



Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment

gonzaga.edu/ClimateInstitute
ClimateInstitute@gonzaga.edu



Our Mission

Informed by an abiding commitment to a just society and care for the planet, the Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment engages in regional capacity building, scholarship, and teaching to promote the flourishing of inland northwest communities, waters, and lands in the face of a changing climate.

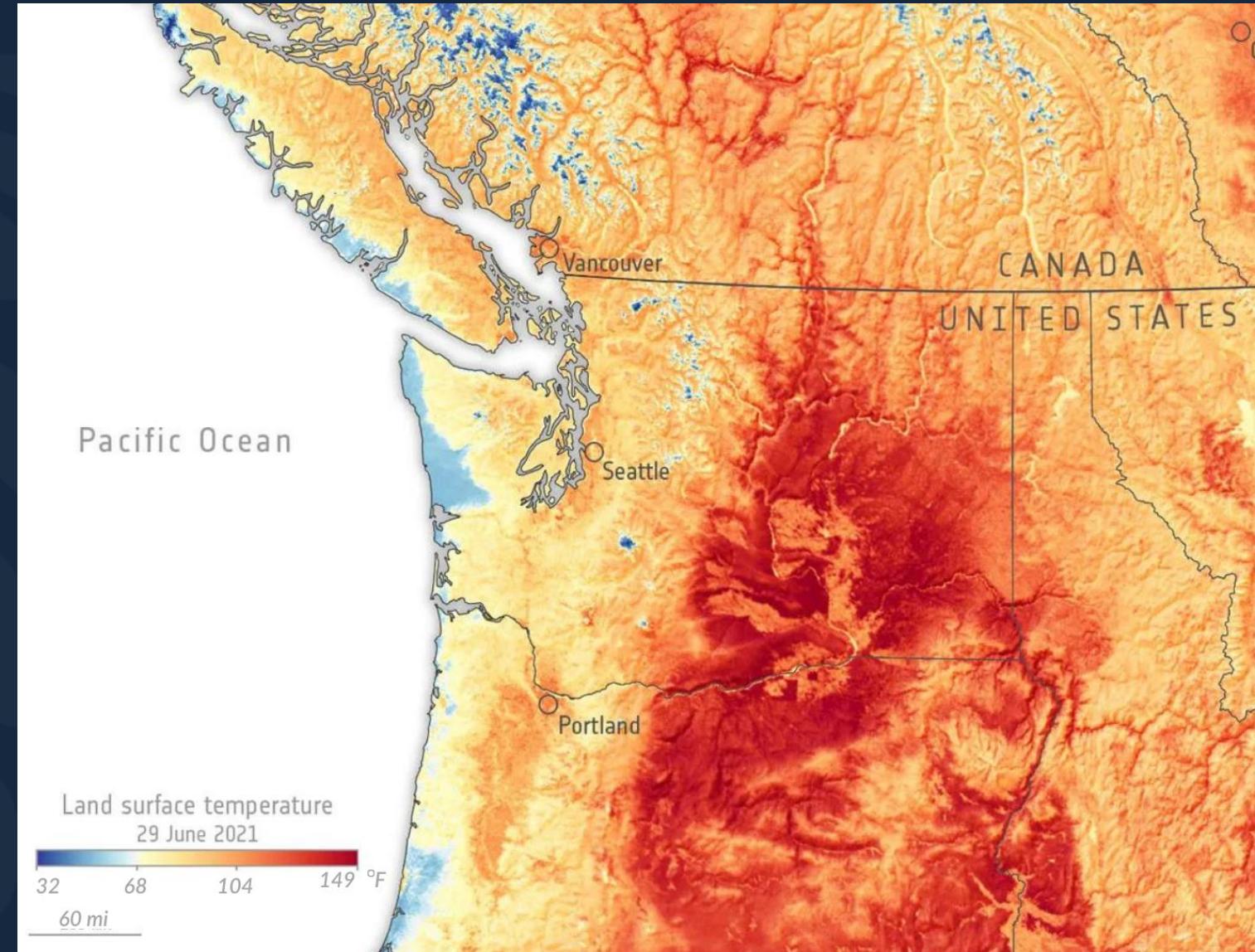


**Institute
for Climate,
Water, and the
Environment**

The Catalyzing Event: 2021 Northwest Heat Dome

157 heat-related deaths in WA

19 heat-related deaths in Spokane County



It's more than just heat...

Annual number of days above
“moderate” air quality (AQI
101+)

2000-2014

2.6

353% increase!

2015-2024

9.2



Downtown Spokane in summer of 2023

Source: Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

Insights from Community-Engaged Research:

- Engage in **proactive planning**
 - Prioritize nature-based, long-term solutions
- Health risk and exposure reduction **education**
- **Financial assistance** for home weatherization, HVAC improvements, and energy bills
- Establish **safe locations** for information sharing and resource distribution during extreme weather
- Improved **coordination and collaboration** across Spokane organizations



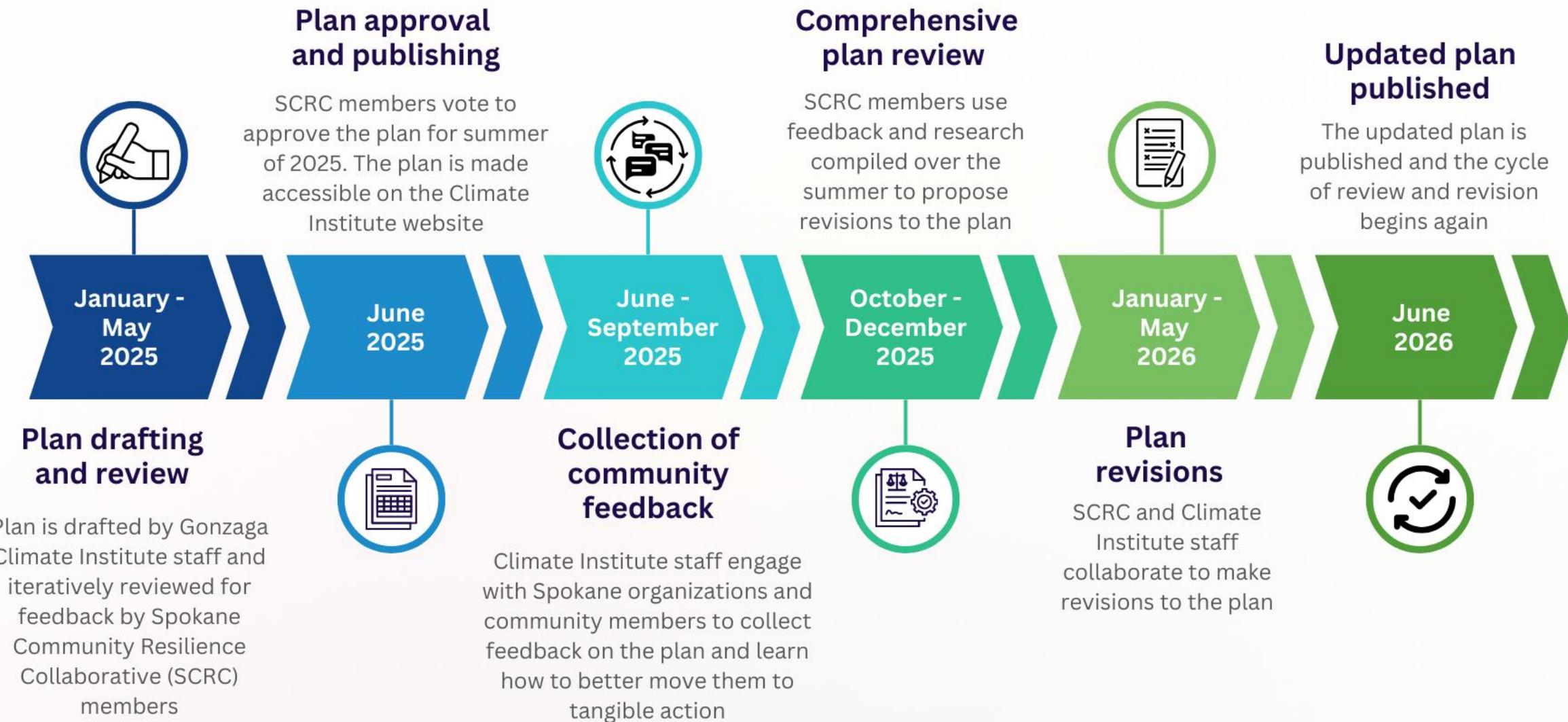
Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative

Founded in April 2024; 15 active member organizations

- **Goal 1:** Develop city-wide extreme heat and wildfire smoke resilience plans for Spokane
- **Goal 2:** Develop a network of climate resilient community buildings with supportive programming and infrastructure throughout Spokane
- **Goal 3:** Create and maintain digital tools that provide educational resources to build household-level resilience

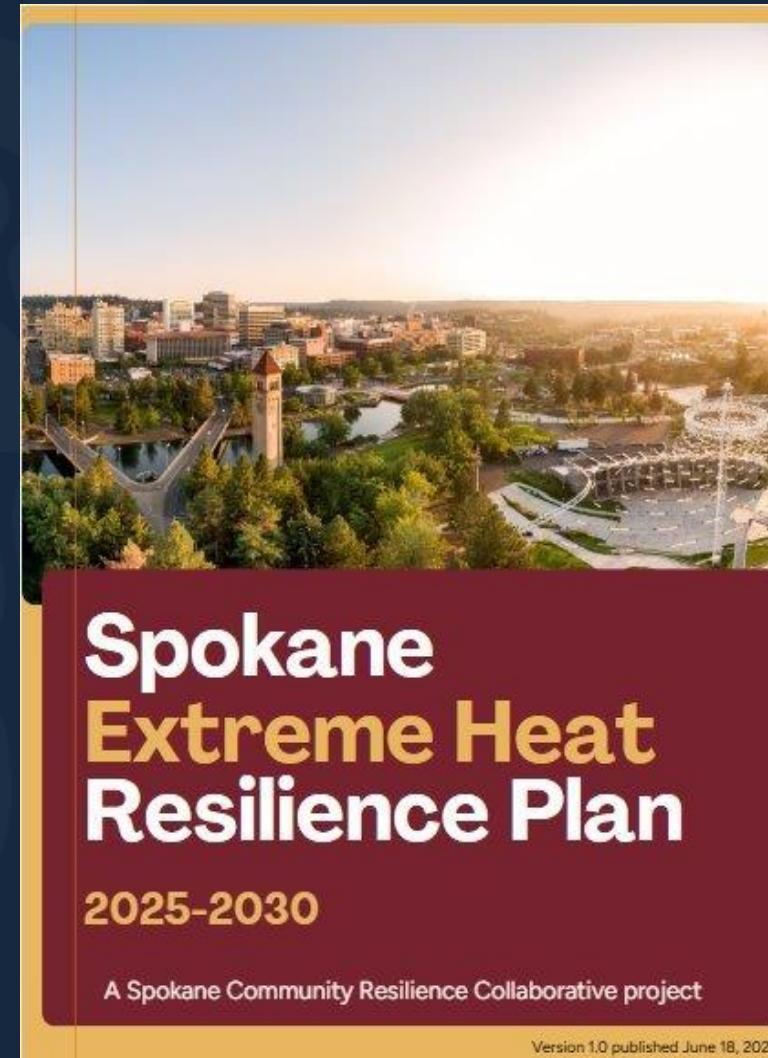


Spokane Extreme Heat Plan Development Timeline



Priorities

- *By the community, for the community*
- Equitable access and advancement
- Proactive *and* reactive
- Collaboration and coordination



Spokane Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plan

2025-2030

A Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative project

Version 1.0 published August 4, 2025

Version 1.0

- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery
- Mitigation
- Recommendation
 - Rationale
 - Considerations
 - Potential partners
 - Timeline

Recommendation 1.3: Establish and maintain a community leader program

Rationale:

According to the research article “Explaining Civic Engagement: The Role of Neighborhood Ties, Place Attachment, and Civic Responsibility,” well-developed neighborhoods are characterized by individuals who are actively involved in their communities, form strong social connections, and share common values built on trust (Dang et al., 2021). With the goal of building resilience against extreme heat, establishing a community leader program in Spokane can help foster essential connections and ensure the city is better prepared to respond effectively.

Considerations:

A community leader program could be integrated with Spokane’s current Neighborhood Council model. The [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) program developed by US FEMA could provide a basic framework to follow. Leaders should be identified and trained in coordination with resilience hubs (see [Recommendation 1.4](#))

Potential Partners:

- Resilience hubs
- Nonprofit organizations
- Local health agencies
- Local government organizations

Timeline³:

Recommendation 1.3 Establish and maintain a community leader program																			
2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Color key				Action in progress				Action planned				Action proposed							

Version 2.0:

Spokane Community Resilience Action Plan

Action plan structure:

- Goal
 - Strategy
 - Action*
- Responsible actors
- Accountability metrics
- Timeline
- Supporting research

*Actions are organized by hazard: heat, smoke, or both



Version 2.0:

Spokane Community Resilience Action Plan

Resilience phases:

- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery
- Mitigation
- Research

New sections:

- Terms and acronyms
- SCRC history
- How to get involved
- Alignment with existing plans and laws
- Featured success stories
- How to read this plan
- Implementation and monitoring



Goals:

1. Expand community education on extreme heat and wildfire smoke safety
2. Improve accessibility of residential cooling and air filtration infrastructure
3. Implement neighborhood programs that build trust, social cohesion, and connection to supportive services during extreme events
4. Update policy and public infrastructure to minimize negative impacts from extreme heat and poor air quality
5. Periodically adapt the Spokane resilience framework in response to evolving research, community input, and best practices

Next steps

- Ongoing community outreach/engagement
 - Including this presentation!
- Direct coordination with organizations for accountability planning
- Connecting with experts and researchers
- Collecting media for success story features
- Graphic design of the new plan
- Deliberations in SCRC
- Public education campaign to accompany the launch of v2.0 in June

Questions & discussion

Jester@gonzaga.edu





Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment

gonzaga.edu/ClimateInstitute
ClimateInstitute@gonzaga.edu

