

Kenai Peninsula Borough Resilience Workshops

Kenai Peninsula Borough, August 23rd, 2017

Community Needs and Priorities

Tourism

- Tourism at Kenai Beach during the summer creates evacuation challenge.
- Annual event during which 20,000+ flock to small area for fishing represents another potentially challenging evacuation scenario.

Flooding

- Numerous homes in Kenai were constructed in high-hazard areas, some of which were built without permits (particularly some of the older homes in the area).
- Some bridges and other infrastructure could be threatened by severe flooding.
- Agricultural runoff during flood events could have negative impacts on wildlife.

Regulatory Authority and Permitting Challenges

- Limited authority of the government creates regulatory and enforcement issues; social norms against government intervention into private property rights.
- Lack of knowledge among individuals about the best ways to site and develop responsibly.
- Homeowners often lack the funds to take proactive steps to retrofit houses or take other steps to reduce risk.
- Legal issues related to the high value of the gravel complicating the removal of gravel from streams.

Education and Engagement

- Home buyers are not informed about relevant hazards at the point of sale.
- There is a need to transfer local environmental knowledge to the public.
- There is no central location for dissemination of environmental information on the Kenai Peninsula.

Priority Actions Identified During Panel Discussion

1. **Develop a central clearinghouse for Kenai Peninsula hazard data and information**

Existing Resources: Risk Assessments and hazard data sets developed by FEMA and others

Specific Ask: Coordinate with State and Local staff to make Risk MAP data, including depth grids and BFE+ maps, available in a user-friendly format

Contact(s): Marshall Rivers (FEMA Regional Service Center) (StoryMap), Sally Cox (State Risk MAP Coordinator, DCCED) (Risk MAP study page), Bryr Harris

2. **Tsunami Evacuation Activities**

Existing Resources: FEMA risk database, outreach materials, Cordova exercise template.

Specific Ask: Work with local officials to organize a tsunami evacuation exercise.

Contact(s): Michael Levkowitz (Project Coordinator, FEMA Community Outreach Team), Cynthia McCoy (Risk Analyst, FEMA Region 10), Sally Cox (State Risk MAP Coordinator, DCCED)

3. **Risk Communication Education Materials for Property Owners, Real Estate Agents, and Others**

Existing Resources: CERC Contract engagement resources; Immersed! Flood insurance tables

Specific Ask: Consider developing documents with comparisons between flood insurance rates and other utility bills to highlight the relative low cost of flood insurance. Disseminate information at Homeowners' Association meetings and Riverfest

Contact(s): Cynthia McCoy (Risk Analyst, FEMA Region 10), Michael Levkowitz (Project Coordinator, FEMA Community Outreach Team, Bryr Harris (Floodplain Administrator, KPB)

4. GIF / Animations

Existing Resources: Risk Database

Specific Ask: Develop GIFs or animations of historic flood events, flood frequencies, BFE +1, +2, +3 feet, or other sharable visualizations of flood risk (and potential flood risk under changing conditions)

Contact(s): Marshall Rivers (FEMA Regional Service Center), Bryr Harris (Floodplain Administrator, KPB), Cynthia McCoy (Risk Analyst, FEMA Region 10)

5. Flood Risk Data for gaps in FIRM

Existing Resources: FEMA data from surrounding areas

Specific Ask: Develop flood risk data for areas not mapped in FIRMs in Soldotna

Contact(s): Sally Cox (State Risk MAP Coordinator, DCCED), Cynthia McCoy (Risk Analyst, FEMA Region 10)

6. Information on Grant Opportunities

Existing Resources: Portland SHMO list of types of applicants and projects that are NOT eligible for certain grant funds; data introduced in the Risk Report and included in the Risk MAP database (which can be used to inform required benefit-costs analyses)

Specific Ask: Information on eligibility requirements for grants, e.g. IA, PDM. Is there funding available for individual property owners to make mitigation improvements to structures? Support in rethinking funding opportunities by relating needs to economic development or environmental protection, as opposed to flood mitigation

Contact(s): Cynthia McCoy (Risk Analyst, FEMA Region 10), Brent Nichols (State Hazard Mitigation Officer, AK DHS&EM), Alex Fonteyn (Resilience Specialist, AK DHS&EM), Dan Belanger