



**Public Disaster Education and Preparedness (PDE+P) Committee of  
the Marin Operational Area Disaster & Citizens Corps Council (DC3)  
Committee Meeting – Monday January 8, 2018**

**PDE+P Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2018**  
*Approved at PDEP mtg 2-5-2018*

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
Garry Lion	DC3 member, Marin Economic Forum
James Wickham	PG&E Safety + Preparedness Specialist
Maggie Lang	CERT Coordinator, Get Ready / Southern Marin
Peter Mendoza	DC3 / AFN representative
Tom Cromwell	Marin Medical Reserve Corps, etc.

Members Excused or absent:

Bill Tyler	CoChair, DC3 Member, Batt. Chief Novato Fire, Fire Marshal
Debbie Yee	Red Cross Disaster Program Manager
Keith Kennedy	DC3 Member, Dist. 3
Megan Scott	Sr Program Coordinator H&HS Public Health Preparedness

Members of Public Present

Dan Reese	Batt Chief, Central Marin Fire, <a href="mailto:dreese@centralmarinfire.org">dreese@centralmarinfire.org</a>
Elaine Tokolahi	CVNL Director, Volunteer Services, <a href="mailto:etokolahi@cvn.org">etokolahi@cvn.org</a>
Henry Warren	Pt. San Pedro Coalition Homeowners <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>

Handouts distributed:

- Agenda, PDEP meeting 01/08/2018
- Draft Minutes PDEP\_Minutes 2017-12-04 d.pdf
- 'Fire safety pipe work surpasses \$100M' Marin IJ article 12-24-2017
- DC3 Subcommittee report / Jason Weber, Chair, Adopted 12-14-2018
- PG&E 'handling As and Electric Emergencies' notepad
- Pass Around: CERT December 2017 Newsletter
- Pass Around: CERT 2017 activity report spreadsheet
- Pass Around: Fires a Wakeup Call / Belvedere Block Captains: Marin IJ 1-5-2018  
<http://www.marini.com/general-news/20180105/belvedere-expands-disaster-plan-after-north-bay-fires>

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

- Frank welcomed attendees, and introductions were made.
- Catherine moved & Garry 2<sup>nd</sup>: the Draft minutes of Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 2017(d) were approved.

**II Some first impressions - the Wine Country Fires - Jim Wickham PG&E**

- Jim Wickham, PDEP member and Sr. PG&E Public Safety Specialist, was ask to describe some informal personal recollections of the devastating October Wine Country Fires.
- PG&E operates a weather alert system that typically provides weather forecasts twice a day. These reports often are used by PG&E to deploy staff and equipment in advance of difficult weather conditions on a low to high color-banded system<sup>1</sup>.
- The PG&E and NOAA projections for Sunday Oct 8<sup>th</sup> were 'yellow' anticipating dry conditions with a 30-40mph wind. Based on this forecast, PG&E pre-deployed additional personnel to North Bay areas, and opened centers in Sonoma and the San Rafael Office Operations Emergency Center (OEC). Within hours, a sudden low pressure gradient

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<sup>1</sup> PG&E Colorbanded alerts, from low to high risk: blue, green, yellow, orange, and red (high danger).



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from the Sierras moved West, causing rapid wind increases and other developments. PG&E opened the corporate Regional Emergency Center at 245 Market St., SF, and increased the deployment of additional resources to the area.

- By very early the next day, Jim was alerted at home that the Tubbs fire in Sonoma was developing rapidly. He reported to the Sonoma County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that was having difficulty acquiring all information needed, so he then reported to the Sonoma Fire / CalFIRE Incident Command Post (ICP) at Santa Rosa Fire Station 3. Jim showed a short video clip of the fire whipping across a road by winds estimated at 80 or 90 mph.
- Jim and others with PG&E began de-energizing electrical lines and cutting off gas mains to communities in the path of the fire, including Coffey Park residential neighborhood. It can take some hours before gas in transmission lines is no longer a fire risk.
- Jim answered a question about Reclosers from a member of the PDEP team. PG&E uses 'Recloser Devices' on power lines designed to briefly interrupt, but not permanently shut down, power lines that might be hit by transient events, such as a passing tree branch that might hit a power line. Such devices were in use in the North Bay, and along with other more permanent automated systems, are designed to reduce power interruptions that do not present a major loss of power to local grids.
- When CalFire moved the ICP to the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Jim followed to assist as an agency rep in the response.
- The Sonoma County Alert system, SoCoAlert<sup>2</sup>, was a recently created emergency alert system, and was thinly resourced at the time. SoCoAlert was largely staffed by volunteers who would attend public meetings and encourage the public to register for the program. There was not a funded media campaign to reach large numbers of persons.
- The Cal Fire fire base camp set up response branches for the Tubbs and other fires, conducted multiple briefings, and deployed incoming fire resources.
- PG&E set up a staging and incident command site on about 100 acres provided by Graton Casino in Rohnert Park. The site was staffed with a mobile command post, tents, generators, trailers, a fuel depo, living and feeding facilities for thousands of personnel brought in from all over the West Coast.<sup>3</sup>
- PG&E made an effort to first respond to life-critical customers with power and gas, such as the Sutter and Kaiser hospitals, and continues to this day in restoring power and gas transmission lines throughout the fire zone
- Jim is also a councilmember at Mill Valley. Mill Valley officials, including Jim and MVFD Chief Tom Welsh, did a site visit to the fire ravaged areas that included Chief Welsh's home in Santa Rosa that was destroyed in the fire. Mill Valley is one of several Marin cities learning lessons from the fire, and expanding programs such as vegetation management.
- Several PDEP members commented more needs to be done with developing public alert systems in our area, as many residents in both the wine country fires and recent massive fires in Southern California were not advised of some 'voluntary' and 'mandatory' evacuations.<sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup> PG&E wildfire response page: [https://www.pge.com/en\\_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/natural-disaster/wildfires/wildfires.page?WT.pgeac=Alerts\\_NapaFire-Oct17\\_Billing](https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/natural-disaster/wildfires/wildfires.page?WT.pgeac=Alerts_NapaFire-Oct17_Billing)

<sup>4</sup> SF Chronicle article 1-5-18: Alerts reached few in Sonoma County in early hours of Wine Country fires. <http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Alerts-reached-few-in-Sonoma-County-in-early-12477770.php>



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- 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. They can, in turn, simply create a rush on 911 emergency calls that can compound the emergency.
- Jim provided PG&E 'Handling Gas and Electric Emergencies – A Reference Guide for First Responders' to PDEP members present.

### **III Some first impressions - the Wine Country Fires, Elaine Tokolahi CVNL**

- Elaine Tokolahi, a former member of PDEP and former staff member at Red Cross, the former Director of Programs at San Francisco Community Agencies Responding to Disaster (SF CARD), and now the Center for Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership (CVNL) Director of Volunteers was welcomed by PDEP.
- Part of her CVNL responsibilities is to manage the CVNL sponsored Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) upon request from Marin County. The role of the EVC is to assist in evaluating and deploying convergent volunteers (and others) responding to disasters, and to assist with disaster donations management.
- CVNL has limited EVC capacity in two counties: Marin and Napa. The planning prior to the fire was any two counties might assist with one county's emergency.
- On Sunday, Oct 8th, just as the fires began - CVNL was missing key personnel on medical and similar leave.
- At about 4:30 am Elaine received an urgent call to deploy to the Napa CVNL EVC immediately. Her own daughter was experiencing a severe nose bleed at the time, complicating matters. Elaine was able to drive North about 6am, but was stopped by the uncontrolled fires blocking the Lakeville highway. She re-routed to the East Bay, picked up another volunteer, and reported to the Napa Valley College shelter.
- Key Red Cross personnel from the Bay Area had already been deployed to massive hurricanes in Texas, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida, and other Gulf areas.
- She assisted Jim Tomlinson, CVNL, who set up the initial Napa shelter, and then was quickly asked to return to Marin, to set up the EVC at the shelter at the Marin Center.
- Communication among the multiple shelter / CVNL sites was inconsistent due to downed cell phone towers. Even communication to the Marin EOC was incomplete. Many Marin County employees arrived to help. Relatively few had taken the New Employee Disaster Service Worker (DSW) class taught by Frank Cox, and needed the most basic 'just in time' instructions to manage the spontaneous volunteers needed to fully operate the shelter and evacuation center. Few persons knew anything about the Incident Command System (ICS) or the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) required of all Government employees assigned as DSWs.
- A few days into the emergency, Elaine was contacted by Christine Paquette from St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin, who was informed by County CAO Matt Hymel that new areas of Sonoma would be evacuated, and that Marin might expect an influx of about 15,000 new evacuees in the next 5 hour period.
- Elaine reached out to Scott Quinn, Executive Director of the Marin Interfaith Council, Maggie Lang, Coordinator for the County CERT program, Cory Bytof, City of San Rafael Volunteer Program Coordinator, Bill Tyler, Battalion Chief Novato Fire, the County EOC team, and others, and was able to identify potential shelter sites throughout the county - staffed largely by volunteers.

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



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- Fortunately, some at risk evacuation areas did not evacuate so the additional shelters were not needed. Hundreds of evacuees and volunteers showed up at the Marin Center shelter that stayed active through the week, with some spill over to sites such as the former seminary in Strawberry, Terra Linda High, multiple churches, West Marin sites, and others.
- As many persons evacuated had little more than the clothes on their backs, and the shelters lacked washing machines, adequate showers, and other resources, the word got out via social media, including NextDoor, that many items such as clothing, food, etc. were needed at the shelters. Great numbers of citizens brought items to the shelters, and much of the donated items could neither be sorted, managed, or used effectively. The donation piles themselves became a liability. A few ad-hoc efforts were valuable, such as volunteered new underwear, but most items were neither requested nor usable.
- Elaine's responsibilities included EVC management in Marin, Planning Chief at the Napa Shelter EVC, CVNL linked duties, and more. Much of the process used at these sites was ad-hoc and on the fly, as spontaneous volunteers and County staff were unfamiliar with ICS.
- Among the hundreds of evacuees who arrived at these shelters were hospital patients evacuated from Santa Rosa Kaiser facilities and other persons with significant AFN limitations.
- A large number of evacuees were monolingual Spanish speakers or limited in English capacity, so the explanation offered these persons on the expected closure of the Marin Center and movement to the Strawberry shelter was poorly understood by many.
- PDEP members commented additional planning for future emergencies should address these cultural / language and other AFN issues, the lack of ICS/SEMs and shelter training for government DSWs, faith based volunteers, Red Cross and other affiliated organizational training and recruitment, management of social media and donations, and more.
- There is a clear consensus that Marin is not ready for 'The Big One' or equivalent disaster without addressing these needs.

#### IV. Updates from PDEP members

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

- Catherine reported that the Twin Cities Disaster Preparedness Committee (TCDP) had met earlier in the day, also at Central Marin Police Community Room.
- TCDP will plan on meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month 9-10am.

##### - West Marin

- The West Marin Disaster Council did not meet over the Holiday season.

##### - Southern Marin / Business Community

- Garry is meeting with Mill Valley officials in an effort to re-energize the M'BER business training and resiliency effort, and hopes to see Get Ready Marin classes offered for business employees.
- Funding for these efforts continues to be inadequate.
- Garry noted that some insurance companies are refusing to issue policies to homeowners and others in potential fire risk zones, and not just higher risk 'WUI' zones. This may raise serious questions for many homeowners. Garry will look further into the problem, and may report further at our next meeting.

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

- Maggie summarized a detailed spreadsheet on CERT Year 2017 accomplishments.
- Some 12 CERT classes graduated 260 CERTs with a male/female ratio of 58%/42%, including 16 persons who had been CERTs in the past, but needed a 'refresher.'
- The average age of the CERTs was 51 years, with an age spread of 12 to 81 years.



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- The CERTs were from many areas: 16 from outside Marin, 39 from West Marin, 36 from Novato, 51 from San Rafael, 42 from central Marin, and 76 from southern Marin.
- Marin CERT sponsored 3 advanced trainings in 2017, including the Annual Exercise held at Pt. Reyes National Seashore.
- A copy of the CERT newsletter was passed around. Central and Southern Marin have existing CERT coordinators, but San Rafael, with some 400 CERTs, still lacks an Emergency Manager with SRFD. The need for improved CERT links to some local fire services, and coordination among various CERT groups, is great.
- Many Marin CERTs volunteered to assist with the fire shelter effort, but CVNL had no way to identify or deploy CERTs, who are linked only to local fire agencies. The CERT steering committee will consider CERT 'mutual aid' planning in the future.
- Marin CERT could learn from other groups around the Country. Los Angeles CERT, for example, has a team that assists with "firefighter rehab", supporting firefighters in wildland fire settings, primarily with hydration support. A survey on their website summarizes feedback they received from a survey sent out in 2012 to 1800 CERT groups around the country. This is a 25 pg document; a summary was sent to Frank to be distributed. Of particular importance are different ways CERT groups engage their members.<sup>5</sup>

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

- Peter recalled at the DC3 meeting held 12/14/17 he raised questions about planning, including the Tsunami Annex and the Marin Access Functional Needs Planning Guidance, that spoke to the important of AFN integration of services, but would be difficult to use as a 'checklist' or workbook by Incident Commanders and their staff to meet these needs.

### - 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 referred to the distributed Marin IJ article reporting MMWD is spending about \$100 Million on water service upgrades. MMWD is making a strong effort to upgrade water pipes throughout the County to replace failing lines with more seismically resilient lines.

### - Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC), etc.

- Dr. Tom Cromwell reported Belvedere has upgraded the Block Captain program, as reflected in the Marin IJ Article he passed around.<sup>6</sup>
- As the article noted, Dr. Cromwell, City Manager Craig Middleton, and members of the Town Council are supporting the local block captain effort by the creation of an informational and sign-up website, [www.belvedereblockcaptains.org](http://www.belvedereblockcaptains.org), that allows residents to securely share sensitive personal and family information with the city and local block captains, who would assist first responders in the event of a disaster, such as a major earthquake.
- The County MMRC director, 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles CERT: "Keeping CERT Volunteers Engaged" – the report, savable as a 25 page PDF, is online at: <http://www.cert-la.com/cert-programs-information/keeping-cert-volunteers-engaged/>

<sup>6</sup> Belvedere – Fires a Wake up call. See <https://belvederecaptains.org/> and Marin IJ article: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20180105/belvedere-expands-disaster-plan-after-north-bay-fires>



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### - Fire Services + County at Large Issues:

- Bill Tyler was unable to attend the meeting. This portion of the agenda was passed to next month.

### - OES, Training and other Events:

- Frank is preparing to teach the February 1<sup>st</sup> New Employee / DSW class, and is particularly interested in having qualified city or County personnel who might be assigned similar duties attend this class.
- Frank is scheduled for medical procedures this month, and continues to urge officials to recruit and help deploy a deeper bench of trainers in DSW (and EOC) duties.

## V. Open Time / Public Comment

### 3:02 PM end of meeting

- Frank closed the meeting.

### Next Meetings:

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

2/5, 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 2018-01-08 b.docx*

*Approved at 2-5-2018 PDEP mtg. rev 2-06-18 1530 hr fcox*