

HMSC Management Committee Meeting
March 23, 2011 1:30 PM
USFWS Conference Room, HMSC

Attending: Renee Albertson-Gibb (HMSC-HsO), George Boehlert (HMSC), Maryann Bozza (HMSC), Caren Braby (ODFW), Rick Brown (NMFS NW), Stephen Hammond (NOAA-PMEL), Nancee Hunter (Oregon Sea Grant), Roy Lowe (USFWS), Walt Nelson (EPA), Debbie Reusser (USGS), Candace Rogers (HMSC), Cliff Ryer (NOAA-NMFS), Gil Sylvia (COMES), Randy Walker (HMSC Facilities), Janet Webster (Guin Library)

Not represented: CIMRS, MMI, Ship Operations

Host Agency Update: Following HMSC tradition the meeting's host, USFWS, gave an update of the agency's recent activities. Rowe Lowe briefed the group on various refuge and restoration projects including those at Nestucca Bay, Neskowin Marsh, Bandon Marsh and Siletz Bay. He also addressed the issue of the disturbance that coastal firework displays have on local bird populations, which is being looked into by USFWS.

OLD BUSINESS

Transportation Survey: Maryann Bozza reported that she has almost finished compiling the data for the transportation survey. Two hundred responses were received, approximately 60-65% of HMSC personnel. She thanked this committee for forwarding the email which ask for survey participation to their groups. This new system of communicating important messages via the management committee to HMSC-only personnel worked very well in this instance.

NEW BUSINESS

HMSC External Review Report: George Boehlert explained that he had received the report in January, after it had been reviewed by the OSU Research Office. In his opinion, the report was reasonable and he gave a few examples of the report's recommendations. There will be a committee meeting this week to formulate the official HMSC response to the report, which will be released when it is completed.

Emergency Planning at HMSC: A roundtable debriefing was done regarding the HMSC response to the 3/11/11 tsunami warning along the Oregon coast following the earthquake in Japan. George Boehlert explained that technically, before making the decision to close the HMSC campus, he is required to get approval from the OSU VP of Finance and Administration. He is working on ways to expedite that process for future events. He noted two of the challenges observed during the 3/11 event: 1) the NOAA "Tsunami Warning Center" website was not updated frequently, and 2) the reverse 911 call system was not thorough. HMSC also needs to develop an "all clear" system on how to notify personnel when the threat has passed.

Rick Brown explained that we need to keep in mind that NOAA's tsunami warning system has to monitor the entire west coast of the U.S. and that regional differences can affect the level of threat. Both he and Steve Hammond noted that NOAA alerts tend to

be conservative and cautious.

Randy Walker reported that he attended the County's debriefing session. Some information from that meeting: 4300 calls were put out by the reverse 911 system in Lincoln County within 5 hours, the notification call system by the school district preformed well, policy needs to be developed by groups regarding sending their staff into at-risk areas to evacuate people (beaches, buildings etc.). Randy is developing a partnership with Oregon Coast Community College to allow HMSC to store emergency supplies on their property for HMSC use during tsunami evacuation situations. He mentioned that HMSC policy is needed on where to send people staying in our dorms during an evacuation and how to let them know when to return. Janet Webster said we also need to take into account the non-HMSC groups which might be on property during a tsunami event.

There was discussion on what closure policy other agencies/groups in Lincoln County use. Caren Braby detailed ODFW's policy and gave a copy of their "Emergency Preparation Reference Sheet" to the committee. Roy Lowe added that USFWS follows the NOAA warning systems to decide their closures. Walt Nelson added that EPA has a packet with phone numbers and emergency procedures, a copy of which he keeps at home. Janet Webster added that HMSC is adding an emergency resources page to the HMSC website.

George Boehlert said that HMSC tsunami response procedures are being put together and will be distributed to the group when finished. He explained that everyone can register for the reverse 911 calls using the HMSC address to get local coastal info. And that Nixel is another notification system which uses text and emails messages. In the course of the discussion, he went over some of the current HMSC closure procedures:

- Once a closure decision has been made, George (or his designee) will call the group leaders on the HMSC Emergency Phone tree list. If the group leader cannot be reached in person, George will then call their designated alternate. Those receiving George's call will then start notifying the people in their group.
- Everyone on this committee needs to keep a copy of the current HMSC Emergency Phone Tree list both at work and at home.
- The HMSC Program Manager (Maryann Bozza) will immediately start notifying the local radio stations.
- The voice mail message at the 867-1000 number and the HMSC website should be updated by 6:30am.

Action Item: The Director's office will give Dann Cutter guidance on the content & placement of emergency updates on the HMSC website. And the HMSC voice mail message should be updated at the promised update time with either new delayed opening info or an "all clear" message, rather than just going back to the normal voice mail message.

OSU Campus Smoking Policy: George Boehlert explained that the OSU campus has adopted a total non-smoking policy on the main campus to begin in 2012. HMSC can decide if the policy will also take effect in the OSU buildings at HMSC. George plans to send out an email to HMSC personnel asking for input before any final decision is made.

HMSC Estuarine Trail and Erosion: George Boehlert explained that the process which started about a year ago, to secure a permit to repair the erosion of our estuary trail, is still not final. The Department of State Lands and Army Corps of Engineers, with input from NMFS and ODFW, have responded with recommendations that will severely limit the scope of the project. We have replied to their recommendations. One point of contention seems to be whether the trail is “critical infrastructure” or if only buildings can be given that designation. HMSC’s viewpoint is that protecting the trail is as important as protecting buildings since it makes possible a large part of our outreach and education activities. Another issue is whether the repair work would negatively impact juvenile salmonids. If the permit is granted, HMSC has offered to monitor the project. Agency cooperation with the study may be requested since there is no money budgeted for it.

Maryann Bozza reported that the damaged part of the trail is scheduled to be closed in the next day or so. Signs will be posted that will direct the public to park in one of the Oregon Coast Aquarium lots and use the south entrance to the trail. The entire trail will not be reopened until the bank is stabilized and the trail repaired. The Sea Grant education groups will still use the mud flats, accessing them by the trail east of the USFWS building. Clammers can also access the flats via two points off the south trail.

Shared Costs of Campus-wide Expenses: George Boehlert introduced the topic of whether HMSC tenant groups should start helping fund future campus-wide projects (current examples: the estuary trail repair or the HMSC portion of the traffic round-about). This topic needs to be addressed since pressure is coming from the OSU campus for a response. George will call a meeting of agency heads to explore this issue.

Staff Orientation: The first all-HMSC, new staff orientation will be held on 4/6/11. Maryann Bozza, Carol Cole and Jessica Waddell are the planning committee. The two-hour orientations will held quarterly, or as needed. George asks that management support this activity and recommend their new staff attend. An open invitation was given to anyone interested to attend the first and see what it includes.

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES:

Rick Brown: Sometime this spring, occupants of the NOAA buildings will be ask to participate in a “spring cleaning” to get rid of unused & excess items.

Janet Webster: Anyone hosting a summer intern, please let her know so she can coordinate their use of the library.

Nancee Hunter: Thanks in advance to all those that have volunteered support for the 4/8/11 Career Day at HMSC.