the audience. Be mindful too of the larger goal of this communication effort, "to establish and advance the whole community's understanding of and support for disaster resilience and recovery of heritage assets."

▼ For Cultural Heritage

- [AIC Disaster Response and Recovery Resources](#)

▼ Disaster Preparedness

- [Cottage Grove Historical Society Disaster Resilience Plan](#)
- [CEMP Preparedness Plan](#)

▼ Relevant Plans

- [2020-2025 Oregon Heritage Plan](#)
- [2020 Oregon Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan](#)
- [2017 Oregon Emergency Operations Plan \(short\) \(long\)](#)
- [Value of Heritage Message Platform](#)

Appendix A: Survey Summary

The survey *Establishing Community Value for Cultural Heritage in Disaster Resilience Planning and Recovery* was opened June 2021 and closed July 2021. It was a total of nineteen questions. The fifty-two responders spent an average of twelve minutes on the survey. The survey had a completion rate of 81%. Below is a summary of the responses.

Audience most important to reach with the message

Decision-makers / Elected Officials
Emergency Management Personnel
Historic Property Owners
Downtown Business Owners
Media

Preferred medium for receiving information on disasters?

Government Agency
News Media
American Red Cross
Social Media

Is your organization or local/tribal government familiar with disaster relief resources for heritage?

78% indicated either no or don't know

What community assets would you want to see operational within a few weeks of a disaster?

Bridges/Roads
Schools/Daycare
Local/Tribal Government Offices
Historic Downtown/Main Street

What cultural heritage assets would you prioritize for resilience or recovery?

Bridges/Roads
Libraries/Archives
Schools
State & National Parks
Historic Downtown/Main Street
Traditional Cultural Properties
Museums / Cultural Institutions

What heritage values for historic and older places resonate most in your community?

They help us understand our history.
They foster community.

Appendix A: Survey Summary

They are valued for their art, craftsmanship and the way they make us feel.
 They support a sound and vibrant economy.
 They connect us to our ancestors.
 They are beautiful.
 They embody civic, state, national and universal identity.

Most effective means for communicating cultural heritage value to the community.

	Residents	Decision-Makers	Cultural Heritage Institutions	Business Owners	Media
Websites			1		1
Social Media	1		2	3	3
Letters- US Mail					
Email		2			
Local/ tribal government meetings		4			
Public meetings/ workshops/ lectures		5			
Newspaper articles/ editorials/ letters to the editor	2			1	2
Organizational newsletters/ publications					
Television ads/ programs/ news					4
Brochures/ flyers in public buildings	5				
Radio ads/ programs/ news					
Door hangers					
One-on-one discussions	4	1	4	2	
Exhibits/ markers			3	4	5
Word of mouth via others in the community	3	3	5	5	

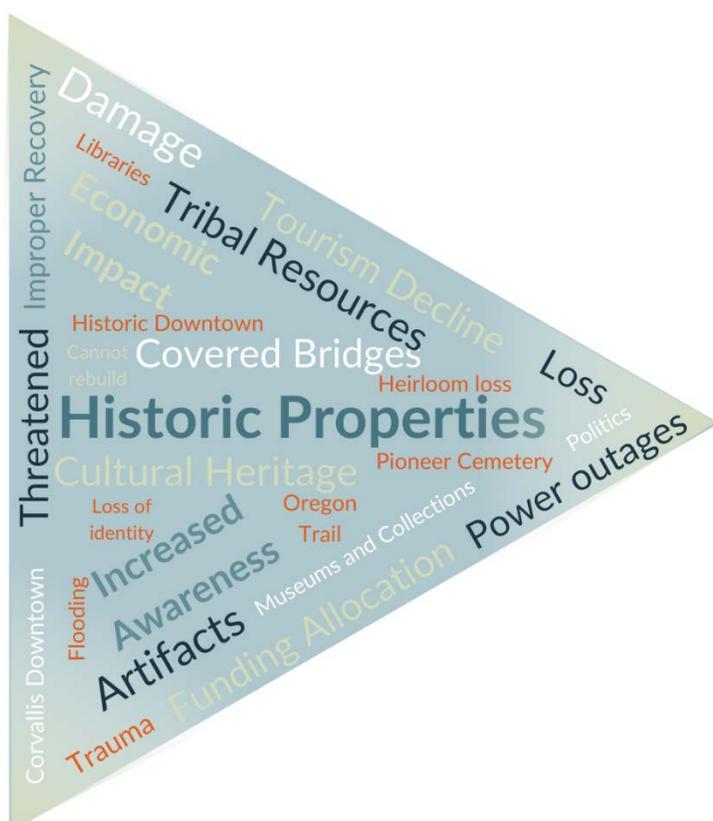
In communicating cultural heritage value in disaster resilience & recovery, which form of communication would you most likely use?

1. Talking points crafted for elected officials
2. Storymap that uses GIS to illustrate cultural heritage assets at risk
3. One page media release with pre-written language scaled for a general audience
4. An article to reprint in my organization's publication on best practices in disaster resilience

Appendix A: Survey Summary

5. A template for a community workshop that promotes cultural heritage and emergency preparedness as mutually beneficial
6. An online web-based communications toolkit for cultural heritage organizations

When asked for the greatest concerns about how disasters will impact Oregon’s cultural heritage, the predominant words used were:



There was a general concern for historic properties, but concerns specifically for covered bridges, tribal resources, libraries, and artifacts.

This concern came from multiple areas typically impacted when disaster occurs improper recovery efforts, politics, economic impacts, damage, loss, funding concerns, power outages, and the inability to rebuild.

The concern that these impacts would cause a loss of identity and trauma was evident by the responses.



VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN DISASTER RESILIENCE

MESSAGING GUIDE

How to use this Messaging Guide

In working with heritage organizations in Oregon to meet the goals established in the 2020-2025 Oregon Heritage Plan, Oregon Heritage laid out as one of its strategic priorities promoting the value of heritage “with public and decision makers to inspire awareness, funding, and respect for long-term preservation of Oregon’s heritage.” Communicating the value of heritage to local communities remains an imperative. Incorporating disaster resilience into that narrative is integral to saving the state’s built and indigenous heritage.

Introduction to the disaster resilience messaging guide

Nations around the world have become much more informed about the global impacts of climate-related disasters on communities. How do we as preservationists and heritage advocates translate that understanding into a value that supports planning for the protection of heritage resources?

This messaging guide is developed to meet the need for communicating the value of heritage within the context of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The goal is to communicate to heritage professionals and volunteers, government agencies and the public the value of Oregon’s cultural heritage in community disaster recovery and disaster preparedness planning.

The information provided in this communication tool is intended to engage and influence community members and decision-makers to advocate for the inclusion of cultural heritage resources into all manner of local and emergency plans.

Since its beginning in 1803, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has coordinated the federal government’s role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or human-made. FEMA supports the development of regional disaster plans along with regional communications working groups composed of federal, state, tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities. As part of this planning effort, FEMA identifies three potential audiences for disaster communication: **core users**, **end users**, and **specialty audiences**.

Core Users

- Heritage advocates and Main Street organizations
- Messaging playbook to guide decisions

End Users

- Elected officials, agency staff, residents, leaders
- Determine measures for heritage assets

Specialty Audiences

- Heritage tourism, real estate, insurance, media
- Connections and communication outlet with historic property stewards

How to use this Messaging Guide cont.

For purposes of this cultural heritage messaging guide, core users are those heritage advocates and Main Street organizations who use this tool as a messaging playbook to make decisions about communication strategies. End users are elected officials, agency staff, residents, property owners, and community leaders who determine the protection measures appropriate for heritage assets. Lastly, specialty audiences include those in heritage tourism, real estate, insurance, and media who have ongoing connections and communication with historic property stewards.

It is critical that institutional and community planning efforts, be it for comprehensive plans, preservation plans, strategic plans, master plans, or capital improvement plans, incorporate the potential for disasters and associated impacts to heritage assets into plan goals, objectives, and actions.

The messaging tools provided in this publication can be used for information sharing in a variety of ways with relevant audiences. Some of these methods include:

- Creating presentation and talking points for community meetings
- Posting content to social media
- Writing fact sheets, letters, or media releases
- Preparing for a meeting with elected officials
- Developing educational outreach events
- Drafting brochures or other informational materials
- Presenting lectures or webinars

However the information is used, it must be tailored to the intended audience. The words used and the examples illustrated must demonstrate an awareness and interest in that audience's individual needs and the larger community in which they live as relevant to the meeting topic, venue, or occasion. For example, in writing a letter to the editor you may choose to:

- Craft it for a general audience using plain language (no acronyms, please)
- Clear and correct taglines ("where it rains, it floods")
- Include a "call to action" that resonates with all readers ("but flood insurance to protect your home, business and family")

This is relevant not only to property owners, in general, but also to individuals and institutional organizations that serve as stewards of Oregon's heritage resources.

Using this messaging platform

Why use this messaging platform?

The result of a successful communication strategy is action by the audience to whom the message is addressed. In the case of planning for greater disaster resilience for cultural heritage, a successful communication outcome would be historic places and cultural resources protected or recovered from a disaster. Identifying heritage as key to community identity, particularly in disaster recovery, can be a unifying force, creating home, and inspiring action. If the value of heritage is woven into messaging about disaster resilience by trusted organizations, then action will result. This messaging platform is intended to do just that, inspire action so your audience will act! Through acting they will:

- Recognize the value of heritage resources in community disaster and recovery
- Include heritage assets in disaster planning and direct resources toward them
- Ensure historic places and cultural resources protected or recovered from a disaster

This messaging toolkit is meant to help trusted organizations weave the value of heritage into messaging about disaster resilience and result in protective actions for Oregon's historic places.

How to use this messaging platform

Consider your audience in deciding the most effective communication technique and message for your users (core, end, or specialty audience). The fuller list of communications techniques provided in the Communications Toolkit is crafted to appeal to different audiences using simple to more complicated tools. Which you choose depends on the character and culture of your community as well as the message and messenger for its delivery. For purposes of audience identification, this message platform guide suggests audiences specific to each message, color-coded as follows:

- **General Public** (Residents, property owners, media)
- **Decision-Makers** (elected officials, tribal leaders, real estate, or insurance professionals)
- **Community Stakeholders** (business associations, civic leaders, community organizations)

In several instances, the message is relevant for all three audiences.

Opening Message

The message umbrella, also referred to as an “opening message” fits within the three-step messaging approach developed by Oregon Heritage for its *Value of Heritage* Message Platform. As detailed in the *Value of Heritage*, “the most compelling language resonates first with people’s emotions—through their deeply held values, beliefs, and aspirations—before appealing to logic and reason.” Thus, the Opening Message must: 1) Grab the audience’s attention (define your audience); 2) Connect with broad values held by that audience; and 3) Set the stage for the more compelling and impactful message to follow.

Begin crafting your **opening message** by asking yourself “Why do I care about saving this... place, artifact, collection, landscape, cultural tradition?” You must be the advocate for the resource before you can develop a compelling story about why others in the community should care.

Core, End, or Specialty Audience: **General Public/ Decision- Makers/ Community Stakeholders**

Disaster resilience opening messages combined with heritage value messages, result in this:

- Anywhere it can rain, it can flood. Keep your history high and dry.
- We want to protect what we cherish most—this historic place we call home.
- Our homes, our lives, our history...kept safe from disaster.
- Think of the people, places, and things you value most. Your heritage is worth saving.
- Owning a piece of history is an investment in the future. Protect it from peril.
- Floods don’t follow lines on a map, but archeologists do.
- A disaster resilient community ensures places made are kept.
- History is filled with stories of loss, fill your future with stories of history.
- Be Resilient. Protect Heritage. Preserve Community Identity.
- Anchor your community to its heritage. Rebuild right.
- Disaster is emotionally devastating. Find solace in the past, hope in the future.

Impact Message

As underscored throughout the Communications Toolkit, emotions play a big role in influencing and compelling individuals to action. But as has also been stated, negative messages are non-starters. Impact messages provide hopeful and forward-looking opportunities for those concerned about disaster impacts on their homes, businesses, or communities. The **impact message** should incorporate ways in which the audience can achieve a positive outcome that benefits them by lessening the risk should a disaster strike their historic community.

Core, End, or Specialty Audience: General Public/ Decision- Makers/ Community Stakeholders

Disaster resilience impact messages combined with *heritage value* messages, result in this:

- Having a disaster plan for cultural heritage helps communities connect with resources
- **Adapting your historic property reduces disaster risk, improves property value, and preserves** community character for yours and future generations.
- Preserving historic places is a sound economic decision for our community; every \$1 invested in disaster resilience saves \$6 later.
- **When making improvements to your historic property, consider disaster risk before you begin.**
- Collection management + disaster management = Protecting the Irreplaceable
- **A continuum of care for cultural heritage begins with a community-wide commitment to disaster preparedness and recovery.**
- Disaster recovery must ensure history's survival.
- Heritage salvaged from disaster can reconnect a community.

Approach Message

The **approach message** is your “work plan” for your audience; how they can incorporate cultural heritage into disaster resilience and recovery for their home, business, and community. At this point you will have built the emotional foundation for why they value heritage, compelled them to understand how disaster impacts heritage, provided optimistic and forward-looking solutions or benefits to them in preparing heritage assets for disaster and now you’ve set the stage for how they can help protect Oregon’s heritage from disaster.

Core, End, or Specialty Audience: General Public/ Decision- Makers/ Community Stakeholders

Disaster resilience approach messages combined with heritage value messages, result in this:

- We inform community rebuilding and recapture personal history post-disaster by sharing our historic collections.
- We protect community identity by recovering historic places from disaster.
- We support community disaster recovery by connecting heritage, people, and place.
- We make historic communities more disaster resilient by working with historic property owners and disaster personnel to identify hazards and recommend adaptation actions that respect the historic significance of the property.
- We gather tribal knowledge about traditional practices in land management and consider treatment approaches that ensure the safety of people and the protection of cultural resources at risk.
- We provide planning guidance for preparing cultural institutions for future conditions of flood, fire, and earthquake and the protection and recovery of heritage assets.
- We gather data to make the economic case for valuing heritage assets at risk from disaster so that community leaders can make informed risk management decisions.
- We share strategies for incorporating cultural heritage into FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plans to support federal grant funding for cultural-resource based risk reduction projects.
- We engage in an ongoing dialogue with our community to involve and empower them to collective action in protecting local landmarks and community identity from disaster.

Approach Message

As with all planning, a communications plan must be monitored, evaluated, and adapted in response to current and future needs. If a disaster strikes, messaging must be respectful and hopeful, pointing to shared values in the community, while at the same time resonating to individual circumstances. Understand and respect that people come first, homes and possessions follow, and livelihoods and business may be leading drivers of disaster recovery.



The success of the message may not be determinable until after a disaster strikes, the community responds, and recovery is underway. However, there are ways to determine the success of your message in the disaster preparedness phase. Begin with the following:

- Develop criteria for success in the use of the specific message and the intended audience. For example:
 - Were you successful in getting an editorial in your local paper on the importance of preparing local landmark buildings for disaster? Did you receive any follow-up from community members regarding the editorial?
 - Did you meet with your elected official and deliver your bullet points? Were you successful in securing his/her commitment to action?
- Gather stories from heritage advocates about use of the messaging platform, both successes and challenges. Share those with other heritage advocates in your community.
- After a disaster awareness event (could be a talk, workshop or even a near disaster event in your community), put a poll in your newsletter, the local newspaper or post it on social media asking community members what places matter most to them in the event of a disaster.
- Poll cultural institutions prior to and after using the messaging platform to determine who has begun putting disaster preparedness plans in place.
- Approach emergency management officials with information on incorporating cultural resources into emergency and hazard mitigation planning. Accept a seat at the planning table for the next plan update.

Finally, the ultimate measure of success is if the core user of the messaging platform, the heritage advocate, has put into place a disaster preparedness plan for their own cultural institution, historic property, business, or family. **Remember, people first!**

Disaster Resilience and Recovery Values for Heritage

- We know that *[city/ region/ tribal lands]* is an incredibly historic place and an outstanding community that is worthy of protecting.
- As we've seen throughout the state, climate-related disasters are occurring more frequently, with greater intensity.
- Portions of *[city/ region/ tribal lands]* are especially vulnerable to *[disaster type]*.
- Disasters can occur without much warning and often result in costly destruction to our buildings, local businesses, the tourism economy, and our daily lives.

We want to protect what we cherish most—this historic place we call home

- The damage caused by disasters is not just emotionally and economically devastating, but it also causes us to lose our sense of place; our physical connection to the places that we value in *[city/ region/ tribal lands]* and the cultural heritage they represent.
- The steps we as community advocates take now will prepare *[city/ region/ tribal lands]* for future disasters.
- The question we must ask ourselves in disaster planning for our community is, "why do I care about saving this historic place from disaster?"

A disaster resilient community ensures places are kept.

- In 2020 the disastrous wildfires which swept across our State resulted in 1.2 million acres lost and more than 5,000 homes and businesses destroyed—the worst Oregon fire season in recorded history.
- From the Warm Springs Reservation to the sacred ancestral homeland of the Klamath Tribes, wildfire destroyed cultural artifacts and traditional places valued by our indigenous people.
- At a cost of \$1.5 billion in wildfire and wind damage, emergency response, and debris removal, the 2020 fires devastated not only the State's economy, but local economies as well.

Sample: Talking Points – Elected Officials

- Businesses that employed thousands of Oregonians were wiped out, leaving some Oregonians unemployed. Restaurants, shops, grocery shops, and other businesses were destroyed.
- In/ near *[city/ region/ tribal lands]* the economy suffered [\$] in disaster-related loss.
- Historic places are important not just for their historical significance and their cultural value, but also for their economic benefit in revenues for *[city/ region/ tribal lands]*.
- Preserving historic places is a sound economic decision for our community; every \$1 invested in disaster resilience saves \$6 later.

Having a disaster plan for cultural heritage helps communities connect with resources.

- Our State's natural hazards mitigation plan recognizes Oregon's cultural resources as worth of protecting from disaster.
- The State has identified as an imperative, the updating of hazard mitigation plans in partnership with local governments and Tribes.
- Plan updates call for risk assessment and prioritization for cultural resource protection and recovery.
- Resources are now available, and an opportunity for *[city/ region. Tribal lands]* leaders to work proactively with building code officials, emergency management personnel, and property owners to better prepare out historic properties for disaster.
- We are beginning the work of identifying those places most at risk, assessing their contribution to our community's cultural heritage, and learning from the community what value they hold and what places matter most to them.

A continuum of care for cultural heritage begins with a whole community commitment to disaster preparedness and recovery.

- *We are committed to working with you [name of official/ tribal leader] to create a more disaster resilient [city/ region/ tribal lands]. Together we can...*
 - Make *city/ region/ tribal lands]* disaster ready by working together to identify hazards and implementing disaster adaptation actions that respect historically significant places.
 - Gather tribal knowledge of traditional practices in land management and treatment that ensures the safety of people and the protection of cultural resources at risk.

Sample: Talking Points – Elected Officials

- Make the economic case for valuing heritage assets at risk from disaster to help make informed decisions for disaster planning and recovery.
- Engage with the community to involve and empower them to collective action in protecting local landmarks and community identity from disaster.
- Stabilize the resource, assess its integrity, and expedite design review to ensure our heritage assets survive.
- Build or rebuild a more resilient community and focus public investments and private incentives to where the impacts are greatest, equitable, and socially just.
- Protect and minimize damage to historic places and cultural heritage by adjusting our policies and regulatory systems and increasing public awareness to reduce risk to the most vulnerable—those people and places that define and determine the future of *[city/ region/ tribal lands]*.

Sample: Opinion- Editorial on Disaster Planning

Our Homes, Our Lives, Our History...Kept Safe from Disaster

Oregonians have become much more informed about the impacts of climate-related disasters on our communities. Whether from fire, floods or earthquakes, the damage caused by disasters is not just emotionally and economically devastating, but it also causes us to lose our sense of place; our physical connection to the places that we value and the cultural heritage they represent.

As heritage advocates in *[name of city/ region/ tribal lands]* we are working to translate that knowledge of climate-driven disaster threats to our community. We are beginning the work of identifying those places most at risk, assessing their contribution to our community's cultural heritage, and learning from the community what values they hold and what places matter most to them.

In 2020 disastrous wildfires stretched across Oregon, from Santiam Canyon to the Southern part of the state and from the Oregon coast to the Clackamas River. It was the worst Oregon fire season in recorded history with 1.2 million acres lost. The most destructive of the fires burned not only the wildland urban interface, but also driven by strong winds, decimated city centers. Thousands of homes, commercial buildings, and public structures, some historic, were lost.

On July 6, 2021, the Bootleg fire started, spreading across the Fremont-Winema National Forest, destroying the sacred ancestral homelands of the Klamath Tribes.

We can be better prepared, more disaster resilient. There are resources available to be more proactive in *[name of city / region / tribal lands]* in protecting and recovering our places of history, our community heritage and identity. We must work closely with building code officials, emergency management personnel, and local leaders to secure the necessary technical resources (i.e., updated wildfire risk maps) and funding to better prepare our historic properties for disaster.

When making improvements to your historic property, consider your disaster risk before you begin.

A starting point is guidance offered by the National Park Service (NPS), the nation's leading steward of heritage resources. In their *Disaster Planning Checklist*, the NPS advises property owners to consider the question, "Why do I care about saving this?" The idea is that no one can be a better advocate for saving historic places and heritage resources that matter to you than you.

Sample: Opinion- Editorial on Disaster Planning cont.

Start by crafting an emergency plan for your property. Create an inventory, retrieval, and protection plan for your most cherished belongings or collections. Ensure that you know the specific hazards that might impact your property – extreme rain events, wildfire, earthquake – all have different methods for disaster preparedness. Consider what building materials are more disaster resilient and seek advice from the *[city / region / tribal]* historic preservation office or the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to determine if those materials are appropriate for your historic property. Have handy the contact information for your plumber, electrician, contractor, or insurance agent. Most importantly make sure you understand what your insurance covers and what post-disaster assistance you can expect from the Oregon Emergency Management Agency or FEMA.

Our State's natural hazards mitigation plan recognizes Oregon's cultural resources as worthy of protecting from disaster, stating their importance for their historical significance, their cultural and heritage value and their "economic impact on local, regional, and statewide tourism." Even more significant is the recognition that "Oregon heritage is everywhere."

As advocates for *[name of city / region / tribal lands]* heritage, we must inspire property owners, cultural institutions, and business owners at risk to prepare for disasters. Our heritage can't wait for the government to act, particularly when it comes to being prepared. Assess what history is at risk and invest in building greater resilience for your own property and your community's heritage.

Take personal responsibility. Understand your disaster risk. Buy insurance. Prepare an emergency kit. Develop a business continuity plan. Maintain your building. Create an inventory.

Owning a piece of Oregon's history is an investment in the future. Protect it from peril.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING COMMUNITY HERITAGE VALUES IN A DISASTER

Tip #1: Relate to your Audience

Determine from your audience the places and experiences most important to them; does heritage play a role? What do they envision for their community in 10, 20, or 50 years? Again, it's about the community's beliefs and values, so start the conversation by discussing what matters the most to them.

Tip #2: Avoid Jargon

Speak plainly and limit discussions on technical topics. Share with the audience what is most at risk from disasters- their homes, their businesses, their cherished spaces, their community identity. Importantly, don't lead with data. Showing disaster statistics and sea-level rise charts and graphs isn't a compelling introduction to the message of heritage-based disaster resilience.

Tip #3: Tell Stories

Charts aren't compelling, but stories of personal experience are, so be prepared with those stories. Better yet, if possible have those individuals personally share their stories. Sharing disaster resilience and recovery stories allows people to make the emotional connections so important to believe that disaster risks to their community's heritage are real.

Tip #4: Answer Questions Honestly

When you don't have all the answers to the questions, admit it and follow up. While you may have prepared with facts, information, and compelling stories, you'll never have all the answers to the community's questions. Take those opportunities to learn from your community members and decision-makers what's important to them and use it as a reason to conduct follow-up, whether one-on-one or through another public event.