



# Resilient Neighbors Network

Minutes of RNN Community Meeting of  
Friday, *September 27, 2019*, 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 UPCOMING MEETING OF November 1, 2019:**

1. Roll call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Status of ABA Resilience Book (Ed Thomas)
4. **Comments/Issues/RNN Community Sharing/Good News**
5. Status of Practical Community Resilience Project in South Carolina & Silver Jackets link (Ed Hecker)  
New NHMA Board Member Ed Hecker to talk about RNN Linkage to Silver Jackets
6. Review of Action Items
7. **Presentation by French Wetmore on NAI.**
8. Discussion re: submitting a briefing on National Mitigation Investment Strategy which FEMA has rolled out.
9. RNN Future Activities
10. Discussion of Best Practices Documentation-New Best Practice on mitigation-based recovery with no Presidential Declaration: Joe Rossi and Coastal Coalition [Material sent separately] and Traci Sears from Montana
11. Next Steps for RNN-DRR Curriculum Future Meeting? Discussion of CTP Grant
  - a. New Grant requires NHMA and RNN to participate with and recommend other possible interested agencies for an advisory committee meeting in Washington D.C. – [Detail by John Wiener circulated with Minutes.] Possible other locations/dates
  - b. NHMA DRR Curriculum & Workshop Status:
    - i. Examining how to further improve fit of the RNN Curriculum to the needs of External Stakeholders; coupling better with existing courses: including FEMA, EPA, NOAA, NACo, NGO & private market courses?
    - ii. RNN Volunteers for the development of the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum;

- iii. How to take advantage of the latest update from the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council on the cost/benefit of Hazard Mitigation.
  - c. Natural Hazard Conference
12. *CTP Collaboration Monthly Call* for Topics
  13. Comments from Vincent Brown of FEMA on the many things happening at FEMA
  14. Status of Island Press Interest, Articles for NHMA Newsletter and/or ABA
  15. Adjourn
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## **Minutes for Meeting of Friday, September 27, 2019:**

### **11:00 am ET - CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL:**

#### **1) ROLL CALL:**

Present:

**Tim Trautman** (Charlotte-Mecklenburg)  
**Traci Sears** (State of Montana)  
**Joe Rossi** (Marshfield Coastal Coalition)  
**Annie Vest** (NHMA Board)  
**Ed Thomas** (NHMA Board)  
**Jim Murphy** (NHMA Board)  
**Vince Brown** (FEMA)

Ed Thomas shared that he just got in from Utah on Saturday and turned right around to do a workshop in Arkansas on Sunday. He has read a good book called "It's Not All About Me; Top Ten Techniques For Building A Quick Rapport With Anybody" by Robin Dreeke, an FBI profiler describing how he gets people talking when he wants to get information out of them. This is relevant to us because we need to be able to listen and then find a way to craft and sell our mitigation message.

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#### **2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** (July 2019 and August 2019)

Quorum not present - Minutes tabled.

#### **3) STATUS OF ABA RESILIENCE BOOK** (Ed Thomas)

**Joe Rossi** just sent his chapter out for peer review so should have it to Ed Thomas either today or tomorrow.

#### **4) COMMENTS/ISSUES/RNN COMMUNITY SHARING/GOOD NEWS**

**Annie Vest** reported that the Arkansas workshop was excellent. They also had the Oklahoma conference the week before and were given a lot of time to speak which was also excellent. She will try to write a little blurb about this for the Newsletter.

**Tim Trautman** gave a general update on activities in Charlotte-Mecklenburg which were mentioned in the last call. Per his remarks last month, they had a river flood in June last year and their Board allocated 2.5 million dollars to provide some grants for their homeowners to raise/elevate their homes and potentially buy some properties out.

Out of 30 fairly damaged properties, probably 15 are substantially damaged. They've had their first buy-out which will close in the next few days. They're struggling to find contractors that can elevate homes. It's a major challenge for them in this economy; Tim believes this must be an issue throughout the country.

They have a FEMA Grant right now to elevate four houses which they've been working on for two years and have been out to bid on this for months. They just can't get contractors to competitively bid. The ones that are probably going to bid say that they have work right now through February of 2020. Even if they get the bid, work can't start until early next year because they don't have the masons and general contractors or house movers that can get started until February. This is the result of the housing and construction market that we're in.

The things along the river that had flooding in June 2019 and were substantially damaged, those homeowners are having trouble getting quotes from contractors – again, the same situation. The challenge there is that they're flooded out of their houses. Some structures have been substantially damaged and it's just a very slow process to resolve because of the construction environment. But they're moving forward.

**Tim Trautman** is involved in two other things nationally that have to do with mitigation and moving the needle:

There is a **buy-out workshop** that he's on the Committee for which is being put together in **Chapel Hill, NC the last week of October**. It's a blend of about 60 invited people with some researchers with universities and locals that actually implement buy-outs. The idea is to try to see what impediments there are to buy-outs, continue the discussion, what additional research may be needed that academia can help with to make them more successful or more comprehensive and have some outcomes through the workshops.

The folks behind the scenes on this are: **NRDC - National Research Defense Counsel**. They identified the need, found the location, invited Tim Trautman and a woman named Fawn McGee who runs the program in New Jersey, to be on the committee helping to organize speakers. It's an invitation only event; he does not know how they came up with the invitation list. People are coming in from all over the country to collaborate for two years.

In early November **the National Association of Counties** will meet in South Padre Island, Texas. They're putting on workshops around the country wherever there are communities and counties that need some guidance and a push toward implementing hazard mitigation.

This is a Coastal Counties Workshop – specifically, a *Coastal Resilience Capacity Building Workshop on South Padre Island, TX, November 7 through 8*. Tim will be speaking about Educating Residents on Flood Risk to Build Community Capacity and Preparedness.

**Ed Thomas** suggested that if there's anything we can do to help support Tim's efforts by sending along any materials from the Curriculum, to please let us know. **Tim** will forward info on the draft workshop with the name and the date for the calendar and for distribution.

- 5) **STATUS OF PRACTICAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT IN SOUTH CAROLINA & SILVER JACKETS LINK** (Ed Hecker) New NHMA Board Member Ed Hecker to talk about RNN Linkage to Silver Jackets
- 6) **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**
- 7) **RNN FUTURE ACTIVITIES**
- 8) **DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENTATION-NEW BEST PRACTICE ON MITIGATION-BASED RECOVERY WITH NO PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION: Joe Rossi and Coastal Coalition [Material sent separately] and Traci Sears from Montana.**

**Joe Rossi** gave an update on activities with the Marshfield Coastal Coalition. They have become a joint venture with another non-profit and will implement grant programs on behalf of communities. After last year's events, when they didn't get a Presidentially declared disaster, they formed a program called **H.E.L.P. – Hazard Elimination Loss Prevention**.

The **HELP Program** is now part of a joint venture with two other organizations. The goal is to implement the HMA Grant for Communities. They are piloting this in two communities in Massachusetts: Scituate and Salem, and it will be out in 2021 because they're still working on the RFPs. This program is very innovative: In Region 1 there are a lot of up-front costs involved in getting into the HMA Program, so they have partnered with philanthropies to pay for these up-front costs for folks who are part of the Program. There's no risk for individuals who end up applying. It is the biggest project they have going on.

Second: The Marshfield Coastal Coalition is doing two CRS User Groups that will start in January: One on the North Shore and one on the South Shore.

**Joe Rossi** is buried in a full CRS implementation in his hometown of Marshfield, MA, where they expect their rating to go from a 9 to a 7. This leap is due to them being only the second Community in New England to have a plan for

public information, and their plan is the highest scoring plan in the region; because of this, their points calculations are coming out at just enough to be a Level 7 Community.

This is the first time in about twenty years that the community has gone through a full CRS Class Upgrade. Joe has been put in charge of almost everything related to it, including the Building Department's audit of the Elevation Certificates, which, upon examination, were found to be atrocious. Consequently, he has been sitting hand-in-hand with the Building Department to correct not only the Elevation Certificates but the compliance issues within the community. They're hopeful this is almost behind them. Their five-year audit is November 7, so it's full speed ahead until then.

**Ed Thomas** congratulated Joe Rossi on this remarkable and very exciting effort. This is a superb example of how a non-profit and volunteer organization can really help a community in a very clear and defined way. It's amazing what's being done between Joe's business enterprise and his non-profit that are really making a change in flood resilience.

**Joe Rossi** further shared that one of the reasons they got involved with CRS in the first place was to prove the Town wrong: In 2013 the Town told them that no volunteer organization could increase a CRS rate class. They were proven very wrong!

**Ed Thomas** had also never heard of such a thing happening before and can certainly understand why the Town would have come to that conclusion. In all the years of his experience, he has never heard of a volunteer organization achieving any such result. **Ed suggested that this really needs to be written up as a Best Practice for the rest of the nation.** Whenever Joe Rossi feels comfortable getting this written up, we can try to persuade Roger Fairs to help out with the writing assignment. This could really help in other small communities around the nation.

**Joe Rossi** added that they did a presentation just last night for a local group hosting a Coastal Resiliency Meeting and when they brought up the CRS issues, two more communities asked for help to do the same thing for their community. Marshfield was the pilot community, so they just need the bandwidth to expand the pilot. If communities took this model and implemented it in their own locale, it very well could be a success.

In the CRS user groups that they plan to host in January for the North and South Shore of Massachusetts, the whole goal for the groups is to get all communities that participate to at least a Class 9. If they can get there on a wide scale and then help the individual communities get a higher-Class rating, that would be the goal.

**Vince Brown** found this very interesting; he shared that FEMA is getting very involved in collecting real life success stories so they can help their Regions and communities implement some of the ideas that other people have had success with and **would be very interested in disseminating anything that we can get written up about this to many folks at FEMA.**

**Ed Thomas** agreed that we would certainly do this. He observed that this is a long-term process that Joe Rossi has started. If there's anything he can personally do to help with Joe's efforts, Joe to please let him know.

**Ed Thomas mentioned that Traci Sears** is one of the leaders in the nation - along with Joe Rossi - on what to do when a community doesn't get a Presidentially declared disaster and needs to come up with solutions for that. Ed invited Traci to report on anything she had to share on this and her progress in writing up some of the stuff she's been engaged in:

**Traci Sears reported that she and her team are** trying to find the time to do the write up about their activities. Her very few coordinators are getting inundated with a tremendous amount of additional work. On top of what they generally already do, they have had their workload increase by about a quarter of the usual amount and are struggling to keep up. They will keep those practices in place and continue working to record them.

**Traci** explained the State of Montana is being driven by some of the Climate Change work going on at Montana State University. They are working with many different stakeholders, especially the ranchers and farmers because the weather has become so dramatic and climate change is having a dramatic effect on what they can grow and when they can do their calving, etc. This is pushing a lot of the watershed coordination and coalition work which is going on.

Because they're dealing with drought as well, one of the many things that are coming up is the recognition that they have to make the watersheds healthier. This is helping them transition into examining not only how they can tap into recovery grants, but also how they can tap into additional funding in other areas. This is all just starting now but they're seeing a big push.

**Traci** reported on her experience at a recent conference for the Montana Association of Planners. There were three different groups participating, all talking about similar actions that are occurring in these watersheds within the state. They discussed alternative ways of funding recovery by looking at The Upper Yellowstone River, which can get funding to

buy up land that might not fit into a Presidentially declared disaster, or something mitigation grants could purchase, and are working on some of those initiatives with them. The Montana Association of Planners is leading the charge on this and she is trying to piggyback on their efforts.

**Ed Thomas** suggested that if there is anything that we can do to help her document these efforts to please let him know; we will also try to get Roger Faris's cooperation on this too. Roger is a brilliant writer and can interview people and knock stuff out pretty quickly.

**Ed Thomas** then asked the group for their views on what NHMA should be doing with regard to the FEMA Grant. He suggested we should have staff available to start writing up best practices so we can pass them over to FEMA to then be distributed around the country. Does anyone have a thought on whether that would be a good use of the Grant? Should we propose to FEMA that we have such capability readily available, not just when Roger Faris can find time as a volunteer, but to actually hire someone to be available to help with this. Any thoughts on that?

**Tim Trautman** agreed this suggestion makes sense. If FEMA is interested in having some of these things documented, he agreed it would be a good approach if that product has value.

**Ed Thomas** concurred that it does have value. He mentioned that NHMA wants to serve as a place where we spread local grass roots initiative information and the idea that it actually works by giving examples of success stories such as Joe Rossi, who is actually getting something done through grass roots initiatives. Massachusetts used to be a national leader in the CRS. In his own community of Quincy, the Mayor used to send out an annual letter boasting about how they were tirelessly working for the community and that was the reason they were getting a discount on flood insurance premiums, etc. Little by little over time they went backwards on CRS and the discounts disappeared. So, it is very important to say, 'here's an example of an organization that's actually getting this done at the local level'.

**Vince Brown** agreed.

**Traci Sears** agreed that this is a great idea. Fresh from a conference on the NFIP transformation with FEMA, and all the characteristics that they're working on trying to implement in order to cheer and provide support to states, she noted that there are probably five or six different types of plans that they are asking the states to implement. The organization is probably set to pull and put together some models that states can actually utilize as these plans come through – one of them is looking at a state supported Disaster Recovery Commission, or having an MOU or Mission Related Finance, to support substantial damage; and the concept goes on with endangered species, etc. There are so many things that states are going to be looking at closely because they're putting characteristics together and some states might have them but not readily available. It's a good way to get this information to the states so they can utilize it and have it filter down to local communities.

**Ed Thomas** remarked that today's discussion was very enlightening – there's stuff that he didn't know about, and there are probably other people out there that are not familiar with this and should be familiar with it. Ed would like very much to talk to the folks there, and this is stuff that we can develop for spreading around the RNN and the NHMA membership and then get it out to other organizations so we can do cross-silo training.

The stuff we just did in Arkansas was great. We were talking to Flood Plain Managers, and the vast bulk of the people in the room, despite FEMA's work in Arkansas - which does a great job of educating its Flood Plain Managers - didn't know about BRIC, they didn't know about recent court cases, they didn't know about how to do substantial damage; there was a lot of stuff that people really didn't know or understand. And in Utah, it was amazing to talk to people in the fire community, and how little they understood about flooding and flooding following fire and also to hear their stories about dealing with land use surrounding wild fires and the aftermath of wild fires including flood; and then having the attorneys in the room with the engineers and architects, it was a great cross-silo training. So the more we can do to reach out to county associations and to other organizations – the agricultural organizations, the folks that are working on real world issues and have problems and how we can help with the flood plain management and the disaster risk reduction aspect of this, the better off we all will be as a society. Ultimately while you have all these tremendous numbers of silos at the federal and even state level, at the local level it all comes together in a sort of hodge-podge. The more we can do to get people talking to each other before and after a disaster, the better off we are. This might give us some tools. As we share information on flooding, this is a great idea.

## **9) NEXT STEPS FOR RNN-DRR CURRICULUM FUTURE MEETING? DISCUSSION OF CTP GRANT**



- a) **New Grant requires NHMA and RNN to participate with and recommend other possible interested agencies for an advisory committee meeting in Washington D.C. – [Detail by John Wiener circulated with Minutes.] Possible other locations/dates**
- b) **NHMA DRR Curriculum & Workshop Status:**
- i) **Examining how to further improve fit of the RNN Curriculum to the needs of External Stakeholders; coupling better with existing courses: including FEMA, EPA, NOAA, NACo, NGO & private market courses?**
  - ii) **RNN Volunteers for the development of the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum;**
  - iii) **How to take advantage of the latest update from the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council on the cost/benefit of Hazard Mitigation.**

Vince Brown asked about status of the Curriculum. What's the latest goings on with the Curriculum?

Ed Thomas explained that we have 24 modules done, we need to vet them. That's the next thing that needs to take place. It has been more difficult to develop than we thought. We had relied primarily on volunteers to get it done; and we kind of ran out of volunteers after a while, so we had to pay a contractor to do it and we need to vet what we've got, and then we need to make sure people know what is available.

Annie Vest has used materials from the Curriculum in her presentations to the Oklahoma Flood Plain Managers, Ed and Annie used it in Utah and Arkansas. We need to get information about the Curriculum out there. For example, If Tim Trautman were to think about some of the topics he wants to talk about, we've probably got slides in the Curriculum that he could use or just tweak to his purposes. The same too for Traci Sears and Joe Rossi. We've got to have our PMT work up what we want to do with the 2018 and the 2019 FEMA Grant which will lead to actually having a plan in in 2020 or in 2021. Our vision is to have a vetted Curriculum Credential that will be made available, tentatively called a Disaster Risk Reduction Ambassador or something else, that would be an all-hazards understanding of the risks and consequences and how to eliminate or reduce misunderstandings of risks and consequences, and then begin to reduce actual risks. We continue to work on it, we have a huge chunk of materials that just need to be vetted, cross-checked and put into action. That's where we are.

Traci Sears of Montana shared they have a pre-conference workshop for their floodplain administrators in March – she will speak to Ed Thomas offline to discuss using some of the modules and test them there.

Ed Thomas agreed to speak with Traci off-line. Observed that money is always in issue in getting people to come out to present, so having her there doing a presentation as one of us along with people like Annie Vest who is a real expert on the post-disaster process, Ed Hecker on interagency coordination, and Jim Murphy on levees and engineering demonstrates the breadth of our RNN Communities' expertise. We have all sorts of different experts that could present remotely or through a webinar such as Ed Thomas doing the legal aspects and presenting some of the really important changes that have just come down from the Supreme Court that local folks need to understand which will impact local governments tremendously in ways that they most likely don't see coming.

**We will get out to the RNN Community members the link to all the current modules in their current state so that they can take a look at them. We have wildfire, post wildfire, earthquake, plus we have the vetted modules.**

Vince Brown agreed he thinks that's going to be very important. If we can show that one of the things we've done and are doing with the Curriculum is getting it out to all the communities in the RNN for their awareness and their use, and documenting their use of the materials. He brings this up because he's been made aware that in the Risk Management Directorate part of FIMA where our branch is located, they're going to start looking at partnerships in our grants – to see how we want to go forward in the future with the relationships that we have now. In other words, we've been funding certain organizations; do we want to continue funding them, if so, then how can we get them to more strategically support us. That kind of thing is going to start going on in 2020 mission priorities and objectives. Thinks it behooves us to start showing FEMA we are doing this so Vince can make people aware on a regular basis of the things that are being done through the Grant. The Curriculum, relative to what we've done, has been a heavy lift, we put a lot of time and effort into it, I think we need to take that next step and start showcasing it, getting it used, also disseminating information about how important we think it is, how strategically it can benefit us. That kind of thinking is coming to the fore here.

Ed Thomas agreed. We collectively have to show a return on FEMA's investment. It's just that simple.

Vince Brown to speak offline with Ed about this but encourages us to do this and make something happen with what he suggested and send this thing out to the RNN Communities. He can make use of both of those activities on our

behalf. As soon as he gets the information about it he can send it out to say Hey – look at what NHMA is doing! Vince thinks he can do that. We need to start thinking more about doing that kind of thing.

**Traci Sears reported that Montana is getting ready to write up their Five-Year Training Program and are more than willing to use the Curriculum. Ed to give her a call either today or Monday to discuss before she's on the road again.**

**Ed** suggested we just plan on weaving this in and thinking about how we can do it – if we need someone to be physically present there for part of it, that certainly is a legitimate Grant expense, but we want to leverage as much as possible and he really likes the idea of Traci doing some of the presentation. If Tim Trautman can find any of this material useful in his presentations it would also be very good. We spent an enormous amount of time, as Vince points out, developing these materials, let's think about how we can best make use of them.

**Vince Brown** suggested some kind of long-distance use might be good too – for example, **if we can get somebody to remotely do a webinar as part of the training event Traci is talking about, that would serve a purpose too.**

**Ed** agreed. More than anyone, Traci Sears can speak to the value of the materials that are presented in the Curriculum. When those go out to local folks they are incredibly well received. Traci has been in the room and seen the reaction of flood plain managers to the materials presented, and the real joy that people get in understanding the stuff that folks like Joe Rossi present when they go out and do these sessions around the country. What Vince is saying here is extremely helpful – there's a real value in demonstrating that we can present these materials remotely.

**Vince Brown** suggested we also think about sending a batch of the modules to another organization, something like the RNPN and say look, we're the NHMA, we've developed these Modules and our RNN Communities would like see what the RNPN members (National Wildlife Fund, World Bank, etc.) think of this material and if they have any comments to please let us know.

**Ed** to talk about this more with Vince Brown. We will just plan on doing that. What we're finding is that virtually all of the modules are better when they are particularized to an individual state. We saw that in Pennsylvania, in Oklahoma, and anywhere that we present because of the differences between and among the states. We certainly saw that in Montana – If we had just gone there and presented stuff that was national in scope it would have been well received at all. And rightly so. When we went there and presented stuff that was particularized to the individual concerns of the people involved there was a huge amount of interest in it. Let's think about how to do that and start getting this stuff out there and in use.

**Vince Brown** stated he is available to talk about any of this any time. Thanked Traci for her ideas and her offer.

**Ed** mentioned that Traci has been one of the most vigorous users of these materials over the years. She deserves and award for that, in his view.

**Annie Vest** mentioned to Tim Trautman that she reached out to Anna Weber who wrote the article that was published. Tim shared that he knows her and is working with her on the team – she is on the presentation panel.

**Annie** is trying to get involved in that group and has been conversing back and forth with Anna; she may be getting Annie into it. Annie has expertise on the FEMA funding side where she also actually helped implement the buyouts in Oklahoma. If Tim or FEMA have additional room or space in the group, Annie would very much like to be considered for it. The issue of buyouts is something she is personally trying to get involved in with regard to changing things. Please keep her in mind from an NHMA perspective if there's room in that group.

**Tim Trautman** asked Annie to please send Anna Weber an email and say that she and Tim actually met and talked today through NHMA and reiterate that she'd like to consider being invited to attend. Please do before 1:00 p.m. as she will be on a planning call with Tim Trautman and he can just follow up with her right then and see what they can do. Tim is helping plan the content of the workshop but has no clue about the list of invitees or how they're picking them or who has responded, etc. at all. They're not able to fund any travel, and that's been a problem for some of the people that they've invited on and off. Annie's involvement would need to be fully funded by her office. They really believe in getting the funding changed after the flooding they had this year in Tulsa County, specifically. But please email her right after this call and tell her she spoke with Tim Trautman and he will follow up this afternoon and see where they're at.

**Ed Thomas** observed that that was one of the most useful conversations we've had in a long time. This whole conversation has been fantastic and is worth the price of admission right there. That's a wonderful offer on Annie's part, and again any of the materials that we've developed for the Curriculum already, everyone is strongly invited and encourage to use and also to update them and if there's something that needs to be done differently and better, to do that.

**Ed** mentioned that as he and John Hustler and others have been saying for years talking about local communication, if people don't do a safe and proper design job on construction, we are underestimating risk most seriously with respect to flood insurance rate maps generally.

Two things have happened: Most everyone here has heard one way or another about the *Arkansas Gate & Fish Case* which pretty well gutted the idea some people seem to hold that they are immune from any sort of litigation. And now we have another case that has come down that coupled with it is going to be very important in the future with respect to local liability for actions that are taken which harm people. That is the *KNIK* case, and Ed needs to write something up on that.

Basically in the *Knik* case the Supreme Court has held that contrary to their previous rulings, now when someone is aggrieved by decisions that are reached at the local level, instead of going back to state court to resolve those disagreements they are allowed to go directly into federal court. This is guaranteed to increase the amount of litigation against local government with respect to perceived harms, including any thought that people have with respect to zoning, buildings codes, and the like. This means between the change of the idea of immunity and what's going on with respect to going directly to federal court using the Civil Rights Statute (42 USC Section 1983) we're going to see more litigation for more perceived harm and more and more folks are going to be learning that they can be held liable when they thought for years that they couldn't be. It is a really major, major, change, not just with respect to hazards, but all aspects of local land use, building codes, and the like.

That's another reason why Ed wishes we had a writer on hand so he could quickly work together on getting out a quick report to the NHMA membership which we could then take out to other folks. Grievances with respect to harm that has been caused, people getting flooded - we're going to see more and more litigation on that particular topic and more of it will be in federal court. Local attorneys in general are much more comfortable and willing to take cases into state court but don't like to go to federal court.

**Jim Murphy** shared on a slightly related issue – the American Society of Civil Engineers had a briefing on Capitol Hill on Tuesday on infrastructure and resiliency based on what happened two years ago in Puerto Rico when Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico and the aftermath. What's important about this is that they're emphasizing the need for disaster mitigation and the use of codes and building standards for infrastructure. There is a potential that they're recommending and which some of the representatives are buying into, called HR2242 which will change some part of the Stafford Act, particularly related to redefining critical services to include first responders, public housing, solid waste management, surface transportation and access, and roads to hospitals. So, there's stuff going on related to the standards, etc.

One of the things they pointed out was in the Bahamas, with the hurricane that just happened, those folks who used the ASCE Seven Standards for building their electrical structure fared the best. In the 22-mile line who used those standards, every single pole and everything in the infrastructure stood up and survived the hurricane that hung over the island for 36 hours. What they're trying to emphasize is that we have to make sure that communities have some standards that they're using. **Jim will send that article so it can be distributed.**

**Ed Thomas** was not aware that they were finally moving along those lines - that is great news. Not sure if Ed Hecker knows about this either. Suggested sharing this around between and among the group and also for those of the RNN that are traveling around the country talking, this will be a good piece of information for them to share, that this is one of the many pieces of legislation that is being considered.

**Annie Vest** shared that Kelly Lynch, who is the general counsel up in Montana, just presented on this when she was doing an update to the conference Annie attended. Annie will send a list of the information she put together and suggested she might be a good resource as well.

**Ed Thomas** would love to see her material and if she's got an article coming, we'd love to use it. Also, if she's willing to write something then we can get it out and Vince can get that out through the Resilient Nations Partnership as well. Most people that Ed has spoken to who are lawyers are totally unaware of the *Arkansas Game & Fish Case*. The word 'immunity' is not to be found in the case and a tremendous number of attorneys have not made the connection with respect to it. They think it's just some puzzling federal case that doesn't have anything to do with them, and they are totally wrong. That and the *Knik* case is a really big show.

**Vince Brown** mentioned that at some point in the near future we should talk about or submit a briefing on National Mitigation Investment Strategy which FEMA has rolled out. They're cataloguing and encouraging communities to



invest in different types of mitigation. Would like to talk about getting that on the Agenda at some point soon because that's going to be big deal too.

**Ed** suggested we just **put the National Mitigation Investment Strategy on the agenda**. Also, Ed Hecker has made it very clear to him that we as an organization absolutely need to take a look at the National Mitigation Investment Strategy and do a crosswalk to what we will do under the Grant so we can directly relate what we're doing to FEMA's priorities and the grant. We need to get rocking on getting Vince materials so he can easily explain what we're up to and why it's important.

**Ed Thomas** summarized that there are a lot of excellent discussions here today about what the RNN members are doing and that Traci Sear is doing, the idea that Traci had, the stuff that Joe Rossi is talking about, and of course the stuff that Tim Trautman is doing nationally. All of this is just incredibly vital. And any of you that want to make use of the Curriculum materials, we'll get the link to them out and if any of you want any information that we've developed on the *KNICK* case or the *Arkansas Game and Fish* in terms of immunity, let us know. In Arkansas, immunity was a really big deal that the local flood plain manager said their mayor and city managers believed they were immune to. And after the *Game and Fish* case, that is just wrong.

If there's anything we can do to support the local flood plain managers in doing their job and anyone that's trying to do disaster risk reduction, that's what NHMA is about, that's what the Curriculum is, and that's what FEMA's financial support is doing for us to help local governments do things differently and better, that's the Curriculum.

### c) **Natural Hazard Conference**

#### **10) CTP Collaboration Monthly Call for Topics**

Please keep in mind the *CTP Collaboration Monthly Call for Topics*.

#### **11) Comments from Vincent Brown of FEMA on the many things happening at FEMA**

#### **12) Status of Island Press Interest, Articles for NHMA Newsletter and/or ABA**

#### **13) Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned 12:10 p.m.

Next meeting is **October 18, 2019 at 11:00 p.m.** Eastern Time -  
**Rescheduled for November 1, 2019 @ 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time**

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## **September 2019 RNN Action Items List**

- (Sept.-A1) **Annie Vest** to write a blurb about Arkansas and Oklahoma workshops for the Newsletter.
- (Sept.-A2) **Tim Trautman** to forward info on the workshops he is doing for posting and distribution.
- (Sept.-A3) **NHMA Admin** to distribute Module links to the RNN communities for review and loop in Vince Brown. - **DONE**
- (Sept.-A4) **Jim Murphy** to send an article on the American Society of Civil Engineers about HR2242 and emphasizing mitigation and use of codes and building standards - particularly the ASCE Seven Standards and how they benefited infrastructure in the Bahamas during a recent hurricane.

- (Sept.-A5) **NHMA Admin** to add Discussion on submitting a briefing on National Mitigation Investment Strategy which FEMA has rolled out to the next meeting agenda. - **DONE**
- (Sept.-A6) **Traci Sears** to use the DRR Curriculum to write up Montana's Five-Year Training Program.
- (Sept.-A7) **Traci Sears** to use the Curriculum Modules at her upcoming pre-conference workshops and other events and consider using some Modules presented remotely via webinar.
- (Sept.-A8) **Joe Rossi, Traci Sears and Tim Trautman** to write-up their various activities for Best Practices.
- (Sept.-A9) **Tim Trautman** to forward info on the *Coastal Resilience Capacity Building Workshop* in South Padre Island, TX, November 7 & 8, for the calendar and distribution.

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## August 2019 RNN Action Items List

### STATUS OF ABA RESILIENCE BOOK (Ed Thomas)

- (Aug-A1) **Chuck Wallace** to reach out to **Tom Robison** and **Donna Boyce** to urge finishing Chapter 3.
- (Aug-A2) **Jim Murphy** and **Lillian Robison** to assist in looking over the book chapter.

### BEST PRACTICES

- (Aug-A3) **NHMA Board to consider** providing some funding for preparing White Papers, editorial and writing support to the RNN Communities for the purpose of writing up White Papers on **1)** the work that was done first in South Carolina, which was then taken up to our RNN Community in Montana with respect to how they handled substantial damage in a very rural state when they had no Presidential Declaration, and no Rainy Day Funds available, either as a good model; and **2)** Charlotte-Mecklenburg as an incredible model with respect to thinking about the fact that they had established a Rainy-Day Fund, they had a process in place, they spent some money, they brought experts in to educate the community on elevation mitigation.
- (Aug-A4) **NHMA Admin** to submit a draft of Tim Trautman's report from the Minutes to Roger Faris for him to do an interview around it to get a White Paper or Best Practice or Lessons Learned started on Charlotte as a model for elevation mitigation. - **DONE**

### GRANT PROPOSAL

- (Aug-A5) **Erin Capps** to work with David Mallory to put the hiring of a skilled writer into our Grant proposal.

### ARKANSAS WORKSHOP MATERIALS

- (Aug-A6) **Ed Thomas and Erin Capps** to share mitigation materials from the Arkansas workshop with Tim Trautman.
- (Aug-A7) **Tim Trautman** to think about whether he wants NHMA to put on any sort of workshop that may be of assistance to him.

### WEBINARS

- (Aug-A8) **Erin Capps** to schedule a webinar sometime next year on elevation mitigation per the example of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.