

Meeting notes

The COSTEP-CT group met in Hartford today, 5/5/10.

Present: Kathy Craughwell-Varda (Conservation ConneCTion), Jane Cullinane (Conn. State Library), Mark Jones (Conn. State Library), Tara Kennedy (Yale Univ., Rich Malley, Lizette Pelletier (Conn. State Library) and Andrew Raddant (U.S. Dept. of the Interior). Note taker: Jane.

Andrew Raddant, from the Boston office of the Dept. of the Interior, joined us and discussed how Interior works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on emergency response.

We proposed the following mission statement for the group:

Encourage communication between cultural resource organizations and emergency responders in order to facilitate the preservation of cultural resources in the event of an emergency and to help cultural resource organizations be of help to the community in the event of an emergency. Create and maintain a statewide disaster framework regarding preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.

We discussed a definition of "cultural resource organizations" as not-for-profit organizations, open to the public, that collect things. We will use the categories of collecting institutions from the Heritage Health Index: "archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, archaeological repositories, and scientific research organizations that hold collections in public trust" p. 23 *A public trust at risk : the Heritage health Index report on the state of America's collections*
<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI/full.html>

We will reconsider the mission statement at the next meeting and we hope to approve it at that time.

The list of desired accomplishments will also be considered at our next meeting, with an eye to formulating some immediate goals for the group. A new accomplishment has been added to this list:
--To create community emergency response teams, consisting of persons from Connecticut who could respond and help any cultural resource organization in the state, in the recovery phase of an emergency

The next meeting will be June 2, 2010 at 10:00 at the Van Block facility of the State Library in Hartford. (directions, <http://www.cslib.org/facvb.htm>).

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DESIRED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

--Write a statement on the value of cultural resources to local economy and public perception that this is a good place to live

--Write a mission statement

--Build up the committee to have representatives from all parts of the cultural resource and emergency responder communities

--Learn what emergency responders do, learn their vocabulary

--Teach emergency responders what cultural resources do and what they can contribute to help a community during an emergency

--Add cultural resources to the state and local plans, as Massachusetts has done with their "Protection of cultural and historical resources annex."

--Encourage cultural resource organizations to be of help during an emergency, for example, train public library staff to assist in filling in state or FEMA disaster recovery forms.

--Inventory what resources cultural resource organizations have that might of help during an emergency, such as meetings rooms, public access computers, bookmobiles with satellite computer access, programs

for children who aren't in school

--Inventory what the organizations would need to accomplish the previous list, for example, a generator to keep the public access computers going, plus running water for bathrooms

--Train and encourage cultural resource organizations to develop a disaster mitigation and recovery plan and meet local emergency responders

--Make cultural resource organizations and community officials aware of state, federal and other disaster mitigation and recovery assistance available to cultural resource organizations

--Offer wet book workshops, and the like, on dealing with damaged materials

--Establish a state contract for disaster recovery services, open to use by all state agencies, municipalities and qualified non-profit organizations (per state definition)

--Establish a stockpile of emergency response supplies in various places around the state, with a contract for each organization to contribute funds to build up the stockpile and replenish it promptly

--To create community emergency response teams, consisting of persons from Connecticut who could respond and help any cultural resource organization in the state, in the recovery phase of an emergency

--Use grant funds to help accomplish these things, such as training, consultants to help develop disaster plans, and stockpiling supplies

--Develop a web site for the group with the mission statements, minutes or meeting notes, workshop announcements and so on

--Spread the word via a Listserv, wiki, blog or some such thing (but lets not maintain too many) and announcements through umbrella organizations' newsletters, Listservs, email distribution lists, etc.