**REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 10/NORTHWEST AREA COMMITTEE (RRT/NWAC)**

**OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

**0800 – 1630 Wednesday 29JUN11**

**Doubletree Club Hotel, Boise, ID**

**Attendance list with contact information can be viewed** [**here**](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Public%20session%20sign-in%20sheets.pdf)**.**

**Meeting agenda can be viewed** [**here**](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/NWAC%20Agenda.docx)**.**

**Action Items:**

* Look into the Outreach Workgroup/Task Force having more involvement on social media sites (Facebook and Twitter)
* Develop a list within the area committee, to document who is ready for what ICS position.

**Safety Brief, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

Commander Ryan Griffin of USCG (United States Coast Guard) Sector Columbia River (CR) opened the session and announced that Captain Kaup, the former commander of Sector CR has retired. Chris Field of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) thanked the Coast Guard for letting the USEPA participate in the Government-lead NPREP exercise (US CAN Salish Sea) that took place in the Strait of Juan de Fuca the week of 20JUN11. Captain Ferguson of Sector Puget Sound welcomed everybody and reminded the group of the “V” that successful emergency management depends on, which is made up of information management on one leg of the “V” and effective response as the other leg of the “V”, and that if we are not mindful about early and effective messaging about the response, the perception of the effectiveness of the actual response will deviate dramatically from the messaging piece.

**Overview of Idaho State Response Program and Vision**

Mr. Jeff Rylee of Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) gave an overview of the Idaho State emergency response program. He stated that in the state of Idaho, there are relatively few people. The state has the largest un-roaded area in the lower 48 states, but it also has an excellent response system. The rural areas do not have many resources, but the state has a communications system which is set up so that if an area needs help, a regional team will respond. The teams in Idaho are 90% type-1 HAZMAT teams, with 250-300 technicians type-1 trained, and a minimum number of responders on standby at all times. Their state communication system is exercised several times every day and their plan is updated every 18-24 months with people’s capabilities and contact information. Mr. Rylee added that their teams use Department of Homeland Security grants and a ranking system for response where level 1 is local, level 2 has state involvement and level 3 has federal involvement.

**Introduction to Regional Response Team (RRT), Northwest Area Committee (NWAC) and the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP) for Oil and Hazardous Material Response**

Ms. Heather Parker of USCG District 13 gave a Power Point presentation on an overview of the NWAC and RRT. Her presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/INTRO.pptx). She also gave a presentation on the 2011 updates to the NWACP which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/6-29%200830%202011%20Updates%20to%20the%20NWACP%20ppt_hap_v3.pptx). The proposed date for a summit to discuss next year’s changes to the NWACP will occur on September 14th, 2011.

**Warm Springs Fire**

Mr. Greg Weigel of USEPA Region 10 gave a presentation on a case study of the Warm Springs fire. His presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Warm%20Springs%20Fire%2010%20gw.ppt). Mike Kreiter of Boise Fire pointed out that this case highlights how response is managed in the state of Idaho, and how it is transferred from the local fire department, to a state response then to a federal response. Chris Field of USEPA added that federal authorities should get involved early in emergencies where federal lands are involved, or if there is soil contamination.

**Review of Spokane River GRP**

Linda Pilkey-Jarvis of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) gave a presentation on the Spokane River Geographic Response Plan (GRP) Update, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/RRT-SpokaneRiverGRP.pdf). Ms. Pilkey-Jarvis stated that typically, booming strategies are agreed on ahead of time to reduce delays or confusion in an initial response, but it has limitations, and can be modified on the day of an emergency depending on the situation. She added that they have been removing strategies from the GRP that have not been practical, and that chapter 6 being overhauled. Dam owners have been involved in the update of the GRP, and drills have been used to test the efficacy of their plans.

**On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Reports**

Idaho BHS: Mr. Rylee reported that there have not been any significant cases in first quarter of this year. Because of the large amounts of snowmelt, they expected floods but have not had any out of the ordinary. Idaho BHS has been occupied mostly with training related exercises. In the last year, they have developed a training program for their response team so that they are all trained consistently

USEPA: Mr. Weigel gave a Power Point presentation on recent activity for USEPA District 10. This presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/2011%20Boise%20RRT_Presentation_FOSC_Report.ppt).

USCG Sector Puget Sound (PS): LCDR Wade Gough gave a Power Point presentation, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Sector%20Puget%20Sound%20NWAC%20June11.ppt). In response to the Japanese radiation threat, Sector PS screened vessels that had been in the area of concern around Japan for cargo contamination. They picked the most probable vessels and sent people on-board as part of their incident action plan, came up with recommendations, and coordinated with other agencies and districts. Captain Ferguson pointed out that one issue that probably needs to be addressed in the NWACP is if you get a contaminated vessel, where does it get sent to? There needs to be a designated port of safe refuge.

USCG Sector CR: LCDR Kelly Thorkilson gave a Power Point presentation, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/RRTBriefing%20JUN%202011.pptx). Regarding the tsunami caused by the Japan earthquake in March, Ms. Thorkilson stated that one of the marinas in their jurisdiction was impacted, but the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) was used because the Stafford act was not declared right away. All but one vessel had insurance.

Commander Griffin spoke about a particular vessel which came to Oregon from Japan, the [PanPac Spirit](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/tn%5B1%5D.jpg), which had been within 52 miles of the Daichi Fukushima power plant. The USCG knew it was coming, and held a training on vertically lowering people for this type of response. They also brought in a Vessel Boarding and Security Team (VBST) and put together an incident access plan. USCG District 13 is the only district that has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Oregon’s Civil Support Team (CST), so this was used as well. They wanted to do a boarding of the vessel as far off from shore as possible but had to do the boarding in state waters, so they went to the J3 through the National Guard to determine that the boarding had to be within 12 miles. It ended up being right at 12 miles. Data was analyzed there on the boat, but the units used by the CST were different from what USCG usually tests in, and it was the first time the USCG had done a joint operational CST boarding. Commander Griffin emphasized the importance of testing and monitoring these vessels, which is public perception and safety of port workers. All of the data readings were low except for the first one which was an outlier, due to “ship effect”.

Ecology: Dale Jensen gave a Power Point presentation, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/RRT%20OSC%20June%202011.pptx).

**Bio-Response Operational and Testing Evaluation (BOTE) Project**

Jeff Rylee gave a Power Point presentation on the BOTE project, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/BOTE_RRT.pptx). He noted that Phase I of the project is over, and Phase II will take place in September, 2011.

**Operational Commanders Roundtable**

Mr. Calvin Terada opened this topic by stating that the concept of this segment is to create a forum for issues and ideas, for people in the response community. He stated that he felt the group was previously missing interaction and engagement, and so this segment was worked into the agenda.

Mark Dietrich of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reported that his agency has been trying to formalize how they transition from the emergency phase of a response, to the cleanup phase. One issue is that once the emergency phase is over, BHS goes on to next emergency, and DEQ picks up with USEPA, but there is no mechanism to close the loop on these responses. Nobody goes back to BHS to let them know that the issue has been closed-out.

 Jeff Christensen of Oregon DEQ stated that when first heard of the Idaho model of response, he was very impressed. He added that the Oregon system is a more common type of system. Their DEQ hears about incidents as the same time as the HAZMAT people do. He stated that he has always like Idaho’s system because there is nothing more valuable than situational awareness and making sure the right people have been contacted.

Mr. Dietrich agreed that Idaho State Communications does a great job of keeping track of communications during an emergency, but not afterwards. He also added that some people do not like using the system. Chris Field stated that one concern is that there is confusion on behalf of agencies that think they are part of Unified Command (UC) just because they are on the bridge call. He emphasized that if people want to be a part of the UC, they have to be on-scene. He pointed out that for the Lochsaw River incident, USEPA did not realize it had gone out of the emergency phase.

Jeff Rylee reiterated that the bridge call involves stakeholders, and its purpose is to get regional response team on the scene. The rest is just informational. Idaho could do conference calls for other issues (such as political involvement) but the bridge call is just to get people out the door. Mark Kreiter added that as a team leader, his role is to help support the incident commander. The bridge system allows them to update when a situation is not as initially described.

Steve Morreale of the Department of Energy (DOE) stated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had sponsored a four-year program in Seattle called Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD) for anthrax release. This addressed the question: How do you recover and restore communities after an incident? Mr. Morreale had been involved in the Wide Area Recovery and Resiliency Program (WARRP) in Denver Colorado, looking at anthrax, and a radiological dispersal device (RDD) to see how that all comes together with recovery. They looked at late-response, into recovery on a large scale and found that it takes six months from the end of a disaster for recovery to start.

Calvin Terada briefly spoke about the National Preparedness Response Exercise Program (NPREP) drill that recently took place. He stated that on the inland side, they do not have a lot of those types of opportunities. They can form teams to tackle issues but do not have a lot of opportunities to practice their skills. He stated that this is an issue, and a weakness in a large scale response. He emphasized the importance of having enough assets in place to resolve problems that may arise.

Jeff Rylee brought up the importance of social media in this day and age. Public information officers are now following social media feeds, and he stated that agencies should too. He suggested that the outreach committee may want to consider having a Facebook page, or a Twitter feed. Dale Jensen added to this, stating that the challenge is to get ahead of the media when an incident occurs, before the public gets inaccurate information or wrong ideas.

Captain Ferguson stated that as an operational commander, his big concern is to be able to bring in people that live and breathe the incident command system (ICS) and know their positions. He suggested figuring out how to drive a universal approach of ICS training, so that there is always a pool of qualified people to choose from. Dale Jensen reported that this is the goal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) credentialing structure. Over the next few years, there will be a pool of FEMA certified people to choose from. Captain Ferguson replied that this has been in the works for a long time, but he needs something that will be ready tomorrow. Chris Field stated that USEPA also now has a training and certification program for ICS. Mr. Kreiter added that Idaho Fire has people that have gone through ICS training, but they need hands-on field training for their positions. Lawrence Edwards of the US Navy stated that he thought sharing training resources is helpful. He reported that the Navy does hands-on, on-water training routinely and helps build teams but they want to open up to other agencies. This is not really ICS training but helps build people in positions.

Jim Kadrmas of the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) stated that in 2004, when the National Incident Management System (NIMS) started, individual states had to certify that their states were compliant, so they did. They were asked if they knew ICS. The federal government said that there could not provide federal funding if the states did not say yes, but they have never denied any funding. Mr. Kadrmas stated that another problem is that different levels of government have different levels of responsibility. At the state level, there are no resources. Their operations section cannot set up divisions and commit resources, because they do not own any.

Scott Knutson of USCG District 13 assured that they are going down a process to make this happen. He stated that they have the capability to pull in private industry, but there are areas where overhead cannot be tracked. He stated that how we do not have amongst ourselves a database that tracks overhead and equipment, and does basic NIMS and ICS organization is a travesty. Jeff Christensen pointed out that every year, there is an all-hazard incident management conference where they are getting closer to meshing all of these pieces together. He pointed out that he feels that technology is good, but we always need to be able to use pencil and paper.

Captain Ferguson suggested coming up with a list within the area committee, to document who is ready for what ICS position.

Dale Jensen stated that there were two last things he wanted to point out. Number one, if there is a spill with a responsible party (RP), this is a different type of response, where you do not have to worry about money as much. With a government led response, there are restrictions around it. Number two, over the years, IMT training and certification is continuously being adjusted.

**Rexburg Drum Case**

Greg Weigel presented a Power Point on the Rexburg Drum Case Study, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Rexburg%20Drum%20Site%20with%20Smith2%20changes.ppt).

**RadNet Deployment in aftermath of Japanese earthquake/tsunami**

Calvin Terada gave a Power Point presentation on the USEPA’s RadNet deployment, following the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. This presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/June%202011%20NWAC%20EPA%20Japan%202011.pptx). Mr. Terada pointed out that there were concerns with public messaging and public perceptions. There were also concerns about who makes a decision about what levels are concerning and who decides when it is a threat. These types of decisions would need to be made in conjunction with health agencies.

**Derelict Vessels: Joint Federal State Actions**

LCDR Kelly Thorkilson and USCG Sector Columbia River gave a presentation Derelict Vessels, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Derelict%20Vessel%20Task%20Force.ppt). LCDR. Thorkilson reported that the Derelict Vessels task force is developing criteria for ranking vessels of priority. This became a political issue after the *Davy Crockett* incident, and now the expectation to come out with criteria is high. She stated that part of the task force process is to figure out how to be proactive about these vessels. The Tribes are also getting involved at the river level and are engaged and interested. One of the tasks for this task force was to review a document by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which serves as a primer for the group. LCDR Thorkilson added that one thing that has contributed to more of these vessels was the Basel Amendment that bans trade of these vessels across international lines. This means that people who would have otherwise sold the vessels to somebody across the border is now unable to.

**Closing Comments**

Captain Ferguson thanked all of the attendees, stating that he felt they had had great discussions. He emphasized the need to be prepared for whatever comes next.

Calvin Terada added that when talking with his counterparts about the team we have in our area, he is confident that we can tackle what comes our way in future.