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DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Steve Mansfield, Sheriff  
Ross McDowell, Deputy Director

Lewis County  
**Annual Pre-Flood Preparation Flood Meeting**

November 3, 2011  
Veterans Memorial Museum

## Meeting Minutes

Deputy Director Ross McDowell opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. He provided an over view of the recently revised Lewis County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). All agencies should have received either a paper work (cities and libraries) or a CD that can be reproduced to provide copies to personnel within each response agency. He reminded the agencies that the CEMP explains how all the disciplines work together when an incident crosses jurisdictional line; however, each agency is responsible to also have their own internal plans with specifics of what will be done, by whom, with what, and in what time frame. Emergency Management can provide specifics for plans if anyone needs assistance.

Meeting facilitator Chief Stacy Brown introduced Ted Buehner, Seattle National Weather Service (NWS). He presented the following updates:

- This year anticipate a La Nina rainfall winter that produces below normal sea level temperatures with increased rainfall. Expect another active fall and winter season. History shows La Nina years produce major wind storms, major floods (1995-96 & 2007); and major lowland snow events (2008 snowy year in Lewis County).
- A new Coastal Radar has been installed in Grays Harbor that adds an additional observation tool, but not a good long range tool for predictions.
- All Washington State Doppler radar stations now have “dual polarization” that adds a vertical dimension to the tool. It will allow forecasters to see just how much moisture there is and if it is rain or snow.
- Additional CoCoRaHA volunteers are needed to gather local weather impacts to validate the new technology. They are looking to add 5,000 citizens to the program.

Brent Bower, NWS meteorologist, discussed the National Weather Service products and services available. For the first time this year, hydrology is available on mobile networks, and a statewide landslide system has been expanded from only one site that was available last year. The NWS also has some additional “Don’t Drown” signs that are available if any of the cities would like to request them.

Local forecaster Dean Dahlin demonstrated his forecast of a very wet, cold, and windy season ahead. Most conditions will be wetter and colder than normal. Precipitation will be above average with the first lowland snowfall about December 9<sup>th</sup> and the potential of a significant flooding event around January 19<sup>th</sup>. Conditions are favorable for several snow periods throughout December, January and February.

Natalie Vader Hulst, Seattle US Army Corps of Engineers, provided a report from the Levee-Dike Inspection Tour conducted November 2, 1011.

- Airport Levee - There has been some heavy equipment driven a crossed the levee, resulting in some damage. It is too late in the year to schedule any repair; therefore, the Corps will be on hand during any rising flood event to monitor the condition of the levee.
- Skookumchuck Levee - There have been two areas on the levee that have been repaired, one is 100' long, the other is 900' long. The new "toe" area is designed to erode away naturally and fall in to make a normal, secure toe. These repairs place the levee in excellent condition for the approaching flood season.
- Long Road Dike - Long Road is in good condition and ready for the season ahead.
- Salzer Levee (Fairgrounds) - Good condition. Will be monitored during flooding events.
- The Corps does have sandbags available during flood events; if needed, they can bring some with them.

Deputy Director Ross McDowell reported an excellent levee tour. Everything looked good and ready for winter. He also commended Centralia on the work done this year on the Skookumchuck Levee. It took several years to forge community relationships that resulted in this year's progress.

McDowell reported there have been changes made in the contacts for Lewis County with the Corps of Engineers. After years of working with Tom Garity, Natilie Vader Hulst is now the primary contact for Lewis County. He explained when the rivers begin to rise, Emergency Management is in constant contract with the Corps representative for their assistance with monitoring the four levees in the area. The Corps can also assist the local area in mounting a flood fight on the levees, when necessary.

McDowell also asked participation in watching over the levees to ensure citizens understand they are not to be driven over.

Chief Stacy Brown introduced David Curtis, West Consultants. The Chehalis River Basin Flood Advisory Committee contracted with Mr. Curtis to improve the west county river forecasting system after the 2007 flood. Several years ago his firm was hired to design and build a flood warning system to improve the existing warning system. The project includes the 2,600 square miles of the Chehalis River Basin and provides the following enhancements:

- Improved the monitoring network with 8 rain/temperature stations and 2 stream stations
- Availability of data and warning
- Inundation mapping

He noted there was no snow measurement on the new gages. The new gages will be solar power with satellite radar reporting. The new system is scalable to a statewide system and will fill many warning system requirements. One direct benefit is the Community Rating System (CRS) program could result in reduced insurance rates for everyone due to the availability of this program. Mr. West provided a PowerPoint demonstration of what is available on line.

Anyone can access the program from home at "conrail.onerain.com" (DO NOT enter a "www." first. The user name and password are "public" and "public" (no capitals).

Mr. Curtis indicated they are looking for a local web person to volunteer to provide the additional upgrades to the system.

Randy Bateman, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), presented a planned detour route and process between Portland and Seattle during flooding events. No trucks will be allowed on SR 7, but will be detoured through the tri cities area. WSDOT will be using a passport system, Commercial Vehicle (CV), to get essential vehicles to the area. They are the first in the State to prioritize freight essential to an event. The priority pass system used will include the following classifications:

- A. Emergency Supplies
- B. Essential Supplies - healthcare, food, water, fuel, livestock, cash, parcel trucks and empty trucks
- C. Others as available

The CV pass will need to be displayed on the windows and drivers will have only a 3 hour window to travel. If the route goes down, drivers will be notified by E-mail. The system will be enforced by National Guard and Washington State Patrol.

Bateman also reminded the audience that traffic camera images were available on the web at [www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov), select "Traffic & Camera", then "Centralia & Chehalis" to see the view at Rush Road.

A question from the audience was raised regarding what DOT plans to do about the East County potential Highway 12, MP 118 washout (covering about 30' of private property that eventually would endanger Highway 12). Bateman replied they will be monitoring the situation and are prepared to rip rap once the washout reaches the "threat" level. Commissioner Averill commented the limited roads (like Centralia Alpha) between both cities were not designed for truck routes and the County will restrict them when flooding threatens. These roads are needed for emergency vehicles and truck traffic can block access if they are not restricted.

Commissioner Ron Averill provided an update on the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority progress. Due to the cost-benefit ratio analysis results, the Corps of Engineers have recommended closure of the twin cities levee project. While it is still possible for the Legislature to do things differently in order to continue the project, other options have to be explored. One such option is to hold more water back (80,000 acre feet of water) south of Pe Ell. With this option, modified levees (the current levees are only build to 40-50 year flood levels) could do their job to protect lowland areas. This option would also require improvement to fish environment somewhere else to minimize the dam impacts.

The Flood Authority is currently creating hydrology data to show what the affect would be. While they can't make structural solution changes immediately, they are working currently at improvements to the public warning system.

Next year, DOT will begin a two-year project to guarantee access to the hospital with the revision of the Mellen Interchange

Tim Elsea, Lewis County Public Works Director, reported they have had 5 personnel changes. Erik Martin is the Road Manager and Kevin Corpi now serves as the Area Shop manager. Public Works will provide sand during flooding events. IT will be putting in a SMART Board so they will be able

to see what the EOC sees during events. The temporary Leudinghaus Bridge has been removed and returned to the Corps of Engineers, and there is no guarantee a replacement bridge can be built.

Erik Martin reported the area shop equipment has been serviced and is ready for events. They have checked all the flip signs and maintained their barricades. Public Works is also looking into a \$5,500 Road Restriction Trailer from Homeland Security grants to assist in emergency events. All the staff have received ICS 100, 200 and 700 training to meet Federal requirements.

Suggestions were made from the audience that Public Works needs to look into the following:

- Look into staging debris removal equipment (excavator) prior to an event at the Packwood Franklin Bridge. It was done last year and helps stabilize the bridge when debris catches there.
- Check into using sugar beet juice on icy roads. What was used last year corroded lines under fire and ambulance vehicles, causing extensive damage. Tim Elsea assured the audience as long as there is a problem, they will continue looking in to a better product for everyone.

Chief Bob Berg reported Centralia is ready. They will be disbursing sandbags from 4 locations. The IT department will be moving production of the local channel to televise live EOC activities to the community.

Chief Kelvin Johnson, Chehalis, encouraged monitoring of the closed arterial roads to freeway access during events. Loss of these roads during events can be life threatening if emergency vehicles cannot get though. Chief Johnson noted the city supports the county EOC during multi-jurisdictional events.

Chehalis Police Chief Glenn Schaffer added roads closed due to flooding are closed to emergency vehicles also.

Chief Dan Mortensen, Morton, reported his area knows in any event they will be isolated and stranded. They have been working toward supplying bunkers with assistance from White Pass Collation and Red Cross.

Mayor Spencer Nichols, Pe Ell, is not having flooding this year. They have cleaned the storm drains, made sandbag piles ready, and added a ham radio for additional communications.

Craig McCown, Toledo, reported they have only 2 guys and no backup; they are as ready as they can be for the coming season.

Chief Terry Williams, Winlock Police, reported they have 6 bridges in their area; two of those were damaged in the 2007 flood and are still awaiting repairs. They are as ready as they can be for this season.

Patty Kaija, Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter (FOLCAS) are available for animal rescues anytime. She can be reached at (360) 508-0150. FOLCAS information is available on the internet at: [FOLCAS.org](http://FOLCAS.org) and Patty can be reached by E-mail at [PattyK@folcas.org](mailto:PattyK@folcas.org)

Craig Larson, Lewis County Communications, encouraged everyone, especially those with cell phones, to sign up to receive warning information through CodeRED.

The meeting adjourned at 11:56.

**Present:**

*US Army Corps of Engineers*, Natalie Vander Hulst, Jeff Tribbett, Geoffrey Dolsey, Ken Forbes, Chuck Cline; *Dean Dahlin*, local weather forecaster; *National Weather Service, Seattle*: Ted Buehner, Brent Bower; *West Consultants*, Dave Curtis; *Lewis County: Sheriff's Office*: Steve Mansfield, Stacy Brown, Steve Aust, Steve Walton, Gene Seiber, Robert Harris; *Emergency Management*: Ross McDowell, Jill Kangas, Fred Hart.

*BOCC*: Ron Averill, Bill Schulte; *Lewis County Public Works*: Tim Elsea, Kevin Corpi, Erin Martin; *Lewis County Central Services*: Michael Strozyk, Craig Larsen, Laura Hanson, Davene Rodocker; *Lewis County Information Technology*: Gabe Anzelini, Steve Wohld, Matt Jaeger; *Facilities*: Doug Carey; *Lewis County Public Health*: Rachael Wood, Danette York, Bill Teitzel; *Lewis County Community Development*: Bob Johnson, Fred Chapman, Doyle Sandford; *Lewis County Animal Shelter*: Amy Hanson; *Lewis County Fiscal*: Dawna Truman, Cheryl Millman;

*Morton*: Dan Powell, Police Chief Dan Mortensen; *Centralia*: Kim Ashmore; *PeEll*: Spencer Nichols, Jeanette Schwartz, *Toledo*: Craig McCown; *Winlock*: Terry Williams, Gregg Robinson; *Chehalis*: Herta Fiarbanks;

*LCFD # 2 - Toledo*, Grant Wiltbank, Tracy Summers; *LCFD # 3 Mossyrock*, Jeffrey Fosburg, Doug Fosburg; *LCFD # 10 - Packwood*, Lonnie Goble; *LCFD # 13 - Curtis* - Gregg Petersen; *LCFD # 14 - Randle*, Jeff Jaques; *LCFD # 16 - Doty*, Greg Feuchte; *Riverside Fire Authority (RFA)* - Jim Walkowski, Mike Kytta, Harlan Thompson, Richard Mack; *Chehalis Fire Department*: Kelvin Johnson.

*Centralia College*: Gil Elder; *Lewis County Head Start*: Sue Burnett; *Centralia-Chehalis Transportation Coop*: Lionel Penn; *Winlock School District*: Shannon Criss, Leroy Zwiefelhofer; *White Pass School District*: Rebecca Miner; *Centralia Christian School*: Denny Taylor; *Centralia School District*: Brian Eko, Matt McConley.

*Morton Hospital*: Jo White; *Providence Centralia Hospital*: Kevin Krogness, Terry Sullivan, Brian Horneckel; *White Pass Coalition*: Toni Nelson; *Friends of Lewis County Animal Shelter*: Patty Kaija; *Chehalis/Centralia Airport*: Ladonna Neiser; *Red Cross*: Michaelle Fries; *United Way*: Linda Lee, Linda Raschke; *United Methodist Disaster Response*: Susan Duren; *ARES/RACES*: James VanOrnum; *Flood Authority*: Edna Fund, Julie Balmelli-Powe; *Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging*: Bonnie Cook.

*Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce*: Jim Valley; *TransAlta*: Jeff Yanish, Tom Davidson; *Wal-Mart*: Jerry Patterson, Summer Keene; *The Chronicle*: Bianca Fortus; *Lewis County PUD*: Steve Grega; *Lewis County Sirens*: Sharyn Decker;

*WA State Patrol*: Jason Ashley, Ted DeHart; *Chehalis Police*: Glenn Schaffer; *Centralia Police Department*: Robert Berg, Jim Rich, David Ross;

*WA State Dept. of Transportation*: Randy Bateman, Scott Wilcox, Jim Gerwig, Colin Hewell; *Cowlitz Tribe*, Mike Iyall;