

Volcano Community Emergency Response Team
June 1, 2019 meeting minutes

Team Leader Nancy Lakin convened the meeting shortly after 9 a.m. at Cooper Center.

First up: Jimmy Love gave a talk on community resiliency efforts over the last few years in Fern Forest, then conducted a demonstration of rescue dog skills with the help of his two certified rescue dogs, Happy and Marley. Accompanying the trio to Cooper Center, but not participating in the exercise, was Happy's granddaughter, Reba, who is a rescue-dog-in-training.

Also present: Ellen O'Dunn, Hank Schultz, Marc Bender, Ray Burden, Doug Wilson, Duane Nakanishi, Richard Turner, Bea Nakanishi, Teresa Evangelista, Ting Ortiz, Balmore Vasquez, Angela Nickell, Sher Glass and Leigh Critchlow. Nancy noted that Carole Slattery and Snookie Mello are off-island.

Guest Hannah Hedrick of Fern Forest familiarized the team with a special project she's been involved with for several years: The Upper Puna Community Response Preparedness Plan. At present, the main focus is on community engagement and collaboration, she said.

Hannah invited everyone to attend a special meeting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 4, at the Keaau Community Center. The Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee will meet and discuss the final version of the plan to be included in the County General Plan. She stressed the importance of representation by residents of Upper Puna. Nancy asked that CERT members try to attend.

In a related matter, Hannah invites the community to keep up with the goings-on in Fern Forest via its community forum on the Facebook Glenwood Fern Forest Bulletin Board.

In other news, Nancy said Vicki Arthur, president of the Volcano Community Association, has asked Volcano CERT to help again with the Volcano 4th of July Parade and keiki games. As we have done for many years, CERT is assigned to help at traffic control stations with manpower and radio comms. These responsibilities back up off-duty police officers helping with crowd control along with event coordinators trying to make sure everything runs smoothly.

For the parade, radio operators confirmed thus far include Doug, Linda, Leigh, Marc, Nancy and Hank.

Fourth of July activities at Cooper Center are managed by the Cooper Center Council.

Volunteers are needed by Cooper Center Council on Wednesday, July 3, at 8 a.m. to set up and also at the end of the event on July 4 to break down. Be sure to sign the volunteer sheet with CERT as your group so we get our volunteer hours. As part of our agreement with Cooper Center Council to use Cooper Center for our meetings, we need to volunteer 4 hours a month and 2 hours per special event or pay a fee.

Traffic control volunteers should show up by about 7 a.m. on Thursday, July 4. Sher will be assisting at the keiki activity booth at Cooper Center and Doug and wife Linda Quarberg will help man our CERT table, also at Cooper Center. In addition to the radio operators, helping out with traffic control will be Duane Nakanishi. Other CERT team members are encouraged to sign up to help. Please contact Nancy.

The day before, in setting up for the next day's festivities, they need "people with good backs," said Nancy. Several temporary infrastructure-type components need to be assembled. Let Nancy know if you can help.

In other news, Doug reported 7 check-ins on this morning's ham radio pre-meeting net. This monthly practice is "a good exercise," he noted.

Doug said he'll be recruiting radio operators to assist during a new half-marathon race, to be held July 27. Let Doug know if you're interested.

On the VERT front, Doug reported that the Volcano Emergency Response Team is now under the umbrella of the Cooper Center Council, which is a 501-C-3 nonprofit. During its formation, VERT was under the auspices of the VCA. This new status will let VERT apply for grants-in-aid and other funding. Doug said 73 volunteers have signed up to help VERT: 46 on sizeup and communications, 9 for transportation, 6 to man the communications center, 2 on shelter coordination committee, and 2 to handle food preparation for volunteers during times of crisis. Additional volunteers are still being recruited.

VERT also has received an official list of 121 Volcano residents who may need extra help during a time of emergency. This list, from the County Office of Aging, is a good resource, and VERT will be following up with those folks and keeping the list updated, said Doug.

To find out more about VERT and the governing Volcano Emergency Response Plan, log on to thecoopercenter.org.

Next Volcano CERT meeting is at 9 a.m. Saturday, July 6, at Cooper Center. It will be a "working meeting," and we will be doing a full inventory on the CERT Container at the bottom of the back parking lot.

Respectfully submitted,
Leigh Critchlow, secretary