

**5/25/22 Meeting with Missaukee County Planning Commission and other Invited  
Community Members**

**Participants:**

- Linda Hartshorne-Shafer, Missaukee County Emergency Management & Planning
- Sherri Blaszak, Missaukee County Planning Commission/Missaukee Conservation District
- Mimi Zwolak, Missaukee County Planning Commission
- Craig Fisher, Missaukee County Planning Commission and City of McBain DPW/Fire
- Bruce Miller, Missaukee County Planning Commission
- Stacy Karll-Linder, Missaukee County Planning Commission
- David Denhouten, Missaukee County Prosecutor's Office
- Liz Vogel, Missaukee County Administrator/Chief Financial Officer
- Pam Niebrzdowski, Missaukee County Commissioner
- Dean Smallegan, Missaukee County Commissioner
- Aaron Sogge, Missaukee EMS Director
- Laura Marion, Missaukee District Library
- Bret Haner, Emergency Response Coordinator, District Health Dept. #10
- Margie Phillips, Clerk, Forest Township
- Craig Ardis, Mayor, City of Lake City
- Joey Roberts, Mayor, City of McBain

**Presenters:**

- Jennifer Neal, AICP, Networks Northwest Community Planner
- Stephanie Loria, Networks Northwest Community Planner

**Participants were asked to indicate their top 3 natural hazard concerns on sticky notes:**

<b>Top Natural Hazard Event or Impact</b>	<b># of Responses</b>
High Winds &/or Tornado	11
Electrical/Communication Grid Failure/Extended Power Outage	8
Large Snowstorm/Blizzard/Ice Storm	6
Invasive Species/Wildlife Diseases	4
Flooding	3
Severe Thunderstorm	2
Road or Bridge Failure	2
Wildfire	1
Extreme Heat & Cold	1

**Severe Thunderstorm/Wind Storm Group Discussion**

- Windstorm in mid-Dec. 2021 resulted in lots downed trees
- Often large old trees along power lines – can be a problem; need more tree maintenance along the lines. Lots of old oak trees.
- Would be good to bury power lines where possible
- Straight line winds are the biggest concern regarding damage impacts. Windstorms have lifted and overturned boats and boat lifts on lakes.

- Wind turbines – could be a hazard in very high winds – could break apart the turbine? There have been two wind turbine fires in the past (equipment malfunction).
- Roads closed from storm impacts (trees/power lines down, snow, ice, washout/flooding, etc.) results in a disruption in the local economy. Agricultural and lumber (two biggest local economic sectors) goods can't be exported, and goods being imported are delayed.
- Property damage from hail can be expensive and vast – ruins crops, Xmas trees; damages vehicles, equipment, buildings.
- With excessive rain, sometimes fields are too wet to harvest crops when they are needed
- Storm sewer overflow in cities from excessive rain.
- Only McBain has a tornado siren alert system. There is no county phone alert system in place. People rely on other phone alerts from NOAA weather phone app, etc.
- Cell phone alerts are limited as there are several areas in the county with poor cell phone service coverage.
- Community comes together to help with cleanup efforts and aid neighbors in distress.
- Campgrounds, seasonal populations are more at risk

### **Severe Winter Weather Group Discussion**

- Ice storms are the biggest concern – shuts down mobility/ability to drive sometimes for several days; increased number of slip and fall incidents; this past winter was particularly bad with ice – had 3 days when power was out in some areas after President's Day in Feb. People can't access goods and services and may not have an emergency supply at home. Stores may be sold out of staple groceries and salt.
- Generally many are prepared for extreme heat/cold, but people still could be better prepared for these events with emergency supply kits.
- Secondary roads often don't get plowed for days after major snowstorms.
- Extreme cold – school community shelter has opened for community support – has showers.
- Heavy snow prevents emergency vehicles from accessing people in need.
- Heavy snow can also cause power outages.

### **Extreme Heat and Drought**

- Both impact more sensitive populations with health issues; livestock; crops/Christmas Trees.
- Lots of Christmas tree farms and agricultural land, especially in Forest Township. In some areas of the county landowners are removing trees to use the land to raise cattle/livestock (Reeder Twp. by the airport, S. of M-55).
- Most of the County's population relies on well water. Some areas have shallow aquifers. These could be drawn down during a drought and result in water supply problems.
- Droughts also impact lake levels for recreation.
- High demand in A/C during heat events could put a strain on the electrical grid and cause a blackout.
- High senior citizen population, about 25%. Most do not have A/C, just fans.
- Increase in 911 calls in summer if power is out (population drinks more alcohol).
- Loss of food in households during power outages.
- People can't run their well pump for water if the power is out.
- Farming crop loss, home gardens also lose produce.
- Most people do have generators

### **Vulnerable Populations Group Discussion**

- Many shelter options available in extreme heat/cold/severe weather events:
  - Christian Reform Church
  - Methodist Church can provide heat, water, and A/C
  - Library (no generator)
  - City Hall in McBain – they just got a generator a few months ago.
  - School serves as a community shelter with lockers, restrooms, showers, generator, food service, etc.
  - All fire stations have generators.
- More at risk:
  - Campgrounds
  - Have several adult foster care facilities
  - Schools
  - Older population – completely spread out over the county
  - Farm laborers – often housed on the farm – mostly in Richland Twp. – English is not their primary language; there is often one farm worker in the group that is bi-lingual
  - Mobile Home Park – “Meadowlark”; also many other mobile homes scattered throughout the county
- Seniors have services through the Area Agency on Aging, but many are reluctant to sign up for assistance.
- There are many living in poverty or in the “ALICE” category. They are often young people with children, living paycheck to paycheck and would not be able to financially recover from a disaster.
- There are also many people who live in isolation and may not be able to be reached or have a support system in an emergency. Would be good to get them on a call system so they can be checked on.

### **Invasive Species Group Discussion**

- Forestry, agriculture, tourism, fisheries are the biggest industries in the county. They could be severely impacted by invasive species. Bovine TB is already an issue.
- There is a disconnect between what is known to be good Integrated Pest Management practices promoted by MSUE (no pesticides) and what the USDA requires for agricultural products to be exported (must apply pesticides to export, even if they are not needed).
- Aquatic invasive plants, like Eurasian milfoil, can be a hazard to people swimming in the lake if they get caught up in it.

### **Pandemic Group Discussion**

- What Worked Well:
  - Vaccination distribution and clinics – partnered with DHD#10
  - EMS offered vaccination clinics
  - Schools went above and beyond expectations. Got resources and food to kids who needed it. School Board had to make tough decisions with variable guidance from the State on how to keep everyone safe; they made decisions they thought were best for the

kids and their families. The Lake City School Board decided to sell some property to get money to fund the needed supplies/changes instead of cutting their budget. Built trust between the community and the school system.

- Community members came together well to support local business and restaurants to keep them afloat – purchased gift cards, to-go meals.
  - Some restaurants offered free meals
  - The use of technology was beneficial to maintain learning, working, and communication. It was not used much before but will certainly be used in the future.
  - Community Hope and churches partnered to set up 4 food banks around the county. They were welcomed and are all still needed/utilized.
- Shortcomings:
    - The need for reliable internet was exposed – there is a serious lack of this technology in many areas of the county. The library offered mobile Wi-Fi/computers and had trouble providing that in some areas due to lack of cellular service coverage.
    - Some people had no options to work from home – healthcare workers, for example.
    - People who were getting state/federal aid during the pandemic, and currently have a job that does not offer paid sick leave, are now not getting tested if they feel sick because they can't afford to miss work. Inequalities were highlighted.
    - Staffing shortages in many industries – still an issue.
    - Work progress on projects stalled and has yet to get picked up – for example, discussions between the County and Wolverine Power and engineers to plan for bike trail development – good progress was being made and nothing has been done since the pandemic hit. Need to re-engage with project partners to re-start the project.

### **Mapping Exercise/Discussion: Flooding and Wildfire**

- During the 2008 Governor- and Presidential-Declared Disaster for the County, the Road Commission provided lots of pictures of road damages due to washouts/flooding to show FEMA the need for assistance in repairs (assistance was granted). The storm system that impacted the County in 2008 happened very quickly. The storm events in 2014 that preempted a Governors Disaster Declaration was a slower event – lots of rainfall in the spring impacted areas that were still thawing from the winter, and led to localized flooding.
- Falmouth Dam is old and needs updates. If it fails it would have a substantial impact around Falmouth.
- Paradise Bend subdivision is downstream from the Reedsburg Dam in Enterprise Township (about 6.25 SW of the dam on Paradise Road; adjoins the Muskegon River). Good to be aware of this in case of an issue.
- Reedsburg Dam had a planned drawdown about 7-8 years ago (MDNR owned). Outflow went into the Dead Stream Swamp. Was re-built in 2021.
- Possible goal (?) Coordinate/share water supply location information amongst all fire departments.

### **Wildfire Concerns marked on the maps:**

- Wildfire risk near homes due to pine forests in:
  - NW area of Caldwell Twp, located south of Rhoby Rd., W. of Lucas Rd., N. of Burns Rd., and E. of Seeley Rd.
  - Lake Twp. near LaChance Rd., Rosted Rd., and Jennings Rd.

- SW part of Lake Twp and the NW part of Richland Twp around M-55, west of Lucas Rd and LaChance Rd
- An active railroad runs through McBain in Richland Twp and the SW part of Riverside Twp. A fire could be started in dry and/or windy conditions from a spark from a passing train on the rail line.
- Much of Norwich Township is considered to have a high fire danger with pine trees. There are oil/gas fields out here, but a radius around the wellheads is typically mowed/cleared of vegetation.

Flooding Concerns marked on the maps:

- Flooded roads in Lake Twp: Lotan Road/Dickerson Rd area and Walenjus Road, west of M-66
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- Falmouth Dam – sediment is accumulating in the pond behind the dam. If it were to break, it would release potential contaminants from the sediment in that water

Poll Question: Please rank the infrastructure failures that would most concern you, with 1 being the most concerning and 9 being the least concerning.

Results: Ranked from most concerning down to least concerning. (12 people completed this question)

