

Meeting Notes

COSTEP-CT met Aug. 18, 2010 at the Connecticut Historical Society.

Present: Kathy Craughwell-Varda (Conservation ConneCTion), Jane Cullinane (Conn. State Library, Preservation Office), Mary Herbert-Busick (Wadsworth Atheneum, NEMA), Mark Jones (Conn. State Library, State Archivist), Tara Kennedy (Yale Univ.), Rich Malley (Conn. Historical Society), Robert Novak (Derby Historical Society), Lizette Pelletier (Conn. State Library, Public Records Office), Ryan Potosnak (FEMA, field services, currently in Conn.), Meredith Vasta (Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center). Note taker: Jane.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tom Romano of the Conn. Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), will offer ICS 100 training on Sept. 23, 2010, 8:30 to 4:30 at State Library Van Block Facility <http://www.cslib.org/facvb.htm>. ICS stands for Incident Command System <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/IncidentCommandSystem.shtm> .

WEB SITE AND COMMUNICATION

Lizette Pelletier hopes to have a website available very soon. She'll create a WordPress site associated with the Connecticut State Library's website. Jane Cullinane has the Mission statement and Goals ready to go online, along with a Resource list of sites mentioned at past meetings.

Kathy Craughwell-Varda distributed a CD with the resources available at the Conservation ConneCTion disaster preparedness workshop series. <http://www.conservationct.org/> .

We also want a listserv so people can be informed of our work, even if they aren't on the Steering Committee. A wiki for our working documents would also be helpful. Lizette and Tara Kennedy will work on this.

Rhode Island's Connecting to Collections grants from the Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) are focused on disaster planning, but they don't yet have a statewide component. Lori Foley asked Kathy to share what Connecticut is doing with the folks in Rhode Island, and our new website will help do this.

If COSTEP-CT wants to reach local emergency responders, perhaps the DEMHS regional managers would forward a message for us.

DISASTERS IN CONNECTICUT

Jane started a list of disasters in Connecticut cultural heritage organizations, based on our discussion last month. This list can go on the wiki and members can add information as needed. The list might be of use to raise awareness of the need for disaster planning.

There was a fire at the Connecticut River Museum in Essex earlier this week. Kathy and Rich Malley both spoke to the museum staff and collections were untouched but the roof was heavily damaged.

The Barnum Museum in Bridgeport collections still have not received any treatment, following the tornado damage in June but the building has seen major work.

The collections of the Indian and Colonial Research Center (ICRC) in Mystic, which were moved to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center following the March flood, have been completely inventoried. But the building is not eligible for FEMA funds and the Center had no insurance.

INSURANCE POOL

Lizette wondered if an insurance pool could be created for small organizations like the ICRC. Mark Jones

could speak to the State Library's Fiscal administrator about how to start an inquiry into this question. Tara will ask an insurance executive she knows.

NEW MEMBERS

Perhaps we can get someone from the insurance industry to join the steering committee. Mary Herbert-Busick knows some underwriters in the art insurance world and will pursue this idea.

Lori Foley suggested two new members to Kathy. Joey Barbera is with the Conn. Interlocal Risk Management Agency <http://www.ccm-ct.org/insurance/> and Wayne Sanford is with the Shoreline Trolley Museum and is retired from the State Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

The Steering Committee is interested in adding other new members from the emergency response community and other cultural heritage areas, to broaden our outreach and perspective.

MUTUAL AID

Kathy suggested that the organizations that participated in the Conservation ConneCTion disaster plan workshops could form the basis of regional mutual aid groups.

Jane and Tara will work on questions for a survey of the cultural heritage community to discover what resources and skills they have, relating to disaster response. Kathy will post it via Survey Monkey.

VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

We discussed the value statement proposed by Tara and the statement in the national COSTEP brochure <http://www.nedcc.org/disaster/downloads/COSTEP%20brochure.pdf>. We decided to rearrange the statements from the national brochure, to emphasize what cultural resource organizations have to offer in the aftermath of a disaster. Jane hopes that the value statement will persuade other cultural heritage organizations to join us and will help those organizations bring their own communities and local emergency responders on board. Kathy and Robert Novak will work on the next draft of the statement.

GRANTS

Kathy and Mark will work on a grant application to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to get a risk assessment survey for the 61 participants in the Conservation ConneCTion archival assessment project.

WORK WITH LOCAL EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

As part of their current grant, the Conservation ConneCTion wants to celebrate May Day <http://www.archivists.org/mayday/index.asp> by encouraging cultural heritage organizations to invite local emergency responders to visit their facilities. Kathy wants to develop a questionnaire to help them learn more about each other. May is also when the American Library Association celebrates National Preservation Week. <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/confevents/preswk/index.cfm> Perhaps this effort could continue in October, since October is both Archives Month <http://www.archivists.org/archivesmonth/> and Fire Prevention Month <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=30758> .

In Connecticut, fire marshals create "Pre-Plans." They visit commercial, educational and assembly buildings in their district and consider what would be needed in the event of a fire at that facility. It is not clear that every town uses the Pre-Plan model and small buildings, such as a house museum, may not fit the model for an automatic Pre-Plan. However, asking for a Pre-Plan may be an effective way for cultural heritage organizations to open communication channels with local emergency responders.

NEXT MEETING

We'll meet Sept. 15, 2010, at 10:00-12:00, location to be confirmed, probably at the State Library Van Block Facility, <http://www.cslib.org/facvb.htm> .