

Mitigation and Recovery (M & R) Discussion -- Meeting held January 30, 2018, in Seattle, WA

Introduction

The NTHMP external review suggested that the NTHMP explore the Mitigation & Recovery topic and consider developing an entity within the NTHMP to work on these issues. Also, 2017 TWERA calls for increased efforts for risk analysis, mitigation, and recovery (though there is no appropriation language in TWERA for any activity). The *2018-2023 NTHMP Strategic Plan* has section on this topic.

What actions and issues should NTHMP M & R efforts address?

- Which of these actions and issues are already being addressed by (MES or partners), which are not being addressed as much as they could be, and which are not being addressed at all?
- How does MES want to deal with the workload and overlaps (if they exist)?

Partnership leveraging and resources

At present, few funding sources are available for work on these issues. FEMA and US Army Corps of Engineers provide limited support for tsunami issues. A few USCG districts have done some work on port recovery as part of the larger task of developing multihazard recovery plans.

We should consider leveraging resources from other sources, but NTHMP should focus on tsunami-specific tasks. Can NTHMP partners only work with each other, or can they partner with other agencies—US Army Corps of Engineers, SeaGrant?

States can and should partner with other entities. National level representatives from these partners have not shown an interest in attending NTHMP meetings or investing any resources because they are not funded for it by Congress.

Physical mitigation measure can be expensive. Vertical evacuation projects can be funded by FEMA and other sources, but planning and pre-development can be done by NTHMP partner states & territories.

For example, Washington pulled people together to educate a community about the value of a vertical evacuation structure. That community passed a bond issue to add on a vertical evacuation structure when they were building a new school.

What do we mean by Mitigation?

The MES last defined mitigation in 2009 as “Any sustained action taken to directly reduce or eliminate the risk to human life and property from a tsunami.”

FEMA definition of mitigation: *Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. In order for mitigation to be effective we need to take action*

now—before the next disaster—to reduce human and financial consequences later (analyzing risk, reducing risk, and insuring against risk). (Feb 13, 2018)

Sometimes people have used “mitigation” to refer to “preparedness” activities like maps, outreach materials and sirens.

Mitigation Activities

What M & R programs are already going on? Harbor mitigation from FEMA Region IX; tsunami program can identify weaknesses in harbors that need to be addressed; sea level rise can be incorporated into some of the programs. How much M of the MES is actually being addressed?

FEMA mitigation—increase coverage and investments by 2020; lots of people are not insured; how do we address the risk and cover it with insurance? Probability maps could help; can probability mapping be considered as a type of mitigation? No—not as FEMA defines it.

Current NTHMP activities and structure

NTHMP partners use most mitigation funds on education/outreach/preparedness and little on other types of mitigation; should this change? How much can be allocated to mitigation?

More subcommittees could stretch people too thin, but should this be a reason to prevent a subcommittee, caucus, or work group from being formed? Rocky has heard complaints, though, from some NTHMP members that they don’t have time to volunteer for more work. Much discussion on workload. Maybe the right people aren’t in the meeting and we may need to bring others into the discussion.

Current structure of the NTHMP is legacy; can we make or recommend changes to the structure? (Ans: yes, recommendations can be made. Ultimately, the Coordinating Committee decides the structure of the NTHMP.) Changes can be incremental. Think out of the box.

Who will work on mitigation activities and will it deprive existing initiatives? Do we need to bring others on board? We should consider taking baby steps. Be open to inviting others.

Recovery

Do states, territories, and localities have a recovery plan and do those plans incorporate a tsunami section? We can’t and shouldn’t re-invent the wheel.

Tsunami recovery doesn’t differ much from other recovery efforts; assist with a recovery plan; provide guidance for the plans; recovery is a whole new dimension to our job and will take time to address. However, some efforts in resiliency and recovery planning are underway along the west coast of the U.S. mainland.

Do a better job of identifying things that benefit the NTHMP. We do a lot of NTHMP things that we do not credit to NHTMP; e.g., tsunami sections to state and territory response plans.

Tsunamis should be included in multihazard program and planning efforts. TWERA Section 3204.b (4) says: *Coordinating Committee shall ensure that all components of the program are integrated with ongoing hazard warning and risk management activities, emergency response plans, and mitigation programs.*

Recovery is much more than just a tsunami focus; it includes economic development and social services. We have a need to consult with mitigation or recovery experts.

Future tactics

Need to write recommendations on the M & R issue for the NTHMP Coordinating Committee to review.

Tamra Biasco (FEMA Region 10) will lead the team. The following people volunteered to serve on the team:

Leo Espia (Guam Civil Defense), Rick Wilson (California Geological Survey), Kevin Miller (California Governor's Office of Emergency Services), Keily Yemm (Washington State Emergency Management), Maximillian Dixon (Washington State Emergency Management), Vinnie Atofau (American Samoa DHS), Amanda Siok (FEMA Region X), Tania Insua (Ocean Networks Canada), Chris Springer (US Coast Guard, District 13 Seattle), Forrest Lanning (FEMA Region IX). As an ex-officio member of everything, Rocky should be kept informed.

Rocky can provide conference call capabilities if needed. Please tell Rocky when you want to roll out the recommendations to the Coordinating Committee.