

# CASCADIA SESSIONS ARE A SUCCESS

The Results are In! Early participants offer praise, 100% plan to recommend the course to others.

## ABSTRACT

The online learning system for the Preparing for the Cascadia Subduction Zone Event (CSZ) features disaster education using engaging strategies for teens and adult learners. It was launched as a pilot in mid-March, 2020. To encourage awareness and preparedness, viewers watch sessions with narrated slides or read the text-only format. A mega-quake simulation can be viewed in video or virtual reality. The simulation also serves as the backdrop for a learning articulate. Supporting videos and disaster preparedness resources are woven through the program. Pilot participants reported an increase in Cascadia action steps that can lead to better resiliency and quicker recovery.

## ISSUE

Disasters suffered by much of the world are mild in Oregon and Washington making it a very attractive place to live and work. We were puzzled, though, by Ghost Forests in the Pacific Ocean and other oddities including some frightening cultural tales.

Geologists dug in to try to find out why a researcher in Japan pinpointed the home earthquake for an orphan tsunami (no earthquake felt in advance) in Japan on January 26, 1700 along the Pacific Northwest Coastline. They found evidence of 19 mega-quakes and destructive tsunamis over the past 10,000 years, the Cascadia Subduction Zone Event (CSZ).

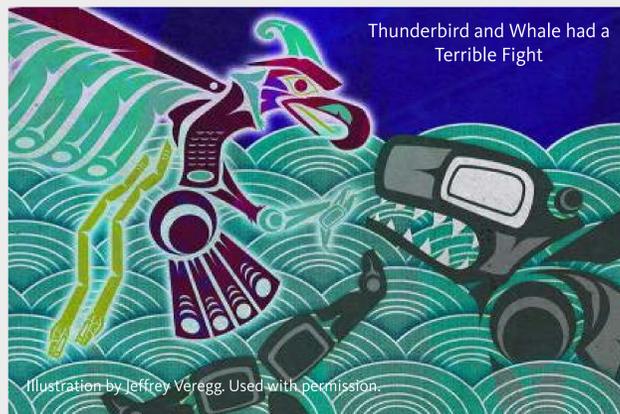


Illustration by Jeffrey Veregg. Used with permission.

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In 1993, some advances were made changing building codes and raising some awareness through the Oregon Military's Oregon Office of Emergency Management. Local Emergency Managers created disaster plans for the CSZ across the state. Yet, Oregonians are still not prepared; they have no collective culture of preparedness that will help them be prepared to experience and recover from a Magnitude 9.0 earthquake shaking 5 to 7 minutes and resulting tsunami.

## OBJECTIVE

Our project creates an online learning system, Preparing for the Cascadia Subduction Zone Event, for Oregonians to become aware and prepared. A fourth module for Extension professionals and agency and organization professionals and volunteers and neighborhood leaders prepare to assist their communities and work alongside emergency responders.

Module 1: Shares the Evidence of the CSZ. What happened in the past and what can we expect in Oregon and in our specific communities.

Module 2: Provides information on what to do during the earthquake and immediately following. Simulation creates a virtual experience.

Module 3: Preparedness activities are described. A motivational tool, Cascadia Action Steps helps viewers

determine next steps to advance their preparedness, mitigation activities and improve resiliency for a quicker recovery.

Module 4: Background is provided for Extension's role in Disasters. Training resources are recommended to advance skills.

## METHODS

The course was released in mid-March, 2020, mainly to Extension professionals and volunteers, but members of the public found the course, too.

Two surveys were set up to gather information. One for those who complete the first three modules. Questions relate to personal awareness and preparedness. It is administered through the course as an optional opportunity in Module 3, but it is set up as an anonymous survey in Qualtrics.

The Extension professionals survey was sent by email to Extension course participants during the pilot timeline. Questions relate to knowledge and professional readiness to serve clients. The survey was set up in Qualtrics and an anonymous link was used.

Participants were also encouraged to submit suggestions for improvements or broken links they had discovered by email to course developers.



Photo by Lauren Kraemer

## RESULTS

In the Module 1-3 survey,

- 90% of respondents reported they "gained knowledge that helps me understand the probability and effects of the CSZ" and
- 95% gained knowledge "that helps me prepare for the CSZ before it happens and "helped me advance my disaster preparations."
- One hundred percent "plan to recommend the course to others."

In the Extension professionals survey, statistically significant gains were recorded in all areas including

- knowledge about the CSZ event;
- feeling prepared to provide info to Extension audiences about CSZ and
- the importance of preparing for the CSZ event as well as
- having taken steps to prepare themselves and family.

## SUMMARY

Preparing for the Cascadia Subduction Zone Event online learning system has had a successful pilot. Recommended adjustments by participants were addressed to improve quality and user experiences. The public marketing and publicity began in October, 2020.

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