



**Public Disaster Education and Preparedness (PDE+P) Committee of  
the Marin Operational Area Disaster & Citizens Corps Council (DC3)  
Committee Meeting – Monday February 5, 2018**

**PDE+P Meeting Minutes for February 5, 2018**  
*Approved at PDEP meeting 3-5-2018*

Members Present:

Frank Cox	CoChair, DC3 Member, OES Auxiliary, OES trainer
Catherine Way	Councilmember, City of Larkspur, member, MCCMC
David Peery	MMWD Safety & Risk Manager
Debbie Yee	Red Cross Disaster Program Manager, Solano-Marin Counties
Garry Lion	DC3 member, Marin Economic Forum
James Wickham	PG&E Safety + Preparedness Specialist, MV City Council
Maggie Lang	CERT Coordinator, Get Ready / Southern Marin
Tom Cromwell	Marin Medical Reserve Corps, etc.

Members Excused or Absent:

Bill Tyler	CoChair, DC3 Member, Batt. Chief Novato Fire, Fire Marshal
Keith Kennedy	DC3 Member, Dist. 3
Megan Scott	Sr Program Coordinator H&HS Public Health Preparedness
Peter Mendoza	DC3 / AFN representative

Members of Public Present

Henry Warren	Point San Pedro Road Coalition, <a href="mailto:hwarren2006@gmail.com">hwarren2006@gmail.com</a>
Lori Schifrin	MMRC, CERT, etc. / <a href="mailto:lori.sch@att.net">lori.sch@att.net</a>
Michael St. John	BC MVFD <a href="mailto:mstjohn@cityofmillvalley.org">mstjohn@cityofmillvalley.org</a>
Tom Perazzo	Sausalito Disaster Prep, SMFD Brd <a href="mailto:tom.perazzo@sbcglobal.net">tom.perazzo@sbcglobal.net</a>
Tom Welch	Mill Valley Fire Chief <a href="mailto:Twelch@cityofmillvalley.org">Twelch@cityofmillvalley.org</a>

Handouts distributed:

- Agenda, PDEP meeting 02/05/2018
- Draft Minutes PDEP\_Minutes 2018-01-08 b.pdf
- Novato Fire District notice: Bill Tyler appointed Novato Fire Chief starting 1/29/18
- LA CERT yr 2012 Survey / keep members engaged / 4 page summary
- Patch news article 10/9/17: MV fire Chief loses home in Santa Rosa Fire  
<https://patch.com/california/millvalley/mill-valley-fire-chief-loses-home-santa-rosa-fire>
- City of Mill Valley Emergency Preparedness Commission webpage  
<http://www.cityofmillvalley.org/gov/commissions/emergencycomm.htm>
- Marin IJ 1/26/18 Wildfire Danger concerns residents article & video link  
<http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20180125/marin-residents-voice-concerns-about-wildfire-threat>
- Sf Chronicle article: PG&E inundated as disaster began  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Dozens-of-PG-E-equipment-problems-reported-as-12529658.php>
- Pass Around notices:
  - Firewise Workshop 2/9/18 at Marin Valley Community Center
  - Marin Town Hall on Fire Preparedness, Feb 10, 2018 at COM
  - Fire in Marin classes: 2/11/18 and 3/4/18

**I. Welcome, Introductions, Handouts. Review of Minutes**

- Frank welcomed attendees, and introductions were made.
- Garry moved and Dr. Tom Cromwell 2<sup>nd</sup>: the Draft minutes of 1/8/18 were approved.

**II Some first impressions - the Wine Country Fires – T Welch, M St John, MVFD**

- Mill Valley Fire Chief Tom Welch and BC Michael St. John were welcomed.



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- Chiefs Welch & St. John showed a PowerPoint presentation that outlined some key events incident to multiple fires in Sonoma, Napa, and adjoining areas starting 10/9/17.
- The Mill Valley Emergency Preparedness Commission, MV Council members, multiple fire personnel, and others did an on-scene inspection of the Santa Rosa fire site.
- The fires became unmanageable spread by sustained 50-70 mph winds, with gusts as high as 108 mph on Geyser Peak. About 180,000 persons were evacuated.
- At its peak, 911 dispatchers were receiving 600 calls per hour. About 110,000 acres burned. An estimated 6,957 structures were destroyed, and 42 lives lost.<sup>1</sup>
- The multiple fires closed so many access roads mutual aid resources from Southern California were staged far South from the fires themselves.
- Video clips taken by MVFD showed the explosive speed of the fire's spread. Crews responding to fires often had to clear fallen trees and utility poles as fires cut off egress lanes behind them. The fires were so close, and smoke so dense, multiple vehicle accidents occurred in the fire zones. Highway 101 was shut down for more than an hour because of one tree.
- Persons evacuating in cars could be advised to wait for breaks in thick smoke, roll up windows, turn on air conditioning, and proceed cautiously from the fire zone.
- Both speakers emphasized that massive numbers of fire embers are created in fires of this size that can ignite buildings very quickly – even seconds - if the winds push embers into vents, flammable ornamentals, debris in gutters, and more.
- In answer to questions – Chief Welch noted when Red Flag dangerous fire conditions are declared, persons with significant Access & Functional Needs limitations, such as home bound elderly, may be advised to simply leave their homes in high risk areas before any fires occur.
- Chief Welch recounted his personal experience in the fire. His wife woke him Oct 8<sup>th</sup> about 10pm, smelling smoke. A few hours later, he began receiving calls from fire colleagues, including MCFD Chief Jason Weber, who reported Sonoma fire officials were requesting immediate help.
- Chief Welch described how he drove to nearby Coffey Park, at first noticing a fence on fire, then nearby homes. He began pounding on doors, forcing entry into some, to alert people to evacuate immediately, finding a range of persons including inebriates, elderly, and more.
- One man was escorting 4 elderly from a group home. He advised a 5<sup>th</sup> was in the home. Chief Welch entered the building, located a non-responsive woman, and extricated her from the fully engaged building. Once outside, he determined the woman had already died. He continued to find more victims, pushed them into his pickup, and drove some to Kaiser Hospital, and still others to a place of temporary safety at a shopping mall.
- During this initial time period, he did not receive alerts or directions from local authorities. The Sonoma County Alert system, SoCoAlert<sup>2</sup>, was a recently created emergency alert system, and was thinly resourced at the time. Local authorities did not use the system, as they were concerned alerts to persons outside the immediate fire zone might create traffic jams of persons trying to enter the fire zones, or blocking egress from the fires.
- The decision by telecommunications carriers to move away from established "copperwire" landline systems to Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and cellular

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<sup>1</sup> The fire statistics may still be under review by various agencies. See overview Wikipedia article on these fires: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October\\_2017\\_Northern\\_California\\_wildfires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_2017_Northern_California_wildfires)

<sup>2</sup> Sonoma County Alerts / SoCoAlert site:  
<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/FES/Emergency-Management/SoCoAlert/>



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communications has created additional problems in creating emergency alert systems that meet geographical targeted alerting efforts. About 72 cell-towers in two counties were destroyed by the fires.

- There are a number of evolving Alert systems: EAS, WEA, Nixle, social media, Nixle, sirens, and in Marin – Alert Marin. At this point, it may be wise for residents to sign up for many alert systems, to maximize chances critical alerts reach as many as possible.<sup>3</sup>
- Older technologies, such as sirens, may alert the public that there is an emergency of some sort – but can confuse people on what the problem is or recommended action. Sirens are associated with floods, fires, or more. Some cities recommend residents listen to localized radio stations, such as Belvedere's SNAP Radio 840<sup>4</sup>. However, these local stations are prohibited by FCC rules from using sufficient power to be fully effective.
- On returning to his own home area, Chief Welch found water pressure was unavailable. Large fires typically sever multiple structural water systems, including sprinkler systems, reducing available water pressure rapidly. At the same time, gas lines are ignited.
- Chief Welch tried to save his home with the only water available – a few buckets from a hottub – but the fire quickly destroyed his home. His elderly next door neighbors were alerted by home smoke alarms, and were able to drive from the scene, although the man who was driving the family car was barely able to see through the thick smoke.
- With winds that fierce, even limbing up trees and clearing ground around the house may be insufficient, as the winds can blow dry fuels from upper levels of trees, and debris from neighbor's properties. In his neighborhood of about 21 homes, 7 or 8 were saved.
- Under California law, first responders generally cannot force residents to evacuate from fire zones, but there are practical responses, such as declaring children held back at the fire zone may be taken into protective custody. Adults may be asked for 'next of kin' information, and advised firefighters will not be able to re-enter zones fully on fire. Residents should never be encouraged to stay behind, and fight fires themselves.<sup>5</sup>
- Parts of Marin County are very much at risk for catastrophic fires of this magnitude. Our speakers advise:
  - Primary evacuation routes may be blocked by fallen trees, utility poles, fires, or traffic jams. Residents should know and practice at least two evacuation routes, and two modes of evacuating (ie: by vehicle, on foot, etc.)
  - Evacuation orders (actual threat to life within 1-2 hours), Evacuation warnings, (less urgent) and clear directions, including safe refuge areas or temporary safe points away from danger should be clearly communicated.
  - Mill Valley, for example, has defined 10 structure protection zones, and a request to County OES for Alert-Marine flash alerts to specific geographical areas can be quickly communicated.
  - Narrow access / egress routes might be mitigated by increasing the number of turn around points, widened corners, and more. Remember: mutual aid responding agencies, especially from city departments with larger fire engines, may not be able to effectively access narrow Marin County roadways.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Marin OES alerts informational page, describing multiple existing systems:  
<https://www.marinsheriff.org/services/emergency-services/emergency-alert-and-warning-tools>

<sup>4</sup> Belvedere SNAP radio: <http://www.cityofbelvedere.org/index.aspx?NID=237>

<sup>5</sup> Cal OES: Legal Guidelines for Controlling Movement of People and Property During an Emergency:  
[http://www.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/LegalGuidelinesforControllingMovementPeopleProperty\(FEAT%20doc\).pdf](http://www.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/LegalGuidelinesforControllingMovementPeopleProperty(FEAT%20doc).pdf)



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- Neighbors must know neighbors. Able-bodied persons (such as CERTs) must be familiar with the neighborhood, and assist with alerts and evacuations.
- Defensible space around all homes in every neighborhood is essential. It is particularly needed in hilly areas, where fires can spread rapidly up hills.
- Homes must be fire-resistant. For example, ordinary insect screens over attic vents may be insufficient to stop entry by fire embers. Residents can look to sources such as FireSafe Marin<sup>6</sup>, or CalFire WUI building codes<sup>7</sup> for advice.
- Public engagement in fire prevention and preparedness is always difficult to maintain. This year, the annual Mill Valley Evacuation exercise will be replaced by localized neighborhood informational efforts throughout the Mill Valley area.
- Recently, attendees at MVFD preparedness talks were given postcards they could write down key ideas. The postcards were mailed back to attendees after a week or more passed, to reinforce the ideas they wrote down at the training.
- At the recent IJ forum on wildfires<sup>8</sup> it was pointed out Marin County has some 11 cities / towns, and lands controlled by the State, Parks, the County and others. Perhaps a collaborative effort, endorsed by Marin Fire Chiefs and others, to create consistent and enforced ordinances to compel requirements and recommendations as outlined in the Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan of 2016<sup>9</sup> will give us Countywide fire resilience.
- Different types of emergencies may require different public responses. Some disasters, such as quakes or hazmat plumes, may best be managed by 'shelter in place' advice. The public needs to be trained to be prepared, flexible, and responsive to emergency communications efforts.<sup>10</sup>
- A great checklist for preparedness is online at ReadyMarin.org<sup>11</sup>
- The Marin Board of Supervisors has appointed MCFD Chief Jason Weber to chair a group of emergency professionals to compile a list of Lessons Learned from the October fires, for Marin use. We look forward to their report.

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<sup>6</sup> FireSafe Marin: <http://www.firesafemarin.org/preparedness> . And MVFD preparedness: <http://www.cityofmillvalley.org/fire/prevention/default.htm> and the County resources: The Marin County Fire Prevention Publications online at: <https://www.marincounty.org/depts/ft/divisions/fire-prevention-investigation/prevention-documents>

<sup>7</sup> California's Wildland-Urban Interface Code Information [http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire\\_prevention/fire\\_prevention\\_wildland\\_codes](http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_codes)

<sup>8</sup> IJ forum on wildfire risks / community planning - video and press article: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20180125/marin-residents-voice-concerns-about-wildfire-threat>

<sup>9</sup> Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2016: <http://www.firesafemarin.org/cwpp>

<sup>10</sup> For example, a mnemonic that suggests in the event of an immediate evacuation in any type of emergency or disaster, there are **Six "P's"** to keep in mind:

People and Pets

Papers, phone numbers and Important Documents

Prescriptions, Vitamins, and Eyeglasses

Pictures and Irreplaceable Memorabilia

Personal Computers (information on hard drive & disks)

Plastic (credit cards, ATM cards, & cash)

<https://www.theindependencecenter.org/the-six-ps-of-evacuation/>

<sup>11</sup> ReadyMarin.org preparedness steps: <https://readymarin.org/plan-prepare/>



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### III. Updates from PDEP members

#### - MCCMC Marin County Council Mayors + City Councilmembers

- The MCCMC disaster preparedness committee has scheduled a first meeting Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. They hope to meet quarterly: March, June, September, and December, and believe they will help galvanize training and preparedness efforts across the many cities and towns in Marin County.

#### - West Marin

- Anne Sands, WMDC, sent PDEP and others flyers on grants workshops, updated lists of CERT activators, and notice of the next WMDC meeting to be held 2/22/18.

#### - Southern Marin / Business Community

- Garry advised he will have more to report at the next PDEP meeting.

#### - CERT, Get Ready and Get Ready 5th:

- **CERT:** Maggie advised Scouts finished Saturday with 25 graduates. The Feb. CERT class in Novato is already full, and the COM almost full. MV & SR classes will open in April. The Marin City class was postponed & Golden Gate Bridge staff class will be scheduled.
- CERT Advanced Trainings are planned: Disaster Psychology in March and FADR in April-both in San Rafael.
- The Annual Simulation will be held in May in Mill Valley; modeled after the San Rafael class in Dominican three years ago.
- There will be Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) training in September. Maggie has requested Shelter training from Red Cross. There is discussion whether CVNL or ARC will be able to identify volunteering CERTs in case of disaster in a way comparable to mutual aid with first responder agencies.
- A Train the Trainer is scheduled for Thurs. 2/8 in San Rafael with 25 participants, including fire dept. personnel & CERTs. Great instructors & will focus on key points in each module & "how to teach" pointers. A curriculum Update is in process.
- CERTs will be a part of Urban Shield in early Sept. with 4 scenarios- ~ 8 hr. day.
- The CERT National Conference in August will be in Florida. Maggie will participate.
- Next CERT newsletter: due out in March. Ideas are welcome.
- **Get Ready:** A request for grant funding was submitted to SHSGP for GR program.
- Tom Cromwell heard that the County will provide \$75,000 to continue the Get Ready program, while Frank heard that the Fire Chiefs have applied for a \$76,000 SHGP grant for this purpose that might be funded by November 2018, suggesting grant funds to renew Get Ready in several forms might be available in 2019.
- GR5: has been offered throughout county- teaching to schools who request. The schools now include MV, Tiburon, 2 Novato schools- St. Anselm's in San Anselmo, Gate Academy & Laurel Dell in SR.

#### -- Access + Functional Needs communities (AFN):

- Peter Mendoza was unable to attend the meeting. This portion of the agenda is moved to the next meeting.

#### - Public Health Preparedness and related programs

- Megan Scott, Sr. Program Coordinator for H&HS Public Health Preparedness, will be on maternity leave until mid year.

#### • - Utilities including MMWD and PG&E

- Dave Peery reported that seismic retrofits at the Bon Tempe and San Geronimo water plants have been completed.
- The Division of Safety of Dams - California Department of Water Resources are encouraging water districts to perform safety checks on local dams. Engineers will be examining Alpine dam both outside, and underwater in compliance with these requests.



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- Jim Wickham, PG&E, will be teaching safety for the next seven weeks to East Bay agencies.
- Mill Valley will add an additional \$300K to improve MV evacuation routes soon, including improved turnaround zones on narrow streets. The focus is always to save lives.
- Catherine underscored the importance of vegetation management in these efforts.
- Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC), etc.
  - Tom Cromwell noted that standards based on older “100 year events” must be reviewed, as so many fire, flood, storm, and other major disaster occur repeatedly in recent years.
  - The City of Belvedere helped support the site [www.belvedereblockcaptains.org](http://www.belvedereblockcaptains.org) that, in turn, both advises residents in preparedness steps, and invites them to register online with local disaster volunteer “block captains” who are trained and equipped to coordinate with city disaster responders.<sup>12</sup>
  - The city manager, police officials, EMS coordinator and others support this effort.
  - So far, 97 Belvedere residents have participated as ‘block captains’, with a good response to a recent Marin IJ news article.<sup>13</sup>
  - The next steps will be to schedule a number of ‘block captain’ trainings in the city.
  - The County MMRC coordinator, who lived in the Sonoma fire zones, has been involved in fire response activities, so that many of her duties have been taken over by Dr. Lisa Santora, Deputy Public Health Officer, H&HS. Her supervisor, Dr. Matt Willis, advised about \$75K of County funds will be given to maintain the Get Ready program.
  - MMRC is coordinating with Maggie Lang to bring First Aid for Disaster Victims (FADR) training to Mill Valley schools. About 6 FADR classes are scheduled through April.
  - FADR classes, each taught by 6 or 7 MMRC members, may be requested by organizations who can guarantee 20 or more attendees for the typical 4 hour class.
  - Approximately 1000 Marin residents have taken the FADR class which now also includes AED and chest compression CPR.
- Fire Services + County at Large Issues:
  - Bill Tyler was recently appointed the Fire Chief for the Novato Fire Protection District. His report will be continued to the next meeting.
- OES, Training and other Events:
  - Frank taught the new employee DSW class on February 1<sup>st</sup>, and requested PDEP member help in identifying qualified city or County personnel who might be assigned similar duties to attend the class, April 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - A planning meeting is scheduled 2/6 for the 5/23/18 OES annual exercise.
  - Frank passed around notices for upcoming events:
    - Firewise Workshop 2/9/18 at Marin Valley Community Center
    - Marin Town Hall on Fire Preparedness, Feb 10, 2018 at COM
    - Fire in Marin classes: 2/11/18 and 3/4/18

#### IV. Open Time / Public Comment

##### 3:00 PM end of meeting

- Frank closed the meeting.

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<sup>12</sup> The Belvedere Block Captains site also maintains a Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/belvederecaptains/posts/2031121680492854>

<sup>13</sup> Fires a Wakeup Call / Belvedere Block Captains: Marin IJ 1-5-2018  
<http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20180105/belvedere-expands-disaster-plan-after-north-bay-fires>



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**Next Meetings:**

**PDEP Meetings: 1-3pm Year 2018: draft dates to be discussed:**

**3/5, 4/9, 5/7, 6/4, 7/2, 8/6, 9/10, 10/1, 11/5, 12/3/2018**

**Dates may be flexible as circumstances require.**

**Site: PDEP unless otherwise posted: Central Marin Police Community Rm.**

**DC3 Meetings: 3-5pm: at Marin Board of Supervisor Hearing Room:**

**Year 2018: 3/8/2018, 6/14/2018, 9/13/2018, 12/13/2018**

**Dates may be flexible as circumstances require.**

*PDEP\_Minutes 2018-02-05 c.docx  
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