Small town, big emergency - lessons learned from the Eagle Creek Wildfire.

EOC, evacuation and shelter challenges for small and rural agencies.

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Abstract

Labor Day weekend 2017, the small town of Hood River, Oregon faced the #1 fire in the country with thousands of tourists in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. Hood River County's EOC (Emergency Operations Center) activated for 20 days – daily we faced evacuation, public warning and shelter challenges. The length and intensity of the Eagle Creek Wildfire was a major drain on such a small County, but in small towns like ours, we embody the whole community approach.

This NEMAA (National Emergency Management Advanced Academy) paper explores issues uncovered, lessons learned and new tools for small and rural agencies in the aftermath of this national incident. How do you ramp up your EOC quickly with mostly volunteer staffs? We needed an evacuation plan NOW but found only one Oregon sample plan to guide us. How do we build evacuation and shelter plans to serve remote and vulnerable populations in challenging geography, during prime tourism season, with clogged roads and bridges, stranded motorists, amidst shelter and communications challenges? These are the issues of Emergency Management, under fire - literally, in small town America.

This project shares what we learned during, and after the Eagle Creek Fire, by leveraging NEMAA's national training expertise to help small agencies ramp up more quickly. After researching best practices, we created a valuable library of ready-made templates such as EOC Tool Kits, just-in-time training, evacuation and shelter plans, to jump-start emergency management in small and rural communities.

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Overview

Introduction

In Oregon's scenic Columbia River Gorge, Hood River, a small and rural County, faced the #1 fire in the country, without warning, with thousands of visitors in town Labor Day weekend. Hood River Sheriff's Office of Emergency Management activated our County EOC full time for 20 days, averaging 31 staff daily - a heavy lift for a small and rural agency. I served as EOC Manager for most of the incident; as sole County Emergency Management staff, our success was dependent mostly on volunteers and non-emergency staffs and the synergy of partnerships across agencies. In small towns like ours, we embody the whole community approach.

Our County opened its EOC fulltime and our Joint Information Center (JIC) team issued rapidly changing evacuation updates daily and hourly. We opened a public Call Center for the first time, fielding thousands of daily calls from concerned citizens in Spanish and English. Our EOC opened shelters, managed community logistics and resources, held daily info sharing calls to enhance situational awareness and build a common operating picture with our partners. Lessons from this incident were learned real time, in the real world, and provided tremendous insight into needs and gaps in Emergency Management (EM) for small and rural agencies.

The Eagle Creek Wildfire blew up overnight, surrounding our County and stranding 162 hikers, mostly families with kids, out for a carefree day on US Forest Service trails. Our County's first mission was a large Search and Rescue (SAR) to reach and help them, with a wildfire raging around them in the most challenging Columbia Gorge terrain. 140 of the hikers camped on the trail under the watch of SAR responders and were reunited with loved ones the next day. All 162 hikers made it home safely and there were no injuries.

Overnight, the City of Cascade Locks was under mandatory evacuation, and residents were displaced for more than two weeks. Wildfire threatened popular Gorge tourist destinations such as the historic Multnomah Lodge, Historic Columbia River Highway, the Pacific Crest Trail, campgrounds and fish hatcheries. Critical infrastructure was impacted – the federal BPA power grid, Bonneville Dam and our lone freeway closed for weeks. The Eagle Creek Fire merged with the Indian Creek Fire, burning 50,000 acres for three months across two Oregon Counties 50 miles apart - Hood River and Multnomah. Spot fires jumped three miles across the Columbia River, causing Washington evacuations. The fire marched toward Mount Hood, causing evacuation notices for much of Hood River County. Our EOC kept its finger on the pulse of a frantic community, while Unified Command maintained forward progress against the beast.

Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area attracts more two million visitors per year [1] – folks were driving, paddling, windsurfing, boating, hiking, biking or strolling our County. Clogged roads and bridges made evacuations extremely challenging, and vastly increased our population. US tourist destinations face complex emergency response challenges like these, when we least expect it – often in small towns, with limited staffs. Our EOC team found only one existing evacuation plan available statewide[2] to help us as we drafted our own plan[3] on the fly, under tremendous pressure.

For this National Emergency Management Advanced Academy (NEMAA) project, I focused on finding new tools to help small town Emergency Managers in situations like these. I researched best practices and a built a library of Evacuation, Shelter, Public Outreach and Mass Care plans from larger, more fire savvy jurisdictions. I customized tools and templates for

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[1] USDA Forest Service, 2019. Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, www.USDA.gov
[2] USFS, ODF, BLM, Grant County staffs, 2014. *Wildfire Evacuation Plan for the Monument Community*
[3] Chris Guertin, Hood River Sheriff's Office, 2017. *Hood River, Oregon Emergency Evacuation Plan* Draft

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County EOC staff and created an *Eagle Creek Fire Lesson Learned* presentation for OEMA (Oregon Emergency Managers Association.)

This NEMAA paper contains an *Abstract* to capture highlights for promotional use. The *Overview* section includes an introduction to the topic and why it's important, a *Purpose statement* applying NEMAA program insights to address challenges and propose new solutions and *Rationale,* or why this topic is important. The *Methodology* section describes the approach used and challenges of writing this paper. The *Results and Findings* section offers new tips and tools. *Lessons Learned* describes the impact on the author's knowledge and suggests future work related to the topic. The *Summary* section captures conclusions. The *References* section lists resources cited in the paper and an *Appendix* includes documents developed for this project.

Purpose statement

What made the Eagle Creek Fire particularly challenging is, small County staffs lacking hands-on experience and tools needed to address a Type 1 rapidly escalating incident without warning. We had remote terrain, isolated residents, a high percentage of vulnerable populations, few available roads, clogged bridges, peak tourist season traffic, evacuations and long term closure of one of the busiest freeways in Oregon.

A key lesson I learned as Hood River County Emergency Manager, is that a library of sample plans, templates and tool kits is a vital help for small agencies in these urgent situations. Our goal is to help better prepare our County, and yours, with this NEMAA project. We ask and answer the question: Small town, big emergency - where to from here? We identify evacuation, shelter, EOC and communications issues and opportunities from our own disaster and incidents other Emergency Managers agencies have faced, and strategies to counteract barriers for

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small and rural agencies, in situations such as:

- Public information, evacuation and shelter planning, under fire – literally.

    It's not just about social media and reverse 911. The need to reach and help:

    - Isolated and vulnerable rural populations

    - Unprepared, recently transplanted citizens used to the comforts of larger cities

    - Citizens, to clarify their specific evacuation status, with a map and a real person on the phone to help. Our EOC Call Center prevented 911 and Public Information Officers from being deluged.

    - Migrant farm workers distrustful of government agencies; farmers, seniors and others unwilling to evacuate; those with pet and livestock evacuation needs.

    - Families and businesses prepare – for all weather, all hazard conditions

- Shelter conflicts – two agencies show up with 100 citizens each, to the same shelter.

- Emergency communications challenges in remote areas. Do EAS, WEA or any of the other alphabet-soup public warning systems work effectively in these situations? Do you have enough *Citizen Alert* (reverse 911) Opt-Ins to be successful?

- What about long term power outages? Will 911 and EOC backup power, phones and email systems work?

- Lack of available EOC staffs and teams that don't work together often, combined with intense incident pressure. The need for rapid response tools.

Rationale

Our worst fears were realized in the Eagle Creek Fire– fire blackened our spectacular national forests and the long-lasting, high profile incident was a tremendous drain on limited

Emergency Management resources for months. Recovery and post-incident mitigation programs continued for another year. Thankfully, there was no loss of life, few lost buildings and limited injuries. But three weeks later, Sonoma, CA wasn't so lucky, with the 2017 Northern California firestorm. Nor was Paradise, CA, in the Camp Fire, a year later.

In small County EOCs, we need to ramp up quickly and offset small staffs and lack of training and plans. Easy-to-activate checklists, pre-built mission assignments, just-in-time training, and sample Evacuation and Shelter plans help jump-start small EM programs.

High-impact wildfire emergencies are expanding, as evidenced recently in the American west. A 2018 OCCRI (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute) study for Oregon[4] forecasted that eight counties in the Columbia River Gorge (including ours, Hood River) will face rapidly escalating wildfire risk in the next 40 years: twelve additional extremely hot days annually and a 40% increase in high fire danger days. For small Counties with one EM staff like Hood River, there isn't time to develop all the necessary plans to meet the growing need and risk, while writing/managing intensive federal grants, recruiting staff/volunteers, hosting training and drills, developing programs, expanding essential equipment and conducting public outreach on small County budgets. Under my watch, we have faced four declared emergencies in the last five years, after previous decades with minimal or no EOC activations. Small towns face big hurdles.

Methodology

In the Eagle Creek Fire, we reaped significant value from our newly created EOC volunteer program - dedicated volunteers sustained our intensive three-week full EOC activation. Call Center staff became an entry point for new volunteers, under management of trained EOC

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[4] Meghan Dalton, David Rupp, Linnia Hawkins, OCCRI (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute) 2018. *Climate Change Influence on Natural Hazards in Eight Oregon Counties, pages 1-2.*

volunteers. I learned similar lessons in building a CERT San Diego Program for the City of San Diego, CA after the devastating Cedar Fire – citizens and businesses want to help and are a valuable resource but recruiting and managing a volunteer program is time intensive, in addition to EM program management.

Helping our County and others like us, fueled my desire to pursue advanced national NEMAA accreditation. I wanted to further my professional aptitude and build Hood River County's EM program capacity. I wanted to listen and learn from agencies with more incident experience. And I wanted to share as many helpful insights as possible through this nationally distributed paper. My plan was to obtain sample plans, tool kits and best practices to be shared across agencies, so we do not reinvent the wheel.

For this project, I pursued NEMAA training and committed to flying 1,013 miles from northern Oregon to southern California for four weeks, to train with national leaders and expand my leadership skills. I met in person with Emergency Managers that tackle wildfires and other emergencies more often. My 2018-19 Riverside NEMAA cohort includes Emergency Managers from Riverside, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino and Orange Counties, who face frequent wildfires, evacuations and emergency sheltering. They also have more staff and resources to draft plans that we can adapt for our own small agency's use.

I collated lessons learned from both Hood River and Multnomah Counties in the Eagle Creek Wildfire. The goal was to look beyond my own EOC experience to get a 360 view, from a variety of perspectives – local agencies, citizens, volunteers, nonprofits, regional, State and federal agencies. I organized a panel presentation at OEMA (Oregon Emergency Managers Assn.) winter 2018 conference with six experts from Hood River and Multnomah County – both EOC Managers, two Sheriff's, State Fire Marshall/IC/Unified Command and Public Information

Officer viewpoints - all served in the wildfire. One of the key takeaways was, we needed more tools - EM templates, draft plans and best practices, to save ramp-up time in emergencies. During the Eagle Creek Fire, we found only one evacuation plan template in Oregon. Thus, my goal of this paper is to research evacuation and shelter plan templates and EOC Tool kits that can enhance/help our community respond more quickly. During NEMAA, I obtained sample plans and best practices from my Riverside Cohort colleagues. I conducted national research to obtain more information. My research goals:

- Expand available plans and tools for EM use in Oregon

- Build a library of resources all EM's can adapt and use more quickly

- Write a NEMAA paper to be shared nationally, helping other small jurisdictions facing similar resource, planning, evacuation, shelter and response challenges.

- Outline key Hood River issues for follow up

- Generate a County evacuation and shelter planning framework for future use.

The challenges were to overcome small County pre-planning resources and lack of experience by EOC teams that don't activate often but ramp up quickly, under pressure. I polled my rural eastern Oregon colleagues – none had evacuation plans or were creating one. Larger agencies with more EM staffs weren't polled and were not my target audience. As we learned in the Eagle Creek Fire, when you need a plan, you need it NOW. But crisis situations are the worst time to plan.

This NEMAA project focuses on making it easier for small agencies, facing intense challenges, like we did. Finding and building a library of templates in advance, helps our EOC team today. With this paper, we also focus on the *where to from here,* for the next five years.

Results and findings

For this project, I used critical thinking skills developed in the NEMAA Riverside academy and conducted research to identify new viewpoints after my Eagle Creek Fire experience. I tapped into new resources in California. I questioned my existing assumptions about evacuations, EOC and shelter activations.

NEMAA instructor Don Patterson reviewed a book, *The Human Side of Disasters* [5], and shared his findings with me. I learned that females are most likely to act in disasters, and 26% of warnings come from nongovernmental sources. Thus, targeting future public outreach to women and non-traditional sources, like community groups, churches and cultural leaders, is a strategic approach.

From my NEMAA colleague, Mario Rueda, Chief of San Marino Fire Department, I learned that his *Standing EOC Objectives* [6] reduced staff confusion about EOC roles, which could help both volunteers and more seasoned law/fire agency staffs focus in future EOC activations. I used San Marino's *Standing EOC Objectives* as a starting point for a Hood River EOC staff workshop; together, we created *Hood River Standing EOC Objectives.* [7]

In the Eagle Creek Fire, evacuations were hampered by clogged roads and bridges, due to our rural road system. We developed staging areas at the Port of Hood River parking lot, with adjacent public facilities, to serve as a Motorhome/trailer evacuation site and holding area. Research from 2018 *FEMA Evacuation Planning Considerations* revealed Contraflow Lane Reversal can open more evacuation travel lanes. Based on this FEMA guidance, we can also add transportation assembly points and evacuation specific fuel supplies. [8]

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[5] Don Patterson, 2018. Take away notes from *The Human Side of Disasters* book by Thomas Drabek
[6] Mario Rueda, Fire Chief, City of San Marino, 2018 *"First to Arrive" Standing EOC Objectives*
[7] Barbara Ayers, 2019, *Standing Objectives – First Operational Period, Hood River EOC*
[8] FEMA staff, 2018. *Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place* draft, pages 13-15

From my NEMAA Cohort colleague Anna Burton of City of Los Angeles Department of Airports, I obtained the *LAX/Palmdale Evacuation Plan* [9] template, that outlined setting up a Passenger Marshalling Area, which we could use to address stranded Columbia Gorge travelers. Also, LAX Arriving Aircraft Procedures could be utilized for small boats and airplanes arriving in Hood River during evacuations.

From the *Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After Action Report,* I learned that our County's Eagle Creek Fire response shared six of seven strengths of Santa Barbara County's response - Robust JIC, Relevant mapping, Use of Call Center, Timely Planning, Use of Volunteers and Robust Public Health – these should be hard-wired for future incidents. Both of our Counties faced similar incident challenges – the need to Formalize Evacuation Planning, Refine Public Warning, Increase Partner Collaboration, Enhance Sustained EOC activation and Increase Disaster Recovery Capability.[10] It was nice to discover that we had a lot in common.

My NEMAA Cohort colleague Yolanda McGlinchey, Emergency Services Manager for the City of Santa Barbara, shared her Riviera Evacuation Drill After Action Report (AAR,) [11] I learned that we had very similar EOC challenges - the need to expand the scope of EOC staffing, and enhance training needs for EOC staff. This fueled my desire to create EOC tool kits.

From our October 2018 OEMA conference presentation *Eagle Creek Fire Lessons Learned*,[12] we identified a high priority to complete a comprehensive evacuation plan that is fully vetted. Also needed, an emergency shelter/shelter-in-place plan aligning a network of community sharing hubs at community centers, to augment more traditional centralized shelters when Red Cross can't get here, or when Shelter-in-Place is called for. We need to add staging

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[9] Los Angeles World Airports staff, 2007. *Palmdale Terminal Evacuation plan* draft.
[10] Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management, 2018. *Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After Action Report, pages 4-5.*
[11] Yolanda McGlinchey, 2007. City of Santa Barbara, Riviera Evacuation Drill (RED) After Action Report
[12] Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Management, Hood River Sheriff Matt English, Oregon Chief Deputy State Fire Marshall Mariana Temple-Ruiz, 2018. *Eagle Creek Fire- Lessons Learned* OEMA presentation

areas and access corridors to counteract clogged roads. One success that is now our best practice, is the use of new State Health Authority/CDC medically fragile population data, that we merged with Citizen Alert opt-ins. We incorporated this into our draft Evacuation Plan and maps. This allowed us to find those in need and offer personalized help, while navigating HIPAA. Social service workers and deputies talked to vulnerable families personally - offering needs assessments, transportation and shelter information. This collaboration was invaluable, thanks to the Oregon Health Authority's Gorge healthcare coalition.

In small towns, everyone offers help – and in emergencies they NEED to help. But spontaneous volunteers and donations can become the disaster within the disaster – one more thing for EM's to manage. Our public Call Center was incredibly busy talking to citizens daily. They developed an excel spreadsheet with a list of volunteered assets for EOC staff use. Thus, our Call Center became an excellent entry point for new volunteers who were highly skilled community organizers, yet not EOC trained. Here, hospital workers, bilingual speakers and service club members played a vital role, which helped with EOC response, fulfilled volunteers personally, built community partnerships and helped speed up post-disaster recovery.

Additional observations from *Eagle Creek Fire Lesson Learned*:

Whole Community partnerships enhance shelter and mass care planning

o Our County and Hospital shelter plans conflicted: we both used the same shelters.

o Red Cross was incredible, but volunteers had a hard time getting to rural Oregon on clogged roads and bridges; this recurs in winter. Few Red Cross volunteers live locally - we need more partners.

o I pursued nontraditional partners to expand emergency support for our vulnerable populations, including *Gorge Food Security Coalition* a group of member nonprofits

focused on meeting community food insecurity needs via farmers and Food Banks. They

are a valuable mass care planning partner and now we're collaborating on training and

grants. These nonprofits are more trusted by their clientele than governments.

> Result*s:* submitted a SPIRE grant with Hood River Valley Adult Center / Meals
> on Wheels and the Hood River Fire defense Board, to add four backup power
> generators to local emergency shelters, submitted in February 2019.

o We need to identify shelter and evacuation planning gaps. Tactics include:

> NEMAA paper research into evacuation and shelter practices (see references)

> Drafted *Hood River County Emergency Shelter and Evacuation planning
> framework* for future follow up. Completed March 2019.[13]

> Wrote a HMGP (mitigation) grant proposal for shelter/evacuation planning,
> submitted March 2019.

> After building partnership with Multnomah County working on *Eagle Creek
> Fire Lessons Learned,* we submitted grants together for the first time.
> Next, we'll leverage their expertise and larger planning staffs to help us host
> workshops to further develop our shelter planning. The large metro agency of
> Portland, Oregon has access to many agencies that we don't.

New EOC Tool Kit developed for this NEMAA project

Tool kits, job aids and pre-built plans are the magic bullet to help our infrequently activated

EOC's in small jurisdictions. My research netted multiple templates that I've personalized with

our own County SOP's and vetted during EOC tabletops. Our new EOC notebook is now in use.

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[13] Barbara Ayers, 2019. *Hood River Emergency Shelter and Evacuation planning framework* draft

EOC Tool Kit – First To Arrive – How To, Hood River County [14]. Sections include:

- EOC First To Arrive: *How To and Key Contacts* - Hood River Hood River County [15]

- Hood River County EOC First to Arrive - *Standing EOC Objectives [6]*

- *EOC 2.0 Hood River County EOC - Just In Time Training for staff [16]* power point.

- City of San Marino, "*First to Arrive"- EOC Set-Up Procedures* [17] manual

- *EOC Action Plan Booklet*, from CSTI [18] (CA Specialized Training Institute,) Cal OES

- *Cascadia Playbook 3.0* - Oregon Office of Emergency Management [19]

We developed strategic grant priorities to fill gaps discovered in drills and emergencies:

- Fragility of infrastructure, phones and power redundancy at Incent Command Center, 911 and EOC, including generators, backup communications, mobile response units, recovery systems, satellite, cell and internet access.

- Lack of public warning systems such as EAS (Emergency Alert System) radio broadcast capacity in the Gorge in Hood River and across adjacent counties (Wasco, Skamania, Klickitat.) Backup emergency public alert systems such as IPAWS, WEA, Ham radio, HF Shares, and other resources are lacking.)

- Need to conduct an assessment and generate a regional Communications Interoperability Plan (now underway.)

- Support new shelter partnerships; place emergency caches, solar, battery backups and generators at shelters.

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[14] Barbara Ayers, 2019. *EOC Tool Kit First to Arrive – How To notebook,* Hood River County EM
[15] Barbara Ayers, 2019**,** *EOC First To Arrive: How To and Key Contacts* - Hood River County (FOUO document)
[16] Barbara Ayers *2019. EOC 2.0 Just In Time Training for staff*, Hood River County EM
[17] Mario Rueda, Fire Chief, San Marino Fire Dept, 2018. "*First to Arrive" EOC Set-Up Procedures*
[18] CSTI (CA Specialized Training Institute) staff. *EOC Action Plan Booklet* for Cal OES
[19] Oregon Office of Emergency Management staff, 2018. *Cascadia Playbook 3.0* draft.

Other projects that address after-action Eagle Creek Fire planning gaps:

- We submitted grants with Eagle Creek Fire-impacted Multnomah County, to update our *Community Wildfire Protection Plans*; develop HazMat Evacuation Toolkits and obtain backup satellite communications systems via 2019 Homeland Security and HMGP (mitigation) grant applications, submitted March 2019.

- Prepared HMGP (mitigation) grant application for public warning systems, March 2019.

Lessons Learned

It takes a year or more to recover from an incident like the Eagle Creek Fire. A year later, October 2018 – June 2019 was perfect timing to attend year-long NEMAA training. The academy experience and Cohort colleagues helped me to grow professionally. I am amazed at how much value Hood River County Emergency Management (and I) have already received via the library of plans and tools I obtained for this project – saving years of planning work. I am re-energized and thankful for FEMA, who administers the NEMAA program, and my Riverside Cohort colleagues and instructors. I'm proud to serve the greater good and share these vital resources with other counties. I sincerely hope it helps them, too.

Suggestions for future work based upon this paper's findings and results:

- Due to Hood River's future fire risk predictions from the OCCRI study and *Eagle Creek Fire lessons learned*, future grant-funded mitigation projects include:
  - Develop Emergency Evacuation and Public Notification
  - Enhance outreach and educational programs
  - Seismic retrofitting of bridges and infrastructure

- ▪ Comprehensive <u>Evacuation and Shelter Planning:</u> get grant funding, hire contactor support; utilize the draft *Hood River Evacuation Plan*, *Hood River Emergency Shelter and Evacuation Planning Framework* and other NEMAA project templates. Host workshops to create and vet an evacuation plan. Add ingress/egress and staging areas; CPOD (Community Points of Distribution.) Develop regional Emergency Shelter / Shelter in Place plans that are flexible and scalable. Continue to develop nonprofit shelter partnerships to build disaster resilience across social service agencies.

- • <u>Develop strategies to meet emergency public outreach challenges.</u> During the Eagle Creek fire, Hood River County got thousands of new Citizen Alert opt-ins from residents. Post fire, we had an uptick in preparedness interest. I developed the *Get Ready Gorge* campaign and a PIO tool kit. Now we're developing *Sergeant Sasquatch,* to increase youth outreach. Future: develop a *Real People campaign* of preparedness in everyday life, promoting family evacuation plans, templates and checklists; Go Early – don't wait for a knock on the door; camping kits are the best Go-Kits, motorhomes and trailers as evacuation shelters; Know Your Zone (evacuation zone, escape routes and backups;) Animals and Evacuations.

- • <u>Enhance training and drills</u>: Access & Functional Needs planning; Shelter management; EOC team and position specific training and job shadowing. Apply to FEMA for another round of IEMC (Integrated Emergency Management) whole community training.

Barbara Ayers

Summary

Disasters and evacuations are inevitable for Emergency Management agencies. It's harder for local jurisdictions to maintain readiness for these infrequent, high impact situations. There were few available resources in 2017 to help us tackle evacuation and shelter needs in the Eagle Creek Wildfire. Since attending NEMAA and expanding my EM leadership skills, learning best practices of my NEMAA colleagues and producing this NEMAA paper, Hood River County and I have already benefitted significantly. Our goal was to jump-start small Emergency Management agencies with new tool kits. I am proud deliver what I believe is vital information for other small communities like ours.

New Tools Developed for this NEMAA project

- *EOC Tool Kit – First To Arrive – How To* - notebook, Hood River County EOC

- *EOC First To Arrive: How To and Key Contacts* - Hood River County

- *Standing Hood River EOC Objectives*

- *Hood River EOC 2.0 - Just in Time Training For Staff*

- *Hood River County Emergency Shelter and Evacuation planning framework*

- *Eagle Creek Fire – Lesson Learned* power point presentation – OEMA fall 2018

- Library of best practices, tool kits and Plans from my NEMAA cohort and research.

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References

1   USDA Forest Service, 2019. *Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area*. www.USDA.gov

2   US Forest Service, Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, Grant County staffs, 2014. *Wildfire Evacuation Plan for the Monument Community.*

3   Chris Guertin, Hood River Sheriff's Office, 2017. *Hood River, Oregon Emergency Evacuation Plan* Draft.

4   Meghan Dalton, David Rupp, Linnia Hawkins, OCCRI (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute,) 2018. *Climate Change Influence on Natural Hazards in Eight Oregon Counties,* pages 1-2.

5   Don Patterson, 2018. Notes from *The Human Side of Disasters* book by Thomas Drabek.

6   Mario Rueda, Chief, City of San Marino, 2018. *"First to Arrive" Standing EOC Objectives.*

7   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, 2019. *Standing EOC Objectives – First Operational Period, Hood River County EOC.* (see appendix)

8   FEMA staff, 2018. *Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place* pre-decisional draft.

9   Los Angeles World Airports staff, 2007. *LAX/Palmdale Terminal Evacuation plan* draft.

10   Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management staff, 2018. *Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After Action Report*.

11   Yolanda McGlinchey, 2007. City of Santa Barbara, *Riviera Evacuation Drill (RED) After Action Report and Improvement Plan*

12   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, Hood River County Sheriff Matt English, Oregon Chief Deputy State Fire Marshall Mariana Temple-Ruiz, October 2018. *Eagle Creek Fire- Lessons Learned,* OEMA presentation.

13   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, 2019. *Hood River Emergency Shelter and Evacuation planning framework* draft. (see appendix)

14   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, 2019. *EOC Tool Kit First to Arrive – How To notebook,* Hood River County. (see overview slides in appendix)

15   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, 2019, *EOC First To Arrive: How To and Key Contacts* - Hood River County (FOUO document.)

16   Barbara Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Manager, 2019. *EOC 2.0 Just In Time Training for staff*, *Hood River County*.

17   Mario Rueda, Chief, San Marino Fire Dept, 2018. "*First to Arrive" EOC Set-Up Procedures.*

18   CSTI (CA Specialized Training Institute) staff. *EOC Action Plan Booklet,* Cal OES.

19   Oregon Office of Emergency Management staff, 2018. *Cascadia Playbook 3.0* draft.

Additional plans and toolkits obtained during this NEMAA research:

Cal OES staff, 2018. *Public Alert and Warning Program*

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FEMA staff report, August 29, 2018. *National Engagement – Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place.* FEMA's National Integration Center.

Silver Jackets, Sept 30, 2018. *Oregon Post Wildfire Flood Playbook.*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex G (Care and Shelter.)*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex I, (Communications and warning.)*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex L (Emergency Public Information.)*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex O (Animal Services.)*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex Q (Evacuation.)*

San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018. *Annex A (Emergency Management.)*

Yolanda McGlinchey, City of Santa Barbara Fire Department, 2010. *Santa Barbara CERT – program guide and volunteer plan.*

Yolanda McGlinchey, City of Santa Barbara Fire Department, 2007. *Santa Barbara Riviera Evacuation Drill (RED) Plan.*

Yolanda McGlinchey, City of Santa Barbara Fire Department, 2008. *Santa Barbara Riviera Evacuation Drill (RED) After Action Report.*

Sonoma County, June 2018. *Complex Fire 2017 EOC After Action Report.*

Cal OES, June 2018. *Sonoma County Complex Fire Alert and Warning Assessment Report.*

Appendix – sample documents developed for this paper
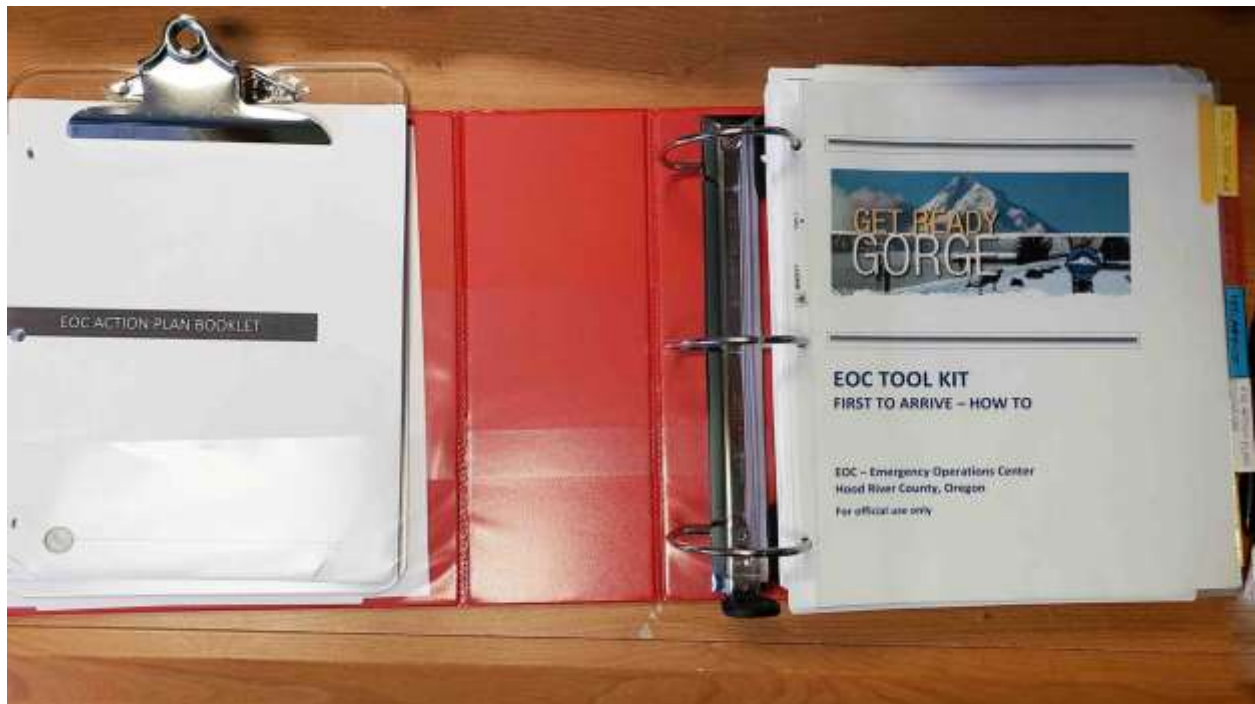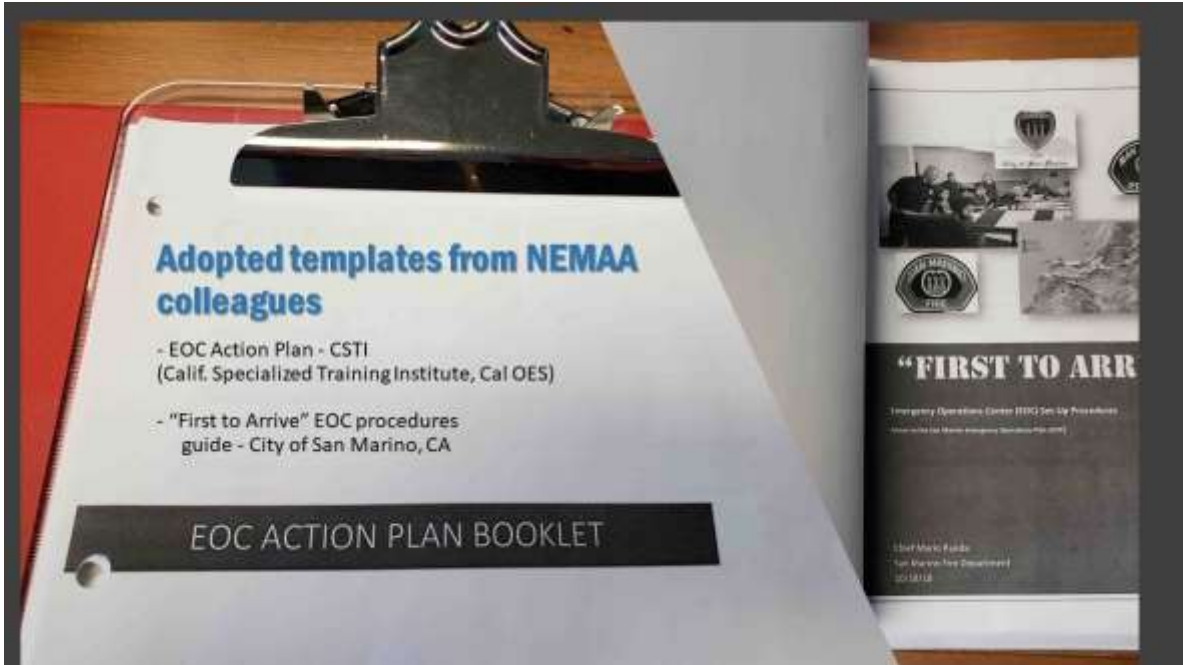
Hood River County EOC TOOL KIT – notebook overview

Adopted templates from NEMAA colleagues

- EOC Action Plan - CSTI
(Calif. Specialized Training Institute, Cal OES)

- "First to Arrive" EOC procedures
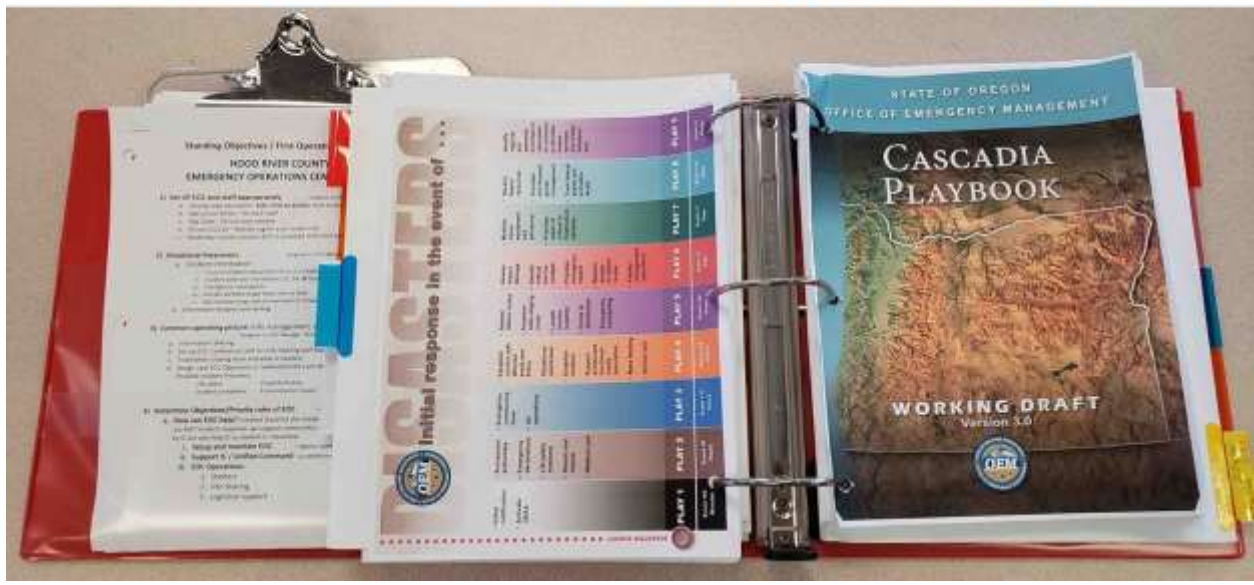 guide - City of San Marino, CA

EOC ACTION PLAN BOOKLET

New Hood River County EOC tools developed

- *EOC First to Arrive*- Hood River EOC
- Hood River County *EOC Standing Objectives*
- *EOC 2.0 — Hood River County EOC* just-in-training power point

Includes relevant step-by-step Oregon State plan

Standing Objectives / First Operational Period
HOOD RIVER COUNTY
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

1) Set UP EOC and staff appropriately
Assigned to: EOC Manager, Logistics Chief

    a. Step by step document: **EOC- First to Arrive:** *How-to and Key Contacts*
    b. Sign in/out forms – for each staff
    c. Org Chart – fill out roles needed
    d. Fill out ICS 214 – Activity Log for each leader role
    e. Notify key County contacts EOC is activated (*EOC First to Arrive* doc)

2) Situational Awareness
Assigned to: EOC Manager, EOC Plans Chief
    a. Incident Information
        i. Current Incident status from ICP or IC (Incident Commander) and 911
        ii. Incident potential information (12, 24, 48 hour projections)
        iii. Intelligence investigation
        iv. Call key partners to get more info on field
        v. Ask Deputies to go look at how bad it is if needed
    b. Information Analysis and vetting

3) Common operating picture (Info management, actions taken, needed)
Assigned to: EOC Manager, Directors, Sheriff, County Administrator

    a. Information Sharing
    b. Set up EOC Conference calls for Info Sharing with key partners
    c. Track what is being done and what is needed
    d. Assign new EOC Objectives as needs/priorities are determined.
       Possible Incident Priorities:
        - Life safety   - Property threats   - High damage potential
        - Incident Complexity - Environmental impact - Economic impact

4) Determine Objectives/Priority roles of EOC
Assigned to: EOC Chiefs

    a. How can EOC help? Greatest Good for the Greatest Amount of People. We are NOT incident response, we support community needs that are not provided by IC but also help IC as needed or requested.

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Standing Objectives / First Operational Period
HOOD RIVER COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC) (Page 2 of 2)

i. Setup and maintain EOC   **-** logistics support, EOC Operations

ii. Support IC / Unified Command – as requested – planning, evacuation, logistics support

iii. EOC Operations:
1. Shelters
2. Info Sharing
3. Logistical support
4. Public Information
5. Call Center
6. Community support

5) Public Information and warning
Assigned to: PIO with EOC support

a. Current and potential impacts
b. Designate a PIO (Public Information Officer) – often Matt does this. PIO contact list is in the pink notebook. HRSO PIO's: Joel Ives, Pete Hughes, Matt English, Barb Ayers
c. Set up Joint Information Center if needed
d. Brief PIOs on current and projected status
e. Monitor media and social media
f. Assess need for public call center; activate as needed in sync with PIO team

6) Acquire/Allocate critical resources
Assigned to: EOC Logistics Chief

a. **Critical resources acquired internally first**
b. Expanding incident: mutual aid, partner or State support
    i. Work with Finance to set up contracts, billing. Track resources in and out

7) Develop / Advise / Support policy level decisions
Assigned to: EOC Manager, County Administrator, Sheriff, Policy Group

a. Share info/coordinate with elected/ appointed officials

DRAFT March 15, 2019   Barb Ayers, Emergency Manager 541-386-1213
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Hood River County Emergency Shelter and Evacuation planning framework

Start with existing Evacuation Plans and Shelter models as a template. Samples:

- Hood River County Draft *Evacuation Plan* September 2017

- *Mass Care and Shelter Guidance for Emergency Planners* – Riverside County

- Santa Barbara County *Riviera Evacuation Drill Plan and AAR/IP*

- San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018, *Annex G, Care and Shelter*

- San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018, *Annex Q, Evacuation*

- City of Laguna Beach *Evacuation Plan* 2018

- City of Laguna Beach *Shelter Plan* 2018

- L.A./Palmdale Regional *Terminal Evacuation Plan*, Los Angeles World Airports

- FEMA2018. *Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place* draft.

- *Mass Care and Shelter Guidance for Emergency Planners* – Riverside County

Apply the three-part shelter model successfully used in Eagle Creek Fire

- Locally managed community shelters with beds

- Adjacent Animal Shelter managed by animal NGO's

- Adjacent trailer site, where evacuees live and access pets and meals in the adjacent Shelters. Use parking lots, fairgrounds and camping areas.

Develop priority list of shelters/shelters in place located in situ when roads are clogged, in lieu of opening one mass shelter. Target schools, community centers, parks, pools, churches, fairgrounds and granges in key strategic locations.

- Focus: regional shelter hubs where NGO Boards of Directors and volunteers manage the site and share resources.

- Start with seismically retrofit buildings that are adjacent to other resources we can share (college campus/parking, health care offices, grocery and hardware stores, Public Health, Public Works resources,) have good parking are easy road access.

- Support Winter Warming Shelter NGO and utilize their expertise.

- Write grants for emergency cache supplies to incentivize participation. Locate equipment caches at shelters, seek grant support for generators / solar / backup power / storage and comms options.

Write grants to generate a comprehensive, vetted Evacuation and Shelter Plans

- Wrote and submitted HMGP 2019. If funding becomes available, host Workshops, develop comprehensive plans, vet with Steering Committee members and adopt.

  o Develop list of MOUs to be developed with shelter partners and fulfill.

Develop a regional, flexible Emergency Shelter/ Shelter In Place Plan leveraging existing granges, community centers and schools

- Leverage strength of rural sensibility, sharing and helping each other. Offer local community sharing and shelter services that are positive – the people you see first in a disaster are neighbors and those you know and trust

    o Target role of Rotary, Lions, Service clubs, Granges and Town Halls – volunteer agencies with pre-built networks of Boards and volunteers used to solving community problems and obtaining grants and donations.

- Prioritize recently retrofit schools for evacuation shelters with cafeterias, school busses, food services and support organizations.

- Build community hubs around shelters (parks, pools, health care, resources)

    o Address hybrid shelter models – public/private community sharing hubs

    o Red Cross cannot get here quickly when I-84 closes. This is a major recurring problem. Develop a variety of management models; all Red Cross; some Red Cross; all local volunteer led or other models.

- Evacuation and shelter plans, with flexible models when roads are clogged

    o Develop staging areas and exit routes and build a shelter in place model.

    o Explore FEMA recommended Contraflow Lane Reversal, to open travel lanes.

    o To address stranded motorists, set up a Passenger Marshalling Area, as per *Los Angeles World Airports Evacuation Plan template* and apply Arriving Aircraft Procedures to Hood River boats and airplanes as appropriate.

    o Add evacuation holding areas transportation assembly points and supporting fuel supplies as per FEMA guidance.

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Utilize state/federal health care data and enhance other partnerships to support mass care, vulnerable population evacuation and sheltering needs

- Leverage new CDC / Oregon Health Authority (OHA) data on vulnerable population and continue to build HPP /PHEP health care coalition partnerships.

- Build partnership with other Gorge counties (Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Klickitat, Skamania, Multnomah, Clackamas) to share planning, best practices and grants.

- Leverage new NGO's and partners to address food security and shelter issues

    o Gorge Grown Food Security Coalition

    o Hood River Valley Adult Center / Meals on Wheels and Food Banks

    o Gorge Ecumenical Coalition

    o Hood River Warming Shelter

    o Animal Evacuation and sheltering groups

    o Livestock evacuation, trailering and shelter groups

Partner with Energy Plan Coalition and MCEDD to support emergency shelter needs

    o Grants and planning for Solar and backup power at shelters

    o Develop the EDA grant with MCEDD – leverage generators and solar backup battery systems to enhance shelter resilience, with Energy Trust and others

    o SPIRE grant- seek four emergency shelter generators to support our newly develop Quadrant Shelter planning model. (completed March 2019)

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Evacuation Outreach Tools to be developed:

- Assess tools in San Diego County EOP, Sept. 2018, *Annex I (Communications and Warning*) and *Annex L (Emergency Public Information)* for guidance

- EAS, WEA, HF Shares, other Aux Comm outreach

- Review Hood River County PIO Tool Kit

- Use new health care data using CDC and OHA (Oregon Health Authority) data merged with Everbridge opt-in information to target homes for personal knocks on doors and vulnerable population outreach

- Long term evacuees – strategies so they don't go back home with evacuation in effect

- Explore CPOD sites (mass health care distribution) with Public Health, leverage sites

- Dedicate a PIO (Public Information Officer) on site at shelters as a liaison to EOC any time Shelters are activated.

- Ensure emergency GIS mapping is in place and generating mapping tools daily during evacuations. If possible leverage one website for all evacuation notices, such as the example in the Eagle Creek Fire.

- EOC to staff up a Call Center; Be sure it opens and is ready before evacuation orders go out with PIOs to talk to residents personally

Hood River Shelter quadrant planning template – target areas:

- Far West (Cascade Locks area)

- South County – Highway 35 corridor

- City of Hood River / downtown

- Hood River Westside

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Hood River Shelter quadrant planning template – target areas (cont.)

- Southwest Hood River

- Central / Hood River Heights

- North Central Hood River

- HRFD and Public Works

- I-84 corridors – North, East, West

Enhance shelters / evacuation plans with:

- Shelter locations east, west, north, south, far west, far east (see Quadrant Planning Sites)

- Shared services

- Staging /holding area for clogged roads, overburdened shelters and staged evacuations

- Access corridors and back up access if roads are clogged

QUADRANT PLANNING SITES:

Far west (Cascade Locks area)

- Stevenson- Fairgrounds – Washington, across Bridge of the Gods

- Cascade Locks School

- Port of Cascade Locks - Rondavel; Marine Pavilion, Port tender building

- Access to: Cascade Locks City Hall

South County / Upper Valley / Hwy 35 - Odell to Mount Hood

- Pine Grove Grange and Fire Station

- Hood River fairgrounds (large animal evacuation / camping, staging, buildings) and adjacent Wy'East Middle School (currently being retrofitted)

South County / Upper Valley / Hwy 35 - Odell to Mount Hood (cont.)

- Government Camp / Sandy (Clackamas County)

- Port property – Odell area

- Cascade Pet Camp – Odell (small pet animal evacuation)

- Hood River Adopt A Dog / County Animal Shelter (small animal evacuation)

- Mt Hood Town Hall and Parkdale Fire Station

- Mount Hood Meadows ski resort (excellent staging area and shelter)

City of Hood River / Downtown

- Hood River Library

- Riverside Church/Warming Shelter, State St.

- Immanuel Church, State St.

- Hood River Hotel

- Access to Hood River County buildings and Hood River City Hall

Hood River Westside

- Rockford Grange and Westside Fire Station training hall

- FISH Food Bank

- Hood River Saddle Club (large animal evacuation)

Southwest Hood River/Cascade Ave.

- Walmart parking lot

- Westside shelter- HR Alliance Church

Central County /Hood River Heights

- CGCC- Columbia Gorge Community College (new, retrofit, underutilized facility)

- Hood River Valley Adult Center/ Meals on Wheels

- Rosauer's Grocery store, The Sports Club and Ace Hardware

- One Community Health, DHS and The Next Door – vulnerable population access

- Radio Tierra – bilingual radio station

- River of Life Church – CPOD site

- Columbia Gorge Family Medicine

- Hood River Armory

North Central Hood River

- Hood River Middle School (recently retrofitted)

- Hood River Aquatic Center and Jackson park

- Hood River Fire Dept, City and County Public Works, Sheriff's storage, Forestry Dept.

- Providence hospital and Public Health facility

- May St. Elementary School (being retrofitted now)

- Bi Coastal Media radio station

- LDS Church

I-84 North / West corridor

- Port Property – waterfront, Lot 1 / Port building / Marina Greene / Boat dock restrooms

- Walmart parking lot – parking, emergency supplies

- Horizon Christian School

- Mount Hood railroad – gathering and egress transportation if roads are clogged

- Hampton Inn and Best Western Hotel

- Hood River Historical Museum

I-84 east corridor   (Wasco Co.)

- Tygh Valley – Wasco County Fairgrounds

- Fort Dalles Riders Club – The Dalles (large animal evacuation)

- Seven Mile Brace property – 80 acres (large animal evacuation)

- Calvary Baptist Church

Resources:

Resource list in *Small Town, Big Emergency. Lessons Learned from the Eagle Creek Wildfire.*

EOC and evacuation challenges for small and rural agencies. Barbara Ayers, Hood River

County Emergency Management, March 28, 2019 NEMAA Riverside paper.

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