



# Resilient Neighbors Network

Minutes of RNN Community Meeting of  
Friday, *August 28, 2020*, 11:00 am ET

**Resilient Neighbors Network (RNN)** is a network of professionals representing communities actively working toward adaptation and resilience from natural hazards.

## **RNN Mission**

To increase resilience in existing and developing communities at the grass roots level by documenting and actively sharing best practices, through education, peer to peer collaboration and mentoring.

## **RNN Vision**

RNN will be a source for a compilation of community driven hazard resilience best practices that can serve as a resource to people & communities before, during and after a disaster. RNN will also actively bring ground truth and grassroots enlightenment to policy makers, researchers, regulators, and journalists.

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## **AGENDA FOR RNN COMMUNITY MEETING OF August 28, 2020:**

1. Roll call
2. Approval of Minutes (July 2020)
3. Comments/Issues/RNN Community Sharing/Good News
4. Discussion of RNN objectives and roles in the new NHMA Strategic and Operational Plan (Ed Hecker)  
- New NHMA Board Member Ed Hecker to talk about RNN Linkage to Silver Jackets
5. Status of ABA Book – Ed Thomas
6. Follow-up on any RNN action items and future activities
7. CTP Collaboration Monthly Call for Topics
8. Publication opportunities and virtual speaking opportunities
9. Any comments from Vincent Brown for FEMA updates
10. Adjourn

## Minutes for Meeting of Friday, August 28, 2020:

11:00 am Eastern Time: CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL:

### 1) ROLL CALL:

Present:

**Traci Sears** (State of Montana)

**Shaye Bodine** (State of Montana)

**Tim Trautman** (Charlotte-Mecklenburg)

**Ed Hecker** (NHMA Board)

**Ed Thomas** (NHMA Board)

**Annie Vest** (NHMA Board)

**Donna Boyce** (NHMA Board)

**Vince Brown** (FEMA)

**Ed Hecker** introduced himself to everyone. He is the part-time Director of Operations for NHMA. His career with the US Army Corps of Engineers in Emergency Management just recently wound down. He looks forward to working with everyone in the RNN Community to play forward everything that we've been working on over the past ten years or so. He is engaging from an operational standpoint with what we're doing with NHMA, starting with his role going forward as lead for the Strategic Planning team. Everyone should have received a draft of the NHMA Strategic Plan as part of the read-ahead for today.

**Ed Hecker** shared that he will chair future RNN calls as we start making strategic shifts with NHMA in the context of the Strategic Plan, but also in terms of launching our Operational effort for the DRR Curriculum and doing some things with the RNN Community. This transition to getting things done at the community level will rely heavily on the RNN community and our engagement and support for them. More to follow.

### 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**A Motion to approve the Minutes** was made by Tim Trautman.

**The Motion was Seconded** by Ed Thomas.

There being no discussion, it was

**VOTED:** The Minutes were approved.

### 3) Comments/Issues/RNN Community Sharing/Good News

#### MONTANA

**Traci Sears** reported on the Montana Resources Seminar. Shaye Bodine has been working hard to coordinate the event. She and Traci have been working closely with Ed Thomas and Traci thanked Ed Thomas for his support.

Everything is set for the Resources Workshop - only the Floods After Fires Module still needs a presenter. They hope to have someone finalized next week.

There is a price reduction for the online venue, per the Community Assistance Program which is getting more detailed about the funding that runs through the Grant process.

Information on how to record the presentations was previously sent out. If anyone has issues, please reach out to Shaye Bodine. They will be doing some tests next week before the Resource Seminar goes forward and will reach out to their speakers to make sure everything is prepared and can address any technical issues then.

Many thanks to everyone for all the hard work, and again to Ed Thomas especially for all his help in the back and forth to make the Workshop a success.

**Ed Hecker** stated he was glad to hear that Montana is seeking someone local for the Fire & Flood Module. He and Ed Thomas had been talking with Clemson and others about who might be able to contribute to that. We continue to look for a speaker for that Module.

**Traci Sears** shared that Montana has also been working on a *Floods After Fire Guide* with the Corps of Engineers and their Fire folks. They hope to have a couple of *Floods After Fire* advocates involved and to pull one of them to be a potential speaker and collaborator for NHMA and the RNN in future.

**Ed Thomas** thanked Traci Sears for sharing that - it would be a huge benefit. He has been very concerned as he thought we would not have any difficulty getting a volunteer to present that particular Module, yet we have not located anyone; very glad that she can possibly get help from there.

**Tim Trautman** shared that he co-presented a long time ago on some fire stuff with someone from Colorado that was part of their Fire Wise program - it was not Brian Barilla, but Brian might be able to recommend someone.

**Ed Hecker** shared that Ellen Berggren, the Corp's Silver Jackets Program Manager, had mentioned Colorado's Center as well and was going to reach out to them for us. He is confident we'll come up with a good speaker team.

**Ed Thomas** added that as Traci Sears pointed out, this will be someone we'll plan on using to fill a hole in our capabilities.

**Ed Hecker** reported with regard to the Strategic Plan. As we take the 24 Modules that we have in the DRR Curriculum and look at updating, improving and adding to them as we play them forward into workshops - such as the Montana Workshop coming up and as we've done in the past in South Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah and elsewhere - we're entering a phase over the next year where we'll try to cover and update all those Modules.

The Montana Workshop is a good opportunity to have folks from the Clemson faculty observing how the Modules perform, so this will be a test run on what we need to do to perfect them going forward. This process is important as Clemson will begin incorporating the Modules into academic curriculums at various universities. So, this is both a great opportunity to assist Montana with this Workshop and start the process of taking the DRR Curriculum to the next level.

**Ed Hecker** promised to close the loop with Traci Sears early next week on the Workshop speakers to make sure we have all the Modules covered and speaker agreements in place. Ed Hecker and Ed Thomas want to ensure we have clarity on who is presenting and what if any adjustments they're making to the original presentation from the Module going back to April 2019. With regard to setting these up, Ed Hecker pointed out that some of the presentations are 36-40 megabytes large and may be hard to transfer by e-mail.

**Traci Sears** concurred and said this should not be too difficult because the State of Montana has a file transfer platform that Shaye Bodine can use which will take large e-mails. Again, if anyone has any issues, please contact Shaye Bodine.

## CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG

**Tim Trautman** shared one of the more exciting things they've accomplished in his community, after years of work they've developed a Flood Risk Community Guidebook through a contract with the DHS. It takes some of their local approaches and will be published and available for anyone in the country to look at. It details some of the ways they assessed risk and prioritized and reduced risk with focus on floods specifically. It was submitted to the DHS as part of their contract in July, and DHS is in the process of scrubbing it up, so it's not available yet.

The Guidebook is exciting and will be a good resource. It may even become a Curriculum Module, if it's interesting enough to NHMA on the risk assessment, risk reduction planning Module with that kind of methodology.

Subsequently and tied directly to that Guide Book, Charlotte-Mecklenburg has developed an in-house tool to manage their data on a Dashboard system, which allows them to go in and run different risk reduction scenarios within their communities depending on how much money they want to spend, etc. It ultimately allows them to plan for the communities' level of residual risk they want at the end of mitigation, or as new construction happens, try to minimize the added risk they have plus how they want to mitigate. They are working it through using this Dashboard tool they've developed to do some planning as well. These are some big accomplishments that they've been working on for a couple of years.

**Ed Thomas** immediately asked if the Guidebook can be shared informally with our fellow RNN members? Or what can we say about it publicly at this point in time?

**Tim Trautman** stated that it's probably only about a month away from being cleared by DHS. It can't be shared now but it's not that far out before it can. DHS is a little sensitive about going through the review process. As soon as they give approval Tim will let everyone know so NHMA can help get the word out.

**Vince Brown** would like to put that in the FEMA newsletter.

**Ed Thomas** would like to incorporate it into the Curriculum with existing Modules. This is big news - congratulations.

**Ed Hecker** has put Tim Trautman down for a call with Clemson to discuss how that fits in with the Curriculum update we're going to do. It certainly fits very well into the Operational Plan we're putting together.

**Vince Brown** asked why is DHS involved?

**Tim Trautman** explained that the project was funded through the DHS Science and Technology Division. There have been some folks that David Alexander, who runs one of the divisions within the Science and Technology Directorate within DHS, has been coordinating with and keeping some folks in FEMA abreast of it. Tim doesn't know who specifically, but one of the goals for this project was not to do this in a vacuum.

**Ed Hecker** will ask Tim Trautman to introduce him to David Alexander at some point.

#### **4) Discussion of RNN objectives and roles in the new NHMA Strategic and Operational Plan (Ed Hecker) - New NHMA Board Member Ed Hecker to talk about RNN Linkage to Silver Jackets**

**Ed Hecker** reported on the NHMA Strategic Plan. We've been working since last December to get the final draft that was provided as read-ahead for this call. This is a transformational effort for NHMA with our partners for addressing the multi-hazard scenarios that we have to assist communities in developing disaster risk reduction and community resilience efforts. A lot of this playing forward will be done with the DRR Curriculum, with everything the RNN Communities have been doing over the past ten years and now playing it into a bit more active role. The next step is an Operations Plan, where we will take the goals, objectives, strategies, etc. that you see in the Strategic Plan and put them into specific actions that we can measure in terms of engagement with a number of pilot projects so we can see what success looks like. The bottom line is we'll be relying heavily on the RNN Communities to be the point of the spear for NHMA as we develop this.

We'll be developing an updated budget for NHMA that will align the funds we have through the Grant and other revenue streams that we'll be developing to make sure that we fully enable any RNN Communities who want to participate in this new increased effort to have the resources they need to take an active role. Asks all to read Goal 3, Objective 3, Strategy 1 which gets into what we want to do in terms of focusing the next five to ten years of RNN program effort based on the foundational work that everyone has done up to this point. We'll start looking at some pilots that were done in South Carolina and the work that's going on in Montana, Oklahoma, etc., and building out some granular pilot projects that have engaged an array of Grants and interagency and federal agency programs. We've got BRIC that's just come into being as a successor to the disaster mitigation programs, and things of that nature. Within that we're starting to set up NHMA as an organization that can assist communities with translating a lot of these national programs to specific actions at the community level. We're going to be looking closely for the RNN Communities to take a look at that, give us some feedback, help us shape it from the Strategic Plan, and then we'll be looking for volunteers from the RNN Communities to help shape some of these initial pilot projects. We have already reached out to the Silver Jackets team to look at building a bond between the Silver Jackets teams and the RNN Communities as we develop this Operational Plan. That's all there in the Strategic Plan. This really looks forward to the folks on this call - and we'll reach out to the rest of the RNN Communities - to engage with this and give us your feedback and ideas on how we can make this exciting and a good next set of steps to build on everything the RNN Communities have done up to this point.

**Tim Trautman** asked about timeline for a response.

**Ed Hecker** responded that we're looking at a two-week turn around for comments. We'll take your comments and incorporate them into the final document. The following week after that is the Montana Workshop; but towards the end of that week we should have a final document that we can then arrange a couple of specific calls around - separate from the routine monthly calls - in order to get the

RNN Community's and the Board of Directors' final concurrence and approval on the plan. From that we'll develop a 2-page version of the Strategic Plan to use in communicating to our external partners and the RNN Communities. Then the Operational Plan to follow will be an internal document in terms of how we're going to get this done. So, by the end of next month you should be seeing an initial draft of the Operational Plan.

The Timeline is the initial step is to get your comments, feedback, ideas, suggestions to us by two weeks from today and we'll play those directly into the final version of the Strategic Plan and then go forward from there.

## 5) Status of ABA Book – Ed Thomas

**Ed Thomas** reported that the ABA Book is published, but he can't yet find the information on the website. He will get the word out to everyone as soon as possible once it's online. Hopefully this will lead to some joint webinars with the ABA.

The Book is very much an NHMA/RNN product. We have several people on the call today who have written chapters for it as well as many other folks whose names we are all familiar with. It will be out, and we'll be talking about it during the webinars for Montana and will be incorporating it into the overall Operations Plan as we roll it out.

**Ed Hecker** asked if Ed Thomas will work with the ABA on a press release or announcement that could transition into another article for the FEMA newsletters.

**Ed Thomas** concurred - absolutely - we want to get a link to it into FEMA's publications and also get it out through NHMA and the RNN Communities along with bullet points of what the different chapters specifically show so people can see what the resource capabilities are.

**Traci Sears** would like a copy of it.

**Ed Hecker** asked will the Book be free to NHMA members?

**Ed Thomas** stated there will be a charge for the book.

**Ed Hecker** suggested we'll work on how to access the book once it becomes available.

**Ed Hecker** summarized that we have a number of things playing forward into September between the Montana Workshop, Tim's Guide and the ABA Book, as well as the whole transition into an Operational Framework.

## 6) Follow-up on any RNN action items and future activities

**Ed Hecker** noted most of the Action Items have been addressed.

**Annie Vest** reported on the Quad-State Conference and Oklahoma Flood Plain Managers Conference. If anybody has any interest in documenting what they're doing, they're looking for abstracts for the Oklahoma Flood Plain Managers Association Conference. The submission period closed today but that was just an arbitrary deadline and they will entertain any other submissions. They did receive one abstract but are focusing on flood risk reduction. Even if somebody wants to propose any of the things NHMA is doing for the Montana Conference those could be submitted, and it's a good opportunity to showcase and reintroduce NHMA and the RNN effort to Oklahoma.

**Annie Vest** shared another opportunity for the RNN Communities to consider around the managed retreat effort. She was reached out to by a group of individuals who are making a documentary on managed retreat, specifically on the climate impact on children. They are looking to interview families that have been affected by disaster. The documentary is for HBO or the Sesame Workshop. The intent is to have families watch the documentary together so that it's a conversation starter for families. Annie has reached out to a few families that she knows personally in Oklahoma who have been relocated and have children between the ages of 9 and 12, which is the age the film makers are looking for. If anyone has done any of this or would be interested in talking to the film makers, please let her know so she can point them in the right direction. It has been more difficult than they thought it would be to find this information because a lot of it is related to privacy. If this is something that anyone is interested in talking to the film makers about, please let her know and she'll put you in contact with them.

**Tim Trautman** said he will talk to one of his staff who worked directly with homeowners on buyouts to see if anything pops into his head. A lot of the buyouts we do are pre-disaster so there aren't a ton of traumatic recent stories with the children that live in the flooded house. Second, a lot of their buyouts are not laser focused on families; it seems that the properties that are at risk don't have a lot of young children involved. He will ask around and have some folks reach out to Annie if they have some families in that situation. Annie shared that those that have been relocated for pre-disaster would qualify and may be of interest. They were specifically looking for Hurricane Matthew. She will reach out to North Carolina.

**Shaye Bodine** offered that Lori Peek at the University of Colorado Boulder a large majority of her research is focused on children in disasters so that would be an appropriate place for the film makers to turn in terms of connections but also in ethical ways to go about something like this as well.

There being no one else present to report on their Action Items, the remaining Action Items were tabled until next month's call.

#### 7) CTP Collaboration Monthly Call for Topics

**Vince Brown** announced that the Montana Workshop article was published in the FEMA NewsFlash; he will send a copy out to everyone.

**Ed Hecker** reminded everyone that anybody who has other topics they would like to craft an article on for submission to FEMA it is a good way to get visibility on some of the things that we're doing.

#### 8) Publication opportunities and virtual speaking opportunities

#### 9) Any comments from Vincent Brown for FEMA updates

**Vince Brown** asked that we focus on National Preparedness month.

**Ed Hecker** reported that there's a note that FEMA's David Maurstad wants to see a significant focus on National Preparedness Month in September, so events like the Montana Workshop and other events that folks are participating in could be good opportunities to get the word out on Preparedness. , Particularly during the follow up to recent hurricanes and whatever else might develop over the next month or so which is mainly hurricane season. This is a good way to use the National Preparedness backdrop as a point of reference for a lot of what we're doing.

**Vince Brown** shared that he was asked if there were any entities that could help support this effort per David Maurstad's request and anything we or our partners can do is much appreciated. Please let him know if you did something and he'll get that information back to David as well. We also disseminated the information, which is helpful too, and Vince will add that data to the numbers. There are also slides and a link in his e-mail with information from FEMA that everyone can use and if you do, please let him know.

**Ed Hecker** added that getting feedback from the communities on what's helpful and what's not helpful and what we can do to improve our overall preparedness status, so put the word out but provide feedback that you receive on anything it would be helpful to FEMA and others at the national level.

#### 10) Adjourn

The Meeting ended at 3:45 p.m.

Next meeting is **September 25, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.** Eastern Time.

## August 2020 Action Items List

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- (Aug-A1) **Tim Trautman** to let everyone know as soon as DHS approves the Flood Risk Community Guidebook so NHMA can help get the word out.
- (Aug-A2) **Vince Brown** to put an announcement about the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Flood Risk Community Guidebook in the FEMA newsletter.
- (Aug-A3) **Ed Thomas and the Project Management Team** to incorporate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Flood Risk Community Guidebook into the Curriculum with existing Modules.
- (Aug-A4) **Ed Hecker** to follow up with Tim Trautman for a call with Clemson University to discuss how the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Flood Risk Community Guidebook fits in with the Curriculum update.
- (Aug-A5) **Ed Hecker** to ask Tim Trautman to introduce him to David Alexander of the DHS Science and Technology Division.
- (Aug-A6) **RNN Communities** to responded with comments on the NHMA Strategic Plan by September 11.
- (Aug-A7) **Ed Thomas** to get a link to the ABA Resilience Book out to everyone as soon as it is available and get the announcement of it along with a link into FEMA's publications.
- (Aug-A8) **RNN Communities** to focus on National Preparedness Month and track activities around promotion of this concept for David Maurstad, getting notes on what they've done back to Vince Brown by the end of September.