

Connecting to Collections: Preserving Washington's Cultural Heritage

Collaborative Disaster Response Networks for Washington's Heritage Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Disaster Response networks have been established in many other regions of the United States. Heritage institutions have formed the networks to encourage and support disaster preparedness and response among their members. The Network members help each other by providing advice, support and/or actual recovery assistance. Networks within a state can in turn help each other to protect the cultural heritage of Washington State. Membership in a Disaster Response Network constitutes a commitment by an organization to make disaster preparedness and staff training an administrative priority.

ORGANIZATION AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

Networks which are inclusive of different types of heritage institutions— archives, historical societies, libraries, and museums— reflect both the cross-cultural approach of the IMLS Connecting to Collections Initiative and the reality that all share a responsibility in preserving our cultural heritage. We recommend that Disaster Response networks be organized at the county level. There are some existing (non-disaster) regional “networks” of cultural organizations in the State (regional museum organizations, state archives regions, public and rural library districts, or networks like ORBIS/CASCADE and NAPCU), but they are not inclusive of different kinds of cultural organizations. There are also no intra state emergency management regions in Washington. An additional benefit of organizing at the county level is that most counties have emergency management divisions that disaster response networks could work with in the case of area-wide disasters.

Smaller counties might want to align themselves with larger adjoining counties. In some cases a Network may cross state lines. For example, Whitman County could organize a Network with Latah County, Idaho. The largest cities in each county are also the homes of Washington State University and the University of Idaho. The two universities are located within seven miles of each other and would be natural leaders in organizing a regional network. Another example is Clark County, where two libraries were members of the former Portals Cooperative Disaster Network based in Portland. Clark County might want to expand this relationship with Portland institutions or organize a separate Clark County Network. Very large counties may choose to organize into multiple, smaller networks instead of one large network. For example, King County may develop one network for institutions in Seattle and another for the rest of the county. The long-term objective is to provide some state-wide services so that no county is left un-served.

DISASTER PLANNING

There are at least three levels to disaster or emergency planning:

- 1) Each institution has a responsibility to develop an institutional disaster plan.
- 2) Collaborative disaster networks at the county level provide advice, support, and assistance to each other.
- 3) State-wide services are provided to provide further assistance.

ASSISTANCE WITH INSTITUTIONAL DISASTER PLANNING

Many cultural institutions in Washington have already developed disaster plans for their collections. The Council of State Archivists (COSA) has developed a Pocket Response Plan (PreP), which has been slightly revised by Western States and Territories Preservation Assistance Service (WESTPAS) for use in the western states. There is one for each state of the eleven states and three Pacific territories in the WESTPAS service area. Lyrasis has adapted the WESTPAS plan for use in the states that they serve. The Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance has adapted the PreP plan for their state <http://vmga.org/aboutVMGA/disaster.html>. At least 40 institutions of various kinds in Washington have completed PreP plans. (These institutions would be good candidates for membership in county networks.) We encourage institutions that have not developed disaster plans to utilize the Washington WESTPAS plan and utilize other resources on the WESTPAS website <http://westpas.org/> to help them develop an institutional disaster plan. A two-part WESTPAS Workshop will be held in the fall of 2009 in Seattle which will provide assistance for additional institutions to develop disaster response plans. Registration will be open to any cultural institution in the State without charge. Additionally, COSA is leading an effort to provide records-related emergency training via Web and CD for state and local records <http://www.statearchivists.org/iper/index.htm>.

Institutional disaster plans should include a Continuing of Operations Plan that outlines administrative procedures for business operations in the event of a disaster. Network members cannot be expected to provide these services to other members.

GENERAL GUIDELINES ON ORGANIZING A COUNTY NETWORK

We encourage Networks to be inclusive of the different kinds of heritage institutions – archives, historical societies, libraries, museums – in the county. To assist cultural organizations in a county in organizing a network the Washington Connecting to Collections Workgroup on Collaborative Disaster Planning has developed a model mission statement and a model mutual aid agreement (Appendix 1), both of which follow. We have also developed a draft list of disaster recovery supplies that might be considered for the Network's shared supply cache (Appendix 2). County networks should identify local sources for supplies and services that might be needed in a disaster. A county network may consider an agreement with a local freezer to freeze wet items (as appropriate) in the event of a disaster (For example: <http://www.portals.org/members/coldstorage.doc>).

We have drafted some recommendations on state-wide services. A group organizing a Disaster Response Network is encouraged to use these documents to help get them started and to adapt them to fit their specific needs. It is essential that each Network develop its mission statement and a mutual aid agreement. As stated above, membership in a Disaster Response Network constitutes a commitment by an organization to make disaster preparedness and staff training an administrative priority. Once a Network is established we encourage its members to meet with their local county and city emergency managers, as cooperation with first responders is essential in the event of a major disaster.

NETWORK FUNDING

Each network will have to determine the funding commitment of its members. This will vary from network to network and depend upon the local situation, but some financial commitment on the part of the members is assumed. The San Diego/Imperial County Libraries Disaster Response Network (SILDRN) has a commitment of \$500 for initial membership with renewal fees of \$100 to \$300

depending upon institution size. SILDRN renewals cover three years. The Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance has membership dues of \$75 or \$50 depending upon the size of the museum's budget. Some additional sources for funding networks are noted under State Wide Services to Support County Disaster Response Networks (see #5). Membership fees will be used for paying for disaster recovery services and stock a disaster recovery supply cache, for training, or other network expenses.

MODEL MISSION STATEMENT FOR A COUNTY DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

The _____ County Disaster Response Network helps archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and other heritage organizations in _____ County to respond to disasters affecting cultural resources and collections. Members help each other by providing advice, support and/or actual recovery assistance. Membership in the Network constitutes a commitment by an organization to make disaster preparedness and staff training an administrative priority.

The objectives of the Network are:

- 1) To promote awareness of potential disaster situations in _____ County and measures that members can take to prevent disasters;
- 2) To assist member organizations in the development of their disaster and collection salvage plans;
- 3) To facilitate or organize workshops and seminars to help members acquire the expertise needed to cope with disasters;
- 4) To prepare and disseminate to any interested archive, historical society, library, museum or other heritage organization lists of local preservation and disaster services, supplies and suppliers, and resource persons, etc. to supplement state-wide and national resources;
- 5) To acquire, on a cooperative basis, supplies and equipment to support the disaster preparedness and collection salvage programs of member organizations;
- 6) To set up subcommittees and task forces to deal with specific, identified problems;
- 7) To facilitate partnerships between members and local first responders and emergency managers before disasters in order to enhance cooperation and understanding;
- 8) To cooperate with other disaster response networks in Washington and encourage the development of similar networks in other Washington counties.

MODEL MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT FOR A COUNTY DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

The working group developed a model mutual aid agreement (see Appendix 1). The Agreement is based on agreements of other Disaster Response Networks. The membership of most existing networks is library-based, so our model agreement had to address issues relating to cross-cultural county networks. An assumption of Network membership is that they will contribute financially to the Network. Although the concept of adjunct membership is presented in the model mutual aid agreement, each Network that is formed will need to address the issue of fees for smaller institutions. Some smaller institutions have limited funding or lack paid staff, but nevertheless will require services in the event of a disaster. A sliding fee scale or tiered membership structure may be suitable for these institutions. Each network will need to determine how to balance the needs of these institutions with the availability of network resources.

MODEL LIST OF DISASTER RECOVERY SUPPLIES

The Work Group reviewed lists of supplies that are on the websites of existing Disaster Response Networks to identify supplies that networks may share in common. (See Appendix 2) The assumption is that each member institution will have supplies to meet its immediate needs in the event of a disaster. Supplies that are held in common may be items that are less frequently used or additional quantities to supplement a member's own supplies in the case of a larger disaster. Since most existing Disaster Response Networks are library-based we are also attempting to identify supplies that may be unique to needs of museum object recovery. Each network will need to determine what supplies are most appropriate for their network.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE WIDE SERVICES TO SUPPORT COUNTY DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORKS

- 1) The Washington Office of the Secretary of State provides a website for County Disaster Response Networks with the model statements and, as networks develop, links to their websites and links to other disaster planning workshops, e.g. the WESTPAS website.
- 2) As networks form, we recommend that a statewide "Washington Collections Emergency Response Team" (WCERT) be organized with representatives of the networks. Although this would be a relatively informal group we recommend that WCERT develop bylaws and meet at least annually. The Office of The Secretary of State might provide some assistance to WCERT.
 - a. WCERT would develop basic guidelines on what to include in a database of state-wide resources (equipment, supplies, and expertise) for disaster planning and recovery. In developing such a database WCERT should consider existing resources, e.g. the Balboa Art Conservation [Washington Guide to Emergency Preparedness Resources](#) http://www.bacc.org/res_pub.htm and *The Disaster Mitigation Planning Assistance Website* <http://matrix.msu.edu/~disaster/> at the Library of Congress, which is searchable by state. Any databases developed in Washington should be linked to the WCERT website. Some participants in WESTPAS workshops have identified local resources in developing their plans.
 - b. WCERT could refine the Model List of Disaster Recovery Supplies and the other model statements.
 - c. WCERT should explore how to develop financial assistance for the county Disaster Response Networks and any state-wide activities WCERT may initiate. Possible sources of funding might be Washington State Library LSTA funds, insurance companies active in the State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance grants for smaller institutions <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>. Grants might fund disaster training and county network supplies and equipment.
- 3) The Washington Office of the Secretary of State and/or the Washington Office of Financial Management Risk Management Division should explore a state-wide agreement with an emergency recovery service. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has a contract with Munters Moisture Control to provide freezing and drying facilities for large quantities of damaged materials. This service is available to public libraries but only upon authorization by designated Board or Northeast Documents Conservation Center staff to a limit of \$25,000. This contract has been designed so that municipalities may contract with Munters for services

beyond those stipulated in the contract, if that becomes necessary, without initiating a new bidding process. Montana has negotiated a similar agreement with Belfor USA.

- 4) WCERT and the Office of the Secretary of State should stay apprised of COSTEP http://statewideplan.pbworks.com/brochure_COSTEP.pdf, an IMLS funded project to develop a framework that will help states create customized emergency response plans for their states. Pilot projects are underway in Massachusetts and New Mexico.

IMPLEMENTATION

Until WCERT is established an informal state-wide planning group should be established to help counties form networks. Members of the C2C Work Group on Collaborative Disaster Planning can help to identify individuals in their counties who can begin to explore the development of county Disaster Response Networks. Institutions that have completed WESTPAS PreP Plans are good candidates for networks. The importance of networks will be emphasized at WESTPAS and other disaster planning workshops. To aid in the development of the Networks a high priority should be placed on developing a website with the model statements.

Connecting to Collections Work Group on Collaborative Disaster Planning

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Note: This list notes workgroup members with their names, institutional affiliation, county, and email address. WMA indicates that person is a member of the Washington Museum Association

APPENDIX 1

MODEL MUTAL AID AGREEMENT FOR A COUNTY DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

This Mutual Aid Agreement ("Agreement") is made and entered into by and between the undersigned libraries, archives, museums, and related heritage organizations in _____ County, whose director or chief executive has signed this Agreement ("Parties") and is effective on Month, Day, Year.

The Agreement serves as a framework in which to share expertise, experience and mutual assistance efforts with the goal of mitigating damages that could occur in the face of a disaster, and thereby impact the operations of the Parties or a specific Party.

Nothing in this Agreement will be deemed to create a contract, legal agreement, employment relationship, partnership (or fiduciary relationship) among the Parties. No party to this Agreement shall be liable for any action spoken, written or taken.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Parties are libraries, archives, museums, and related heritage organizations located in or near _____ County, Washington;

WHEREAS, each Party has identified disaster recovery personnel or a designated volunteer, all of whom have authority to perform disaster recovery services to the respective agency or institution by which they are employed or retained as a volunteer;

WHEREAS, the Parties agree that it is not be economical for any individual Party to purchase, store, and maintain all of the supplies and equipment that would be needed to cope with a major disaster; and

WHEREAS, each Party desires to provide to, and receive from, the other Parties' disaster recovery assistance through participation in the _____ County Disaster Recovery Network("The Network") in the circumstances described in this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, it is agreed that mutual disaster recovery assistance would be beneficial to all Parties hereto:

NOW THEREFORE, it is agreed as follows:

Governance. The Network is governed by a steering committee. Each Party will appoint one member to the steering committee. A Party may change its appointed steering committee member at any time upon written notice to the other Parties. The steering committee will be responsible for general administration of Network policies and programs. It will also be responsible for operational decisions regarding the Network, including:

- 1) Recommending the amount of fees, if any, that should be assessed of the Parties and the date by which such fees must be paid;
- 2) Deciding how to utilize the Network's membership fees or in kind contributions by the Parties;
- 3) Obtaining and monitoring the level of disaster recovery supplies purchased by the Network via the Parties' membership fees; and
- 4) Determining the level of aid, assistance, and supplies to be provided to adjunct members and non-members if such aid is requested.
- 5) Approving requests for adjunct Network membership.

Decisions of the steering committee will be determined by a majority vote of the members voting on any given decision.

Membership. Membership includes the following requirements: commitment of membership fees in the amount of \$Fee to be paid annually by date; signing of the Mutual Aid Agreement; appointment of a staff member to the Steering Committee.

Libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, or other heritage organizations located within _____ County, but without the personnel or finances to become members of the Network may apply for adjunct membership. Adjunct members may appoint one non-voting representative to the steering committee. Adjunct members may request personnel assistance, disaster recovery supplies, and financial support from the Network as needed.

Membership fees. In consideration for participating in, and benefiting from, the Network, each Party will pay the Network membership fees in the amount of \$Fee annually and by date. A Party may pay the membership fees via in-kind contributions at the discretion of the steering committee. If a Party fails to pay the membership fees in a timely manner, it may not benefit from the rights set forth below until such fees have been paid.

Disaster Recovery Assistance. In the event of a disaster that cannot be conveniently or expeditiously met with a Party's disaster recovery personnel, the Party experiencing the disaster may request assistance from the disaster recovery personnel of the other Parties, which will be provided at the discretion of each such Party. The extent and duration of the assistance provided by one Party for another Party under this Agreement will be negotiated by the Parties according to the needs of the situation. No Party will be required to pay any compensation to any other Party for services rendered hereunder, the mutual advantages and protection afforded by this Agreement being considered adequate compensation to all of the Parties.

No Party will be liable for any action taken by its personnel in good faith or at the direction of the Party for whose institution assistance is rendered in the course of performing disaster recovery services pursuant to this Agreement.

Disaster Recovery Supplies. Using the Parties' membership fees, the Network maintains disaster recovery supplies and equipment deemed necessary for salvaging collections ("Supplies"). The Supplies will be stored in storage containers in predetermined locations, as identified on the Network's Web page at *Web Address*. The Network will maintain the storage containers and will pay for such maintenance with the Network's membership fees. If a Party on whose property a storage container is

stored withdraws from the Network, the storage container will be moved to a new location at the Network's expense.

In the event of a disaster that cannot be conveniently or expeditiously met with the disaster recovery supplies held locally by a Party, the Party may access the Supplies in the Network's storage containers. A Party experiencing a disaster shall take no more than the amount of Supplies reasonably necessary to meet its immediate disaster recovery needs and will replace any Supplies withdrawn from the Network's storage containers within 90 days of removal.

Term and Termination. This Agreement commences on the effective date set forth above and continues indefinitely, unless terminated by a majority vote of the steering committee. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any Party may withdraw from the Network and terminate this Agreement with respect to itself at any time, effective upon 30 days written notice to each of the other Parties. None of the Parties will incur any liability to any other Party by reason of such termination. The terminating Party has no right to the Supplies it may have contributed to the Network.

Upon termination of the Network, the containers and the Supplies contained therein will be either sold and the net proceeds disbursed in the same proportion as the value of their respective contributions (including Supplies and membership fees) or distributed in kind to the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have caused this Agreement to be executed by their respective authorized representatives.

APPENDIX 2

MODEL LIST OF DISASTER RECOVERY SUPPLIES

5/21/09