

11/17/83

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CHARTER
for the
FLOOD and LANDSLIDE DISASTER EVALUATION

Background

A special staff position was established in the Watershed and Air Management Staff to prepare an evaluation of the flood and landslide disaster that occurred in the Intermountain Region in the spring of 1983. This evaluation is the fifth of five phases that included the emergency response, initial damage assessment, a detailed damage assessment, restoration, and evaluation.

Objective

Working closely with Intermountain Region and Station personnel, other Federal, state, and local agencies, and associated universities, review what has been learned from the entire flood/landslide incident; evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forest Service response; determine what is needed to be better prepared for future flood/landslide disaster situations; determine adequacy of past watershed protection work and structures; identify needed changes in facility location and design criteria; determine the responsiveness of the planning and budget process; determine the responsiveness of the several levels of the Forest Service in the five phases; identify skill deficiencies; recommend necessary changes, corrections, and/or additions to policy direction and program management; and disseminate relevant information to pertinent parties.

Approach

An initial scoping effort identified a list of subjects which need to be addressed during the evaluation. These items will be addressed through interaction of ad hoc teams of relevant players and through interviews and consultations with individuals. Those Forests relevant to this evaluation are the Wasatch, Uinta, Manti-LaSal, Fishlake, and Ashley in Utah; and the Toiyabe and Humboldt in Nevada. The disaster and management teams on these Forests will meet with the evaluator and address pertinent issues. The evaluator will also meet with key Regional Office and Intermountain Station staff, discussing the following issues with specialists in CF, WS&A, Engineering, IO, P&B, F&AM, WL, Rec., A&FM, Timber, Range, and the P&A AD at the Station.

Other agencies that need to be contacted for input and comment are the SCS, USGS, Corps of Engineers, FEMA, ASCS, Comprehensive Emergency Management, and the State Minerals and Geological Survey.

The following issues are examples of those that will be discussed:

1. Analyze the fabric of Forest Service policies, roles, and responsibilities in geologic and hydrologic emergency incidents, by addressing the following:

Did we do what was required and necessary throughout the emergency?

Did existing Forest Service direction and completed orientation and training provide an adequate understanding and effective execution of essential duties by key individuals?

Is what we did in FSM?

Does FSM fit different degrees of incidents, i.e., one flood vs. long-term landslide events?

Did we implement well and understand what we did?

How well did policies provide for formal and informal coordination with other state and Federal emergency response organizations?

Are new policies and procedures needed in FSM at national, Regional, or Forest levels?

Should this degree of emergency incident (i.e., 100-year flood or instantaneous geologic events) trigger a change in policies?

How did we utilize our skill pool? Was the skill pool adequate to respond?

Does disaster direction need to be tied together (Regional Disaster Plan, NIIMS, 1590, 2500, Forest supplements)?

Does the Forest Service role complement, duplicate, or contradict state and local responsibilities?

What policy and procedure improvements are needed to provide accurate and timely situation reporting? How can the Forest Service coordinate with other agencies and spokespersons in situation reporting?

Were Forest Service actions consistent with existing laws, regulations, and policies?

What should be the extent of Forest Service involvement in downstream concerns?

2. What authority does the Forest Service have in expending funds in emergency work? Is our authority extended to offsite? Is any policy action needed on how the Forest Service funds rehabilitation of damaged resources other than roads (ERFO) and in-channel (403) restoration.

3. Does the Forest Service have direct and workable emergency incident linkages to affected governments, such as

Cities - local networks, mayors

Counties - commissioners, disaster coordinators, irrigation districts

State - Emergency Boards, governor

Federal - USGS, SCS, BOR, USDA State Emergency Board

Who establishes and maintains these linkages? Are linkages in place to relay critical factors indicating an imminent emergency?

4. Does/should the Forest Service have an (adequate) early alert process for advanced warning of future hazards? What actions should the Forest Service implement now for future events?

5. Do we need a better understanding with the SCS on:

Definitions: What is emergency watershed protection?

Direction: Is it clear and concise to field personnel?

Consistency: Funding 403 projects between SCS Districts.

6. Are Forest Service policies on rehabilitation work consistent with the executive order on flood plain management? Are we fulfilling its mandate? Do we have a criteria on whether or not to do structural rehabilitation work on flood damaged capital improvements, especially roads, trails, and campgrounds? Is our criteria consistent between Forests, weighed by political, social, economic, and environment constraints?

7. Are all resources covered in the flood damage assessment report? How do we handle timber loss and changes in long-term yield?

8. What are the management implications that we learned which will benefit future actions and advanced planning? Do we need improved linkages with external governments and agencies that are adjacent to the Forest to provide input into planning and zoning laws/criteria/regulations/directions for protection from future events (i.e., residential development on alluvial fans)?

9. Is the hydrologic-geologic-engineering design input adequate in our capital improvements, i.e., road culverts and campgrounds?

10. Do we have any situations for liability claims?

11. Have we received an adequate Regional priority in national needs for funding repair/replacement of damaged or destroyed improvements and resources? Do we have a consistent and realistic Regional approach to funding and supplying manpower (purchasing, contracting, labor crews)?

12. Is there adequate coordination of all proposed research work related to the flood-landslide events and technology transfer of past research results? Is appropriate or duplicate research being done?

13. Did past watershed protection work and structures assist in mitigating the disaster?

14. How effective was public information and relations during and after the event?

Report

A final report will be prepared having the following sections:

Executive Summary

Introduction with the background, objectives, and approach

Analysis including authorities, directions, and issue responses

Conclusions and findings

Policy and administrative recommendations and opportunities

A draft will be ready for review by September 30, 1984