LWC Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Notes
Held at Rec Center & via Zoom 25-Sep-2024

*(**Note:** Any additional information or clarifications that were not part of the TTX but added by the recorder are indicated with red italics.)*

Start: 1400 PDT

Attendees: Bill Albright, Paul Banas, Anne Bradley, Stuart Cory (**Facilitator**), Chuck Duncan, Don Foot, Ginny Garrels, Pat Hossle, Randy Kollars, Patricia Koonce, Chris Lodge, Judy Maguire, Susan Teggart, Greg Steinke*, Barbara Tomlinson, Mike Tomlinson *(recorder)*, Tom Voshell, Ken Williams, Shirley Williams*

*Attending via Zoom

Guests: Michael Dane & Eric Williams (Depoe Bay EOC)

TTX Scenario:

Essentially a county-wide (and beyond), ice storm leading to a 5-day power outage with freezing (but not sub-zero) temperatures accompanied by ice-covered roads and walking areas rendering driving and walking hazardous or impossible; downed trees and branches bringing down transmission and distribution power lines and possibly damaging homes; and “normal” communications (landlines, cellular, and Internet) intermittent or not working. **Note:** For this scenario, we assumed there was a 1- to 2-day notification from NOAA NWS (National Weather Service) that this storm was approaching and would be severe. Also, not all speakers will be identified. Instead, passive voice may be employed occasionally in these notes.

Notes:

Stuart said that for this TTX, each day would be compressed to 20 minutes. The meeting focused on preparing for a 5-day power outage due to an impending ice storm. Key points included the need for a roll call, communication setup, and resource mobilization. Critical supplies like generators, fuel, and radios (particularly radio traffic handling), organizing teams to clear roads, and assess damage and the need for trained safety captains to use *Rapid Needs Assessment Forms* and pass this information on to the LWC Incident Commander. The importance of accurate information dissemination was discussed and highlighted the challenges misinformation can present. The importance of self-reliance and emergency preparedness was emphasized, with suggestions for community members to have their own radios and emergency supplies. The conversation also covered potential medical and mental health challenges, the need for regular updates, and the importance of coordinating recovery efforts post-outage. The discussion highlighted the importance of clear communication protocols and the role of safety captains in

maintaining order and support. They also discussed the ethical implications of triage systems and the value of having emergency communication tools and go bags prepared.

Action Items

- [ ] Conduct an email roll call to determine who is available and what resources they have. *This can be done in concert with the ICS radio tests identified below.*
- [ ] Send out a communication (email [e.g., forwarded FEMA Alert] or through Safety Captains) to the community about the incoming storm and the need to prepare.
- [ ] Test the LWC ICS (Internal Communications System) radios and ensure everyone is familiar with their operation.
- [ ] Identify a central radio operator to coordinate communication during the outage.
- [ ] Compile a list of vulnerable residents who may need additional assistance.
- [ ] Establish a schedule for regular radio check-ins and updates to the community with the understanding that the scheduled intervals may vary depending on conditions at the time.
- [ ] Coordinate with the Depot Bay Emergency Planning Committee to set up supply caches for medical and other emergency needs.
- [ ] Provide radio recommendations and training to residents to ensure compatibility and proper usage.
- [ ] Develop a protocol for handling emergency radio traffic and message logging.
- [ ] Ensure the Safety Captains are trained on the *Rapid Needs Assessment Form* and procedures for data gathering and reporting.
- [ ] Organize a team to **safely** survey the area for damage and blocked roads and paths once the storm passes using the *Rapid Needs Assessment Forms*.
- [ ] Schedule an *After-Action Report* (AAR) and debriefing session to discuss the lessons learned from the tabletop exercise.
- [ ] Explore the possibility of conducting a larger-scale exercise that incorporates an earthquake, tsunami, and fire scenario.
- [ ] Encourage community members to obtain their Ham radio licenses to enable the ability to transmit text data and emails via Ham radio. *Note: While text is*

*possible with some GMRS radios (e.g., BTECH GMRS-PRO®), it only works between radios of the same model. This is **not** the case with Ham radios.*

Outline

Preparing for the Ice Storm

- Stewart Cory explained the expected weather conditions: freezing temperatures and strong winds blowing from the valley, leading to icy roads and potential power outages.
- Stewart Cory emphasized the importance of being prepared and staying together during the storm, as leaving might not be an option due to icy roads.
- Paul Banas suggested starting with a roll call to identify who is available and to prepare communications, logistics, and supplies.
- Paul Banas advised community members to gather safety supplies, including warm clothes, blankets, water, and food, and to alert others about the impending storm.

Initial Response and Communication Strategies

- Randy Kollars questioned how to communicate with the community and whether to start an incident command communication event the day before the storm.
- Bill Albright suggested using email or cell phone to contact Safety Captains and initiate a group text.
- Stewart Cory started the timer to simulate the power outage, noting that people will likely be waking up and starting to realize the situation.
- Paul Banas proposed getting all committee leads in position by 8 AM, doing a first radio check, and monitoring external communications from the city or county.

Coordination and Vulnerable Populations

- Randy Kollars discussed the importance of identifying vulnerable neighbors and how to check on them without putting themselves at risk.
- Anne Bradley emphasized the **need for residents to be self-reliant and prepared**, as the community cannot assist everyone.
- Stewart Cory highlighted the challenges of dealing with people who have not prepared and the potential for increased demands on resources.

- Randy Kollars suggested using radios to check on neighbors and to prioritize assistance for the most vulnerable individuals.

Medical and Communication Needs

- Stewart Cory discussed the potential for medical emergencies and the limitations of emergency services during the storm.
- Bill Albright suggested using radios to coordinate medical assistance and to prioritize help for the most vulnerable.
- Michael Dane explained the importance of using radios effectively and the need for regular checks to ensure communication is maintained.
- Eric Williams emphasized the need for a protocol to handle messages and to avoid confusion during communication. *We have an ICS Protocol already but it will need to be revised somewhat, particularly in light of our moving the Communications Hub to the Crow's Nest and considering our change from lower-power Channel 7 to the higher power Channel 15.*

Long-Term Impact and Recovery

- Stewart Cory discussed the long-term impact of the storm, including potential shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.
- Randy Kollars suggested sharing resources and organizing community meals to help those in need.
- Stewart Cory emphasized the importance of planning for recovery and coordinating efforts to restore normal operations.
- Michael Dane explains the Wilderness Protocol for Radio Communication *(refer to Appendix A)* and the need for regular checks to ensure information is shared effectively.

Final Preparations and Recovery

- Stewart Cory discussed the final preparations for the storm, including ensuring all vulnerable individuals are accounted for and have the necessary supplies.
- Randy Kollars suggested organizing a group to walk the roads and identify any obstacles that need to be cleared. *This should only be done when it is safe and, if still icy, wearing suitable gear (hard hats, crampons, radios, etc.).*
- Pat Hossle shared his experience from a previous storm, highlighting the importance of being cautious and prepared for potential dangers.

- Stewart Cory emphasized the need for ongoing communication and coordination to ensure a smooth recovery and return to normal operations.

Protocol for Handling Messages and Traffic

- Eric Williams suggested establishing a protocol for handling messages to avoid confusion and tangled communication.
- Michael Dane agreed and mentioned the need for a traffic handling protocol.
- Stewart Cory noted that they are starting Day 5 of the simulation.
- Michael Tomlinson questioned the fact that gas was not shutoff on Day 4 and expressed the potential frustration and challenges over losing gas *in addition to loss of power;* however, Stewart did not want to challenge us too much during this TTX.

Day Five and Restoration Plans

- Stewart Cory discussed the weather improving and the need to start restoration of normal operations.
- Stewart Cory suggestd plans for communications, medical, and other personnel to start checking on people and assessing damage.
- Randy Kollars emphasized the need to organize a group to walk roads and identify obstacles.

Damage Assessment and Communication

- Pat Hossle described the extensive damage from the ice storm earlier this year and the fear it instilled in the community.
- Randy Kollars mentioned being careful while walking around due to the danger of falling trees.
- Stewart Cory highlighted the importance of ensuring people understand when it is safe to wander out.
- Paul Banas suggested having volunteers do a survey to prioritize road clearance and relay information about open gas stations and grocery stores.

Data Gathering and Incident Command System

- Michael Dane recalled logging information about damages and trees down from Ron Pierre to Public Works.

- Michael Tomlinson explained the *Rapid Needs Assessment Form* used by Lincoln County for evaluating road and home conditions.
- Michael Tomlinson mentioned the need to train Safety Captains on using the assessment form.
- Michael Dane shared an exercise from 2022 *[Cascadia Rising 2022]* where they taught staff to fill out the damage assessment form and transmit it through radio communication.

Final Thoughts on Day 5 and Future Preparations

- Stewart Cory wrapped up Day 5, noting that people are walking around but still without power.
- Stewart Cory mentioned the possibility of power outages lasting another few days.
- Randy Kollars recalled a previous power outage that lasted three additional days after coming back on.
- Stewart Cory emphasized the importance of being prepared for extended power outages and the mental health impact.

Communication and Misinformation

- Randy Kollars discussed the importance of accurate communication to avoid people driving long distances for gas.
- Stewart Cory highlighted the issue of misinformation and the need to verify information.
- Michael Dane shared his experience from the Otis Mountain Complex Fire and the rumors circulating about McDonald's (and other structures) burning in north Lincoln City and how misinformation spread quickly.
- Eric Williams and Michael Dane discussed using tools like TripCheck and satellite imagery to provide accurate traffic information.

After Action Review and Ethical Considerations

- Stewart Cory suggested having a debrief or TTX after-action review to discuss what went well and what needs improvement.
- Bill Albright emphasized the importance of taking good notes during emergencies for the associated *After-Action Report*.

- Stewart Cory mentioned the need for ethical considerations when dealing with long-term emergencies.
- Randy Kollars shared an example from the Depot Bay Emergency Planning Committee about ethical concerns with triage systems.

Self-Reliance and Emergency Preparedness

- Paul Banas suggested focusing on self-reliance and inventorying go bags.
- Michael Dane showed his emergency communication setup, including GMRS radios and a power pack for charging phones.
- Eric Williams emphasized the value of having “scribes” to help with message handling.
- Michael Dane encouraged people to consider getting a Ham license to use radios for text messaging and emailing.

Final Remarks and Next Steps

- Stewart Cory suggested recording the meeting and having a follow-up session to review what was learned.
- Stewart Cory mentioned the possibility of doing a larger exercise involving earthquakes, tsunamis, and fires.
- Bill Albright and Stewart Cory discussed the importance of having a clear plan and prioritizing tasks during emergencies.

Stop: 1630 PDT

Appendix A – Wilderness Radio Protocol

The "Wilderness Protocol" is a communication guideline used by amateur radio operators and GMRS users in wilderness areas where cellular service or other forms of communication may not be available. Its primary purpose is to facilitate emergency communications when someone needs assistance and does not have immediate contact with emergency services.

Key Components of the Wilderness Protocol:

1. **Monitoring at Specific Times:** The Wilderness Protocol suggests monitoring specific radio frequencies at certain intervals during the day. The most commonly suggested times for monitoring are **7:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM, and 10:00 PM** local time. These times align with a period of 5 minutes on the hour (e.g., 7:00–7:05 AM).

2. **Commonly Monitored Frequencies:**

    - For **amateur radio** operators, commonly used frequencies for monitoring include **146.52 MHz** (2-meter band) and **446.00 MHz** (70-centimeter band), which are both common simplex frequencies.

    - For **GMRS** users, it could be helpful to monitor **channel 20** or other designated GMRS simplex channels.

3. **Emergency Communication:** If you are in a wilderness area and need help, you can transmit on these frequencies during the designated times. Other radio operators or GMRS users should also monitor these frequencies at the same times to assist anyone in need.

4. **Procedures for Calling for Help:** When calling for help, it's recommended to transmit using the phrase **"Wilderness Protocol"** and provide your location, the nature of your emergency, and any other pertinent details.

5. **Extending Monitoring Times:** In situations where an emergency or potential assistance is more critical, operators may also choose to monitor frequencies on the half-hour, particularly during poor weather conditions or in extremely remote locations.

The Wilderness Protocol serves as a safety net for individuals or groups in remote areas, providing a way to potentially communicate with others when traditional communication channels are unavailable.