



Resilient Neighbors Network Minutes of Meeting of Friday, *June 22, 2018*, 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.

AGENDA FOR UPCOMING MEETING OF July 20, 2018:

- 1) Roll call
- 2) Approval of Minutes (April, and May 2018)
- 3) Review of Action Items
- 4) **RNN Participation in Montana Training**
- 5) **Veronica Criscitiello (Wightman & Associates) Request suggestions for good leadership exemplar –**
(Request for feedback went out to RNN Communities)
 - a) Does anyone have a recommendation for a good candidate to interview as a real life risk reduction leader for the Leadership Module?
- 6) Discussion of Best Practices Documentation-New Best Practice on mitigation based recovery with no Presidential Declaration: Joe Rossi and Coastal Coalition [Material to be sent separately]
- 7) External Stakeholders Workgroup – Tom Hughes
- 8) **Rebecca Joyce's Membership Memorandum**
- 9) Further Roll Out of RNN/Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum: Hiring a Contractor; Further Presentations in Colorado, South Carolina and Montana
- 10) NHMA DRR Curriculum & Workshop Status:
 - 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, NGO & private market courses?
 - RNN Volunteers for the development of the Disaster Risk Reduction Curriculum;
 - How to take advantage of the latest update from the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council on the cost/benefit of Hazard Mitigation.
- 11) **NHMA and RNN Community Meeting: Natural Hazards Workshop - July 9-12, 2018?**
- 12) Status of Practical Community Resilience Project in South Carolina
- 13) Comments from Vincent Brown of FEMA on Reorganization and the many things happening at FEMA
- 14) Status of Island Press Interest, ABA-Houston Success Story
- 15) Comments/Issues/Good News
- 16) Adjourn

Minutes for Meeting of Friday, *June 22, 2018*:

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

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: **Ed Thomas** (NHMA Board Member); **Donna Boyce** (NHMA Board Member); **Veronica Criscitiello** (Wightman & Associates); **Tim Lovell** (Tulsa, OK); **Ned Swanberg** (State of Vermont); **Vincent Brown** (FEMA).

- Quorum not met. Review of Minutes and Action Items were tabled.
- Ed Thomas suggested we convene as an informational session;
- Both member communities on the call agreed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: - TABLED

3. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS - TABLED

New Action Items from the June Meeting:

- **Who would like to work on a committee to pick a date, location, etc. for the RNN Community in-person meeting?**

- Vincent Brown will send the Moonshot materials and FEMA's Strategic Goals for distribution to the RNN Community. – ***DONE (Attached with Minutes)***

- NHMA Admin to ask Jaime Marso, our webmaster, if there's a way of tracking the downloading of new materials as we turn them out. Can we spot where interest is in topics and location? – ***DONE – awaiting reply.***

- Ed Thomas to work with Vince Brown and FEMA to distribute the new post-disaster materials.

- RNN Community members to distribute information about the new materials via word of mouth effort. That's one of the purposes we've designed and carefully put this material out there for.

- Ned Swanberg and Tim Lovell to write up their thoughts on 'what the RNN means to me' as part of building this into the DRR Curriculum and showing the benefits of involvement in the RNN.

- NHMA Admin to present Ned Swanberg with a summary of his remarks by way of writing them up. - ***DONE***

- Ned Swanberg, Ed Thomas, to write up their thoughts on mitigation accountability and think about how we can take this further forward.

- Vince Brown to get together with David Mallory on the grant application.

Outstanding Items from the April & May Meetings:

- **ONGOING**: Roger Faris requested a reminder on the Agenda that success stories are still needed from members of the RNN Community. His role is to get from each person a little story about what their most proud of that their community has accomplished with regard to hazard mitigation. **STATUS**: Roger Faris reported he has received several excellent Success Stories and is looking now for about ten more. More stories are needed and welcome.

- **ONGOING**: Vince Brown to offer more information next month on status of inviting Regional Coordinators to participate in the RNN calls.

- **ONGOING**: NHMA Admin awaiting confirmation from RNN Community members regarding their info in the Contacts List and their approval to post this to the website.

- **ONGOING**: RNN Communities to provide comments to Tom Hughes on Multi-Hazard Mitigation material (copy of Emergency Response Guide and Emergency Checklist).

- **ONGOING**: RNN Communities to provide feedback to Tom Hughes on External Stakeholders Workgroup PDFs he sent out for their next meeting in August.

- **ONGOING**: Still needing feedback from RNN members to Ed Thomas on whether they want to be part of NHMA's response to Keith Porter on the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council's draft Cost Benefits of Hazard Mitigation.

- **ONGOING**: Discussion of Membership Memorandum to continue on next month's agenda.

- **ONGOING:** [Veronica Criscitiello](#) seeks recommendations for a good candidate to interview as a real life risk reduction leader for the Leadership Module.

- **ONGOING:** [Tom Hughes and NHMA Admin](#) to collaborate on sending something to Vince Brown to publish about the RNN.

- **ONGOING:** [Vince Brown](#) to get us information on FIMA's 50th Anniversary Celebration Program. [The RNN to let Vince know](#) if there's anything we'd like to get involved with.

HIRING AN NHMA CONTRACTOR:

[Ed Thomas](#) reported that applications for the NHMA Project Manager and Executive Director position are due today and we have received about a dozen strong applications. NHMA will be reviewing these and make decisions in near future.

PROGRESS OF RNN INPUT ON THE LEADERSHIP MODULE:

[Veronica Criscitiello](#) reported that she got two responses to her request for suggestions on the Leadership Module.

- The drafts are complete and will be sent out next week; any feedback is requested and appreciated.
- [Ed Thomas and Vince Brown](#) will review this material as soon as possible; it is fundamental to the Montana and South Carolina events.

PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE RNN:

- Ed Thomas confirmed that everyone received a copy of the [RNN Retreat Report for 2016](#) and the [2017 Interim Membership Memorandum](#). These would be the centerpiece of finding out what NHMA can do as an organization to make these meetings more useful to the RNN Communities and increase participation.

Q: How can we make these meetings most useful to people doing hazard mitigation, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the local level?

Q: (Ned S.) [How much are we tracking people taking advantage of the resources and what they are looking for?](#)

RESPONSE: (Ed T.)

- One way of gauging this is through increased interest in the materials that the RNN and NHMA have produced.
- Have seen an uptick this year in people wanting our workshops and being willing to contribute financially in rolling them out.
- Had great success with them in Utah and also in Montana, South Carolina, and Colorado.
- When people have seen our materials and what they can do, there is tremendous interest, so we keep getting invited back for presentations of the Curriculum.
- The question then is *how do we disseminate information to people who haven't seen our materials?*
 - [These materials are unique](#) and very special aimed precisely to support people working on the ground in their local or regional communities to help them respond, increase and enhance disaster risk reduction.
 - [These materials are aimed to educate](#) people with little or no knowledge about how to solve local mitigation problems and overcome obstacles to resiliency in their particular communities.
- We made a huge effort to distribute the *Roadmap to Resilience*; feedback indicated it didn't work as well as the old *Patchwork Quilt*.
- In the process of improving the materials and want to see how those fare when they roll out.

Q: Do you have suggestions for how we can better track the acceptance of the materials and how we can do a better job of seeing to it that folks are interested in it?

(Ned S.): Part of this will be making sure there's systematic feedback.

- Tracking the uptick of requests for workshops is helpful.
- Word of mouth is important.
- How to establish exposure in places where people are not familiar with it yet?
 - May be able to use technology to see what materials are downloaded and distributed.
 - May indicate interests in topics and location.
 - Many people probably don't know about the materials or the many kinds of support opportunities available through them.

(Ed T.): As we've advertised the new position of part time executive director for NHMA, we've gotten a lot folks applying for the job that have never heard of NHMA and are very much in the climate change community; they are members of ASAP or similar organizations.

- Could talk to Jaime Marso, our webmaster, and see if there's a way of tracking the downloading of new materials.
- Will work with FEMA to distribute the new Post-Disaster materials.
- Word of mouth effort through the RNN Community. That's one of the purposes we've designed and put out this material for.
- Linkage is a very good idea.
- NHMA & RNN to increase our level of visibility and support for ASFPM.
 - Erin Capps, Traci Sears and Tim Trautman attend the ASAP Conference this week as part of that effort.
 - Both Tim and Traci were board members of ASFPM, and through them we may try to cross link with ASFPM in terms of long-term viability.
 - Hope to establish a certification level within the ASFPM.

DISCUSSION ON INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN THE RNN COMMUNITY CALLS:

(Ed T.) **Would it be worth sending out a Doodle Poll to see if a different day and time would help to have a call?**

- **How can we make this more useful to you and show FEMA the value of the RNN and its overall strategic objectives?**
- **How do we want to move forward?**
- **How can we show a return on FEMA's investment?**
- **How can we show that this is of value to the RNN members?**
- **Why should you take time to invest in the RNN?**

Vince Brown will send the Moonshot materials and FEMA's strategic goals for distribution to the RNN Community.

(Tim L.): Good idea.

- His reason for being on the call is to report back to the City of Tulsa and encourage people from the City to be involved in the RNN.
- The thing that stood out in his report to the City was the info from Vince Brown on FEMA and the potential connections we have to information coming directly from FEMA that you might not get anywhere else except through a meeting like this.
- This has tremendous value and is a good approach.

(Vince B.): In general, the message he got from speaking to people before the last call was that people didn't see the value of their involvement in RNN. They didn't see anything coming out of the RNN, and they didn't have time to sit in on a call once a month, so they dropped away.

- Does not know how we get to the point of producing something, but this probably needs to be looked at.
- With regard to getting information from FEMA, he pointed out to folks that there is a possible program opportunity here, but it would require an active intent on someone's part to connect to the new FEMA organization – it's now called the Resilience Organization Directorate.
- The name *Resilience* is part of RNN, and FEMA is turning into the *Resilience Organization*;
- **Is there a way to capitalize on this by infusing the RNN into whatever it is that the FEMA Resilience Directorate will come up with?**
 - This will take effort, and requires someone to do it, pull it together, offer it up and try to make some inroads in the new organization.
- **What can be produced that will keep you interested and get more and better involved with this new organization?**

(Ed T.) Suggests doing a comparison analysis to look at what FEMA wants, and what the RNN wants, and find the commonality.

- Ultimately, we're in the job of selling this organization to folks who are in a position to participate or not – they're choosing how to use their time.
- One benefit of involvement here is *information dissemination*.
 - Making sure folks know that this is one of the many things we do;
 - Getting more information out from Traci Sears on the value that she sees in education from her communities;
 - Getting increased participation from some of the other community officials who have seen our material and know the benefit of it in pushing out higher standards and helping people better understand what the RNN is trying to do;
- Along with the Curriculum which is designed to elevate the understanding of people with respect to resilience.

(Vince B): The Moonshot goal is to double flood insurance coverage by 2022 and improve the flood programs.

- **Does the RNN have the capacity to support this?**
 - It needs somebody leading an effort to connect with insurance agents in their communities and to push out flood insurance.
- **Can the RNN develop inexpensive messaging devices – flyers, posters, etc. - about the values of flood insurance?**
 - This could be a way of increasing the investment in flood insurance mitigation and could be coupled with getting CRS points.
 - Can make a proposal to the Directorate if anybody wants to do this.
- **Is the RNN in the ballgame and does it want to play?**

(Ed T.): The DRR Curriculum is fundamental - the Flood Module is crucial.

- The work Ed does with Joe Rossi is very much about increasing the sale of flood insurance as part of resilience;
- They have an article coming out at the American Bar Association about this.
- **Listing out what FEMA is looking for, and what the RNN wants support for in their efforts and finding common ground, can show a path forward on a lot of this.**
 - The purpose of the Curriculum is to 'look beyond just recovery to preparation and resilience by applying higher standards'.
 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Tulsa are examples of flooding resilience success.
 - A whole session in Colorado addresses this.
 - Suggests a matrix for this, and have Tim Lovell and perhaps Ned Swanberg say, 'this is what RNN means to me, this is why I participate'.
 - Think about: What do you get out of the RNN? What are other people getting or not getting out of it?.
 - 'You have to put something into the game if you want to get something back.'

(Ned S.): **I don't think flood insurance is the answer here.** Flood insurance is mostly a tool for statewide and banking systems, it doesn't really meet people's needs at the end of the day. It's really about avoiding disaster, caring for how we treat our natural resource systems in a respectful way. Unfortunately, that's not what this country is about, sadly. It's not about the well-being of the population, it's not about the well-being of resources and their systems; so how do we use the opportunity of dealing with learning from disasters to understand how badly the systems break and how to respond better? That's really a heart and soul problem. It's a big thing for this country at this stage of history; but that's what we need to do. In the meantime, we've got a lot of people working on a lot of different levels - separate agencies with no clear authority and no clear mission, so I think people doing good systematic planning for the common interest and disaster resilience is a big thing. There's very few people that have that level of integrated support in the country as we know it. And that's what we need to do - create a place where people talk to each other and are building institutional long-term efforts to develop in a way that helps everybody. That's difficult in this place.

(Ed T.) **Ned's comment is a great summary of this meeting.**

- NHMA Admin to write up Ned Swanberg's remarks for him to review and expand for publication.
- They echo remarks by the California State Insurance Commissioner from an interview with NPR:

"Probably the biggest single improvement we could make (with regard to endangering people by allowing development in high risk areas) is to say, 'look, we're going to require the local governments to bear some of the costs of these decisions.'"

(Ed T.): Part of the DRR Curriculum is to push back on the concept that local governments do not have financial liability;

- The mitigation universe has shifted in terms of financial liability of government with respect to decisions that are made that result in flood and other damages;
- There's ongoing litigation in Houston & California with respect to wildfire;
- Ned Swanberg is saying we really need to encourage careful local government decision making.
- Mitigation is one way to improve on this concept.
- We need to show how our educational materials move right in on this comment by the California State Insurance Commissioner, and directly cross-relate to the Moonshot that FEMA's trying to make;
- We need to show how NHMA as an educational organization with the RNN Communities as close intimate members are helping revive this concept through the DRR Curriculum and can help us move forward.
- **Does this resonate with anyone as a way of getting interest with the RNN Communities?**

(Ned S.): There needs to be a demonstration of the concept that people have to be accountable.

(Ed. T.): This is a fundamental part of what Ed Thomas is developing with the ABA and the Kresge funded initiative.

- We need the RNN Communities to spread the word and be part of this.
- Can Ned write up and expand on his summary so we can get it published?

- The fundamental purpose of government is to stop us from harming each other. When we make decisions that harm people and the environment and the economy, then there will be accountability.

(Ned S.): It's hard for public servants to articulate this in a way that makes sense. This is where the legal voice is helpful.

- (Ned S.): Just as a CEO is held accountable for the decisions of the company, it should be a social obligation represented by all our public servants and decision makers.
- (Ed T.): This is part of the educational goal and responsibility of the NHMA to bring these ideas forward and assist FEMA by getting the material out to the world at large.

(Ed T.): Let's write up what we've got and think about how we can take this further forward.

(Vince Brown): **Is there anything RNN related specifically you're planning on including in the new grant proposal?**

(Ed T.): My thought is that we've got out there among the top national experts who are actually getting something done beyond the minimum standards at the local level.

- They know what the impediments are, day to day.
- The entire purpose of NHMA is to help local folks understand risks, overcome them, and build a resilient future.
- This is why we're working with NAACo on their Disaster Toolkit, ABA Resilience Initiative, APA, etc., why we have the RNN and have created the DRR Curriculum as an educational entity: to get the word out.
- FEMA's mission of using the flood insurance program as part of the building block of disaster risk reduction and resilience is important.
- Flood insurance is the most cost effective program we've ever had, but following the minimum standards of the flood insurance program is a recipe for disaster.
- Overcoming the impediments – **How can we take the work of the Multi Hazard Mitigation Counsel, the work being done by the ABA and others and apply it for a better future?**

PRESENTATIONS IN COLORADO, SOUTH CAROLINA AND MONTANA:

We have three major training programs going forward next month:

- **MONTANA:** Three days of very intense workshops built around the DRR Curriculum with some additional materials and speakers provided by the State of Vermont.
 - At least 2 RNN members are involved.
 - Potential role for RNN community members to serve as instructors as we roll out the Curriculum;
 - Curriculum is designed to support hazard mitigation with part time management and disaster risk reduction at the local level.
 - Let's communicate this when we talk about the purpose of RNN Communities in their role as Subject Matter Experts and making use of the DRR Curriculum in their day to day lives.
- **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Major roll out in cooperation with the State of South Carolina, Clemson University, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Silver Jackets Program. One-day training session in cooperation with the State carefully designed with selected portions of the Curriculum based on the State's perceived needs.
- **COLORADO: NATURAL HAZARDS WORKSHOP:** We have several sessions at the Natural Hazards Workshop where we're weaving in the Curriculum and bringing it forward.
 - We have a poster, informational brochures on the Curriculum and the RNN to distribute at several sessions during the course of the Workshop.
 - We continue to spread the word and let people know we want to get their views.
 - Includes people like the Energy and Environment News; Ed Thomas had a great discussion with Adam Anton, a writer for E&E NEWS. This is a major publication in the Environmental Community.
 - Adam is working on some articles on wildfire and the wildfire-flood linkage; Ed Thomas has been sharing information and cross-linking him with Molly Mowery, as well as the wildfire and the wildfire-flood modules from the DRR Curriculum.

IN PERSON MEETING OF THE RNN COMMUNITIES:

(Tim Lovell): **Will the RNN Communities be meeting in person this year?**

- Assumes we're looking further down the road timewise.
- In person meetings are helpful in building connections and increase participation, though not as cost effective as phone calls.
- **Where are we with this?**

(Ed T.): Suggests before holding an in-person meeting, we need to know why we're going to meet and what we want to accomplish. Consider: What is the RNN?

- What do we really want to do at the meeting?
- Need volunteer(s) to take steps to design a meeting to help take RNN to the next step.
 - Need to decide where and what the RNN wants to do, then NHMA can put it into the grant.
 - We had some people volunteer to help develop and use the DRR Curriculum in Montana, South Carolina and at the Hazards Workshop, these could be good meeting sites.

(Tim L.): His impression is that we're in a rebuilding scenario.

- When the RNN started it began with an in person meeting with people who developed the way forward.
- Wonders if, as a part of this, having the meeting may be the way to develop this direction rather than developing the direction and having the meeting after.
- Might be beneficial to have the meeting sooner in the process rather than waiting to get all the ducks in a row.

(Ed T.): Could do another retreat for a relaunching; still thinks we need to do a little better job to plan the meeting so we can inspire people to give their precious time.

- We distributed the information Rebecca Joyce developed in 2017 along with the 2016 materials;
- We could go back and find the materials from the original two retreats at the Hazard workshop.

(Donna Boyce): Need to do some planning, ask folks to consider the purpose of the meeting.

- We could use a matrix/ analysis on:
 - What were our original goals?
 - What is the tremendous progress that's been made?
 - Recognizing the world has changed a bit since then, how should we move forward?
 - Maybe use discussions or doodle polls to get some input from people, and put ideas on the table;
 - Maybe if we start formulation, then take significant decision making steps, and have a better idea of where to go from there.

(Tim L.): Suggests:

- May benefit by setting a date goal up front – something people can put on the calendar and work toward.
- As a part of that, because FEMA is providing the money for the meeting, therefore we need to treat it as a commitment and do the homework required to make that meeting successful.

(Ed T.): **Who would like to work on that?**

- We're talking about laying out the steps for the meeting.
- Will put this out to the group.
- Terrific conference idea.

(Ed T.) How we go about doing that is incredibly important to the success of our future operation.

- Suggests writing up what we've got; put it out to the group to see who would like to work on a committee to pick a date, location, etc.;
- Consider, **what do we want to say to FEMA that we've achieved in the RNN?**
- **What do we want to say to FEMA about what we'd like to do and how it fits into their goals and objectives?**
- Suggests we focus in on how the RNN can be part of the DRR Curriculum which is highly focused on assisting FEMA with its Moonshot and the accomplishment of the National Mitigation Strategy.
- We can then lay out our general goals for the RNN:
 - This is what FEMA's gotten out of the money they've invested;
 - This is what we want to do going forward;
 - Try to target an answer with respect to the Grant first, and then come up with an objective of having an in-person meeting so we can further carry out sorting the objectives of what the RNN is for.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned: 12:10 p.m.