



CEC Newsletter

Connections • Communication • Protocols • Training

Spring 2018

Reforming of the Coastside Emergency Corps (CEC)

By Jeneen Sommers, President

A very brief history: The CEC was formed in 2013 to provide better coordination between the agencies and volunteer organizations that activate during an emergency. It was founded by Nick Gottuso, who had been hired as the OES Coastside Emergency Coordinator in response to a 2012 [report](#) by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) which noted a lack of coordination and information during the 2011 tsunami threat on the San Mateo Coastside. Nick made a lot of progress (and friends!) until he resigned in 2016.

In late 2017, an interim board of directors was appointed to reestablish and reorganize the CEC. The interim board meets monthly and is comprised of volunteers who are active in emergency preparedness in their communities, and who want to help ensure that the issues found by the SVCF are resolved – hopefully before we have another emergency.

So what has the interim board been doing? Our first priority was to file all the necessary paperwork with the IRS, state and City of HMB that had been neglected; we have reworked the bylaws to reflect the changes in leadership and organizational structure; we have met

with leaders of the volunteer groups involved with the CEC (aka Standing Committees) to get a better feel for how their organizations work, how the CEC can help their efforts, and what they think the role of the CEC should be; we are working on a CEC website; and we are working on establishing chain of command and call out protocols with our served agencies. Projects on the horizon include co-training exercises and community information events.

The appointed interim board will give way to an elected board in January 2019. I encourage anyone who might be interested to consider serving on the board. It's a unique opportunity to serve your community, and a great way to get to know and help your neighbors.

CEC Interim Board Members

President: Jeneen Sommers, Loma Mar

Vice President: Al Mallamo, Burlingame

Secretary: Jim Williams, Half Moon Bay

Pat O'Coffey, South Skyline

Peggy Wargo, South Skyline

Peter Wainright, Half Moon Bay

CEC Standing Committees

There are currently six CEC Standing Committees. These are the volunteer organizations affiliated with the CEC that are activated as needed during an emergency. They include Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Large Animal Evacuation Group (LAEG), Red Cross, Peninsula Humane Society (PHS), and the Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART). Each organization has provided a description of what they do and how to get involved:

CERT

By Peggy Wargo

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a FEMA-sponsored national program that educates volunteers about disaster preparedness. CERT training prepares participants for the hazards that may impact their area, and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. A nationwide program, CERT training offers a consistent set of skills and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, allowing first responders to focus on more complex tasks. Through CERT, the community's capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters is expanded and enhanced.

CERT volunteers are trained to respond safely, responsibly and effectively to emergency situations, but they can also support their communities during non-emergency events as well. For example, our two Coastside CERT groups, SouthCoast CERT and SouthSkyline CERT, assist with many community-based programs such as safety events like the annual Chipper Program, and our many fundraising activities.

This program specifically trains volunteers to prepare for various types of disasters that we

can be expected to face. Through hands-on practice and realistic exercises, CERT members:

- Learn how to safely respond to manmade and natural hazards
- Help organize basic disaster response
- Promote preparedness by hosting and participating in community events
- Support first responders with auxiliary services (Firefighter Rehabilitation support, for example)

Detailed CERT training, taught by first responders and other qualified volunteers, encompasses the following during its 20-hour course:

- **Disaster Preparedness:** Addresses hazards specific to the community. Materials cover actions that participants and their families take before, during and after a disaster as well as an overview of CERT and local laws governing volunteers.
- **Fire Suppression:** Covers fire chemistry, hazardous materials, fire hazards and fire suppression strategies. However, the thrust of this session is the safe use of fire extinguishers, controlling utilities and extinguishing a small fire.
- **Medical Operations Part I & II:** Participants practice diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding and shock by using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques. Covers evaluating patients by doing a head to toe assessment, establishing a medical treatment area and performing basic first aid.
- **Light Search and Rescue Operations:** Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques and rescuer safety.

- **Psychology and Team Organization:** Covers signs and symptoms that might be experienced by the disaster victim and workers, and addresses CERT organization and management.
- **Course Review and Disaster Simulation:** Participants review and practice the skills that they have learned during the previous six sessions in a disaster activity.

Our next CERT course is tentatively planned to be held in Pescadero in March 2019. Stay tuned from SMC Alert announcements in early 2019.

To contact your branch CERT coordinator, please see below.

- Branch 1 Ashley Gray**
MontaraCERT(AT)gmail (DOT)com
- Branch 2 John Muller**
farmerjohnmuller(AT)gmail(DOT)com
- Branch 3 Robert Smith**
Robert.smith(AT)lahondafire(DOT)org
- Branch 4 Peggy Wargo**
peggy.wargo(AT)lahondafire(DOT)org

ARES

By Jeneen Sommers

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a national corps of volunteer amateur (“ham”) radio operators dedicated to providing auxiliary communications for disasters and public service events.

Why do they do that? Because ham radio works even when all other communication systems fail. During the recent fires up north, for example, phone lines, internet cables, cell towers, and communication equipment used by emergency personnel were destroyed in the fires. Volunteer radio operators were able to provide a critical need that could not be met any other way ([Ham Radio Bridging the Gap](#)). Hurricanes and other major storms, major

earthquakes and tsunamis – basically, any major disaster – results in similar conditions, and ARES is always there to help with communications.

But ARES helps out during lesser disasters, too. On the Coastside, we’re called out now and then to provide support during emergencies, particularly in the unincorporated areas of the Coastside. In recent years we have provided communications from the Red Cross shelter in Pescadero during flooding and the 2011 tsunami threat, and from the La Honda Fire Brigade during heavy storms. ARES members also work with CERT to provide communication between the CERT teams in the field and emergency responders, as we did during emergency evacuations due to mudslides in Cuesta La Honda.



Laurel Mitton participates in an ARES exercise

More frequently, Coastside ARES members are called on to help with communications at large

public events such as Dream Machines, the Pumpkin Festival and the HMB Marathon. Radio operators are placed strategically in the field where they can provide immediate, first-hand information to event organizers and emergency personnel as needed. This includes basic status information (the parking gate has been opened), medical emergencies (runner down at mile 18), and interventions (the pilots are using the wrong radio frequency!). In addition to providing an important service for the community, these events provide training and mentoring opportunities for hams...and they're fun!

Consider that our Coastside communications infrastructure is relatively fragile compared to that of more densely populated areas. What would you do if you had no way to communicate, especially during an emergency?

If you are interested in becoming a licensed ham radio operator, we can help. For the southern areas of the Coastside (aka Branches 3 and 4), contact w6ncs(AT)arrl(DOT)net, and for the northern areas (aka Branches 1 and 2), contact hpyhmb(AT)gmail(DOT)com.

Large Animal Evacuation Group

by Kris Thoren

San Mateo County's rural areas are an important part of its character. It is important that the County's emergency planning efforts include provision for evacuation of livestock in the event of a wildfire or flood. The San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group (SMCLAEG) is the county's designated volunteer resource for large animal evacuation; this resource's mission is to transport large animals out of harm's way in order to lessen the burden on emergency services.

SMCLAEG is one of the Coastside Emergency Corps' member groups and may be activated by Fire personnel, Sheriff's Office personnel, or

through OES. SMCLAEG members are experienced animal handlers, trailer drivers, licensed HAM operators, First Aid/CPR certified, and CERT trained. The group meets monthly and holds 3-4 training sessions or drills each year to strengthen and refresh members' skill sets. Typical training topics are trailer maneuvering, HAM radio use, and animal handling. Training in 2018 will include an animal handling drill and a table top exercise where various emergency scenarios will be simulated.

SMCLAEG has established relationships with designated large animal holding areas throughout the County; as with all emergency response, preparedness and planning are key. We urge all large animal owners to have a well thought out emergency plan – and then practice your plan! Tips for large animal emergency planning may be found on our website www.smclaeg.org. Anyone interested in joining or just visiting is encouraged to come to one of our general meetings which are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Half Moon Bay firehouse training room.



Ari Delay helps out during a LAEG drill

What Are Branches?

The San Mateo Coastsides has been divided up into manageable sections, similar to how emergency responders divide up areas to be managed during a disaster. These sections are referred to as Branches. In theory, each Branch has its own basic resources to handle small emergencies within their boundaries, and can call on resources from other Branches and beyond as needed.

Branch 1: Tom Lantos Tunnels to Frenchmans Creek (Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada)

Branch 2: Frenchmans Creek to Tunitas Creek (Half Moon Bay)

Branch 3: Tunitas Creek to the Santa Cruz County line (La Honda, Loma Mar, Pescadero)

Branch 4: South Skyline (Portola Heights, Castanea Ridge and other small communities along Skyline Blvd.)

Red Cross

By Jim Holley

The presence of the Red Cross on the Coastsides is primarily through the San Mateo County Office, located in Burlingame. Several of our volunteers live on the Coastsides and participate in many of the disaster related activities in place to prepare the Coastsides for what may come. The office is a small part of the American Red Cross whose mission is as follows: The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by

mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

The San Mateo County office of the American Red Cross is part of the Bay Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, one of many Red Cross chapters, headquartered in San Francisco. The American Red Cross is an NGO funded by donations, and not supported financially by the U. S. Government. One fact that makes the Red Cross unique among NGOs is that it is essentially a volunteer organization and approximately 92 % of the workforce are volunteers. A second unique aspect of the Red Cross is that it relies on partnerships with a range of volunteer, government and private groups to deliver needed services to the served communities.

In total the Red Cross has several functional areas including Blood Products, Instructional Programs and Supplies, Services to Military Families, and International Services, and Disaster Cycle Services. The San Mateo Office is essentially focused on Disaster Cycle Services (DCS). Under DCS are three functional groups as follows: Preparation for Disasters, Response to Disasters, and Disaster Recovery.

Under Preparation, the San Mateo office provides a range of workshops and classes preparedness, shelter fundamentals, shelter management, and psychological first aid. The team also does one-off workshops to meet the specific needs of partners or other agencies. Incidentally Red Cross partners in San Mateo include San Mateo County organizations such as HSA and OES, private groups such as the Peninsula Humane Society and the Lions Club, faith organizations, and municipal organizations including law enforcement and fire departments/districts.

Disaster Response includes responding to local events including floods, fires, evacuations, etc. for rendering immediate financial and housing

assistance to those impacted. The San Mateo office also responds to large disasters within the state as well as disasters in other states or territories. The office does not self-deploy to local or out of state disasters, rather the office is called upon by partners or the National Office of the Red Cross.

Recovery activities assist people impacted by disaster through a combination of Red Cross Resources and referrals to our partner agencies who meet clients' needs. San Mateo caseworkers do face to face recovery work locally, as well as remote services for clients in other parts of the state or the country when called upon.

San Mateo volunteers represent a broad section of the community, are ethnically diverse, and often bilingual. There are a few requirements including a minimum age of eighteen and the ability to pass a background check. The main requirement is a desire to contribute to the needs of various communities impacted by disasters, and a willingness to participate in a range of training programs. A few positions require professional certification especially those in Disaster Health Services and Disaster Mental Health. Volunteer time commitments are those offered by a prospective volunteer including those volunteers who only have a few hours a month to give. People interested in volunteering can explore opportunities at redcross.org. Those with questions can also contact Jim Holley, Community Engagement Administrator at [jim.holley\(AT\)redcross\(DOT\)org](mailto:jim.holley(AT)redcross(DOT)org).

DART

By Marian Harris

According to the USGS, natural hazards have the potential to impact a majority of Americans every year. Nowhere is this more evident than the Bay Area with this year's wild fires and proximity to major earth quakes fault lines, In

San Mateo, Coastside residents have the added risk of damage caused by earthquakes and being cut off from the peninsula and traditional supply lines and services.

To help the community in the event of a disaster, the HMB Airport Pilots Association formed a Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) team in 2017, leveraging a programmatic format created at the San Martin Airport which was developed in response to their real-world experience supporting the Santa Cruz community after the Loma Prieta Earthquake. The DART is a volunteer airlift resource helping communities and emergency responders cope with a local disaster. A DART team, based on pilot aircraft availability, does this by providing air support including:

1. Transfer of individuals to distant locations where they have family or friends.
2. Food airlift into the area.
3. Movement of emergency workers into or out of the area.
4. Damage reconnaissance.
5. Movement of ambulatory medical patients to out-of-area facilities.

With standardized processes and a mission to provide airlift support for both supplies and people, the HMB DART team hosted their [first disaster exercise](#) in October, 2017. Joined by San Mateo county managers and emergency groups, the first exercise was one of the largest earthquake and disaster exercise conducted on the Coastside at that time. Following the event, processes within the DART local chapter were further refined to improve processes and response plans in the event of an actual disaster, and for future exercises.

Additionally, the HMB DART team can call on a network of nearby DART partner airports which will help the local DART team scale quickly, for example with volunteer pilots in Watsonville

and San Martin Airport. Locally, aircraft and pilots have established the relationships and ability to communicate among diverse relief groups with differing needs and communication protocols, and identified processes that need further refinement to stand-up in an actual emergency and changing weather conditions which could affect both flight and communication capabilities.

“With the recent fires in Napa it is brought disaster preparedness to the forefront of everyone’s minds and we were very excited to be able to include the community in these exercises.” said Gretchen Kelly, San Mateo County Airport Manager. “The groups organizing and participating in these events are very experienced and the exercises are fun and educational.”

To see how the support airports and groups like DART can help during a real emergency, learn how the Watsonville Airport and pilots from the surrounding area supported the community during the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake here: [Lifeline video](#).



DART Exercise in HMB

Peninsula Humane Society

By Juli Barr

The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA has a comprehensive plan to help animals and animal

owners in the event of a local disaster or emergency. Five points are stressed throughout our written plan: 1. In order to receive reimbursement from the federal government, our local government- and not PHS/SPCA, a private, non-profit- is responsible for making plans that account for animals during a disaster. 2. PHS/SPCA has chosen to assist local government by making plans to help animals and animal owners. 3. PHS/SPCA will not have resources to care for all animals in our county during a wide-scale disaster or emergency. Still PHS/SPCA will have a vital role. 4. PHS/SPCA is not a first responder as are Police, Fire, Public Works and human medical emergency personnel; initiation of PHS/SPCA resources will be directed by our County’s Office of Emergency Services (OES). 5. Pet owners should never assume someone else- local government or PHS/SPCA – will be able to care for their pets in the event of a wide-scale disaster or emergency. Pet owners need to have their own plan, which includes a pet-friendly place to stay if they are displaced from their home.

Our Response to Small Scale Disasters or Emergencies PHS/SPCA has had experience responding to small scale emergencies. In one case, PHS/SPCA (and other SF Bay Area shelters) was given less than 24 hours’ notice and told a number of animals displaced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina were coming to SFO. With help from volunteers, PHS/SPCA turned its back parking lot into a mini shelter, and housed 60+ animals for a few months. More recently, PHS/SPCA was on scene minutes after the San Bruno gas explosion and provided the following:

- Trained volunteers remained on scene for days helping pet owners with general information
- Free housing at its Coyote Point shelter for displaced pets
- Free supplies to pet owners
- Animal Control Officers checked-in on pets left behind in homes and yards

PHS/SPCA would provide this same level of assistance in any local, small-scale disaster impacting a few blocks, one neighborhood or one small community within our county.

Our Response to Large Scale Disaster or Emergencies PHS/SPCA has not yet been called on to assist in a local, large-scale disaster, but is prepared to have a role. PHS/SPCA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Red Cross, explaining how the two organizations will work together. In addition, PHS/SPCA has recruited a number of volunteers with specific backgrounds (animal handling, construction, CPR, pet first aid, CERT) and works with these volunteers periodically.

PHS/SPCA does not have the resources to help all pet owners in a large-scale disaster, but will have the ability to establish a temporary field shelter in our community. Initial supplies on hand will allow us to provide assistance for 100-150 animals for five days until additional resources can be gathered. As many people know, pets are not allowed at shelters for humans. In addition, PHS/SPCA contacted many local for-profit veterinarians as well as various local boarding kennels and pet friendly hotels to see which can help us expand our ability to help animals by offering staffing, supplies or accommodations for pets in the event of a disaster. If you work for an animal-related business and are unsure whether your group has offered support (and to what extent), please contact Katie Dinneen at 650-340-7022 ext. 319 or [Kdinneen\(AT\)PHS-SPCA\(DOT\)org](mailto:Kdinneen(AT)PHS-SPCA(DOT)org).

Volunteers In the event of a disaster of any scale, PHS/ SPCA will likely receive far more volunteers than are manageable. For this reason, we've recruited a team of Disaster Prep Volunteers and work with them periodically. And, we have plans in place to manage new volunteers. New volunteers may be allowed to participate on an episodic basis in limited roles,

but only after a brief interview and screening with Volunteer Department staff.

Identifying Types and Levels of Disasters

Many types of incidents can trigger the need to implement disaster response plans, from local emergencies to regional disasters. PHS/ SPCA has requested that our County OES make us aware of relevant high-alert situations. The San Francisco Bay Area presents several potential hazards which could significantly impact animals and necessitate PHS/SPCA's disaster response; some are unique to our location, while others are potential hazards in all parts of the country:

- Earthquakes- fault lines run near our county
- Industrial Accidents
- Floods- several hilly residential neighborhoods
- Tsunamis- coastal communities in our county
- Fires- thousands of hillside acres
- SFO Disasters- fires, crashes, terrorist acts

Community Awareness By increasing readiness among our county's individual pet owners and caregivers, PHS/ SPCA will significantly reduce the need for our shelter's assistance and mutual aid. Ultimately, increased readiness among individual pet owners is the single most important measure to decrease the number of pets impacted by a disaster.

PHS/SPCA will continue to urge residents to create their own personal disaster plans, as this will impact the number of animals requiring assistance and/or temporary shelter. PHS/SPCA will speak to this topic at public events, hold periodic disaster planning events/ workshops at the shelter, distribute disaster preparation materials and maintain pertinent information on the organization's website.

Additional Information or Questions? Please contact [Disaster\(AT\)PHS-SPCA\(DOT\)org](mailto:Disaster(AT)PHS-SPCA(DOT)org)

CEC Meetings

The CEC Interim Board meets monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. If you have ideas or concerns you'd like to have addressed by the board, please contact us.

CEC General meetings are open to the public and are held quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) on the 4th Monday of the month at 6pm. The meeting place will be moving around the Coastsides and will be posted on our website in the future. In the meantime, make sure you're on the mailing list to receive emails about upcoming CEC meetings and other news. Contact w6ncs(AT)arrl(DOT)net to be added to the list.



Drill briefing at the CEOC in HMB

Closing Thought

By Jeneen Sommers, President

I want to thank each and every one of you for playing your part in preparing your community to respond and recover during a disaster. Without your dedication and enthusiasm for what you do, we wouldn't be nearly as prepared as we are. We still have a lot of work ahead, and that means there's plenty of opportunity for anyone interested in getting more involved. Please contact a board member for more info.

STANDING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

CERT

Ashley Gray, Branch 1 Coordinator
 John Muller, Branch 2 Coordinator
 Bob Smith, Branch 3 Coordinator
 Peggy Wargo, Branch 4 Coordinator
 Peter Chupity, Instructor
 Pat O'Coffey, Instructor
 Judy Sencebaugh, Instructor

ARES

Harry Ysselstein and Brian Hunt, Branches 1 and 2
 Jeneen Sommers, Branch 3 Emergency Coordinator (EC)
 Pat O'Coffey, Branch 4 EC
 Linda Bennett, District EC (DEC)
 Peter Chupity, Assistant DEC
 Bob Smith, Assistant DEC

SMCLAEG

Kris Thoren, President

Red Cross

Jim Holley, Community Engagement Administrator

DART

Marian Harris, HMB Airport Pilots Association

Peninsula Humane Society

Juli Barr, Coastsides Coordinator
 Allison Akana, Coastsides Coordinator