

Draft minutes of the joint meeting:
Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde Emergency Teams,
Concerned residents and the
Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee of the
Los Trancos County Water District

January 31, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 pm at the home of Charles Krenz and Karen Tate, 80 Joaquin Road, Portola Valley

Water District Director's Charlie Krenz, Mike Ward and Tom Uridel were present. In addition District residents Loren Archer, Tim Bailey, Linda Drey-Nightingale, Dennis Enstam, MaryAnn Furda, Los Trancos Woods Emergency Coordinator Arthur Nielsen, Vista Verde Emergency Coordinator Bill Tag, Karen Tate and Kerri Tate attended.

Krenz started off the Meeting with some background:

"Mike and I have some introductory comments on why we're here to think about spending Water District funds on emergency preparedness, why such expenditures are what the community wants and how we feel these expenditures are legal. I'll also go over our funding situation and then turn it over to the group so that we can throw out some ideas. Remember, this is brain-storming. Let's get a bunch of ideas written down and suspend judgment for now."

Krenz reviewed the finding of the survey the District conducted 2 years ago. He read the survey question and the responses:

"Emergency Preparedness – How important is it to you for the Water District to provide services such as easy access for the fire department to the District lake, to provide and ensure potable water sources in case of emergency, to fund communication equipment, to purchase emergency supplies, etc.
(Please circle one)

- a. [59%] Very important
- b. [25%] Somewhat important
- c. [10%] Not important

[No Response 5%]

"Clearly, the residents support this issue"

"On the legality, there a couple of perspectives here that we believe support our expenditures in non-water related emergency preparedness"

“Last summer I spoke with Martha Poyatos at LAFCo and explained to her the community’s interest in this area. I further explained that we had gone through the “low hanging fruit” in water related emergency preparedness... filters and storage containers. I told her we would like to find a way to do more.”

“She offered to facilitate a meeting with WFD where for some to be defined percentage of our county revenue, we’d receive an as yet to be defined package of benefits from WFD that would add to our ability to withstand a natural disaster. She called this a special benefit zone”

“Implicit in her recommendation is that this approach would be legal. I’ll talk more about this later, in the brainstorming session”

“Mike and I have learned of another avenue by which some funds could be allocated to emergency preparedness.”

MW: “I spoke with our District’s council on the matter. She indicated that municipalities often donate money to non-profit/community organizations. It’s ok so long as you don’t have interlocking boards or other situations that might imply that you have a conflict of interest. She said as long as there was clearly a public purpose to the donation you should be fine, and there is a neighboring example of Purissima Hills Water District assisting the Los Altos Hills Emergency Communications committee”

Krenz then reviewed the District’s finances. “Per the recent budget, we project receiving \$177,000 from the county this year. \$16,000 will go for certain fixed expenses. Of the funds that remain when you remove fixed expenses, a few years ago, we voted to allocate 55% of it to the offset program. Because we we’ve had trouble getting the money spent, and spent well, we’ve upped that percentage considerably. In the long run, it seems like the board would like to see the percentage stay around 55%. This is the level that the survey seemed to indicate.

Of the 45% that are available for programs, we see some serious expenditures in lands this year, but once the program is implemented, we don’t see a need for large outlays in this area. Water conservation projects have done well, but expenditures in these areas will probably not be that high. My point here is that there are monies that could be applied to our Community’s emergency preparedness programs.

On our balance sheet, as of last of the end of November, we had \$231,166.40 in the bank, a considerable sum. The way this board member feels, if we can design programs that judiciously spend a percentage of these funds over the upcoming years, I’d be supportive. I must emphasize the importance of spending the money wisely. I’d much rather be criticized for having too much money in the bank than for inappropriate spending.”

Krenz concluded: "I hope we get a lot of ideas flowing, but I hope we can also spend some time thinking about some sort of acceptance criteria for the projects we are considering. We need to be thinking about what will provide the most bang for the buck"

Pen in hand, at a flip chart, Mike Ward then guided the rest of the meeting.

The conversation flowed on for 2 hrs. Topics jumped from one area to another.

Karen Tate: "Perhaps we could categorize our ideas by Prevention vs response."

Tom Uridel: "We are one district that covers two communities. Tradition says that we've always had these parallel universes, the homeowner's associations that do roughly the same thing. For emergency preparedness, I think we need to reverse this, to avoid redundancy. "

Bill Tagg: "Sometimes combining things is not so good. There's only so many people that I can work with at one time. Except for this one concern, I think we should share as much as possible."

Karen Tate: "I like the notion of "bang for the buck", but it's tough to do a side by side analysis of one project vs another when one is designed to assist in the very big but very rare emergency vs other types of emergencies that come up more frequently."

Krenz: "Like a big earthquake or brush fire vs the need for a defibrillator."

Karen T: "Here's a prevention idea: how about if we hired a fire specialist to survey our neighborhood and determine where we're in particular need of fire breaks. We could then work with neighbors to get these barriers cleared."

TU: "We should start clearing with the District owned lands. They are a mess. If I lived up on El Rey, I'd be scared.

Denny Enstam: [thinking about fire breaks] "Would property owners be ok with folks cutting wood on their lands?"

Unknown: "I'd think any cutting would have to be done with the permission of the land owners."

Kerri Tate: “At the last Homeowners meeting I was talking to the W.F.D. battalion commander that attended the event. He said just in the drive up he spotted 5 of the 8 big no-no’s in wild-land fire safety.”

Mike Ward: “We might do well to get our Emergency command centers structurally reinforced so that they could withstand and 8.0 quake.”

Denny Enstam: “We have to think about what happens when people move. Not all of them are going to want their house to be an emergency command center.”

Bill Tagg: “How about if we had 2-3 shipping containers full of supplies and emergency equipment on District land?”

Linda Drey-Nightingale: “A prevention idea: Sudden Oak Death is going to create a major fire hazard up here in the next few years. We could hire a crew to remove these trees. It’s fuel load reduction.”

LDN: “The inflammatory characteristics of a tree, how its shaped and its species will govern what the fire chief will say about whether a tree should stay or go [in a fire break]”

Kerri T: “We could set up a rebate program and get people to replace wood roofs or or plant fire resistant plants.”

CK: “Wendi Haskell called me just before the meeting. She’d like us to find a way to get the big eucalyptus trees on Coal Mine ridge removed. She feels they are a fire hazard.”

Bill Tagg then led a discussion of AED’s, (Automatic External Defibrillators)

“We’d need at least 2 of them for the neighborhood, probably more. If someone is having a heart attack you should be able to retrieve the unit, and initiate treatment within 2 minutes. The units would be mounted at easy to get to locations in the neighborhood. You can get mounting systems for the units such that when someone grabs the device, 911 is automatically called. Cost, for the unit is about \$2,000. Every few years you need to replace the batteries for \$154. You have to check the battery every month or so.”

The group then watched a [video clip](#) on the unit’s operation

MW: “Residents that are at particularly high risk may want to buy their own.”

MW: "Charlie: I'd like to hear more about what Martha Poyatos thinks could be done with the Woodside Fire Department"

CK: "It was a very brief conversation last summer. No detail has been worked out, but the idea is that our area would be designated a "special benefit zone". "Some of our revenue would be directed to Woodside Fire in exchange, we'd get an improved level of emergency services. Right now, its an unspecified package of services delivered at an unspecified cost.

She offered to set up a meeting with Woodside Fire. I didn't take her up on that offer then, but last week I put a call into her to get more information" I called her again earlier in the week saying it would be real helpful if I could have some detail for tonight's meeting. Anyhow, yesterday she called back. She said we could set up a subcommittee to meet up with a sub committee of WFD's board to explore plan where WFD would become the successor organization to our Water District. Woo-owe... I said, were not talking about us going out of business here. We were thinking in-terms of how we could partner with WFD to get some professionals involved to help us with our emergency services. After some back and forth she said she'd already placed a call to fire chief Armando Muela on our behalf. I asked if we couldn't just have a few representatives from our sub-committee meet with the chief to explore ideas. She indicated that she would try to get this done."

Krenz and Tagg volunteered to attend the meeting if it can be scheduled.

MW: "We could set up a program to maintain peoples fire extinguishers. We could have people bring their old fire extinguishers to the picnic... get them exchanged or recharged. The district could own some as replacement units"

Loren: "We could get a quantity discount on recharge services"

Bill: "If you grab an extinguisher and shake it, it should shake well. It shouldn't every fell like there is something heavy and solid inside. You don't want to hear clunk clunk"

Kerri : "We could sponsor more emergency response training... I took the 2 night training program course with Bill Tagg recently. It taught me a lot on disaster first aid training, triage. These programs are great as they get people involved, with hands on experience"

Krenz: "I've another one. Last fall on NPR I heard of people in Southern California that were close to those wild fires. Some of them were foam coating

their houses before they evacuated. I've got a video clip that explains how the stuff works. Its kinda cheesy as the company must of hired the local Fox affiliate to make it up for 'em, but it does get the point across" [Video Clip](#)

"If this stuff is for real, we could get it deployed to the residents and set up teams of people that would cover for each other helping to get everyone's house properly foamed"

LDN: "Let's put this one off for the future. I've heard the fire retardants that they drop from planes are horrible for the environment"

CK: "At least one of the companies makes a big deal about how environmentally sound the stuff is. The say it's bio-degradable. We'd have to check this out"

Two links: [Barricade](#), [Thermo-Gel](#)

Mike Ward then turned our attention to communications:

"In a disaster, we'll need reliable communication and a more reliable way to track information at the VV and LTW command centers. We have a system with FRS radios and a paper based information system that tracks individual incidents. Things can get very confusing even in a simulation. In a real disaster it's worse. The events can go on for days. Information gets lost particularly at shift change.

There are various solutions, in place now in other emergency prep groups that could help here. One solution for our neighborhood could be packet communications between command centers and the county. Communication between computers/data transfer is done by an analog radio linked to a HAM radio. The software is already written to get this done. This gives a written record of communications that will work even if the phone systems go down.

Another area where we could probably do a lot of good would be common-ize all our radios. Things would work far better if we all had the same equipment to simplify training and maintenance.

We'd need some training to make the entire system work as well.

Another area of importance is communications within a command center during an incident. As mentioned before, this is a paper based system. A sustainable Wi-Fi system (with emergency power) would give all stations access to the same information and be easy to update as the emergency progresses, including shift changes.

Further, Vista Verde Community Association just purchased a repeater radio and some special hand held radios that solve the communications problem down into

the areas with poor radio reception. We've done a dry run test, and it works very well, including lower Joaquin and throughout LTW.

We need to have this installed at a Cal Water tank (they've agreed to this), and buy more hand held radios for LTW and train the neighborhood leaders in their use.

We could also use reliable backup power at the Pony Tracks Ranch backup EOC.

Bill, Loren Archer, Arthur Nielsen and I did a rough cost estimate for the whole package. It came in at \$43,000."

See the 2 page detail at end of these minutes.

Tim Bailey : Is there some way we could get our cell phones to work better up here...

Mike Ward: "They are pretty unreliable in emergencies due to over crowding"

Bill Tagg: "I was in New York on 9-11. The phones were useless."

MaryAnn – "I've heard text messages ok, cell phone are not so good."

Bill Tagg: "A while back we started to develop some software to help track who in the community has the assets we'll need in an emergency ie chain saws, rescue equipment. We haven't gotten that far with this."

Krenz: "How's that work in a real emergency when the power is out?"

Denny: "The thought is that the software tracks what people have. Every few months, the emergency command centers print out the information so that they will have it on hand."

Kerri Tate: "If there are holes in the package of things we need in an emergency we may we need to pay people to do stuff for us, like writing this software"

Karen Tate: "We could provide an emergency packet to each family: food, first aid. Etc We could do it like the water containers. People opt in. "emergency response packet" for each family."

By this pt, our group had spent about 2 hours in discussion

MW: "What do we need to do with these ideas?"

Unknown: "We need to list them and prioritize them. The good ones we need to investigate more seriously."

Tom Uridel: "Our projects will need to be defensible to LAFCo in 3 years time when we are next up for review. We need to balance emergency preparedness with other project' e.g. lands."

Krenz: "Do we need expert advice to help us sort through these ideas?"

Bill Tagg: "I think we should take a first shot at sorting through the concepts and prioritizing them. We do know some real experts in the field that can help us out."

Krenz agreed to take a first cut at writing up the ideas. Ward and Tagg volunteered to collaborate on the effort.

| The group agreed to have the next public meeting on Tuesday Feb 26th.

*Conversation between John Carnes, Bill Tagg and Mike Ward;
reviewed by Loren Archer and Arthur Nielsen*

**Purpose: explore ideas for modernizing Emergency Prep communications
in Vista Verde and Los Trancos Woods operations.**

John Carnes is very active in our local CERPP as Communications chair, past operations chair and active in Search and Rescue operations for over 30 years; and the chief planner for disaster drills. We all attended the presentation by Joint Venture ; Silicon Valley Network. A collaboration of government and industry groups to help the bay area overcome provincialism (political lines, business competition) and get into the 21st century; they were urged on by the Oakland fires which showed poor coordination of resources. Bill and I came away thinking about how our small districts (VV & LTW could improve our operations) What needs doing, what would be nice to have. Bill and I also visited the Los Altos Hills emergency preparedness operation, chaired by Rick Ellinger to get some ideas, and where they are going in the future.

The Los Trancos County Water Board has told the Emergency Prep committees that they may be in a position to make a grant of monies to the community E/P teams to help them do a better job of preserving the community, and the water district (CAL Water) assets, which, in turn will help the neighborhood in time of disaster. Charlie Krenz; current President of LTCWD has called for a brainstorming meeting January 31st at 7:00 pm, at his house, 80, Joaquin road.

Here are some thoughts to feed that meeting, based on our discussion with John. I know there are others.

Incident Command - EOC - communications.

Current situation In the Vista Verde EOC, volunteers monitor one phone line (land), and FRS radio communications from Neighborhood Leaders. When an incident occurs, a three part form is filled out and given to the planner, emergencies to the incident commander. A recorder puts the key data up on a white board (room for maybe 18 incidents). A copy goes to the HAM radio person in case outside resources are needed, or LTW needs to be notified, or County needs to be notified. Another copy goes to the Medical team, or Search and Rescue team, if available, and appropriate. A marker showing the incident type and location is put up on a magnetic map of Vista Verde
Operatinos in LTW vary somewhat, but are basically the same, depending on participation.

- Issues**
- ▶ VV experience has shown that when incidents come in faster than 1 per 5 minutes, the congestion causes confusion.
 - ▶ FRS (radio) Communications down Joaquin are impossible from the VV EOC. We have used Rich Tryce as a human relay, which works, but stops all other traffic for a while thereby tripling comms time. Comms in the LTW is weak in several areas
 - ▶ When there are incident updates (i.e. fire is out, or worse; injure is better or worse; road is blocked or open, etc) it is difficult to find the old paper and their distributed copies in order to update all parties.
 - ▶ Los Altos Hills Emergency committee reports that it is difficult to transfer knowledge when a shift change occurs (we've never gone that long in an exercise; but it is good to know that will be an issue in the real world.)
 - ▶ In the VV EOC, there is no magnetic map of LTW, so we don't know what their situations are, and if they effect us, or we them (for access or evacuation); and in LTW, there are no maps at all.
 - ▶ Only the Incident Commander and planner have a hope of seeing the big picture

Note A radio repeater has been purchased with VVCA monies (but not installed) and special HH GMRS radios to communicate with VV Neighborhood Leaders, especially the Joaquin Neighborhoods. and between the VV & LTW headquarters. Tests have shown that an antenna on top of the OST water tank do reach all areas of VV, and LTW as well. Installation may cost an additional 4K to 9K; LTW will need to purchase a special GMRS radio.

Dream situation

- 1 Easy person-to-person communications in both EOCs
- 2 Written communications/requests to County and between VV and LTW
- 3 Easy updates as incident info changes
- 4 Good written history of incidents so shift change will be easier; written communications to County
- 5 Easy overview of situation for all (not just IC and Planner)
- 6 Guaranteed power
- 7 Easy to use Ham radios, consistent interface in all EOC's (LTW, VV, P-Trx)
- 8 Solid communications across VV and LTW
- 9 Know where assets, Drs, S & R teams are, along with community physical resources; i.e. 4 w/d's, tractors, chain saws.....
- 10 Visualize situations in the field from EOC and at NL's hqs.
- 11 Training and documentation of systems QRG's KISS

Ways to accomplish these

			Qty	Unit cost K\$	Sum
1	Local WiFi network; laptops at each station (6 in VV, 3? In LTW), guaranteed power	VV, LTW & PTx	12	0.6	\$7.2
2	Packet comms between County, CERPP and VV - LTW	bulletin board and form software	3	2	\$6.0
3	Data Base and server for Incident info	VV, LTW & PTx	3	1.8	\$5.4
4	Included in 2				
5	computer projector of incident summary on wall	VV, LTW	2	2	\$4.0
6	Archer EOC has excellent emergency power; replace PTRx generator with 4 kw diesel unit; LTW ??		1	1.3	\$1.3
7	Replace and upgrade eclectic collection of radios with Kenwood units (3)	LTW, VV & PTRx	3	1.3	\$3.9
8	Repeater radio installed, Solar power; Kenwood HH GMRS's for NL's & GL's	VV & LTW	1	6.5	\$6.5
8A	Kenwood HH GMRS's	V & LTW	15	0.28	\$4.2
9	Use SV JV tools to track assets, people				
10	Digital cameras for NL's, (infared?), transmit pics ??		8	0.15	\$1.2
11	commission magnetic maps for both communities, both locations	VV & LTW	2	0.5	\$1.0
12	Power Flares for each neighborhood	VV & LTW	25	0.1	\$2.5
13	Training for NLs, GLs			??	
					\$43.2

Known Issues

Software for managing EOC info is home grown (Foster City has a system working) May be able to adapt or write new
 Silicon Valley Joint Venture tools not yet ready for prime time
 Backup EOC (Pony Trax Ranch) will not be available forever

Wild ideas

Designed and rebuild Loren's Garage to resist an 8.0 earthquake with an importance factor of 1.5". 1 \$25.0