

Hazard Mitigation Plan-Update
2nd Steering Committee (SC) Meeting
March 6, 2013

Welcome and Introductions

SC chairperson, **Jay Parrish**, called meeting to order at 1:32pm.

Cybelle Immitt requested those in attendance gather together for a group picture of the Steering Committee.

Group Introductions:

Those in attendance introduced themselves and their affiliation to the group at large.

SC Members and Alternates Attending:

Alison Talbott (SC) , PG&E	Jay Parrish (SC) , City of Ferndale
Barbara Caldwell (Alternate) , Red Cross	Jody Brundin (SC) , Blue Lake Rancheria
Bill Gillespie (SC) , City of Eureka	John Friedenbach (SC) , Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District
Daniel Larkin (SC) , County of Humboldt Office of Emergency Services	Karen Diemer (SC) , City of Arcata
Desmond Cowan (SC) , Arcata Fire Protection District	Lon Winburn (Alternate) , Fortuna Fire Protection District
Greg Perry (Alternate) , Blue Lake Rancheria	Lou Iglesias (SC) , Weott Community Services District
Hank Seeman (SC) , County of Humboldt Public Works	Tom Nix (SC) , CAL FIRE

SC Members Absent Without an Alternate Present:

Judith A. Warren, HSU Regional Training Institute

Public, Planning Partners, and Agency Representatives Attending:

Cybelle Immitt, County of Humboldt Public Works

Danielle Allred, County of Humboldt Public Works

Gary Wellborn, Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District

Pat Kaspari, GHD

Tim Petrusha, Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District

Review/Approve SC Ground Rules

The chairperson informed the SC that members may choose to have more than one alternate if they feel that a second alternate may be necessary to have a representative at each meeting. There were no objections to allowing SC members to have more than one alternate, if necessary.

The chair addressed the topic of public comment at meetings. Although there was minimal public attendance during the formation of the original plan, protocol will be established for the possibility for public comments during the update process.

A group discussion favored the protocol discussed in the modified ground rules, in which public comments will be allowed at the beginning of each meeting, and each person will be allowed three minutes to speak, at the discretion of the chair. There were no objections.

Action: Alison Talbott moved to approve the SC Ground Rules; Desmond Cowan seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Review/Approve Minutes

The group reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. No comments or edits were made.

Action: Lou Iglesias made a motion to approve the minutes; Bill Gillespie seconded the motion. The SC passed the motion unanimously.

Plan Review Observations

Original Plan

There was a discussion about whether or not “*fish losses*” constituted a true hazard and whether or not it should be included as such in the updated version of the plan. It was noted that “fish losses” constitutes an economic hazard, particularly for tribal groups. The question was posed whether or not “fish losses” is a hazard that can be mitigated—what can be done about it? Hank Seemann explained that the inclusion of “fish losses” as a hazard in the original plan was inspired by substantial fish loss on the Klamath River, which resulted from massive algae blooms. He proposed that since there is an anthropogenic element to the problem, there are factors that could be mitigated. The question was posed: which of the Planning Partners would be most affected if “fish losses” was removed from the list of hazards. It was noted that the issue is applicable to the Humboldt area, and that the “meat” of the issue is already included in the plan, so it would not likely require a huge amount of effort to update it.

There was some discussion about including “fish losses” as a subsection of another hazard, such as “drought.” But it was also pointed out that it is not just a result of drought, it is also a water quality issue. Someone observed that oyster beds are an evolving fishery in this region and that water quality is important for this. It was suggested that some data be collected on the percentage of fisheries-based occupations within the Humboldt County job sector, as this has likely changed since the last plan was made. A possible shift toward a higher percentage of fishery-based jobs would potentially make this a higher priority issue.

Pat Kaspari asked if the group was prepared to vote on whether or not to eliminate “fish losses” from the list of hazards. It was decided, however, that the group did not have enough information on the topic to vote on it presently.

Task: The Planning Staff will look into the issue of “fish losses” and the group will revisit the topic next meeting. This may be broadened into something like a water contamination hazard chapter. Staff will also look at the jurisdictions’ action plans/initiatives from the original plan and see if anyone had an action item related to fish loss hazard.

State Plan

Members talked about some things they liked in the State Plan. One member stated that she liked some of the language within their “goals and objectives.” Another person liked the discussion of having a “climate change impact” analysis for each of the hazards.

The question was asked: Did we get any feedback from State on our plan?

Pat explained that we did the crosswalk and FEMA gave us back comments, and those will be incorporated into the updated plan. Cybelle elaborated that there was nothing that gave them pause and they approved the plan. They suggested that next time we focus on differentiating between what constitutes a preparedness project and a mitigation project. These two will be separated out a little bit more in the plan update. They also wanted us to include the fault map for earthquakes. It was also mentioned by staff that this time, more back-up references, technical data, and details on how analyses were performed will be included.

Task: Planning Team will email the SC the crosswalk that state and FEMA reviewers commented on.

Review/approve hazards of concern for the plan update

There was some discussion about the State's Plan analyzing the same hazards as our local plan, plus some other hazards that aren't really applicable to Humboldt County.

Pat enumerated the hazards we are going to look at.

Unmaintained and abandoned infrastructure was brought up as another potential hazard to be included. The Glendale Bridge—an unused railroad bridge—was mentioned as an example. In the event that the bridge failed, there could be severe downstream impacts. The question was asked: if unmaintained/abandoned infrastructure was included in the plan as a hazard, could grant funding be obtained to do something about it? A discussion about ownership and eligibility for funding followed. The Glendale Bridge is owned by North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA), which is not eligible for funding through this plan because they are not a planning partner. NCRA also owns the rail prism, which acts as a barrier between Humboldt Bay and Highway 101. It was suggested that this type of infrastructure could be discussed within the plan more as a potential consequence rather than a stand-alone hazard.

There was some discussion about including “oil spills” and “natural gas pipelines” as hazards in the plan. Cybelle reminded the group that we probably do not want to get too expansive with adding hazards, but should focus on tweaking the existing ones to suit our needs within the parameters of the available funding provided by the FEMA grant. She suggested that it is helpful to think of the Plan in the way that it will be used—keeping its purpose in mind. Who will be applying for funding for the projects? Are they a Planning Partner? Is there a specific project to be done? For example, is it important for a jurisdiction like Humboldt Bay Harbor District to take on the “oil spill” issue because of their potential exposure?

Pat asked: Are there other hazards that we want to include?

It was suggested that some verbiage on “coastal flooding” be added to the flooding chapter. There was some talk about addressing sea-level rise as a subset under other hazards within a climate change analysis. Hank proposed working with GHD and Tetra Tech on amplifying the link between excess sediment and loss of channel capacity contributing to flooding hazards within the plan update.

Task: A revised proposed list of hazards will be brought back to the next meeting including the outcomes of considering the fish losses chapter as described above.

Guiding Principals, Goals and Objectives

Changes, additions or deletions?

Pat asked: Are there any edits/suggested changes from the last plan?

The “Guiding Principal ”reads: *“Through partnerships and careful planning, identify and reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards in order to protect the health, safety, quality of life, environment, and economy of the communities within the Humboldt Operational Area.”* It was pointed out that, technically, we are including non-natural hazards as well. It was suggested that we remove the word “natural” from the guiding principal to just say: “...identify and reduce vulnerability to hazards...”

Action: The chairperson asked if there was any opposition to eliminating “natural” and just saying “hazards.” There was none. The group was unanimous in support of the change.

As a result of the above action, it was pointed out that the word “natural” would also need to be eliminated from “natural hazards” where it appears in the 12 listed objectives (O).

These include: O-1, O-3, O-6, O-9, and O-11.

It was also pointed out that some more goals (G) should be applied to some of the objectives.

- G-2 should be applied to O-2;
- G-6 should be applied to O-10;
- G-5 should be applied to O-11.

Action: The chairperson asked if there was any opposition to the changes to the goals and objectives described above. There was none. The group was unanimous in support of these changes.

Critical Facilities

Definition from last plan

A question was asked about the critical facilities category, “Medical and Shelter Facilities and Vulnerable Populations.” A member wanted to know if “board and care” includes assisted living, whether it be for elderly persons, or persons with special needs. Pat expressed that it was his belief that it was the intent of the board that they be included under that definition.

A SC member expressed his opinion that levees should be identified as an essential facility.

A member pointed out that, in Chapter 10, there is a discussion of maps depicting critical facilities, but then they are identified as confidential. He asked if it would be possible to have sensitive and non-sensitive maps. Cybelle replied that the discussion from the last time resulted in some hesitation about a public agency producing a document that could not be accessed by the public. She reiterated that it is good to keep the purpose of the plan in mind, and posed the question, “Is having those maps going to help us get funding for projects related to those facilities?” Pat pointed out that there’s a CMA database that has every project that has received federal funding and that could be added to the plan. There was some discussion about why it would be problematic to produce a public document that presents sensitive locations like repeater sites and areas where chemicals are stored. One SC member suggested the sensitive critical facilities could be listed without mapping them. Another SC member voiced his query about why we would be hesitant to identify the location of a place that has hardly anyone near it and has no history of vandalism, but we include the address of fire stations where people work and could be vulnerable.

It was suggested that, if any of the Planning Partners have critical facilities with county roads leading to them that may have issues, those could potentially be included in the Plan.

It was observed that the “Critical Facilities” document refers to “major dams,” but there is no definition of what makes a dam “major.” It was also pointed out there are no major dams in Humboldt County; however, there are major dams outside of the county that could have downstream impacts on this area if a failure were to occur. The group decided to leave “major dams” as it is written in the Critical Facility definition but to review the Dam Failure risk assessment chapter to make sure we are using the appropriate definitions.

Pat summarized the discussion thus far, noting that there was a proposal to include levees as a critical facility, and that no changes had been proposed to the definition of critical facilities.

Action: The chairperson asked if there was any opposition to the inclusion of levees or the approval of the definition of critical facilities. There was none. The group was unanimous in its approval of these decisions.

Hazus Default Entries

Pat explained that the Planning Team will send out this list to all the Planning Partners. He asked if people would be willing to act as gatekeepers for the type of jurisdictions they represent. For example, have one person coordinate the responses for all the fire departments. If someone has a question about whether a critical facility is being updated, they’ll have one person to go ask.

Karen Diemer agreed to reach out to the other cities.

Pat explained that there will be several tabs: one titled “emergency shelters,” one titled, “water,” and one titled, “other.” It was asked how people would be able to use those tabs. Pat explained that facilities will end up as points on the map; so, if a facility is vulnerable to flood, it will feed into that analysis, so we know that something must be done to retrofit that facility or move it or something.

Cybelle suggested that Lon Winburn could help reach out to fire departments as the President of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs’ Association. She also asked if Lou Iglesias would be willing to represent the water districts and community service districts (CSD). He agreed that he would.

Task: The Planning Team will add the following tabs: an emergency shelter tab; a water tab; a levees tab, and an “other” tab. The SC was in consensus on this. Information will be added from County of Humboldt data sources and the spreadsheet will be sent out to all planning partners.

Public Outreach-Phase 1

Website:

Pat encouraged all the Planning Partners who have a website affiliated with their organization or jurisdiction to add a link to the Plan Update project website.

It was decided that the spreadsheet listing the critical facilities should not be posted on the website because it is too public, but other documents that are not as sensitive will be accessible on the website.

Press Release:

Rob Flaner sent a press release that was tailored to the Humboldt area. Cybelle sent it to the County Public Relations person who made a couple editorial changes. Of the three potential titles, he liked, “Local Governments Planning Now to Reduce Impacts of Natural Disasters.” It was suggested that this be amended to say, “Local Governments Planning Now to Reduce Impacts of Hazards and Natural Disasters.” This suggestion was received favorably by the group.

There was a comment about an acronym (on page 2, 3rd paragraph from bottom) that is not used anywhere else, so it was suggested that the acronym be deleted. The group agreed.

The discussion of whether or not to include “fish losses” was revisited. The group decided to leave it off the list shown in the press release until it is known for sure that it will be included.

Since the list of hazards that will be included is not yet solidified, there was also a suggestion that the following text: “The hazard identification and profiling in this plan will address the following hazards,” be changed to: “The hazard identification and profiling in this plan may include hazards such as:”

Action: The chairperson asked if there was any opposition to the suggested changes to the press release described above. There were none. The group was unanimous in its decision to approve the changes.

Questionnaire:

There was a discussion about whether or not the SC wanted to utilize a questionnaire in order to elicit public involvement. Pat pointed out that one advantage is that it’s an easy way to document public involvement, which is required within the creation of the Plan. Although the meetings are open to the public, low attendance is common. Someone asked what the questionnaire’s utility was in the last plan. Pat explained that not much use came out of it, and that it did not influence the development of the plan very much.

One SC member voiced the opinion that, “if you’re going to use it, you need to go into it with the mentality that you’re going to promote it vigorously, otherwise it’s not going to be useful.” He also stated that we should figure out what a statistically valid sample size would be and strive for it. Cybelle pointed out that there is more potential for it to be valuable this time because so many folks have access to new technology for getting it out to more people. She also pointed out that it can be used as a tool to raise awareness.

Another SC member said that there will likely be people who recognize the questionnaire as something they filled out before, and he suggested coming up with an introductory letter about the value of community feedback. He emphasized the importance of helping people understand that having potential projects included in the plan helps obtain funding for them.

There was a group discussion about the types of questions that the questionnaire would ask and the type of information we would hope to get from it. One member suggested that these types of surveys should be done over time and should be designed in such a way that it can be seen how

the information changes over time; he said this would make the information valuable and worth the effort of obtaining.

Task: The Planning Team will dig up the data from the last time the questionnaire was conducted for analysis and send it to the SC.

Pat asked if the group wanted to take the next step of saying that this is a method we want to pursue, regardless of whether or not we have the right questions just yet.

One SC member asked the question, “Is there some point further down the road when we’ll be able to pose the questions that will elicit more meaningful input, maybe once we have preliminary action plans? Is there a better time to get more meaningful input?” He said that determining the objective of the survey would be a good goal to help shape the design of the questions. Cybelle suggested that the Planning Team could send out a draft questionnaire that can be edited by the SC. The sense from the group discussion was that, if a survey is to be conducted, it needs to be improved first. The group was reminded to think in the long term and of conducting the survey in the future and comparing data.

Task: The Planning team will put together a draft questionnaire to send out to the SC for review and feedback.

Task Summary:

- Planning Team will email the SC the crosswalk that state and FEMA reviewers commented on.
- The Planning team will send out a list of all the hazards we came up with for the SC to review and return next time with input on what to include.
- The Planning Team will refine and send the Hazus input MS spreadsheet to the Planning Partners, who will review it before the next meeting.
- Cybelle will make edits to Press Release and send it out to the partnership.
- Planning Partners will add the link to Hazard Mitigation Plan Update webpage to their organization/jurisdiction websites (for those who have them).
- The Planning Team will find data from the last questionnaire and get it out to the SC.
- The Planning Team will prepare a draft questionnaire and send it to the SC.

The next SC meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2013 in the GHD Conference Room, 718 Third Street in Eureka.

The meeting adjourned at 3:26pm.