

**Lewis County Annual Pre-Flood Preparation Flood Meeting
October 14, 2010
Veterans Memorial Museum**

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Agencies:

City of Centralia, Police and Fire: Bob Berg, Jim Walkowski, Mike Kytta, Richard Mack, Jim Rich, David Ross; *Centralia College & School District:* Denny Taylor, Steve Warren, Gil Elder; *City of Chehalis, Police, Fire, Schools:* Kelvin Johnson, Bud Goodwillie, LCFD #6, Glenn Schaeffer; *Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle and Portland:* Natalie Vander Hulst, Rhonda Lucas, Ed Benton, Tom Garity, Franchesca Gilbert, Ken Forbes.; *Speakers:* Dean Dahlin, *USGS:* Ken Frasl; *Cities: Morton:* Dan Powell, Sherry Claycamp; *Mossyrock:* Matt Hadaller, LCFD #3; *Napavine:* Nick Bozarth; *PeEll:* Spencer Nichols, Jeanette Schwartz, Walter Roderick; *Toledo:* Tracy Summers, Michelle Whitten, Craig McCown; *Vader:* Wanda Brazda; *Winlock:* Terry Williams, Kevin Anderson, Greg Robinson; *Unincorporated:* *Onalaska:* Mark Connor, Andrew Martin; *Randle:* Jeff Jaques; *Chehalis/Centralia Airport:* Allyn Roe, Ladonna Neiser; *Providence Hospital:* Karina Murphy; *Morton Hospital:* Jo White; *Human Response Network:* Emily Marede; *Red Cross:* Michaelle Fries, Steve Finley; *Salvation Army:* Catherine Warner, DeWayne Halstad; *United Methodist Disaster Response:* Susie Duren, Jim Truitt; *United Way:* Debbie Campbell; *White Pass Coalition:* Caitlin Maly, Toni Nelson, Doug Hayden; *Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter:* Patty Kaija; *WA State Patrol:* Mike Herron, Ted DeHart; *LCFD #13 Curtis:* Tim Baars; *Dept. of Ecology:* John Hanson; *WSDOT:* Randy Bateman, Dan Dollar, Tony Leingang, Hal Weiblen; *WA DNR:* Russ Hovey; *Lewis County: Sheriff's Office:* Steve Mansfield, Stacy Brown, Steve Aust, Gene Seiber; *Emergency Management:* Jill Kangas, Robin Merchant, *BOCC:* Ron Averill, Bill Schulte; *Public Works:* Tim Elsea, Kevin Korpi, Steve Skinner; *Central Services:* Michael Strozyk; *Information Technology:* Evan Calkins, Gabe Anzelini, Matthew Trent; *Facilities:* Doug Carey; *Public Health:* Danette York, Bill Teitzel; *Community Development:* Bob Johnson, Fred Chapman; *Businesses: TransAlta:* Larry Webster, Tom Davidson; *Veterans Memorial Museum:* Lee Grimes, *Energy Northwest:* Terry Meade; *Olympic Pipeline:* Chris Anderson, Dave Wild; *AMR:* Greg Pulver

Welcome/Introductions

Sheriff Steve Mansfield started the meeting at 10:03 a.m. with opening remarks and thanking everyone who has a response in times of disasters in Lewis County. He turned the meeting over to Chief Civil Deputy Stacy Brown of the Lewis County Sheriff's Office. Chief Brown introduced Dean Dahlin, local weather forecaster.

Guest Speakers

Dean Dahlin gave his presentation on the winter weather outlook for Lewis County and comparing how La Niña, La Niño and neutral weather years differ from each other. He used bar graphs to compare the different weather patterns for snowfall and was able to show how there is increased snowfall during La Niña weather patterns over the last several decades. He is predicting lower than average rainfall this October and November with temperatures remaining in the normal ranges. For December he is predicting more wind and rain in the beginning and

arctic temperatures starting around Christmas through New Year's Day. He is anticipating that December will bring higher than average precipitation. January will bring higher than average snow and rainfall. February expecting more wind and snow. He did not predict any heavy flooding events, however, he stated anything is possible. His 2010-2011 Winter Outlook is attached to these minutes.

Chief Brown introduced Tom Garity with the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Garity started by introducing the team of engineers that serve Lewis County which are: Natalie Vander Hulst, Rhonda Lewis, Ed Benton, Ken Forbes. He stated that they just completed their tour of the levees in Lewis County. The Airport Levee's vegetation was well established, fresh gravel had been recently placed and there appears to be some mole/animal burrowing activity. The only concern was regarding a newly constructed wing wall structure which appears to exit in the right of way of Airport Road. County officials and the ACE are discussing mitigation options.

The second levee visited was at the Skookumchuck Levee. The City of Centralia has removed all trees and many stumps; there was some minor varmint/mole activity. There are many stumps remaining in the outboard slope of the Pearl Street Bridge area. The levee looks very good and is ready for rehab next spring.

The third levee visited was the Long Road Levee. The levee appears to be in excellent condition with vegetation well-maintained and freshly mowed. No concerns were noted.

The last levee visited was at the Salzer Creek levee. The levee was recently repaired which has greatly improved the inboard slope by lengthening the slope to 3:1 or greater and was recently hydro-seeded. Recent construction also included the stream bank armament of the outboard slope just west of the National Avenue Bridge where Salzer Creek is closest to the levee.

The overall condition of all of the levees are good and the Army Corps of Engineers are ready to respond if needed during any kind of event. He finished by discussing sandbagging classes and availability of their staff to assist us if desired.

Chief Brown introduced Ken Frasl with USGS for an update on additional rain gages added in Lewis County this year. Ken gave a review of all of the stream gages, reservoir gages and rain gages in Lewis County. He covered the two new gages added which are: Elk Creek in Doty and Salzer Creek in Centralia. USGS has been operating stream gages for almost 90 years in Lewis County. Information on their gages are also linked on Lewis County's River Readings webpage. Their handout is included in these minutes. Spencer Nichols, Mayor of PeEll, asked him why there wasn't a rain gage in PeEll and Ken stated that all gages need a funding source. Gages can be placed anywhere as long as the funding source is covered. No other questions were asked.

Special Reports – Local Agencies

Chief Brown took this time to announce winners of the drawings for 2 NOAA Weather Radios and 3 "Grab n Go" cups. She then introduced Evan Calkins with Lewis County Information Technology with his update for the River Readings and Road Closures webpages. The County's website home page has a direct link to the River Readings webpage, but if you want to access it directly it is: <http://rivers/lewiscountywa.gov/>. The newest update this year is the ability to

“**Subscribe**” to any river listed on the webpage to be notified either by e-mail or cell phone (text only) for updates when a chosen river has reached a specific Flood Phase. Evan had a screen shot of each webpage and he detailed the different areas in the webpage; how to “Compare” and only show those rivers that you are interested in following; how they are automated and linked directly to USGS; and the different flood phases for reference.

Evan moved on to the Road Closures webpage which is accessible at: <http://roads.lewiscountywa.gov/> . He showed the screen with the different possibilities that you can sort and view road closures by: Street, City or status (Open, Restricted or Closed). The different statuses are color coded for easy viewing. He gave his e-mail address: evan.calkins@lewiscountywa.gov for anyone who had suggestions or questions regarding any issue relating to the county’s website.

Chief Brown introduced Col. Ron Averill, Lewis County Commissioner and chairman of the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority. He began by thanking all of the first responders that have a role during a disaster of any kind and their contribution to the citizens and welfare of Lewis County.

Col. Averill discussed how the county had gone back to using “River Spotters”, a practice that was used in the past decades. He covered the age of the different levees in Lewis County: the Airport Levee was built in 1943, Skookumchuck in the 1930’s, Salzer Creek was built in the 70’s and the Long Road Dike was built in the 1990’s. None of them are “100 year levees”. The Twin Cities Project which consists of a 5 mile levee system on the Chehalis River and water retention at Skookumchuck won’t start until 2016 and should be complete by 2020. He stated that Lewis County has two other river basins, the Cowlitz and Nisqually which also need better warnings. There is a lot of resistance to the water retention idea plans and they are a long way from coming up with a plan that everyone agrees to for a flooding solution in our county. He covered the other plans that are in place such as the Mellen Street interchange and how it will guarantee access to Providence Hospital during a flood. This project will start in 2012 and be finished by 2014; however, it will create some additional water to the south and there is a study currently under way to solve that issue.

Col. Averill also covered an issue that affects citizens during flooding, which are sandbags. The BOCC has found a way to provide bags to the general public by using a sponsor to purchase the bags that would be given out to public, similar to City of Centralia. United Way of Lewis County has accepted the role of sponsor in our community and will be working with the BOCC to get this plan into action. He ended his talk with urging everyone to have a disaster plan and be prepared for flooding this year.

Chief Brown introduced Michael Strozyk, Director of Lewis County Central Services (which includes Communications, E911, Facilities, Information Technology). He started out by stating the meeting with United Way is scheduled for next week to discuss implementation of sandbag usage for the public. Michael recapped the recent CodeRED usage by the City of Toledo when they had a water main break and needed to release students from school early as they had to shut down the water system to repair the break. He gave the statistic that 37,000 phone numbers are on file and the sources they are using to glean additional phone numbers to enter into the

CodeRED system. CodeRED computer mappings were recently completed showing areas of flooding from previous events. A media campaign will begin in the next two weeks for people to add their cell phone numbers as this is not something that is available from phone directories. You can also build groups for individual businesses, like Providence Hospital recently did for their employee group to call in during an emergency.

Chief Brown introduced Fred Chapman, Building Official with Lewis County Community Development. Fred started by discussing the different floods we have had in the past and how the program to elevate homes has increased with repetitive losses and those homeowners participating that have been flooded more than once. He stated that 85% of the homes flooded in the last 3 floods were NOT in a flood zone. They have 61 repetitive loss sites; 16 had never been flooded before, and 28 sites flooding more than once. He stressed that anyone living near a river should obtain flood insurance. He stated that everyone has fire insurance because their lender requires it; however, you have 35% greater risk from being damaged by a flood than you do in a home fire. The county is proposing an increase for home sites in new development to have the main floor three feet above base flood elevation. Currently, the county requires one foot above base flood elevation for homes in designated flood zones. City of Centralia just went to a requirement for two feet above base flood elevation for homes being built in designated flood zones. This proposed requirement would lower the level for risk of flood damage to individual home owners. Community Development sent out 3,000 letters this year to homeowners who have homes in the floodplain. They have elevated 89 homes to date and are currently working on receiving funding for 14 more. He ended his presentation by encouraging everyone who lives near a river to buy flood insurance.

Agency Reports

Chief Brown welcomed the new Public Works Director for Lewis County, Tim Elsea. Tim stated he was from Idaho and although he was no stranger to flood events, he has not experienced the level of flooding Lewis County has repeatedly experienced over the years. He announced that the bridges over the Newaukum River south of Chehalis and Chandler Road in Doty would be opened by January 2011. He stated that employees in Public Works update the Road Closure website during business hours and E911 will enter updates during non-business hours. During an event, Public Works employees working in the EOC will enter all updates into the webpage. He introduced Kevin Korpi, Roads Supervisor and he discussed some mitigation efforts with culverts to help with flooding and recapped that we have sandbags in every area shop and vendors have rip rap available during an event.

Bob Berg, Police Chief in City of Centralia discussed how their city is divided into four zones for response and they have a fixed EOC location in each zone. The command duties are shared by him and Jim Walkowski, Fire Chief of Riverside Fire Authority. Their EOC staff trains quarterly and they have three EOC sites that are ready when needed. Their sites are located in city hall, Riverside Fire Authority on Harrison Avenue and their Mobile Command unit.

Kelvin Johnson represented the City of Chehalis and gave his report on their activities. He stated there is now an Alert Notification System internally. They will support the county EOC due to its proximity and location; and it meets all of their needs in addition to the county. They have locations available for alternate EOCs if needed in the basement of City Hall and Community

Development. He is working on closed roads/blockades with Police Chief, Glenn Schaffer to get awareness of the dangers out to the public and how they will enforce these closures/restrictions.

Mayor Spencer Nichols from PeEll stated they are the first town to see the Chehalis River rising and are prepared with sandbags and emergency supplies for flooding events.

Steve Finley, Director for the American Red Cross announced their 24 hour, 7 days a week operations duty phone line, which is: 360-507-0021 and all volunteers and employees are ready to assist. He wanted to make sure people are aware of the type of assistance they need, to be more detailed in requests for resources.

Patty Kaija with the Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter gave her cell phone number to those who weren't aware of it, 360-508-0150 and stated that they are available to assist in a number of different areas, whether it is flooding or not; if there are animals in need of rescue or help, they stand ready to assist anyone requesting help for their animals.

Randy Bateman with WSDOT was very happy that the county has a link on their Road Closures webpage to DOT's website. Their information line, 5-1-1 has information on state roads and highways for anyone who needs it. This number is an automated number that provides instant information on the roads you are traveling.

Chief Brown adjourned the meeting early at 11:57 a.m.