

1. Abstract

A fundamental challenge for emergency management is improving the recognition and awareness of local hazards among both government officials and the public. For many people, disasters may appear to be surprising “bolt-out-of-the-blue” events. In fact, most natural hazard disasters are foreseeable and sometimes even predictable. However, for successful actions to be taken to prevent, mitigate, prepare, alert and respond, local natural hazards must be thoroughly studied.

Hennepin County Emergency Management, with several close partners*, has produced a landslide atlas to document the historical distribution, associated slope steepness and, when possible, the triggers associated with landslides in Hennepin County. Research conducted for this atlas revealed the natural landslide processes at work in the county, as well as the ways that some human activities may increase exposure to slide risks. This atlas provides users with accessible local landslide information, including the geographic distribution of susceptible areas and the description of landslide precursors and triggers, such as springs.

The atlas can guide landslide hazard avoidance and mitigation efforts, as well as emergency response planning. Developers and officials can employ the atlas to help identify areas where additional site-specific geologic study might be needed to safely guide construction or land-use activities. This atlas will also help efforts to establish specific landslide indications and alert criteria for times of possible elevated landslide activity in Hennepin County. Finally, the foundation laid by this atlas has become the inspiration for additional work to study landslides across the state of Minnesota.

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