

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

*October 14, 2020
10:00am – 11:30pm
Zoom Meeting*

MINUTES

Approved Approved with changes

Co-Chairs: OEM, Jeanne O'Donnell and TCEP, James Grasso

- I. Welcome from the Co-Chairs**
Jeanne O'Donnell, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office-Office of Emergency Management and James Grasso, TCEP
- II. Introductions/Roll Call**
See sign-in sheet for full list.
- III. Mission Statement**
The mission of the Topanga Emergency Management Task Force, a partnership of designated public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations is to ensure the sustainability of emergency management efforts and strategies for the Los Angeles County unincorporated area of Topanga. The Task Force oversees the coordination and communication among governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community to improve preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. It will develop, review, and monitor community-based emergency plans, facilitate emergency planning exercises, ensure community involvement and educational outreach, and evaluate and update emergency plans after a disaster.
- IV. Public Comments (3 minutes each person)**
No public comment.
- V. Review/Approval of Minutes of *August 12, 2020 Meeting***
Minutes approved with changes.
- VI. Evacuation Planning**
 - Representatives from Fire, Sheriff, and CHP were gathered together for their presentation.
 - Captain Becerra explained that they have drafted and finalized a plan that will be a living document. Began to test plan by drilling.
 - Lieutenant Carrillo explained the evacuation is contingent on where the fire starts. We thus have to be fluid and flexible when it comes to planning. They have been working with the Sages to identify people who will need help evacuating. Sheriff's primary mission will be to evacuate these people first. They have gone out to Topanga and tried out the timing. They are working with Fire and CHP on road closures. They are also getting the word out to Topanga residents, and encouraged signing up for Alert LA, Wireless Emergency Alert System, and social media.
 - Mark Winn added that they have held four training days for different groups at 69 Bravo and got LAPD up to date with zone maps and access cards.
 - Questions/Comments:

- O'Donnell: How does this differ from the original plan (worst scenario fire starting at Mulholland with evacuation to Taft and Pali)? Anything new to consider for local planning?
 - Answer: No new developments. Everything depends on where the fire starts, the time of day, etc. We need to be flexible for nature of emergency and threat, as there are too many variables. They have a set number of tactical options of where to send evacuees and will need support depending on the length of emergency.
- Grasso: If there is a fire in the north, and we need to evacuate south, what is the plan for PCH and Topanga with the whole community headed that way?
 - Answer: May not have residents turn left to go to Santa Monica and instead send people to Malibu/Camarillo. Traffic flow will be managed. Law and Fire will have that conversation based on the fire threat, resources, and mobility for population to maneuver. CHP has a playbook on this issue and have discussed Topanga at length. Evacuations will be ordered as soon as possible to get everyone out.
- Ryan Ulyate: Is there a plan to avoid a bottleneck?
 - Answer: They will send every unit possible to block off PCH until CHP can get there to start contraflow. Would work with CHP and their plan (every sergeant has laminated sheet for contraflow plan out of Topanga). It worked during Woolsey.
- Jane Terjung: Tam Taylor can elaborate on how the Sages are helping. Deputy Cerveney went out and visited every high-risk residence.
- Susan Clark: Is there a plan regarding the evacuation of the homeless population?
 - Answer: HOST team works with the homeless population and they asked HOST to study Topanga in the event of an evacuation. Only identified three people in Topanga who came to them as homeless. Will never know exact number, only an estimate. They have found that the homeless population often knows about fire even before law enforcement and they find a way out. HOST team works to have these discussions and has put up signs and told people where to go.
- O'Donnell: OEM working with Fire and Sheriff to get out Wireless Emergency Alerts. They sent out 14 for Bobcat Fire over a few days. The info was also on the County website with parameter maps, road closures, etc.
- Winn: Worked with Fran Pavley on El Nino playbook for the homeless. Could use that to assess for fires.
- Taylor: Does the evacuation plan have a contingency for what people should do when they cannot evacuate? In general, what should people do when the plans fail?
 - Answer: Will follow up on this. They work hard to get ahead of the emergency, particularly by working with people who know they have limitations. However, only so much can be done. Those with limitations should call Access, a friend, or anyone who can help you get out. They should also make themselves known to the Sheriff in preparation.
 - Answer: The protocol has always been to evacuate, evacuate, evacuate. If you cannot do this, then go to the next closest PSR. Fire will try to check the PSRs. Go to PTRAs in the event you cannot get to PSR and you do not feel safe staying at home.

- Scott Ferguson: Some of the Alert LA and Wireless Emergency Alert messages have been less than clear. Can we work with TCEP to craft the messages to ensure the info is correct?
 - Answer: The messaging protocol was changed. We need to be ready, so we do not get caught by surprise. We will be clear in messaging, won't bifurcate by roads, and will tell people when to evacuate because time is important.

VII. **Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority**

- Walt Young described several projects MRCA is working on.
 - Arson Watch: MRCA has supported with field personnel and will continue this year. They are able to provide \$10k worth of repeater radio equipment. This will belong to MRCA, but Arson Watch can use. It will be placed on the mountains to replace old equipment and increase communication. It was purchased three months ago and should be in place now.
 - Edelman Park: MRCA has received complaints about the ongoing fireworks problem, which has been occurring everywhere. They had an onsite meeting and created a tentative plan to use a camera there to monitor from 10pm to 4am. There is no evidentiary value, but the survey camera can detect cars after hours. They reviewed weekend nights, and saw cars parked late at night but no fireworks. The ultimate plan is to place a texting camera aimed at the parking lot, which will have no audio recording (eliminating the need to post a sign) and will take pictures every 10 minutes. When there are fireworks and explosions in the canyon, this will allow us to look at the parking lot to determine if it is the source. A separate license plate reader camera will only capture license plates because of the reflective nature of CA plates. The goals are to catch someone in an illegal act, get a broad view of illegal activity and an evidentiary view of license plates. MRCA hopes to have the system up and running in three weeks.
 - Wildfire Alert: This is a statewide fire monitoring program. They have a camera at San Vicente Park that can view any fire that starts in the northeast. MRCA strongly urged the state to look at MRCA property near Top of Topanga and the site is being evaluated. MRCA will execute the agreement if it fits into the Wildfire Alert Plan.
 - MRCA Strike Teams: These resources will no longer leave SMM. Trained firefighters are available for use by Fire and won't leave town.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Tessa Charnofsky: The Edelman Park camera is vulnerable to being stolen and is very expensive. Wanted to recognize that MRCA will put this up one time, but it is not clear how it can be replaced. As such, she would like to talk offline about whether now is the best time to install the camera, or if we should wait until June of next year before the 4th of July.
 - Ulyate: As the Co-President of the Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council, he believes AT&T will be better service for the texting camera. He added that the fireworks concern is not limited to the 4th of July and that we might want to consider the Santa Ana winds for installation. Is Lost Hills still the best number to call when residents hear fireworks?
 - Answer: Park rangers are not a 24-hour operation. Some homeowners have taxed themselves for extra patrol, which finances the night shift. They operate 24-hours during red flag conditions but are mobile. Sheriff has responsibility for law enforcement, and MRCA/Park Ranger are a layer on

- top. So, residents should absolutely call the Sheriff. They can also call 310-456-7049, which is the ranger services number.
- Ulyate: Should we put up a sign to alert people to the camera?
 - Answer: Signs are good for referencing citations, but they do not deter bad behavior for those intent on illegal acts. We cannot replace cameras every 60 to 90 days.
 - Grasso: Has there been any evidence of fireworks on the trips to that area?
 - Answer: We do not have that answer. We have yet to see it, but that does not mean that the evidence has not been disposed of. We do not know.

VIII. Southern Cal Edison

- Dave Ford provided SCE updates:
 - Topanga is a critical area of fire watch. SCE has ongoing vegetation management, inspections, brush clearance, hazardous tree removal, and dry fuel mitigation, particularly when encroaching on conductor wires.
 - Fortunately, there have been no PSPS activity in Topanga.
 - SCE is looking for ways to communicate and engage better. Their highest priority is to save lives and prevent wildfire ignition.
 - They are looking at deteriorated poles, that could fall with strong winds, and other poles that need to be replaced. They will keep the community updated on this.
 - Ford would like to continue the camera discussion offline. SCE has a couple of cameras in the canyon, and if we need monitoring, we can talk about the possibility of installing more camera.
 - SCE is still processing grants for the Sages.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Charnofsky: Wants to discuss ongoing issues with vegetation management offline. Does SCE have an update on the county library being a community resource center and bringing in mobile charging system?
 - Answer: Janice Wong sent a note to ISD about a switchgear that SCE would install free of charge. SCE is awaiting a response. We still want Topanga Library as a CRC. SCE has had conversations with the Supervisor's office and the library. SCE is looking at the library as a dual opportunity for either a resource center or mobile station.
 - Grasso: Will the mobile station be able to supply a cellular type hotspot? Communication is the top concern in PSPS.
 - Answer: This is not installed in the vehicles, but SCE will explore the possibility. COVID complicates this, as we do not want people congregating around the vehicle. The mobile stations are more designed to engage by passing out kits.
 - Clark: There was an SCE tree cutting emergency that threatened to take away a hospice patient's power for 12 hours, so SCE offered to get a generator. Can we have generators in the canyon for seniors who need them quickly?
 - Answer: Critical Care eligible customers can register for this program. When it comes to generators, SCE tracks service for critical care customers that would be interrupted and makes an effort to prepare folks. SCE is working to do more circuit isolation. Portable generators are not a service for guaranteed power per se. SCE does have a program for battery backup for medical

baseline customers, and Ford will send the flyer out to everyone. SCE also has a rebate program for generator reimbursement for critical infrastructure, like water wells.

- Ulyate: How far along is SCE on insulation?
 - Answer: 7.2 miles of covered conductors have been installed in Topanga. 3-4 circuits feeding into Topanga have been upgraded from 4 to 16 kV. Additional work is being done around area that supports Topanga (ex: pole replacements, cross arm replacement). Additional upgrades are pending permit approvals from DRP. Operation practices are in place to take lines down for outage, which switching routine crews must follow.
- Ulyate: What part of Topanga does have covered conductors?
 - Answer: Ford can provide map of circuits. It is on SCE's website.

IX. Elected Offices Updates

- Charnofsky provided updates from the county and Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.
 - We are still in Tier 1, the most restrictive for CA. Certain industries and schools are not fully open. We are doing fairly well, but the case rate needs to continue to decline. Gatherings are not allowed, with certain exceptions for protests, marriages, and religious services (with safety precautions). We need to continue to do better so we can advance and get schools and business open. O'Donnell added that people should tune into Dr. Ferrer's afternoon briefing today, which will clarify the rules about events and gatherings and touch on the holidays.
 - You can find vote centers and drop boxes near you with links from RR/CC. Topanga has 3 vote centers, although the Community Center might need to drop out.
 - Census: SCOTUS ruled that the Census needs to end early. Tomorrow is the last day to do data collection for the Census.
 - Charnofsky will continue to send info out about grants and funding opportunities.

X. Member Reports

- Javier Mendoza (Frontier Communications): Frontier continues to work with other utilities and agencies to keep customers informed. Happy to answer questions and participate. (javier.mendoza@fr.com and mobile number for urgent calls (562) 305-2345)
 - Ferguson: What is Frontier doing about emails informing people that phones cannot call 911 during a power outage?
 - Answer: The letters are legitimate and are meant to be informative. Frontier wants people to know that they should keep backups for devices that require power. The telecommunication network requires electric power. Frontier is working with CPUC and other providers to mitigate effects of PSPS. However, if the power is out longer than backup system can provide, there will be outages. Most customers are connected to central offices that have diesel powered generators.
 - Ulyate: He has FIOS and is connected to central location in Topanga. He also has backup on phone and a diesel generator running. What is the difference between VOIP and FIOS? How long can a backup generator run?
 - Answer: VOIP means voice over internet protocol. Generators run as long as you can safely get fuel deliveries.
 - Terjung: What do you supply for ONT? Do you still supply an eight-hour box?

- Answer: After initial installation, the customer is responsible for the battery.
Will get more info and put together fact sheet to distribute.
- Dave Rydman (Water District 29): They are finishing a project to go solar. They have solar and battery backup at every tank in Topanga, and every pump station control is solar. These also quick connect to set up mobile generators. They are running a pilot program this year and will implement resiliency plan for generators at pump stations.
- Chris Moore (CPUC): Attended PSPS workshop, share concerns with colleagues, and filed a report with management. He has had discussion with SCE about vegetation management, and backup power has been brought to his attention. CA is working on communication resiliency for 72-hour backup. The state realizes the importance of wireless communications.
 - Mendoza added that all utilities are working with CPUC to make progress.
 - Grasso added that the absence of cell towers in Topanga make communication issues particularly important.
- Winn (Arson Watch): Arson Watch is working on radio system communications with Lost Hills EOC. They will use civilian groups to help community.
- Ulyate (Fire Safe Council): Working with TTC to get Topanga labeled as Fire Wise community. This will translate to 10% reduction in home insurance. TCEP can now transmit on FRS radio thanks to Simon T.

XI. New Business/Announcements

- O'Donnell mentioned LA Times article (September 27th edition, opinion section) on Topanga's emergency management efforts. Push to register more people for Alert LA County.
- Clark: Lost Hills and homeless outreach have been able to deliver 32-64 sandwiches daily thanks to a federal grant and county outreach food grant. It would be great if they could partner with Lost Hills for homeless count.
- Ulyate: Posted a home hardening video on Youtube: check out our 50 minute video on home hardening <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZV7IAjuDjU&feature=youtu.be>

XII. Adjournment

Adjourned at 11:45am. Next meeting: January 20th.