

**Lewis County Annual Pre-Flood Preparation Flood Meeting  
November 4, 2009,  
Veterans Memorial Museum**

Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:**

**Agencies:**

*City of Centralia, Police and Fire:* Bob Berg, Bob Willey, Jim Walkowski, Mike Kytta, Richard Mack, L.G. Nelson, Jan Stemkowski, Jim Rich; *Centralia College & School District:* John Bash, Brian Eko, Gil Elder, Sean Mayfield, Brenda Novarra, Denny Taylor, Steve Ward; *City of Chehalis, Police, Fire, Schools:* Tim Grochowski, Eddy Pitts, Judy Smith, Kelvin Johnson, Larry Allen, Bud Goodwillie, LCFD #6; *Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle and Portland:* Andrea Takash, Tom Garity, Les Miller, Chuck Carrig; *Speakers:* Dean Dahlin, *USGS:* Bob Kimbrough, Ken Frasl; Retired Colonel Jerry Zabriskie; *Cities: Morton:* Dan Powell, Sheryl Low, Rick Linehan, George Harbaugh; *Mossyrock:* Matt Hadaller, LCFD #3, Thomas Meade; *Napavine:* Nick Bozarth; *PeEll:* Keith Shepard, Spencer Nichols, Jeanette Schwartz; *Toledo:* Loren Steveson, Tracy Summers, Grant Wiltbank, Derek McMillion; *Vader:* Carol Broom, Kathy Crawford; *Winlock:* Terry Williams, *Unincorporated:* *Onalaska:* Scott Fenter; *Randle:* Jeff Jaques; *Chehalis/Centralia Airport:* Allyn Roe, Ladonna Neiser; *Providence Hospital:* Audrey Hensiek; *Red Cross:* Michaelle Fries, Steve Finley; *Salvation Army:* Catherine Warner, DeWayne Halstad; *2-1-1:* Sarah Teague; *Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter:* Patty Kaija; *KACS Radio:* Cameron Beierle; *Valley View Health Centers:* Linda Tomasheck, *LTRO:* Kristen Focht; *WA State Patrol:* Randy Bateman, Jason Ashley, Larry Bradeen, Jeff Speer; *Dept. Natural Resources:* Steve Fraidenburg, *LCFD #13 Curtis:* Gregg Petersen; *Cowlitz Tribe:* Mike Iyall; *Lewis County: Sheriff's Office:* Steve Mansfield, Stacy Brown, Steve Aust; *Emergency Management:* Ross McDowell, Jill Kangas, Robin Merchant, *BOCC:* Ron Averill, Bill Schulte; *Public Works:* Rod Lakey, Cyndi Ticknor, Lisa Panko, Merrilee Kenyon, Richel Perkins, Steve Skinner; *Central Services:* Michael Strozyk, Craig Larsen; *Information Technology:* Steve Wohld, Evan Calkins, Gabe Anzelini; *Facilities:* Doug Carey; *Fiscal Services:* Cheryl Millman, *Public Health:* Danette York, Doug Wangen; *Community Development:* Bob Johnson; *Lewis County ARES/RACES:* Mike Payne; *Businesses:* Alida Brown, King Oscar Motel; *Twin Transit:* Ernie Graichen; and Jason Baker

The meeting started at 10:10 a.m. Welcome and introductions were made by Ross McDowell, Deputy Director DEM. A presentation on new improvements to the Lewis County website was made by Evan Calkins with Information Technology; specifically the new river and roads applications. Evan explained the different phases shown for river levels, how to narrow the scope or “Compare” rivers to view, and the color coding of the different river phases and welcomed feedback from users. For the roads application he covered the color coding for status on roads showing the screen shot. You can filter the roads down to city, street or status. He provided the website addresses for both rivers and roads.

Dean Dahlin gave his presentation on the 2009-2010 Outlook for winter. He discussed meteor dust affects on our weather. Speculation of this theory started in the late 1950's. He started comparing our flood events to meteor dust/showers. About 30 days after a meteor shower, dust reaches cloud height. The more dust in the atmosphere there is, the better chance for a greater amount of rain. He illustrated this with a chart showing all of the major historic floods and how they compared to meteor showers. He showed a graphic of the sun and stated that the sun is always a major factor in our weather patterns. He discussed the repeated "100 year flood" and "500 year flood" claims and how they continue to occur in Lewis County. He prefers using the Canadian hand drawn maps during rain activity as they are more accurate than those provided by the National Weather Service.

Jerry Zabriskie presented his slides as a follow up to last year's subject of Sun Spots and solar flares. A sun spot is a magnetic disturbance that occurs on the sun. The sun spot can explode into a flare and send many different types of rays to the earth. The sun ejects particles that contain energy and heat toward the earth; this is called a solar flare. Flares also send out electronic radio signals. These destroy our radio frequency signals on earth. He discussed the fact that we have had 29 sun spots in the last two years. He also provided a graph from the last "cycle" which ended in 2007 that depicts the temperature of the earth. The earth has been slowly warming since the 1700's. Historically when you have no solar activity, we have more snow. He demonstrated that we are now in a cycle with low solar activity. If there are less than 60 sun spots in any given month, the earth is cooler, if there are more than 60 sun spots in any given month, the earth is warmer. The U.S. started monitoring the earth's temperature in 1980 with satellites. He predicts it will be another winter with lots of snow. He exhibited several animated slides of the sun depicting no sun spot activity, indicating the strong possibility of snow and colder temperatures. He believes we will experience 15 more years of colder weather with El Nino years being drier and warmer. If this cooling trend continues, we could be facing a grain shortage and famine problem.

Ken Frasl and Bob Kimbrough with USGS in Tacoma gave a presentation on monitoring surface water with their "Streamgage Program". They are a federal agency inside the Department of Interior. Their mission is to provide data on earth resources – which includes all water bodies. During floods USGS personnel are out in the field monitoring surface water. There are 340 sites in Washington State. Most of the sites use streamflow gages. Some sites collect water quality only. They have 20 sites in Lewis County. There are 3 reservoirs with gages. They have one gage for the Chehalis River Basin with others on major tributaries such as Skookumchuck and Newaukum; and the other major river system is the Cowlitz. The cost to operate this network is \$220K annually. The success of the program is due in part to supportive partners such as Tacoma Power, Lewis County Public Works and PUD. Ken talked about streamgages as a structure on a river, how it communicates with the river, records the river level and sends it by satellite to a ground station. They also use phone modems, but most are intake systems with floats that are recorded on their webpage in time. Their old gages transmitted every 4 hours but in Lewis and Thurston County they are transmitted every hour. They have upgraded some to every 15 minutes. They wade in the water during low flows; bridges are used during

high water flow, as the river levels change. They are constantly refining this rating curve to provide the most accurate data. Methods for measuring river stages include “Stilling Wells”, “Pressure Transducers” and “Radar Sensors”. Stilling wells have potential to clog during floods. Pressure transducers are portable but they can be moved by the water and destroyed. They started using radar sensors because they send out signals and the river stage is returned. There is nothing in the river to be moved, destroyed etc. This is the preferred method. The biggest drawback is that you must have a bridge or permanent structure to mount them. They have a phone tree that they can call and give alerts when they see levels that reach concern. <http://waterwatch.usgs.gov>

Tom Garity from Army Corps of Engineers (Seattle) spoke briefly. He discussed the abundance and availability of sandbags. Sandbags are available upon request as well as technical advice on levee repairs. The ACOE just completed an inspection in October of all levees in Lewis County. He stated they were all in good shape for this year.

Patty Kaija with Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter spoke about the availability of disaster kits for pets. Her cell phone is 360-508-0151. She is always available for assistance to rescue animals by providing transportation or foster care. She discussed a common problem with people putting supplies in their kennel and when they need to evacuate there is no place to put their supplies once their pet is inside the kennel. The disaster kit is a bucket with supplies separate from the kennel. She had handouts with a list of supplies needed for your pet.

Audrey Hensiek from Centralia Providence Hospital spoke regarding the need to receive early notification, which is necessary to open their incident command center at the hospital. It is critical to receive early warning in order to notify staff needed for patient care, and have them available to stay for the duration of the event. They also contact vendors that normally make daily deliveries so schedules can be adjusted, maintaining the hospital’s smooth operation.

Steve Finley from American Red Cross spoke about sheltering issues during a flood. There is always some confusion regarding the trigger when sheltering is needed. Michaëlle Fries, local Red Cross volunteer, works diligently to diversify their supplies for accessibility. When flooding occurs they look seriously at where shelters are needed and can be opened, with considerations such as available volunteers and partnering shelters. More supplies can usually be delivered within hours.

Jason Ashley with WA State Patrol communicated the fact that they are fully staffed right now. Their main focus for this wet season will be I-5 and getting people in and out of King County in the Howard Hanson Dam area (Auburn, Renton). He added that we will not be receiving the amount of assistance we have had in the past if flooding is happening up there. They need communication early if we need personnel from State Patrol.

Chief Goodwillie from LCFD #6 spoke about their focus with early notification, to make it possible to get their volunteers in to the station. Road closures prevent their volunteers

from accessing their station. Partnerships with LCFD #5 helps the two stations maintain their needs.

Mike Payne with LC RACES spoke about their role with ham radio operations in the EOC. They now have e-mail capability; they are set up with equipment to work with the hospital. If all communication is out, they can communicate for us. EMPG (Emergency Management Planning Grant) fund dollars were used to get their e-mail capability.

Col. Ron Averill, LC BOCC spoke his appreciation to everyone in the room for their efforts during disaster events. He discussed the fact that out response during events has improved greatly over the years. He personally thanked Steve Mansfield for his department's continued efficiency in response efforts during flood events. Col. Averill described the Flood Authority and the many accomplishments that have been gained through their efforts. The flood authority contributed to the additional gages to monitor the Chehalis River. He recapped some of the current mitigation projects in the county, such as raising homes in Centralia, Chehalis and in unincorporated Lewis County. Access to the hospital continues to be a concern, with a solution to improve access off Mellen Street, which has a completion date of 2012. The Army Corp of Engineer's plan for more levees will not begin until 2013 and could take as long as 2020 to complete. His concern right now surrounds the issuing of sandbags. Sandbags in storage now are for public buildings only; and he has asked our people to find a solution to distributing sandbags out to the private citizens.

Craig Larsen with E911 spoke about the CodeRED system. This is a mass notification system that the county can use to mitigate threats to life and private property loss. They have a little over 24,000 numbers signed up. The system is able to process 1,000 calls a minute. They can notify everyone in the county within a ½ hour. The system can be setup by map shapes (flood zones or layers on maps) and people in the area can be contacted. The system can start calling citizens within 5 minutes. This is not to be considered the sole means of notification; it is an alternative or additional way to communicate. The system is capable of providing any type of information the user wants to distribute (voice and text).

Steve Skinner with LC Solid Waste spoke about the Disaster Debris program and how it has been improved. They are able to provide vouchers in a more timely fashion to aid citizens in cleanup efforts following a disaster. They have printed new vouchers and are ready for the next event.

Cyndi Ticknor with LC Public Works spoke about their main focus which is county roads, dikes and bridges. They are there to help with equipment, sand etc. There are sandbags issues that they are hoping to get resolved in the near future. New road maintenance manager is Kevin Korpi and his phone number is: 360-520-0686. They have opened up Area 2 in Adna and have equipment to fill sandbags there. They have lots of "closed road signs" available.

Sheriff Steve Mansfield spoke about the direction we continue to move in this community. Planning and preparation are tremendously important in dealing with events that affect Lewis County. Partnership, sharing resources and planning together will allow Lewis County to succeed in dealing with disasters.

Chief Bob Berg with City of Centralia spoke of the improvements to their EOC, mobile command unit and staffing. They divide their city into four quadrants to effectively respond to any type of event. The maintenance program for the Skookumchuck levee continues and is expected to be completed very soon. They have quarterly EOC training and will be handing out sandbags to the public.

Kelvin Johnson with the City of Chehalis FD spoke regarding their priority of continued efforts with schools and road accessibility. They need to do a better job of maintaining barricades for road closures. They would also like a better way of determining accountability for accessibility of roads when closures occur. They have a swift water team now trained. In closure, Ross McDowell added that they are discussing a credentialing system for access during road closures.

Thomas Meade, Mayor for City of Mossyrock, stated that his city is not normally affected by floods, however last year was different. Their sewage plant took on a foot and a half of water during the last flood. The plant was designed with a berm and the berm has since been repaired to deal with most or all runoff. They also replaced equipment that was sitting on the floor and has been raised to avoid any future problems.

Kathy Crawford, Clerk with the City of Vader announced that the City has taken over the Enchanted Valley water system, which presents a concern during flooding. Vader is fine tuning their emergency plan that covers inventory of equipment and manpower during flooding.

Terry Williams, Police Chief with City of Winlock stated that the Olequa Creek drainage is their early warning system. Within 12-24 hours before any event in the Chehalis Valley the Olequa Creek presents itself with issues. They worked with the American Red Cross to provide a shelter. Their new sewer treatment plant is able to facilitate all of their needs without going into the Olequa Creek. They have sandbags and will give them out as needed to anyone who needs them.

Ross spoke about the issues surrounding the Howard Hansen Dam; how our access to resources will be limited if flooding or large water releases occur. If their dam breaches and breaks, we are looking at a major portion of Interstate 5 affected. They are sandbagging the levees surrounding the dam. One side of the earthen dam is on a slide and the ACOE is trying to enforce that portion by drilling and placing a substance that closes off the leaks. Ross asked Gregg Peterson, Fire Chief for LCFD #13, and also an Auburn Firefighter, to give everyone a summary of what their plan is to flood-fight.

Gregg Petersen stated The Green River Valley is very likely to see some major flooding this year. They have a very limited concept of flooding because they haven't had any

flooding since the 1950's. Debris has piled up over the decades and will contribute to any flooding problems. He requested that we help Auburn as much as they helped us during the recovery effort after the 2007 flood event.

Ross discussed the meeting for stakeholders for the Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan. They will be having a meeting early next week to review the final draft completed by Emil Pierson. The file is too big to e-mail but can be saved on a CD if anyone wished to review it. Ross or Emil will be e-mailing out the news release for the meeting.

Danette York, Director for LC Public Health stated she has no flood experience and they have been busy dealing with H1N1.

KACS spoke about the fact their station was able to stay on the air during the last few flood events. He stated they are available to the public for EAS and any announcements as they are happy to help.

Mike Iyall from Cowlitz Indian Tribe has the Cowlitz Tribal Center (old St. Mary's Center) and has offered to help us during any kind of event.

Les Miller with Army Corp of Engineers Portland gave a flood fight slide presentation with some alternatives to sandbags.

Ross thanked everyone for attending today's meeting which adjourned at 12:25 p.m.