

S.C. Floodwater Commission National Security Task Force

Feb. 7, 2019 teleconference

MINUTES

The National Security Task Force teleconference was called to order by NSTF Secretary W. Thomas Smith, Jr. at 10:00 a.m., Feb. 7, 2019.

Present for the teleconference were:

Col. Bill Connor – CHAIRMAN
Col. Steve Vitali – Operations Officer
Col. W. Thomas Smith Jr. – Secretary
Mr. John Cleveland – Governor Henry McMaster’s office
Col. Bryan Hilferty
Mr. Robert Ijames
Col. Scott Banning
Mr. Steve O’Brien
Director Kim Stenson
Mr. Tim Harrington
Maj. Paul Sipe
Mr. Gary Rivard
Lt. Col. Jeff Palazzini

[Titles and ranks above are subject to correction]

Smith invited John Cleveland from Governor McMaster’s office to address the conferees.

Cleveland thanked everyone for being present and for “working with us” on the matters of FOIA compliance.

Smith then called the roll and turned the meeting over to Chairman Bill Connor.

Connor thanked everyone, and then described the role, brief history and background of the NSTF, and what we have been tasked with in terms of assessing installation needs and vulnerabilities. He then discussed the importance of meeting the deliverable date of July 1 for the “finished document” to the Governor. He reiterated that June 15 is the date for completion of the NSTF draft copy to all members.

Connor referred to the National Defense Authorization Act 2019 which requires all military installations to include energy, climate, and resilience efforts in the master plan,

and how it fits into what the NSTF is doing as regards integration of bases with civilian communities. “Prime movers within this project [going forward] will be the emergency managers from each of the bases.”

Connor again discussed the necessity of an advisory (liaison) committee.

Connor discussed the impacts of offshore Hurricane Joaquin in 2015 on the bases, and potential impacts to bases going forward on the face of new, as yet unforeseen, storm threats.

Connor reminded everyone of the DoD installation brief and workshop on Feb. 13, followed by the NSTF conference call. He also reminded everyone of the next day – Feb. 8 – working meeting of the full Commission wherein he will brief the Governor.

Connor then said there would be read-ahead packages forwarded prior to Feb. 13. Connor commended Steve Vitali and Bryan Hilferty for their work thus far. Connor turned the meeting over to Vitali.

Vitali addressed the NSTF’s Concept of Operations.

Vitali said, “First, our plan is to conduct a monthly conference call to provide guidance, to coordinate, to receive emergency manager updates, and to provide a platform for floodwater installation discussions.”

Vitali said that is ongoing.

Vitali then said, “Today, we should have identified the major South Carolina military installations considered. The installation list was amended to add Shaw Air Force Base and the Naval Hospital Support Base Charleston.”

He said, “We ask that all National Security Task Force liaison, advisory and emergency managers continue to identify and coordinate with subordinate component service emergency managers and engineer points of contact by 13 Feb.”

He said, “We plan to conduct National Security Task Force working groups with installation emergency managers to cross pollinate potential floodwater vulnerabilities, the challenges. We’re really interested in hearing about the fixes to previous to emergencies, and to find and propose solutions or other mitigation factors. Our first such working group will be held on 13 Feb. at the South Carolina State Emergency Management Division.”

He said, “We ask each installation to analyze, define and validate installation floodwater categories (impacts and affects) by next week.”

Vitali then referenced a DoD 2019 Climate Change Report that specifically discussed the vulnerabilities to Shaw AFB as regards “environmental impacts of recurrent flooding, drought and wildfires.”

Vitali said, “We ask each installation to analyze, define and validate non-emergency manager floodwater categories – Electrical grids, rail, roads, bridges, communications, medical / diseases resulting from floodwater, etc.” This will be done by Mar. 1.

He said, “We ask each installation to identify to the National Security Task Force shortfalls / challenges to mitigating floodwater affects and impacts on Installations or from local communities.” This will done by Mar. 13.

He said, “Identify installation fixes to any previous floodwater emergency (Example – Fort Jackson upgrade construction of installation dams that had flooded the ‘Kings Grant’ civilian community.)” This will be done by Apr. 1.

He said, “Identify and develop solutions and coordinate mitigation with federal, state, and local organizations” This will be done by May 23.

Vitali added that “Installation EMs and liaison personnel will provide to the NSTF chair – via Ops Officer – draft input / recommendations.” This will be done by 1 June for consideration into the Final SCFC NSTF Report to the Governor.”

He said, “Draft NSTF Report forwarded to liaison, advisory and emergency managers.” This will be done by June 1.

He said, “NSTF Chair will submit his final report to the SCFC Chair for his report to the Governor on 1 July.”

Vitali then said the conference was opened for further discussion.

Connor then thanked Vitali, and discussed the dates going forward and overall objectives of the other nine task forces within the SCFC. Connor also provided examples.

Smith asked if a law-enforcement piece was perhaps necessary based on previous offline conversations he had had with Connor and Vitali about it.

Connor discussed restrictions of posse comitatus and how integration and coordination of military police and other law enforcement agencies might tie into the overall effort.

Connor then encouraged everyone to voice other potential “tie in” categories for discussions going forward.

Vitali encouraged same.

Connor said teleconferences will kept to one-per-month.

Hilferty brought up the importance of communications of U.S. Army Central and U.S. Air Force Central, and how AFCENT has the backup CAOC [Combined Air Operations Center] for the Middle East at Shaw AFB. He discussed continuity of operations, and he encouraged a similar plan for the NSTF and between installations with state assistance.

Connor discussed the importance of state assistance in terms of resources.

Hilferty also suggested that the NSTF was also good in terms of helping “anti-BRAC,” And that the Commission might demonstrate that this state is committed to supporting all of its military facilities if BRAC again comes up in the future.

Kim Stenson discussed the public information component and how SCEMD might be able to assist. He added that the password-protected Palmetto System might be able to help in terms of sharing information. He also discussed the importance of establishing and furthering relations between local emergency managers and military installations.

Connor mentioned the effectiveness of the Palmetto System in terms of establishing and maintaining good situational awareness.

Connor added that he would like to include getting all the bases access to the Palmetto System in the forthcoming report.

Vitali brought up base evacuations. This was discussed between Connor and Vitali. Steve O’Brien suggested a template for ideas going forward. Hilferty suggested a questionnaire for same.

Connor said the NSTF would send out directions to the physical EOC (SCEMD) site for the Feb. 13 meeting and conference call.

Smith then asked for a second roll-call of all teleconference participants. Roll-call was completed.

Tim Harrington mentioned that it might be beneficial for there to be some outreach to – and crosstalk between – multiple channels. He mentioned talking with the S.C. Military Base Task Force and the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability.

Smith mentioned that he believed Gen. George Goldsmith served on the S.C. Military Base Task Force.

Scott Banning discussed Shaw AFB and Joint Base Charleston. He referred Christopher Aamolb, deputy CE squadron commander for Shaw AFB.

Connor called for alibis. He then thanked all teleconference participants. Connor officially closed the teleconference.

Submitted by W. Thomas Smith Jr., Feb. 11, 2019