

APPENDIX E7. PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE TRIBE MEETING SUMMARY (MAY 16, 2019)

**Washoe County 2020 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
Partner-Specific Meeting**

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PARTNER-SPECIFIC MEETING – PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE TRIBE

DATE: Thursday, May 16, 2019
TIME: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
LOCATION: Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Fire Department

ATTENDEES: Don Pelt, Emergency Response Coordinator, and Cassandra Darrough, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician

AGENDA:

1. Impacts and Response to 2017 Flooding
2. Other Hazard Risks

SUMMARY:

The project team met with representatives of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to the Mitigation Planning Team to discuss hazards of concern to the Tribe, particularly the flooding that the Tribe experienced in 2017.

Impacts and Response to 2017 Flooding

The Tribe used its emergency plans to the utmost during recent fire responses and flooding.

Areas of concern during the 2017 flooding – main area of concern was the Truckee River, which goes through Wadsworth and Nixon. Hit several feet above flood status. May have been about 20 feet at one point. Areas of Wadsworth impacted the most were those that were expected to flood. No unexpected flooding. Were able to mitigate a lot of the impacts through sandbagging. Asked residents to evacuate several residential areas before flooding started. Some residents refused and had to be evacuated during the flooding, which was dangerous.

Lost ranchlands and farm fields during the flooding. Fields were out of use for a long time, which resulted in an economic impact on Tribal farmers and ranchers. Utility impacts included some power outages, but most of those were on this side of the reservation in Sutcliffe. Wadsworth power was not impacted as badly, which was a surprise.

Hwy 427 over the Truckee was shut down, but I-80 was still accessible.

In Nixon, almost had to shut down 447, but flooding receded before that needed to happen.

The severity of flooding was impacted by the burn scar near Sutcliffe from the Tuley fire. Hwy 446 to Sutcliffe washed out from the junction south to Popcorn Rock. This highway is owned by NDOT, and NDOT had to complete millions of dollars of repairs. While the highway was out, had to access Sutcliffe by going down I-80 to Reno and then detouring up north to access Sutcliffe. Have several homebound patients in Sutcliffe. Tribal emergency management pre-positioned a mobile clinic to help homebound patients. Tribal staff went door to door in Sutcliffe to make sure people had access to the resources they

needed. The Tribe also provided sani-huts since water/wastewater systems were down following the floods.

Hardscrabble Creek also flooded out part of Hwy 446. Two families in Big Canyon and Raven Ranch were completely cut off and could only be accessed by helicopter. These are not Tribal members, and the County coordinated response to these families.

Southern part of Hwy 446 may have been impacted more by downpours than actual flooding.

Hwy 446 was shut down for about a year, which also impacted truck traffic through the county.

The Tribe is still working through the process of reimbursement for recovery projects. Recovery was held up by lack of funds to complete repairs.

All of the creeks on the western side of the lake turned into rivers during the flooding. Several box culverts were washed out. The Tribe can provide a list of the washed-out creeks. The culverts have been repaired since the flooding.

A lot of homes in Sutcliffe sit right on Hardscrabble Creek, so there were a lot of evacuations in Sutcliffe.

Economically, the Tribe had to shut down the lake during prime fishing season. Fishing permits are a huge source of revenue for the Tribe. In some areas along the lake, there were no longer beaches, and roads had also been washed out along the lake. There are still areas that haven't been reopened since the flooding. The south side of the lake has mostly been reopened. Areas that are still closed have no access. Access is blocked by boulders that were moved by the floods, and the Tribe doesn't have funding to clear them.

Docks at Pelican Point were washed out. These provide the main boating access to the lake. Two other docks in Sutcliffe and on the southern end were also washed out and haven't been replaced.

Water utilities were damaged by the flooding, and water was cut off for a period of a week. Temporary water sources were brought in during this time. Initial temporary repairs took 7 days. Flooding and rain also caused a power outage at Sutcliffe.

Tribal staff were bringing water from nearby water systems to Sutcliffe for use by residents.

The 2017 flooding was the first incident that required activation of the Tribe's EOC.

Since 2017, more people have built homes or have gotten land assignments along Hardscrabble Creek, and these homes may be prone to flood in the future.

Atmospheric rivers flood the road to the community of Little Nixon. It seems like atmospheric rivers are more likely to occur in the future.

Damage in Sutcliffe also included damage to the fire station and roofs of some Tribal facilities, due to the rain and wind.

During the 2017 flooding at the reservation, the regional EOC was stood up.

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The Tribe was fortunate that resources were deployed to the reservation early. Without assistance, it would have taken the Tribe a whole year to recover. A lot of the issues were handled so intensively that the extent of the damage was limited. North of Sutcliffe, the Tribe didn't have enough resources to address damage, so this damage got worse over the successive atmospheric river events.

The Tribe can provide photos and a PPT presentation on the damage following the 2017 floods.

The whole western side of the lake is different because of the flooding.

The alluvial fan south of Sutcliffe did flood several times, which cut off access to Sutcliffe, but the fan didn't flood to the degree people were expecting.

Areas of most concern – Mullens Creek below the hill south of Pyramid Hwy is a flooding concern. Runs year-round and used to be a small river. Arsenic treatment plant for Sutcliffe is on this creek.

Alluvial fan south of Sutcliffe is also a concern.

Hwy 445 from Sutcliffe north to the reservation boundary is a Tribal road, and the Tribe has responsibility to maintain this road.

Sutcliffe residents are on septic systems.

A fish hatchery sits next to the creek west of Sutcliffe. Owners were worried that the flood would wash out the hatchery due to erosion. No impacts during the 2017 flooding aside from a power outage.

In 2018, there have been additional flash floods on the west side of the lake, which have temporarily covered the road with mud and debris. The Perry fire in 2018 burned the range east of Warm Springs Valley (the Pah Rahts), and flooding occurred on this burn scar.

Two creeks come off the Perry burn scar and impact Little Nixon – Rodero Creek and one other.

NDOT owns the highway up to Sutcliffe.

Homes in Sutcliffe (about 3) are cut off by flooding, and their utilities are impacted, but the homes themselves have not flooded.

“PTFD” (Post-traumatic Flood Disorder) due to atmospheric rivers.

USGS has set up water gauges on Hardscrabble Creek to monitor flood conditions. USGS will soon turn these gauges over to the Tribe to maintain.

Another gauge on Anderson Creek within the Perry burn scar was vandalized. This gauge was set up following the Perry fire. Don can provide the exact locations of the gauges.

Zane requested specific locations of structures and culverts and information on reimbursement requests for recovery projects.

Other Hazard Risks

2016 – big issue was fires, 2015 – a winter storm took out the Tribe's “extension cord”, the single electrical line that comes over the mountains from “Tracy Clark” to feed Sutcliffe. The line went down in

the mountains. The Tribe lost power for about 4 days. The power provider had to take snow cats up into the mountain to get to the outage, but halfway up the mountain the snow turned to mud, which presented challenges for the snow cats. Access issues delayed repair of the lines.

The Tribe is one of the most solar reservations in the country. Don tried to get solar installed on the fire station, but the building is too old and upgrading the electrical system to accommodate solar is too expensive.

The Tribe is constantly looking for ways to bring solar to the reservation, and Don would like to also install a transfer switch to allow solar to keep running even when electrical power goes down. If electrical power goes down now, the Tribal office has to shut down, even though there's a solar array right behind the building.

The clinic is buying stand-by generator for emergency power.

Don is planning to use mitigation grant funds to purchase generators. Following the floods, mitigation funds have been getting easier for the Tribe to get; however, because of the amount the Tribe had to spend on flood recovery, there aren't funds to provide matches in order to get additional grant funding.

Landslides are a concern after fires along the ridges.

Currently have a 30-mile stretch of burn scars along the west side of the lake.

BLM provided GIS layers for burn scars. The Tribe used these layers to develop their burn scar map.

The Window fire in 2018 affected the area south of the Tuley burn scar. Burned a small area. Started by a power/telephone pole falling.

The Virginia complex fire destroyed two travel trailers and two vehicles. None were occupied at the time.

Recent fires have been dangerously close to the Tribe's three communities. Sutcliffe is the largest concern because of the growth of cheatgrass in the burn scars. If a fire starts here, it will run right down the ridge to Sutcliffe. During fire season, have to pre-stage trucks up at Sutcliffe.

Immediate threats are landslides, wildfires, flooding, and power outages due to winter storms. Earthquakes are potential hazards. The reservation overlies a major fault, and the fault is past-due for an earthquake. Nixon sits on a fault line. Multiple fault lines run through the reservation. Another fault runs beneath the lake in the Hell's Kitchen area. Multiple earthquakes have occurred along this fault recently but all of these have been about magnitude 2.0.

None of the Tribal buildings or residences have been retrofitted to meet seismic standards. The Tribe's buildings are so old, it isn't cost-effective to retrofit them. It would be more cost effective to demolish the buildings and construct new ones.

The planned community center will provide a gym, community center, shops, and park areas. Don is not sure if the Tribe is planning to use this as a shelter or design it to meet seismic standards. Zane requested more information on the location of the community center, whether it's in the WUI, etc. The

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site is just outside of Wadsworth and is being used as an evacuation site for smaller community emergencies (manmade and flooding). The community center will be constructed using grant funds.

The Tribe may be able to access mitigation funds to design the community center to seismic standards or set it up as an alternate EOC location.

Paiute Pipeline runs through Dodge Flats and crosses the southern part of the reservation to meet I-80. The pipeline transfers gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel. Don isn't sure where the pipeline starts or ends. It may end in Sparks.

Winter storm in 2014 ripped siding off the old mobile home used as the fire station. Were able to replace the mobile fire station using insurance money. High school recorded highest wind speed at 101 mph during that storm. One mobile home rolled over during this storm. Nixon is the most exposed to winds coming off the mountains and over the lake. Nixon also exposed to lake effect snow.

Winter storms used to be worse, but haven't had a bad one in the past 9 years since Don started working for the Tribe. Atmospheric rivers are the new concern. Landslides and flash floods are new disasters that the state is having to deal with.

The county is in the rain shadow of the Sierra Mountains, which mitigates weather effects to a degree.

Lake level in Pyramid is up this year, about 3 feet in the last few months. No barriers have been installed along the lake, and the Tribe doesn't see the need for barriers unless all of the snowpack melts at once.

There's room for about 5 more feet of water rise before lake levels become an issue.

The City of Sparks was proposing a flood plan that would effectively increase the speed of the river and increase flood hazards downstream of Vista, including the reservation. The Tribe fought that plan.

In Sutcliffe, another area of concern is Sutcliffe RV Park sits over an eroding section of shoreline. The Tribe hasn't had funding to repair this area. Increased water levels will continue to erode this section of shoreline.

There is a threat of seiches (inland tsunamis) at Pyramid Lake in the event of an earthquake under the lake or large landslide.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Aaron Kenneston, Emergency Manager
Washoe County Emergency Management
(o) 775-337-5898
akenneston@washoecounty.us

Zane Beall, E & E Project Manager
(o) 503-248-5600 x4622 | (c) 360-904-6828
zbeall@ene.com