

Wexford County Hazard Mitigation - Public Input Meeting Notes 4.21.22

Attendee	Representation
Gary Taylor	Wexford County
Michael Guernsey	Buckley Fire Dept.
Richard Harvey	Wexford Joint Planning Commission
Dave Cox	Wexford-Missaukee ISD
Mike Boyd	Selma Township
Jason Nelson	Fire Chief – Colfax-Greenwood Fire Dept.
Trooper Travis Thenikl	Michigan State Police
Jake Paddock	City of Manton DPW
Jessica Schisser	City of Manton Clerk
Mike Boyd	Selma Township
Bret Haner	District Health Dept. #10
Davis Fox	Wexford Township
Karl Hanson	Wexford County Road Commission
Erin Brotherton	Wexford Council on Aging
Tiffany Jones	Wexford Conservation District
Travis Baker	Wexford 911/EM

Sticky Note Exercise – Top 3 Hazards of Concern

Electrical Grid Failure (6)

Snowstorm/Ice (5)

Pandemic (4)

Flooding (4)

High Winds/Tornado (4)

Bridge/Road Failure (3)

Fire (2)

Loss of Nature (1)

- High rainfall events - Sanitary sewer overflow concerns around Lake Mitchell; may also backflow into water supply; some illegal plumbing may have been done on private properties
- Wildfire in May 2021. Burned about 350 acres; was a 'red flag day'
- Check USFS for wildfire data. What is reported in MDNR land wildfires could easily be doubled or tripled to reflect wildfire frequency.

Group Discussions – Impacts on People, Economy, Natural Environment and Built Environment

Thunderstorms

- Power outages, especially with straight-line winds
- Lake Mitchell and Lake Cadillac water levels are controlled by a dam on the Clam River outlet from Lake Cadillac. Wexford County Drain Commissioner operates it. If power goes out, generators will be needed to keep it going.
- Flooding, storm water overflows cause impact on environment
- Roads – trees down, washouts, road closures.
- Strain on local/county staff and resources for cleanup. Where do you put downed trees – need places to put cleanup debris.
- Vulnerable populations - elderly/disabled persons affected more, esp. those with cardiac issues and need power to run their oxygen or other medical equipment; those who are confined to wheelchairs.
- Location – urban vs. rural (communications more important to reach those in rural areas)
- Lack of EMS availability to get to rural areas if those areas are impacted more than urban areas.
- Radio communication for dispatch. Need to communicate to people where the shelters are.
- Wexford does not have tornado sirens. They utilize CODE RED.
- Poor cell service in some areas. But hard to find an area that is a “dead zone. People vacationing in the summer get lost on rivers/forests. Calls for 911 go up a lot in the summer.
- Rural population can be self-sustainable – have chainsaws, 4-wheelers, generators
- Damage to personal property – homes, businesses, vehicles. Gas stations, restaurants, lose \$ when power is out.
- High winds in dry spring/summer/fall conditions can cause grass, brush, and wildfires.

Winter Storms

- Power outages
- Icy roads – ice is worse than snow – takes longer to travel; more risk of any vehicle sliding off rd.
- Downed trees
- Snow drifting off roadways, blocked roads or driveways
- Vulnerable populations – elderly, those with medical issues, animals left out in the cold
 - COA tries to contact and check on elderly
- County Road Commission going through salt supply – salt application has negative impacts on environment
- Long hours for road commission crews
- Communities need to have a good snow removal management plan
- Getting to equipment/vehicles that need tows
- EMS runs – takes more time to get to people
- Extreme cold – pipe broken in second homes or those who are lower income and live in poorly insulated houses

- Generators needed for local businesses
- Getting information out about road closures – re-routes – this makes EMS dispatch runs difficult and more time consuming
- Local economic boost of gas stations, grocery/hardware stores – “pre-storm buy”

Extreme Heat/Drought

- Increased wildfire risk
- “No Burn” warnings issued during dry times to reduce risk of wildfire response
- Summer Events – thousands of people outdoors susceptible to dehydration, heat exhaustion
- People may have to work different hours or have to work fewer hours – earlier and later in the day to avoid afternoon heat
- School athletic programs – may also have alternate game and practice times
- Lack of cooling stations – only 1 in Cadillac
- EMS resources strained in the summer due to more calls
- Power grid strain with increased A/C use – possible “brown-outs”
- Dust blowing on dirt roads – a brine application only lasts for a day, and brine is expensive
- Agricultural losses, crop damage
- Animals left in cars; elderly
- Those with medical issues – breathing issues/trouble keeping cool

Vulnerable Populations – Group Discussion

- COA puts their customer’s risk level in their system. They keep tabs on people in more rural areas to check on them. Know their location, health status, support people nearby?
- Mike Boyd – Selma Twp. – they are looking into getting a generator for each of their Twp. buildings to use as a shelter – heating/cooling, water, food service. Once they do this they will tell the COA, put on their website and notify 911 dispatch.
- Nursing homes, foster care, elderly apts. (people can get stuck on their floor if the power is out and the elevator doesn’t work). The county can provide generators to help them as needed.
- *Per discussion with David Fox, Wexford Twp. Treasurer:* EMS service was discontinued out of Buckley as of Jan 1 2022. Recently the four townships in the NW corner of the county (Wexford, Hanover, Springfield, Antioch) formed a new NW Emergency Medical Association – trying to gather funding for their own EMS service. Mobile Medical Response (MMR) serves the whole county but their response times are just too slow to reach their rural areas.

Invasive Species – Group Discussion

- Spongy Moth (formerly “Gypsy Moth”). Last few years was bad – eat tree canopy, kill trees, vegetation on ground shoots up.
- European milfoil – has been in Lake Mitchell for years; they tried to introduce a bug to eat it; mowed it on shore; but still a problem. Up to lakefront owner to clean up their own property.
- Phragmites, Japanese knotweed, wild parsnips removal – Road Commission has worked with CAKE – CISMA in ROW
- There are many fungus/beetles/diseases and pests that kill trees – increases wildfire risk

Pandemic – Group Discussion

- **Shortcomings/ Problems**

- EMS /Fire – difficult to get people to volunteer to help because they were scared of getting sick
- People not wanting to go to regular Dr. visits ended up postponing their existing health conditions and getting sicker. Actually exacerbates existing crisis situation in hospital when they have to go in under emergency.
- Supply chain – vehicle parts, steel, concrete pipe, construction materials etc. hard to get. They tried to increase their stockroom supply but have run out. Can't get same day delivery now or some things just can't get at all, or there is a 6+ month delay.
- Impacts construction project they have already accepted bids for – delayed project and costs of materials have skyrocketed due to supply chain and inflation. Fuel, materials, brine have doubled in price.
- Road Commission funding decreased due to less \$ from gas tax, when people drove less during the pandemic lockdown.
- No high speed internet in Colfax Twp. Difficult for schools to teach remotely. Went back to in-person teaching in the fall of 2020. Schools parked buses in areas to provide a WiFi connection and gave laptops to kids to use in Cadillac.

- **Lessons Learned**

- Lack of PPE supplies when first started. Learned when they get it, take more than they think they might need.
- There will always be a conflict on what to do in pandemic situations. Need to determine what is acceptable moving forward. At what level do you decide on economic shutdown, vaccinations, quarantine and isolation rules.
- The pandemic was not nearly as bad as it could have been. There could have been a 5-15% death rate.
- Not enough health dept. staff to perform contact tracing like they have done on a much lesser case for TB, Hepatitis, etc. What's the point if you can't keep up? The State then said to stop contact tracing except for specific cases.
- Road Commission – learned how to create ways to keep staff members separate and handle work when they essentially were ½ staffed. Keeping in mind if a major storm hit, response times would be very slow to clear roads.
- EM/911 Manager - Never thought about the economic impact before of a pandemic when doing pandemic preparation courses! This will always be future consideration.
- COA partnered with Health Department to make vaccination appointments for seniors.
- Health Dept. had enhanced or new developed partnerships. Happy with vaccination clinic process – handled mass clinics in 10 counties; good feedback from community on how they functioned.
- MS Teams/Zoom provided a major benefit for the HD to communicate without being there in person. This technology was necessary for their work to be done.
- Face-to-face meetings are still valued – difficult to convey technical information regarding in virtual meetings. Best to continue with mixed options of virtual and in-person meetings moving forward as it does save expense on time/travel.

Rank the infrastructure failures that would most concern you, with 1 being the most concerning and 9 being the least concerning.

Type of Infrastructure Failure	Rated from Most Concern to Least Concern	Mean Score
Electrical Grid Failure	1	1.92
Communications Failure	2	3.31
Loss of Community Facility (school, hospital, etc.)	3	4.23
Road Closures	4	5.15
Loss of Private Home/Businesses	5	5.31
Bridge Collapse	6	5.69
Water Main Break	7	6.17
Dam Failure	8	6.38
Sewer Failure	9	6.5

14 surveys submitted; 1 omitted due to incorrect answer format.

MAPPING EXERCISE

Flooding Risk/Issue Areas

- Flooding potential all along the Manistee River in Springfield, Wexford, Hanover, Greenwood and Liberty Twps.
- Flooding potential along Slagle Creek in Slagle and Boon Twps.; goes though the Village of Harrietta.
- The Clam River in the City of Cadillac and Haring Township; flows N/NE out from the Clam River Control Dam on Lake Cadillac.
- Wexford Township:
 - W4 Rd., located NE of N7 Rd.
 - N9 Rd. between W. County Line Rd and W4 Rd.
 - Around the intersection of W2 ½ Rd. and N11 Rd.
 - N11 Rd. between W. 12 Rd. & W. 12 ½ Rd.
- Greenwood Township:
 - Manistee River surrounded by the following roads: N 27 ½ Rd., E 2 ½ Rd., N 29 ½ Rd., and River Rd.
- Cedar Creek Twp. and Colfax Twp:

- Road intersection of N37 Rd and E16 Rd.
- Cedar Creek Twp.:
 - City of Manton – Lake Billings Dam
- Selma, Cherry Grove, Clam Lake and Haring Townships and the City of Cadillac:
 - All wetland areas that are part of the floodplain for Lake Mitchell and Lake Cadillac.

Fire Hazard/Risk Areas

- All of the forested areas generally in the southwest portion of Wexford County; this is mostly Huron-Manistee National Forest property in Slagle, Boon, Selma, Cherry Grove, South Branch and Henderson Twps.
- Hanover Township
 - Several forested areas in the northern half of the township (DNR owned?)
 - North of the Manistee River, east of the Village of Buckley
- Greenwood Township (*Should this have been colored in blue for flooding instead? Seems to be in a wetland area*): Areas around N 31 Rd. & E8 Rd and N33 Rd between E8 Rd and E6 Rd.
- Liberty Township - A large section of the north part of the Twp. around the Manistee River
- Greenwood Township: NE part – around the Manistee River
- Colfax and Cedar Creek Twps: N 37 Rd between E 18 and E 16 Rd.
- Colfax Twp.: Land between E 14 Rd., E 16 Rd, N 33 Rd and N 31 Rd.