

The Aftermath of Wildfires



Prepared for:

Prepared by:

March 2019

AEP State
Conference



The Aftermath of Wildfires

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Focus for Topic

Corrective lenses
for how we 'see'
recovery from
wildfires

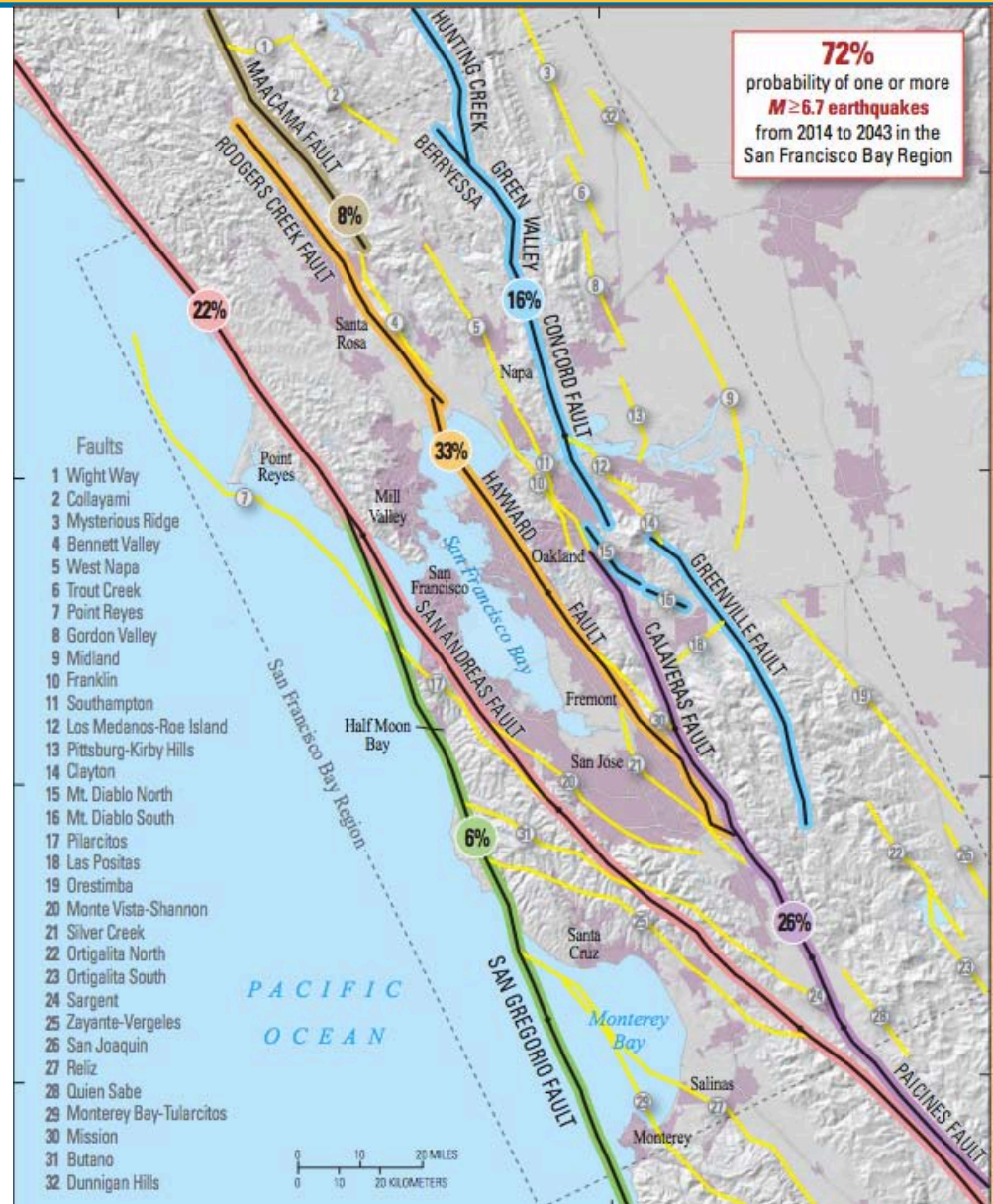


Results of a recent national survey:

90% of those polled felt that:

**"Today's positive trends will
continue uninterrupted into the
indefinite future"**

72% Probability of ≥ 6.7 Magnitude Earthquake before 2043



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➤ How many here
have their Go-Bag
in their vehicles?



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Pre-Disaster Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery

- Every person
- Every family
- Every business
- Every school
- Every community
- Every agency

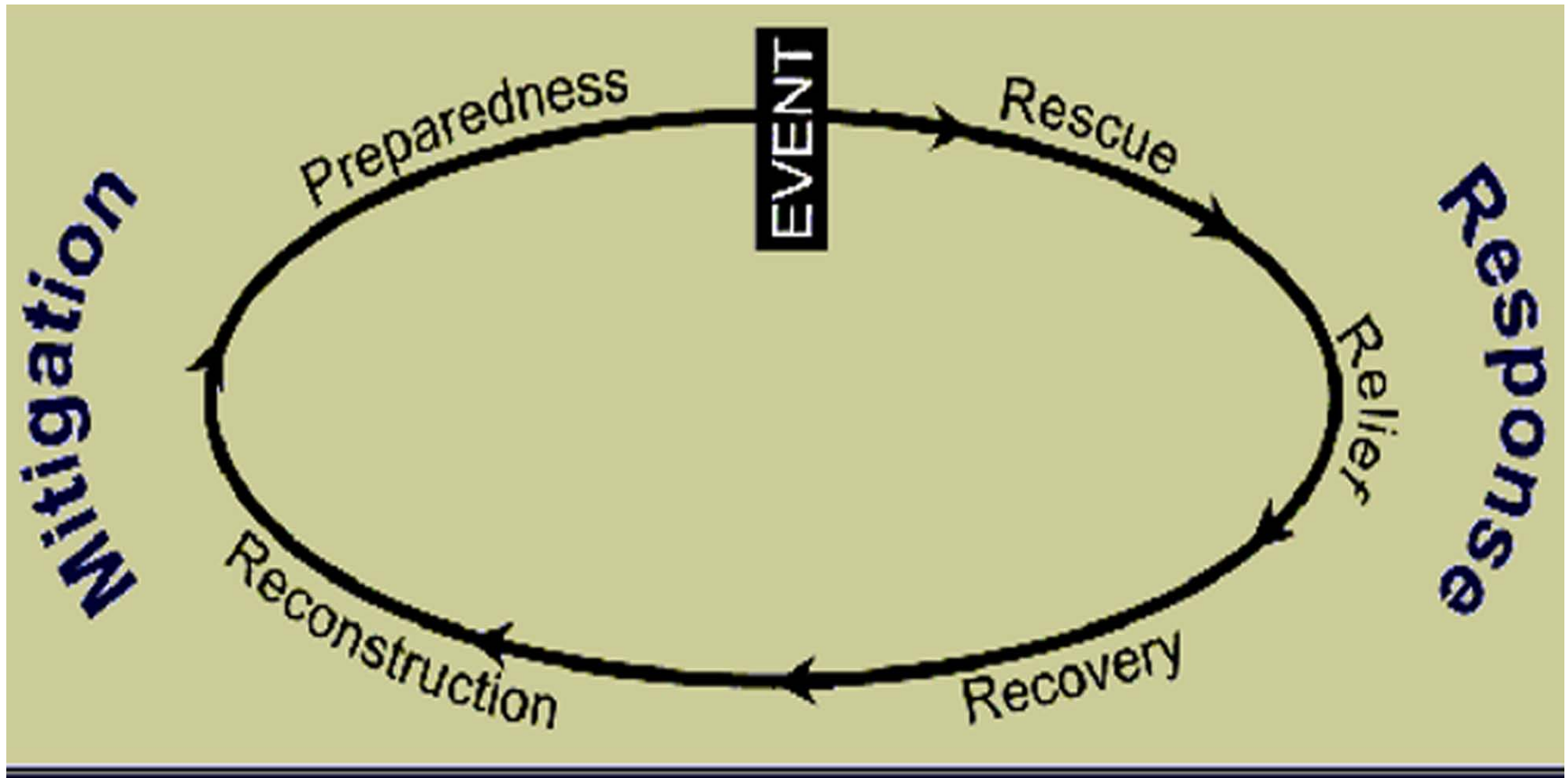
Pre-Disaster Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery

- Every person
- Every family
- Every business
- Every school
- **Every community**
- Every agency

Terms

- **RESILIENCY** - the power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.
- **RESPONSE** - a reaction to something.
- **RECOVERY** - a return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength; the action or process of regaining possession or control of something stolen or lost.

Typical Disaster Cycle



Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning

- Often overlooked until a disaster occurs
- Focus in the past has been on **Response**. Focus today is on **Resiliency**.
- **Recovery** from floods and earthquakes focuses on public infrastructure.
- **Recovery** from wildfires focuses on private properties/structures.
- To be **Resilient** there has to be a Pre-Disaster **Recovery Plan**

- **Healing of our communities is not part of the Response mode and something planners arent prepared to deal with but necessary for rebuilding and resiliency**
- **What are steps a municipality needs to plan for now to be prepared to assist the community in coping and rebuilding their lives and homes? How do volunteer groups fit into this?**

Uniqueness of Wildfires as a Disaster

- Wildfires involves putting out the disaster where most response to other disasters is related to emergency care and immediate needs
- Restoration (other disasters) vs. Redevelopment (wildfires)
- Communities typically know where flooding and tsunamis will occur. Ground shaking from earthquakes is almost universal in CA. Wildfires can strike any time and anywhere nowadays.
- Agency recovery efforts are different.

Disaster Recovery Planning

- 1000's are going through it right now in CA
- Five year process to get back to 'normalcy'
- Who does it?
- The need for addressing
 - As a person, as a community
 - As an agency
 - As a consultant



Considerations

- **Communications after being evacuated**
- **Assessments of buildings, roads, etc. opening up at earliest opportunity.**
- **Declaration of a State/Federal Emergency –what opportunities does that offer? What paperwork can be completed now?**
- **Site cleanup – what to expect from State/Federally-funded clean up processes.**
- **Dangers and impacts of clearing a burned-over piece of property or searching for personal items.**
- **Dealing with contaminated soils and need for erosion/sediment control on each burnt site. (More than 1000 sites to complete in the Carr Fire area before winter rains last year)**
- **Loss of landfill capacities due to debris contributions (One landfill a few years ago had capacity for 15 years of disposal. After all the Lake and Mendocino fires it's capacity is reduced to less than 5 years, with more debris from the Mendocino Complex Fire coming.)**

Considerations

- Planning policies that conflict with recovery needs
- Ways planning/building/public works dept staff can assist fire affected residents, such as permit streamlining/flexibility, preapproved plans, temporary housing.
- Requirements of CEQA for rebuilding in burned-out areas. (Can we exempt everything? How to define Baseline?)
- Processing the sheer number of building permits, how to handle the sudden workload.
- Opportunities to rebuild in more fire-safe ways. What guidelines are available?
- Loss of residents who move from the community rather than rebuild.
- Loss of property tax revenues
- Loss of utility users (one local water system provider went from 3000 rate payers to 2, who are now responsible for the district's monthly costs?).
- Loss of employees/jobs.

Considerations

- Preventing price gouging of evacuees at local hotels
- Where does funding come from?
- How to maintain local control –which areas receive attention first?
How fast can government move?
- Keeping a major industrial employer can require/ benefit from a recovery plan
- Deciding if we are going to fix the mistakes of the past (1 million homes are in high fire severity zones)
- The Public Works Director may lose their home in a wildfire and need to take care of their family before coming into work to head the response/recovery efforts. May need several people to fill one position (redundancy) to cover for missing people.
- Consultants can be pre-approved to be contacted in case of emergency for a variety of tasks

Considerations

In Paradise

- Can a community sustain a loss of >20% jobs, employees, businesses, students/daycare, tax revenue, utilities?
- How to get residents to rebuild when there are no commercial establishments, employment, schools, infrastructure?
- How to get commercial establishments, employment, schools, infrastructure rebuilt when there are no residents?
- What happens in the 2-3 years waiting to get permits to rebuild?

Considerations

In Chico

- Was not physically affected by the Paradise fire
- Went from a population of approx. 87,000 to 105,000 within a few days
- Can a community sustain an unplanned 20% growth overnight? Are they prepared to sustain this for 3-5 years?
- Can a community sustain a 20% increase in needed residences, jobs, employees, businesses, students/daycare, utilities, traffic, government services ?
- How can a municipality be prepared for this influx?
- How does a municipality get funded to react to this influx?

Considerations

In Sacramento

- **Overnight - 100,000 survivors of a wildfire (or other disaster) show up**
- **What are we going to do?**

Two Parts to Recovery

- What is government's role in Recovery Planning?
- What is government's role on the human side of recovery?



The Scenario

March 27th at 2:00 A.M. A fire starts in a residence in your neighborhood. It quickly spreads to two neighboring properties and adjacent wildlands. At 2:35 A.M. you receive a reverse 911 call for mandatory evacuation. All residents within a half mile (approximately 880) are evacuated. You grab your cat, your phone, throw a coat over your PJs and head outside. All your neighbors are doing the same. You see the orange hue of the fire a couple blocks away and smell the smoke. Panic hits you.

The Scenario

- **As you get into the car you realize the road out is getting jammed up with cars. You want to go fast but the cars aren't moving. You decide to drive some place and watch at a distance as the fire slowly spreads.**
- **You check your phone and cant find out any information. At daybreak you decide to get a cup of coffee and find out what is happening.**
- **You run into other evacuees who are wondering what to do. What do you tell them? What do you do next?**

The Scenario

- You don't know if your house burned.
- The neighborhood remains closed as smoldering flames are extinguished. Debris and hazard trees are being cleared. Power lines are being reestablished. A storm is coming and erosion control is being applied.
- The neighborhood remains inaccessible for five days; 880 people are looking to meet basic needs.
- Who is in charge and what happens next?
- You go to City Hall to find out what you should do and next how to find information and assistance on line.

The Scenario

- **There is barely no one at City Hall as staff is out implementing their Hazard Mitigation Plan**
- **There are 50 others at City Hall looking as lost as you are about what to do next**
- **Then, the one lonely Assistant Planner at the counter remembers there was a pamphlet that a planning class prepared a couple years ago that provides some guidance.**
- **She starts to hand them out to everyone there**
- **What does the pamphlet tell you to do?**

- **“It is the City’s policy to recognize that one of the most serious impacts of any disaster is the psychological trauma which the disaster creates for public services and volunteer personnel who must respond to it”.**

(Los Angeles 1994 Recovery Plan)

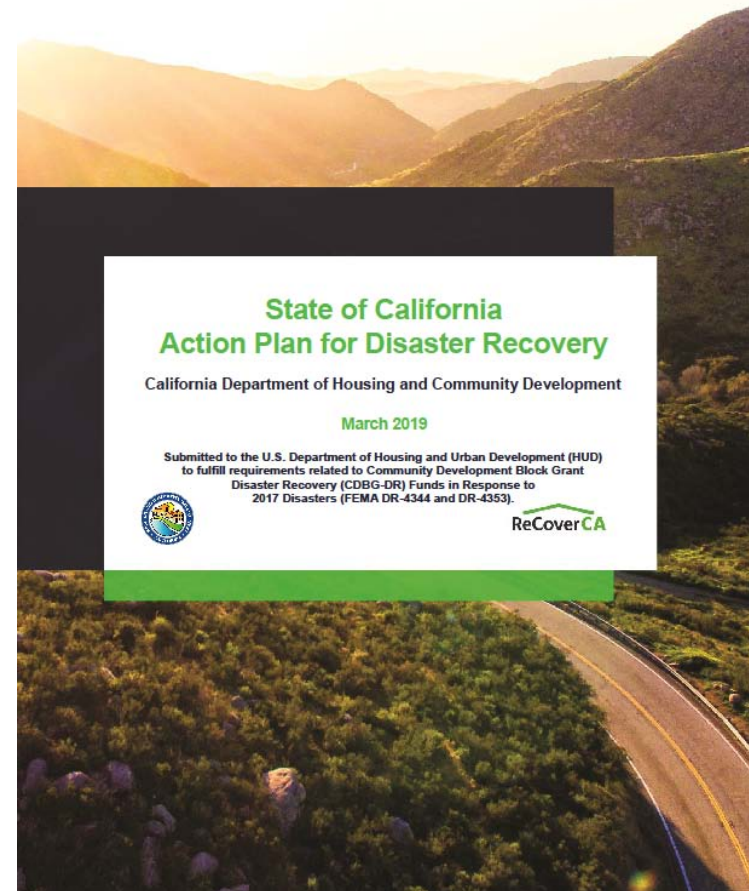
The Human Side

- Government is often limited to 'Practical Compassion.' We plan what we can plan for so unplanned items are few.
- What Survivors need is real compassion, communication, cooperation, trust.
- In shock, overwhelmed by loss, stress, lost – do they need to make 20 stops? Or just one?

Lessons Learned

- Recovery starts on Day 1
- Private sector/ volunteer support is critical
- Challenges/benefits for including rebuild flexibility
- Emotions: public and staff
- Build partnerships before the event
- Rebuild/recovery comes in many sizes, shapes, personalities
- Communication is key

- March 15, 2019 **HUD APPROVES PLAN TO SUPPORT CALIFORNIA IN ITS RECOVERY FROM 2017 WILDFIRES AND MUDSLIDES: *\$124 million in federal recovery funds to rebuild damaged homes, businesses and infrastructure***
- **California's Action Plan for Disaster Recovery. March 2019**
- <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/disaster-recovery-programs/cdbg-dr/docs/March-2019-HCD-CDBG-DR-ActionPlan-APPROVED.pdf>



Six Policy Areas for Pre-planning

(from APA Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery, 2014

<https://www.planning.org/research/postdisaster/>)

- **Land use reconstruction standards**
- **Infrastructure and transportation restoration**
- **Housing recovery**
- **Economic redevelopment**
- **Environmental restoration**
- **Health and social recovery**



Land use reconstruction standards

- Do building and land development regulations address post-disaster rebuilding?
- How will permitting processes stand up to post-disaster pressures?
- Is there a temporary building moratorium ordinance prepared?
- Will rebuilding be allowed in areas or prohibited in other areas?
- Are value thresholds established for rehabilitation versus reconstruction?
- Has a value been established for public acquisition of private property?

Land use reconstruction standards

Quality of Construction

- What are the thresholds of damage in the community that require compliance with current codes and ordinances (e.g., substantial damage is defined by the National Flood Insurance Program as damage repair costs that exceed 50 percent of the structure's market value)?
- What aspects of code compliance are required for set thresholds (e.g., flood mitigation ordinance elevation requirements or seismic building retrofits)?
- Are there nonessential requirements that are waived after a natural disaster (e.g., are architectural standards or nonconforming uses covered by a “grandfather” clause)?

Land use reconstruction standards

Redevelopment Patterns

- Should areas be prioritized to focus redevelopment (e.g., economic activity centers or other areas where development is already encouraged or incentivized)?
- What goals from the comprehensive plan or other master plan/visioning documents can be addressed through the recovery (e.g., areas targeted for increased mixed use or transit-oriented development)?
- Is neighborhood preservation a goal for any of the affected areas?

Land use reconstruction standards

Other Considerations

- How are historic structures going to be identified during damage assessments, stabilized, and restored if affected by a disaster?
- Should sustainable building practices be encouraged or required in some zones during rebuilding (e.g., LEED certifications)?
- Are there opportunities to incorporate walkability, mixed use, or placemaking goals into redevelopment plans?
- How will post-disaster blight be addressed in a timely manner?

Infrastructure and transportation restoration

Short-Term

- Are debris sites pre-identified or an expedited siting process in place to ensure that environmental and historic resources will not be damaged?
- Is there a plan for separating debris to prevent contamination and to allow reuse or recycling of building material debris?
- Will extended closures of any roads or bridges impair the ability of businesses to recover?
- Will reopening of roads and restoration of utilities to severely damaged areas encourage rebuilding prior to the creation of redevelopment plans for the area?

Infrastructure and transportation restoration

Short-Term (cont.)

- Will restoration of public facilities in highly vulnerable areas supersede possible relocation or hazard mitigation improvements?
- Is there any coordination arrangement in place between the power providers and the community for identifying critical facilities to expedite restoration and recovery operations?

Infrastructure and transportation restoration

Long-Term

- Is it cost-effective to repair the damaged infrastructure or should temporary restoration or detour arrangements be made?
- Are previously planned infrastructure improvements eligible for wildfire funding?
- Are there any public facilities or infrastructure, if damaged would be better if relocated?

Infrastructure and transportation restoration

Long-Term (cont.)

- Are there modifications that can be made more resilient to future disasters and climate change?
- Is sustainability a goal of disaster recovery?
- Are there opportunities to include or improve multimodal facilities when repairing roadways (e.g. bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and transit stops)?

Housing recovery

Temporary Housing

- Are there provisions in zoning or other code, or emergency ordinances that specify allowances for onsite placement of temporary housing (e.g., mobile homes)?
- If not, can areas be rapidly delineated, in correlation with building moratoria after the disaster, so onsite placement of temporary housing will be allowed?

Housing recovery

Temporary Housing

- Will employers be allowed to provide onsite temporary housing to employees if they are interested in offering this service?
- Have special-needs populations been considered in the temporary housing options?
- Are there opportunities to use available, undamaged housing?

Housing recovery

Transition to Permanent Housing

- Are there provisions specify sunset or removal timeframes for onsite temporary housing?
- Are there policies when a group temporary housing site should be closed?
- Are there provisions for designing group temporary housing sites in a way that would allow for the sites to become permanent housing developments

Housing recovery

Transition to Permanent Housing (cont.)

- Are there programs to assist homeowners in navigating insurance, FEMA assistance, and permitting required to rebuild their homes (e.g., one-stop centers)?
- Is the proportion of housing types being built post-disaster matching current demographic needs?

Economic redevelopment

Business Resumption

- Are there opportunities to provide one-stop centers for business recovery (e.g., the centers could provide information on financial assistance, business counseling, streamlined permitting, and relocation assistance)?
- Are there programs to encourage business continuity planning, particularly for small businesses?

Economic redevelopment

Workforce retention

- Is the reopening of schools and daycare occurring fast enough to enable the population to return to work?
- Are there obstacles for employers to provide disaster support services to their employees?
- Are job losses being tracked and can case management services be offered to displaced workers?

Economic redevelopment

Workforce retention (cont.)

- Is preference to local unemployed residents being given in temporary disaster work?
- Can training programs be offered for skill sets needed to fill disaster-related jobs and jobs at companies with large employee losses?
- Can incentives be offered to companies considering relocation in order to keep jobs in the community?

Environmental restoration

- What are the environmental review needs for temporary staging, debris, and housing sites?
- What post-disaster pollution monitoring programs are necessary for public health and ecological concerns
- What are the needs related to hazardous materials remediation programs and liability?
- What is the public perception of contamination monitoring and remediation?

Environmental restoration

- What has been the impact on endangered/ threatened species populations and habitats?
- Will affected ecosystems be more susceptible to invasive species?
- If aquatic habitats were disrupted, what are the long-term ecological and economic consequences for fisheries and can they be restored?

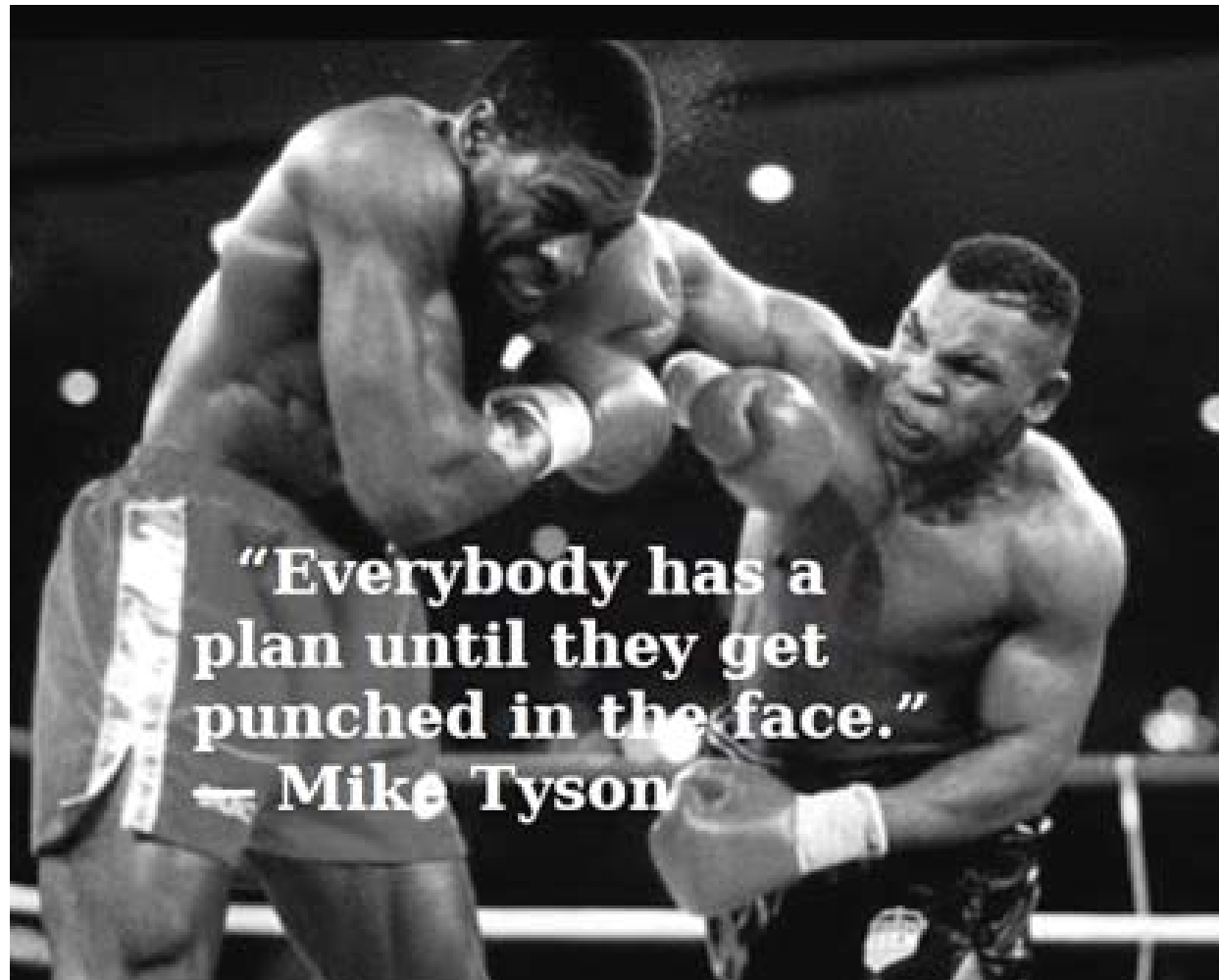
Environmental restoration

- In the event of a windstorm, how much is subsequent wildfire risk increased by dead and damaged trees?
- In the event of a wildfire, will flooding and erosion be an issue in restoring destroyed forested slopes?
- If hazardous materials were released, will there be bioaccumulation of toxic substances through the food chain?

Health and social recovery

- Are there continuity plans for area hospitals, clinics, nursing and assisted living homes, and other critical healthcare facilities? Are there plans for personnel retention in the case of a catastrophic disaster?
- Is there adequate capacity for an extended period of post disaster mental health assistance?

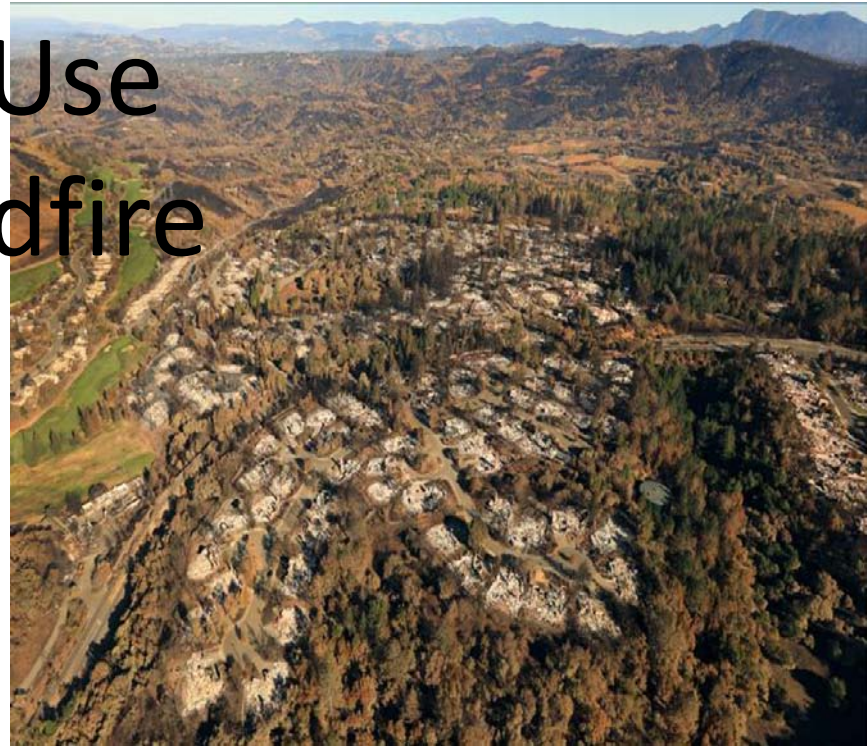
One take-away – Mike Tyson Quote (from Erin at City of Napa)



Planning now for recovery will make the blow a bit softer

Using Community Capacity to Address Land Use Planning Post-Wildfire

Edith Hannigan, Land Use Planning Policy Manager
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection



Kent Porter/Press Democrat

Association of Environmental
Professionals
March 26, 2019
Monterey, CA

Fort McMurray rebuild happening too quickly and cheaply, review finds



A KPMG report released on Thursday recommends that the city of Fort McMurray, Alta., which is working to rebuild after last year's wildfire, implements policies that would encourage 'building back better,' such as offering tax rebates for individuals that use fire-resistant materials.



JON CHIU/AP

High-Risk Housing Developments Fan the Flames for Wildfire

Kramer and her colleagues confirmed that post-fire construction tends to concentrate in areas of equal or higher fire risk than those that had last burned.

Local governments are incentivized to rebuild as quickly as possible to recoup lost tax revenues and bring civic and economic life back to comfortable baselines.



Kent Porter/Press Democrat

Getting Back What You Lost — Rebuilding In A Wildfire Zone

By Lauren Sommer | **KQED**
Tuesday, October 16, 2018

Land Use Problems in the WUI

Building

- Population growth = expansion into the wildlands
- Climate change = more fires
- More development + more fires = more ignitions & more structure loss

Rebuilding

- Structures rebuilt larger
- Over time, new structures built in the fire perimeter
- Without regulatory interference, land/homeowners do not undertake additional fire safety steps

Regulators

- Overtaxed & Under Resourced
 - Maintain business as usual + recovery functions
- Between a rock and a hard place
 - Desire to maintain tax base & pressure to rehouse newly homeless
 - Concern about future wildfire risk

Regulatory Requirements Add Costs

Local

- Zoning code restricting temporary uses
- Lot size, square footage, ancillary rooms – i.e., covered garage
- Permit applications, process, timelines, costs

State

- Building code changes – fire safe construction, required solar, etc
- Environmental – septic proximity to streams; restrictions on building on fault zones, in floodplains
- Other overlays that place limitations on building type, size, or design

Post-Fire Questions Faced by Local Government

- What edition of the building code are we requiring people to rebuild to?
 - Existing? Existing as when constructed? Additional fire safe requirements?
- What kinds of building requirements are we going to relieve?
 - How are we going to discover which are the most onerous or have the least health & safety benefit?
- What incentives can we use to encourage safety?

**HOW DO WE RESEARCH &
ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS?**

Capacity

- Pre-fire, most local governments probably don't have the capacity to conduct an intensive review of local and state codes to identify potential rebuild issues.
 - Post-fire, local governments are overwhelmed trying to provide recovery and business as usual services.
-
- ❖ Build government capacity
 - ❖ Build community capacity

Government Capacity

- Possesses institutional knowledge
 - Capture that knowledge; learn and improve after each event
- Already has a community outreach structure
 - Maximize this with a Planning and Development Department-specific communications manager
- Opportunities to learn from other jurisdictions
 - Who has gone through something similar?

Community Capacity

- Local trusted organization that serves multiple functions in a community – including planning
- Part of the impacted community
- Can quickly identify priority items for government to address
- Can collect anecdotes about barriers to rebuilding and bring them to government once they become a trend
- Eligible for grant funds a government may not be

Thank you!

Edith Hannigan

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The map illustrates the division of California into two Voluntary Obedience Areas (VOADs). The northern region, labeled 'NorCal VOAD', covers the area from the Oregon border down to the San Francisco Bay Area. The southern region, labeled 'SoCal VOAD', covers the area from the San Francisco Bay Area down to the Mexican border. The map is color-coded to distinguish between the two regions and their constituent counties.

**NorCal
VOAD**

**SoCal
VOAD**

WHO WE ARE

Due to its size and geography, California is home to two regional VOAD associations—NorCal VOAD and SoCal VOAD which share the California State VOAD seat at National VOAD.

National VOAD provides structure, resources and support to state VOADs.

Over the past 44 years, the VOAD movement has grown to include more than 100 Member organizations at the National level.

Guided by the core principles of the 4Cs — cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration — National VOAD Members provide the leadership that builds strong, resilient communities and delivers hope in times of need.

MISSION

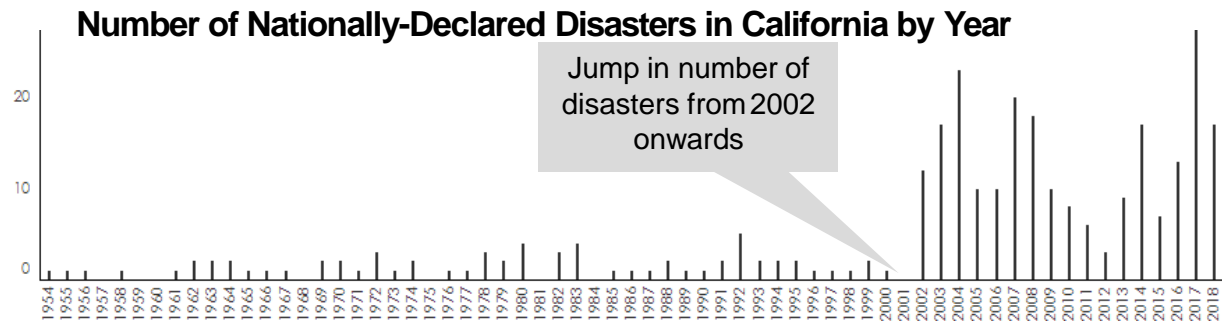
National VOAD, an association of organizations that mitigate and alleviate the impact of disasters, provides a forum promoting cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration; and fosters more effective delivery of services to communities affected by disaster.

VISION

National VOAD will be the recognized non-governmental leader of the disaster preparedness, response, and recovery sector. National VOAD members and partners represent a powerful force of goodwill in America. Through the VOAD network, WE provide the leadership that makes our communities stronger and more resilient. In times of need, WE deliver hope for a more positive future.

California faces a growing number and scale of disasters

We heard from interviewees that the number and scale of disasters in 2018 stretched the State emergency response system



226 of the 300 disasters CA has faced since 1953 were wildfires

- While the State infrastructure is well-equipped to handle one disaster, **multiple fires in October 2018 stretched the emergency response system** and its resources thin
- The scale of the 2018 fires was so large that the State had already **spent \$1B fighting fires before the deadly fall fire season even began***
- The recent fires **highlighted unique areas of need across California's diverse communities**, for example, animal care needs for rural farming populations

*"I have worked lots of different emergencies for 20 years, but I have never experienced **the magnitude that Camp Fire presented...**"*

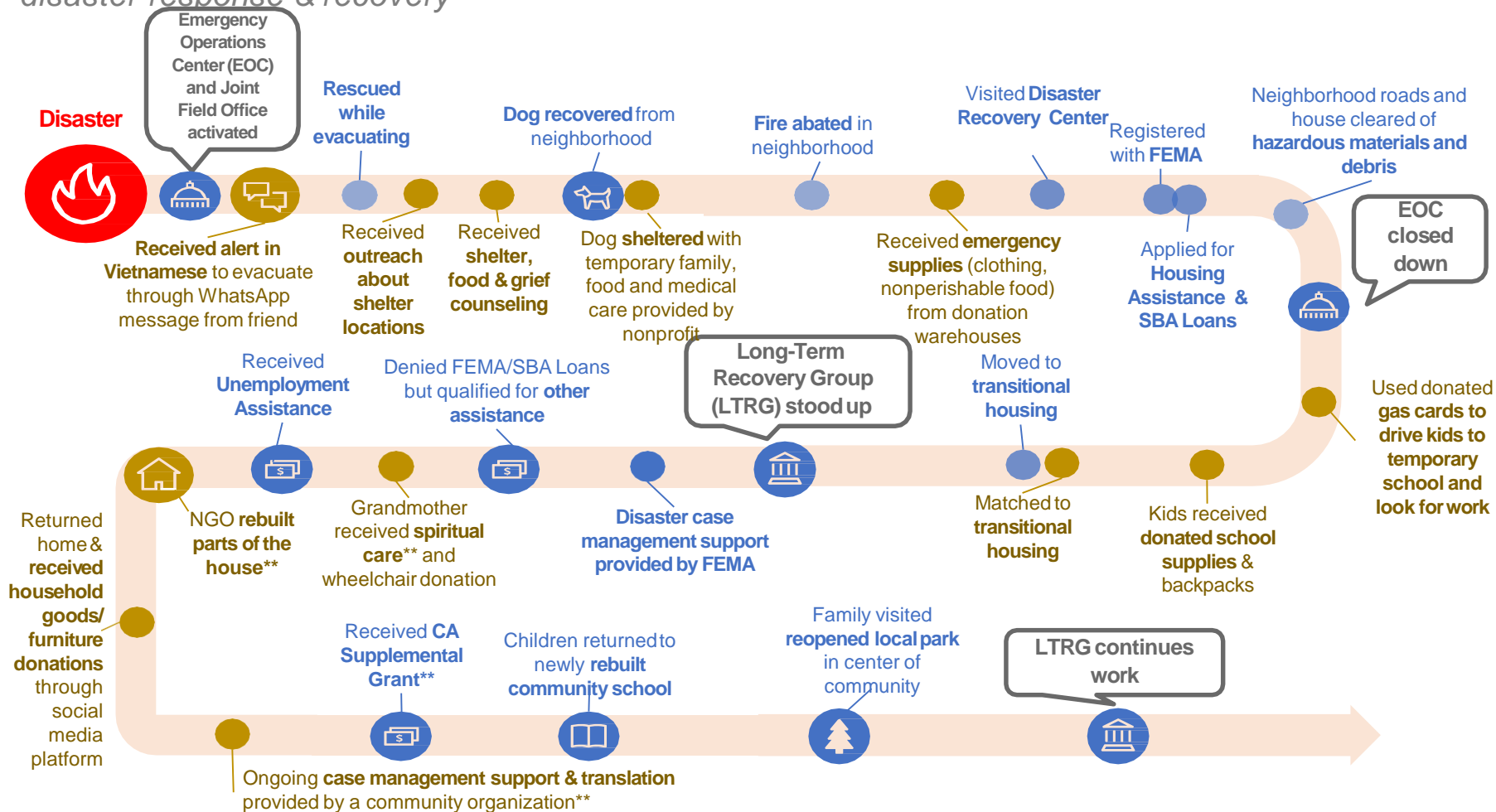
*"We need to look in the mirror and call on organizations – **how are we supporting vulnerable populations?** By definition, they are least-resourced, with no safety net..."*

The emergency response system must integrate all parts of the community to ensure a smooth response and recovery process

Disaster response is a whole-community affair

Key: ● Govt. support ● Non-govt. support Coordinated by ** Long-Term Recovery Group

*Looking at the post-fire experience of a single family – the Nguyen's – helps bring to life the critical role that NGOs and private sector organizations play alongside government during disaster response & recovery**



Notes: *While the Nguyen's story is fictitious, all events are based on real examples. Events can occur earlier or later depending on the disaster, location, and circumstance. This sequence presumes a Presidential declaration of disaster which invokes FEMA resources – this will not apply to all disasters. The term NGO includes faith communities.

Window of opportunity for increasing community engagement

At all levels of government, increasing focus and funding for community engagement in disaster preparedness present an opportunity...



Federal

- **FEMA defines whole community** as "a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests."
- FEMA's **Resilience Team engages communities** in preparedness activities



State of California

- Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bills 72 and 73 appropriating **\$131M for emergency preparedness and disaster relief**, including \$20M for CBOs*
- Under the Governor's "**California for All**" campaign, local disaster preparedness is a priority

“It’s not a coincidence that my first full day as Governor is focused on emergency preparedness. It’s deliberate, it reflects intentionality, and it speaks to the **priority that I place on emergency preparedness, response and recovery.**”

—Governor Gavin Newsom, Jan 8, 2019

Consequences of NOT preparing the whole community (1/2)

Interviewees indicated that most communities don't have sufficient systems to effectively integrate NGOs & private sector organizations during/after disasters, and that this can lead to a range of challenges:



Individuals & organizations are unprepared for disaster

- ❖ **Frontline NGOs become overwhelmed.** Service providers can become impaired by the disaster or hobbled by the stress from increased, calls, web traffic, etc.
- ❖ **NGOs can't scale.** Local NGOs may not have funding or capacity to adequately follow-through on commitments, leading to cascading coordination challenges
- ❖ **Lack of long-term volunteers.** It's time-consuming to orient people who volunteer for a day or two; organizations much prefer AmeriCorps members who offer more continuity and are willing to do any task assigned
- ❖ **High turnover in NGOs.** Regular leadership and staff turnover leaves staff unaware of disaster guidelines, processes, and coordination



Insufficient coordination wastes resources

- ❖ **Insufficient messaging about how to help.** Individuals and organizations not active in disaster don't know how to contribute volunteers and/or donations
- ❖ **Inability to effectively leverage trained volunteers.** Certified volunteers are limited by lack of organized opportunities, lodging, support, or infrastructure
- ❖ **Failure to efficiently deploy donations.** Available material and financial donations get wasted because they are not matched with organizations
- ❖ **Non-traditional resources are underutilized.** Tech companies, skilled volunteers, and other newcomers lack access points to support disaster response and recovery
- ❖ **Frontloading of donations.** Resources pour in during the 72 hours after a disaster; relatively few resources are earmarked for the multi-year recovery
- ❖ **Community resources aren't leveraged.** Volunteers and donations may offset County contributions to disaster expenses, but often aren't properly documented

Exemplary Stories from Interviews

*An overwhelmed nonprofit **didn't record volunteer contact information**, leaving behind thousands of names to be contacted again, one-by-one*

*Trained volunteers drove **hours** to complete shifts, but were **turned away** because they didn't have the "right credentials"*

*A company secured **thousands of transitional housing units**, but **couldn't scale** this service without greater access to dislocated families*

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Consequences of NOT preparing the whole community (2/2)

*They added that some challenges create **problems to be managed by government**, and can leave **community members more vulnerable** during and after disasters:*



Unplanned efforts get in the way of emergency response

- ❖ **Unsolicited donations become “the 2nd wave of disaster.”** Well-intentioned individuals and organizations collect goods that are not needed
- ❖ **Untrained/unvetted volunteers and organizations pose a risk to self & others.** Untrained volunteers are unable to effectively contribute to NGOs or the County during disasters, and are unaware of govt. rules around disaster response & recovery.
- ❖ **Community efforts create risks government must address.** Some initiatives can create unintended safety/security challenges that government is forced to manage

Critical community needs aren't met



- ❖ **Not enough special outreach leaves communities at risk.** Communities that require special outreach or lack infrastructure (e.g., hearing impaired, non-English speakers, lack of broadband access) aren't well-integrated into emergency planning, making them more vulnerable and lacking crucial information during disasters
- ❖ **Individual needs that don't require emergency response are unaddressed.** Families and individuals often have needs that do not rise to the level of severity and importance for first responders to address, such as pets, functional access, lower severity health concerns, etc.

Exemplary Stories from Interviews

*A **donation of thousands of desks became a crisis** to manage as overwhelmed school administrators struggled to find a place to store them*

*A well-intentioned group **stored donations in an empty warehouse**, which became a place of **looting/criminal activity** requiring security*

*Families that don't speak English are often unable to understand official **emergency response materials**, because these **aren't translated***

Critical actors in whole-community preparedness

Our interviewees stressed the need to expand communication and coordination in advance of, during, and after a disaster to include a wider spectrum of local actors :

Actors mentioned by interviewees:

- **Government:** Federal, State, Local, and Tribal
- **Disaster organizations & programs,** i.e., local VOAD and CERT
- **Faith communities,** i.e., congregations & denominational/ freestanding organizations
- **Philanthropic organizations,** e.g., community, corporate, and private foundations
- **Private sector organizations** (including corporations and small & medium sized enterprises), trade associations, and unions
- **Operating NGOs,** e.g., local food banks, animal shelters, and community health and homelessness service providers
- **Anchor Institutions,** e.g., K16 education, hospitals, libraries, and local YMCA/YWCS and B&GC
- **Representative Community Groups,** e.g., community advocacy groups, Sr. citizens programs, special ability programs

What we heard from interviewees

“Nonprofits and faith communities can respond immediately. Government, although exquisitely trained, takes longer to act.”

“[A local anchor institution] had no disaster plan. Everything was done informally. They would have benefitted so much from advanced planning and coordination”

“We don’t just need to reach out to **vulnerable populations**; we need to engage them and learn how to serve them more effectively.”

Community-based activities that increase local preparedness

In addition, they emphasized that increasing whole-community disaster preparedness requires the following activities at the County level:

- ❖ **Building capacity:** NGOs & private sector organizations need to have continuity of operations plans (COOPs) and sufficient disaster-trained volunteers, and their constituents and clients (individuals & households) need to be prepared for disaster
- ❖ **Setting up structures & procedures:** Local NGOs and private sector organizations need mechanisms for communicating and coordinating with each other and with official government systems, and for accessing/managing volunteers & donations
- ❖ **Understanding government systems:** Anyone interested in getting involved in disaster response & recovery needs to understand Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), the role of government, and what government resources are available (and how to access them)
- ❖ **Choosing “lanes”:** NGOs & private sector organizations that want to contribute but don’t have a disaster mission need to understand where they can contribute, and what mechanisms exist for committing resources and getting trained

What we heard from interviewees

*“In the County EOC/DROC there was **no one at the table representing nonprofits**. This would be helpful to have.”*

*“In the middle of an emergency it’s important that decision-making be held with the smallest number of people... it’s **critical to understand incident & unified command**”*

*“It would be great to have an **inventory of CBOs and their assets**—what can they offer, for how many people, and for how long?”*



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