

Fourmile Canyon Fire – Lessons Learned and Questions to be Asked

1. How can you contact fire survivors? How will information get to this group?
 - Work with Red Cross and other agencies to get contact information – cell phones and e-mails.
 - Find community leaders to assist in with communication
 - Hold community meetings to get information out to both the fire survivors who lost homes and others who live in the impacted areas

2. What is the declaration process from the local level through to the federal level?
 - Local disaster is declared by the principal officer of a political subdivision. Verbal is okay in the beginning but must be followed up by a written declaration.
 - A Damage Assessment will follow with various local, state, and possibly federal agencies to determine total damage to both public infrastructure and private infrastructure. Make sure local officials are involved in this assessment – you know your community best and will have to answer to your residents.
 - If thresholds are met, a State Declaration may follow, activating the State EOP.
 - From there, if the State thresholds are met, the Governor will request Federal assistance through a Stafford Act (“Presidential”) Declaration. Make sure local officials are involved in the decision regarding a declaration request. You only have 30 days from the date of the disaster to make the request. Even requests which are denied can be appealed or amended for further consideration. But once the 30-day clock has run, there is no way to request a declaration.

3. What state resources are available to assist with recovery from a disaster? How do local officials know who to contact and what assistance is out there?
 - All State agencies have a role in disaster recovery depending on the incident
 - CDOT, CDOC, CSP, CSFS, DLG, DEM, DFS, etc.

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- Non-Governmental Agencies: COVOAD, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Southern Baptists
 - The key is to have a contact with DOLA that can assist in getting the right people involved. Local officials should request a recovery meeting with DLG and DEM as soon as practicable after the disaster to begin the process of sharing information and looking for assistance.
 - Local officials must keep asking questions to ensure they are getting all the assistance available to them.
 - Remember, this is your local disaster. You should have final authority on any decision to provide services or encumber resources.
 - Ask for a single point of contact to help navigate the state agencies, and offer a single point of contact so the state can easily communicate with you.
4. How are state-wide partner agencies activated and what is the scope of their responsibility? How are state and local resources coordinated to ensure we are providing assistance that is appropriate for the community and done in the most cost effective manner?
- Local officials need to be involved with these agencies from the on-set of their work, and there needs to be specific agreements between the locals and these agencies as to what their role will be and what they are allowed to do.
 - What can your local non-profit partners do? Can you tap into your local community instead of using state-wide agencies?
5. What Federal resources are available to assist with recovery from a disaster?
- Individual Assistance Program
 - Public Assistance Program - this deals with public infrastructure losses that qualify
 - Hazard Mitigation Program
 - Fire Management Assistance Grant
 - Small Business Administration Disaster Loans
 - Agricultural Emergency Disaster Designation and Declaration Process

6. How can the Policy Group ensure that the right decisions are made for their citizens when all of these organizations come to assist?
 - Local officials need to understand what is being assessed and how that assessment is being completed. By understanding the process and participating in the assessment, locals can provide valuable information to state and federal officials about the specifics of a particular community or area.
 - Local officials will be the ones who need to answer to their constituents who want to know why certain decisions were made.
 - Local officials should request a point of contact at the state to make sure all necessary information regarding the process and assessment for a disaster declaration is being shared with local officials.

7. What are the key areas of consideration after response and into recovery that will affect the Policy Group and the decisions that are being made?
 - Damage Assessments – get involved!
 - Debris Removal
 - Asbestos removal from the Four-Mile Fire Area
 - Costs of clean up
 - Public and Environmental Health Considerations
 - Health impacts of fire retardant
 - Blowing Ash, pre-existing medical conditions (Asthma, COPD, etc)
 - Clean-up regulations
 - Volunteer and Donations Management
 - Housing Assistance
 - Community Meetings and Information

8. Assistance Center – Fourmile Canyon Fire Experience – the “One Stop Shop” approach with case managers assigned to each fire survivor to assist with the rebuilding process
 - Debris removal – this is a big issue for many people. Is it hazardous/asbestos contaminated? What is required for clean-up?

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- INSURANCE COVERAGE!! – Most people will not have adequate coverage. United Policy Holders is a resource.
- Rebuilding – won't happen very fast and you may want to make changes to your building/land use codes to speed the process

9. What are the planning considerations for the Disaster after the Disaster?

- Flood after Fire
- Erosion control and land rehabilitation
- How soon should this process begin? Who should be involved? How is it organized?