HENTF MEMBERS BRIEFING NOTES

20 August 2020 • 2:00 – 3:30 pm EDT • via Zoom
Convened by HENTF’s co-sponsors:
FEMA’s Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation and the
Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative

AGENDA

2:00 Welcome
Lori Foley, Coordinator, Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF), FEMA
Corine Wegener, Director, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI)
Welcome everyone, we've already had an active disaster season, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

HENTF Updates
Lori Foley
The importance of engaging in your HENTF responsibilities this busy hurricane season:
• As you’re all well aware, we’re in the midst of a hyperactive hurricane season. We’re now entering peak hurricane season, which runs through mid-October, when about 95% of hurricanes form. NOAA predicts that 19 to 25 named storms will develop, of which 7 to 11 will be hurricanes.
• Tropical Depression 13 is expected to become a TS later today. It has the potential to impact PR and the USVI this weekend, and FL early next week. And TD 14 is expected to become a TS later tonight or tomorrow, with a track forecast to move into the Gulf of Mexico on Sunday. I urge you to monitor these systems at hurricanes.gov.

Wildfires
• Wildfires are ravaging the West, but they’re also burning in Florida, Alaska, and the Southeast.
• The NWS has issued red-flag warnings from the Northwest into the Rockies.
• As of Tues. evening, there were at least 77 large complexes of wildfires burning in 15 states across the country (according to the National Interagency Fire Center).
• Almost a third of them – 25 – are burning in California.
• Just over the past 5 days, 5 of the 6 disasters declared fall under the Fire Management Assistance Program, a program in which FEMA provides assistance to states, tribal govs, and local govs in the form of grants for equipment, supplies, and personnel costs.
• Also, the Preparedness Level has moved from Level 4 to Level 5: several geographic areas are experiencing major incidents that have the potential to exhaust all agency fire resources. A sobering thought.

Iowa Derecho
• But while we’ve been fixated on the hurricanes and the wildfires, another event occurred that has impacted the Midwest, but most severely impacting Iowa.
• A powerful line of severe thunderstorms known as a “derecho” tracked across eastern Iowa and northwest Illinois on the afternoon of Monday, August 10, producing widespread straight-line wind damage.
• The most extreme winds, clocked at around 110 mph, destroyed or damaged outbuildings, grain bins, homes, and trees in Benton and Linn Counties.
• In addition to the damage, numerous power outages were reported across the region.
• And power has still not been restored to thousands of people.
• The derecho tore the roof off the Granger House Museum, in Marion, IA, a house museum reflecting middle-class life in the Victorian era.
• Map [in PPT] showing the counties in which Public Assistance has been made available for emergency work and for the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities.

The Ask
• I need you to step up to the plate. With so many disasters occurring around the country, I expect each of you, as a delegate, to do the basic work required of a TF member organization: When I send you information to disseminate to your members in the impacted state or territory, I’m not just HOPING you’ll do so; I’m EXPECTING you to do so. And conversely, I count on you to reach out to your members, check on them, gather reports of damage from them, ask them what they need, and pass that intel along to me.
• That situational awareness will help FEMA and its federal partners identify where the greatest needs are and, most importantly, it can enable me to mobilize the HENTF organizations that might be able to provide assistance to impacted communities whenever possible.
• It might mean serving as a subject matter expert. It might mean serving on a HENTF working group to help develop resources to assist the cultural heritage community. Many of you have been stepping up to the plate following numerous disasters. Your efforts have made a difference. What I’m asking for is involvement and engagement from many more of you.
• A shout-out to Martha Sharma of AAM for suggesting I make it easier for everyone to push out information by providing a link to that info on the HENTF website. It’s a terrific solution that we’re eager to implement.
• However, as I’ve implored before, YOU need to sign up for the Constant Contact eblast in order to receive it, which is where that info will be posted; we can’t do it for you. Sign up for the HENTF News Brief at https://bit.ly/3eJwzwL

Stacy Bowe, SCRI Training Program Manager
• Communications updates: SCRI hosts the HENTF resources library on our website. We have organized resources under four categories and just added a fifth, COVID-19 Resources Hub. An area that needed expansion and care was the Planning, Preparedness, and Mitigation page. We are in the peak of a very crazy hurricane season, so we felt now was the time to expand this page.
• Sept and Oct are the most likely months that hurricanes impact the US. We should be working on preparedness now. For the month of August, we’ve been selecting resources from this page and collecting others recommended during trainings and are pushing them out through our social media, Facebook (FB) and Twitter. We also wanted to be a little creative with the campaign and grouped them with a diminishing time frame. We’ve developed a branding campaign and daily preparedness calendar. Preparedness can be broken down into actionable steps. FB posts have been a little more expanded, sharing resources and explaining why they’re important. If any of you are also working on preparedness events or resources, we would be happy to share. NCPTT just had a webinar today about hurricane preparedness for Gulf Coast states and we shared that on our FB page.

Liz Kirby, SCRI Senior Advisor for Programs and Partnerships
• Happy to give the membership an update on a new initiative with FEMA’s Individual Assistance / Disaster Recovery Centers Unit that places cultural heritage and family history within the formal disaster response framework.
• Recall that HENTF and FEMA had teamed up in 2017 and 2018 to offer Saving Your Family Treasures (SYFT) demonstrations on-site at various Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in Louisiana, Texas, South Carolina, and Iowa.
• The DRCs are facilities set up in central locations so people who have been through a disaster can apply for FEMA disaster assistance and learn more about FEMA programs that will help them navigate recovery. SYFT seemed like a good fit with the DRC mission.
• The demonstrations showed people how to handle, dry, and clean damaged objects, like photos, books, and textiles. People came to talk with us about how to salvage quilts made by their grandmothers, family photo albums, and wood furniture handed down through generations. We made it clear that this is an emergency process designed to salvage and stabilize keepsakes until advanced conservation treatment, if appropriate, can be done.
• These events received local media coverage that made it clear that communities were appreciative of HENTF and the Smithsonian’s help. The events were so engaging and comforting to the public that the FEMA unit that runs the Disaster Recovery Centers was interested in working with us to figure out how to scale this effort.
• In 2020 we produced our first joint product, a poster for all DRCs that offers information on prioritizing what you will save and simple tips for different kinds of heirlooms. We include a link and QR code to the HENTF website so people can learn even more using our resources. We also began developing ideas about how to have a broader reach within the DRCs.
• The onset of COVID-19 demanded a virtual solution —how could we be safely present for people in an effective manner? As we talked, we discovered that this is also an innovation we can adapt to serve more people.
• So, later this year, we will be launching a pilot program in which our DRC partners will refer people to a telephone assistance line where their question will be logged and assistance-line staff will consult with experts on answers. Then, we will circle back to the person in need.
• We believe that with a little patience, prompt action, and professional tips, saving photographs, letters, and other irreplaceable objects is possible. By helping people save objects that matter to them, we are literally helping them pick up the pieces of their lives so they can move forward on the path to recovery.
• Cori Wegener: Up until now, we have been relying on Lori and Smithsonian staff to serve as the experts for this program. Today, we would like to invite HENTF members to share their expertise and participate in this program as subject matter experts. You aren’t on your own. Stacy Bowe has created a Saving Your Family Treasures Boot Camp training. Our assistance-line staff will help with coordination of questions and answers from the DRCs. Contact Lori Foley for more information.

2:20

HENTF Working Groups
Nana Kaneko, SCRI Program Manager for Cultural Disaster Analysis

• As many of you may already know, HENTF has three active working groups, Communications, Resource Development, and Asset Mapping, with the shared goal of strengthening HENTF’s capacity to more effectively respond to disaster situations. The Smithsonian backbone staff of Lori Foley, Liz Kirby, and I support the administrative needs of these working groups.
• We’re actively posting WG meeting notes to the HENTF Member Portal on SCRI’s website. We will furnish you with the username and password in a follow-up email, so that you can access these notes and keep up with the WG activities. The WGs are still in the early stages and we’re still accepting members, so please do let Lori or me know if you are interested in joining a group.
• Our three co-chairs, Sam Snell, Tatiana Ausema, and Andrew Robb are here today to share WG updates since our briefing in May.

**Communications**
Samantha Snell, Smithsonian Institution National Collections Program

- Link to SurveyMonkey. Covered brief overview of survey responses from last meeting, but responses were very few. We’d like to hear from more members on what kind of communication you would like and what is working for you now that we have an opportunity to engage all HENTF members to share info more effectively and efficiently. We want to make sure that people can find the info they need.
- If you’re interested in joining our group – a few of our members are here today – please reach out to us.

**Resource Development**
Tatiana Ausema, National Endowment for the Humanities

- Big announcement: Elaina Gregg (FAIC) has agreed to co-chair this WG with me. Elaina is the new emergency programs coordinator at FAIC.
- Has been fairly quiet 3 months for this WG, but 2 areas to provide updates on. Applying for grants and providing grant-writing resources was a foundational idea for this group. We found that after a disaster, it’s a really hard time for orgs to get their 501(c)(3) status and learn about grants for the first time. Planning on working on this in the upcoming year.
- NEH, IMLS, and NEA are working closely in Puerto Rico to get arts and cultural orgs the resources they need. Support for obtaining 501(c)(3) status is a need. NEH provided funding to the humanities council and NEA to the arts council to support that type of work. Would like to identify these types of needs with the WG. Would like members to attend planned webinars to apply this to other parts of the country.
- Call to action: We could use assistance in grant writing. Federal agencies are limited in grant-writing support. We can talk to orgs and individuals about programs and how to navigate the system but can’t provide grant-writing support. If you or someone in your org would like to join and help us figure out what types of resources to provide before, during, and after disasters to provide grant-writing support, please let us know.
- In the area of private grant making, we have great representation from the federal agencies, but we would love to have some representation from private grant makers.
- Brand new initiative, seeking input: supporting cultural orgs as they prepare for closure in light of COVID-19 and resultant funding challenges. WG has identified that we’re especially concerned about colleges and universities. There are news reports about immediate or long-term closures in various university systems. How can HENTF support those cultural heritage stewards in colleges and universities that are likely to fall through the cracks? Colleges and universities have important documents and resources spread throughout their org, so we’d like to start working on some resources and reaching out to any orgs that may need those resources. If you have resources, please reach out to us.

**Asset Mapping**
Andrew Robb, Library of Congress

- We’ve increased our numbers and have a great cross-section of folks from HENTF on the technical and user sides.
- Asset mapping and asset listing is a more technical WG. We focus on how we generate lists of cultural institutions that may have addresses that we can then map,
so when we’re looking at maps of response or long-term recovery, we can use info
about cultural institutions to help people that may not be reaching out to us and we
have ways that we can tailor our tools. Trying to do these things in a sustainable way,
be a clearinghouse, and use these tools as our own work.

- If you’re interested and/or have lists, contact us. If you’re interested in using this kind
  of info or have this info, please let us know. Exploring resources for our use and ways
to help as we communicate with FEMA and others during disasters.
- Need to set short-term agenda and select a co-chair.
- From Jan Newcomb of NCAPER: Members of the NCAPER Steering committee are
  also developing a concept paper on artist and arts industry asset mapping that could
  perhaps complement the work of this working group.
- From Paige Fitzgerald of IAEM: If we need people to do mapping work, IAEM has
  student chapters all over the US, and we could use students as interns to do some of
  the mapping if you were thinking GIS or a similar platform. It will help develop their
  résumés and keep those of us in the WG from getting overwhelmed with extra work.
- Additionally, SCRI will have another cohort of Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS)
  interns from this September until May of next year working to track damage to
cultural institutions after disasters. These interns compile and clean master
spreadsheets of cultural institutions and arts organizations and conduct phone
outreach after major disasters to gather status reports. To date, they have created
master spreadsheets for North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, Nebraska,
and Puerto Rico. We received 66 applications for this project, and sent out 18
acceptances, so we will hopefully have another robust team this year.

2:40

**Spotlight on Puerto Rico Recovery**

**Gretchen Ruiz Ramos**, FEMA HENTF Liaison, Joint Recovery Office, Puerto Rico

Gretchen joined FEMA in November in 2017 and in early 2018, joined the RSF (Recovery
Support Function) team for Natural & Cultural Resources. In the early stages of response,
HENTF and RSF focused on outreach to public and private non-profit organizations that took
care of cultural resources. 500-page COR3 report submitted to government of Puerto Rico
and US government includes 200 points of action, of which 6 address the needs of cultural
resources.

**Cultural Resources Courses of Action:**

- Historic and Cultural Properties and Collections Preservation
- Arts Recovery
- General Archives Mitigation and Modernization
- Caribbean Cultural Collections Preservation, Research, and Safe Storage Center
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Institute of Puerto Rican Culture (ICP)
  Staffing to Meet Project Review Requirements
- Enhance Public Participation and Education through Museum Exhibits

SHPO and ICP are the leads in implementing these courses of action.

Current and future plans are meant to address the direct and indirect impacts of the
hurricane. Through RSF, assistance has been requested from federal partners to conduct
assessments of libraries, archives, museums, and houses of workshop, and assess historic
properties. Thanks to this work, FEMA has obligated funds to stabilize, treat, and preserve
collections. In addition, assessments have been used to request other sources of funding.

Other projects have been the capacity-building plan and educational-resource plan, which
aim to empower the cultural community and help them overcome economic hardship. There
have been several (all-free) workshops arranged and over 1000 individuals have benefited.
For example, the Spanish-language version of the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel were distributed to workshop attendees.

Training for artists and artisans also happened (with Performing Arts Readiness and CERF+ help). Done within a week and with an intensive schedule. They were offered through different regions of the island.

ACE – Alliance for Cultural Emergencies Puerto Rico – was founded by graduates of the 2018 HEART Puerto Rico program. ACE has developed and led workshops for entities that manage cultural collections and taught how to create Pocket Response Plans (PReP). ACE workshops had a personalized approach by going directly into communities. 150 cultural stewards participated, and the aim is to develop a network. Early signs of success were seen after the recent earthquakes. Participants thanked ACE members for their training because they applied the lessons they learned in that situation.

University of Delaware partnership – focus on photography salvage, treatment, and conservation. Workshops led by Debra Hess Norris. Ongoing but paused due to COVID-19.


Database – there was a lack of consolidated data and correct contact information for the cultural and historic organizations on the island. HENTF/ICP have created a map and database of over 400 entities with physical addresses and GIS coordinates of places. This database feeds into the “Cultural Institutions and Arts Organizations App” generated by FEMA GIS specialists. Will be used by FEMA for future disasters and response tool.

Hilda Teresa Ayala-González, Archivist, General Archives of Puerto Rico, and Interim Director, National Library of Puerto Rico

Started in August 2019 at ICP and took on leading some of the recommendations in the assessments. Became General Archivist and Director of National Library in 2020 and will continue the work that has been done.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria – It took 2 months to get help after they hit. Hilda created a timeline of activities that occurred to cultural institutions since the hurricanes (includes HENTF and funder contributions). Gave a summary of deployments and an update on all of the large grants that have been given to the National Library and General Archives. (See PPT slides for details.)

Andi Mathis, State and Regional Specialist | Partnership, and Brian Lusher, Historic Preservation Officer, National Endowment for the Arts

Andi

NEA normally works through each state’s arts agency, which redistributes the funds to on-the-ground partners and networks. Showed a chart of the approved emergency funding requests for 4 state arts agencies in areas impacted by the 2017 hurricanes. Puerto Rico’s is so high ($375K) because that total includes funds from previous open grants that were converted to response funds.

Two grant workshops (in collaboration with other granting organizations) at University of Puerto Rico in San Piedras and Mayaguez. 600 attendees. Lesson learned: many of the arts and cultural organizations in Puerto Rico have state-level non-profit status, but not federal status, which was challenging to maneuver since NEA requires this status. One-time lifting of this requirement. Since then, NEA has worked on seeing which orgs are interested in/ capable of getting this status, and why they have not worked on getting this status before. Research revealed it’s more of a financial issue (lawyer fees and other costs associated with the process, which deters orgs from pursuing it). State arts agency and University of Puerto
Rico and NEA brought together 3 cohorts of 25 organizations each to address and teach about the issue. Just received financial support for the training (virtually) which will begin soon. NEH is supporting similar training for humanities organizations.

Showed a new NEA-commissioned mural in Cataño, which is a hard-hit community with mental health concerns. The mural is across the street from the ferry gate. Showed the cover of the NEA magazine that was devoted to arts and healing.

Brian

Described the work he conducted during response and recovery phase – procured supplies, found blue tarps for roofing, networked with all agencies involved. One of the jobs he coordinated is with NPS and the SHPO of Puerto Rico to implement its emergency supplemental historic preservation grant of $12 million to position the SHPO to take on many different initiatives: some forward looking and some related to recovery. It will help with the giant Section 106 caseload, allow the SHPO to implement surveys of its historic properties, update inventories of existing lists, and survey remaining properties in up to 78 municipalities. Also includes an archaeological survey of the PR coastline.

This allows for the enhancement of known information on historic properties of the island and improve/develop a disaster preparedness plan. All of this activity will allow for the SHPO to be in a much better position to respond to future storms/disasters. Also looking at longer-term planning to develop the workforce on the island. ICP and SHPO have identified, for a while, the lack of traditional trades and tradespeople to repair historic properties. A case study will involve preservation of lime plaster repair using ICP’s HQ building. Another example is implementing a timber frame workshop in the historic district of Aguirre. World Monuments Fund has also recognized this project.

ICP has also long administered “Patrimony in your Hands,” a program to teach how to repair historic properties in an appropriate way. Program will be augmented to develop and register apprenticeships in order to produce and receive trades credentials (that can be use around Puerto Rico and the rest of the country!). There is a national interest in this type of skill-building. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has established traditional trades task force and will develop a policy statement and advice on what curriculum would look like and what an apprenticeship would look like and are moving ahead quickly. Currently identifying sponsors, who can confirm training objectives are being met, discussing how the training requirements will be met, and identifying various schools that may provide necessary classrooms for the training. Also identifying traditional practitioners on island who are the ones who will transfer their skills to an entirely new generation on the island. National Park Service has been doing similar work at El Morro – hopefully the groups will combine. This may be the first location that may establish a traditional trades apprenticeship under the auspices of the Dept. of Labor – a huge accomplishment! All because the governor of Puerto Rico named cultural heritage as one of the top priorities in the report that we all work from. Aiming to hold virtual events with NEA and IMLS in September on upcoming grant opportunities.

John Dumsick, Task Lead, Disaster Recovery Initiative, Association for Preservation Technology

Representative for APT, but also a liaison for APT’s Disaster Resilience Initiative, founded to help with post-disaster assessment of heritage structures as a result of the quantity of lost heritage following Hurricane Katrina from demolition. Done through facilitated training and outreach. Good news: APT has earmarked funds to help assess buildings following disasters. In January 2020, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Puerto Rico. Not typical for this region (more likely seen in Pacific West Coast). A lot of aftershocks. 10% of global building stock was damaged.
One way architects and engineers provide help is through rapid post-disaster assessments. ATC-20 is a baseline procedure for rapid assessments following seismic activity. ATC-45 is for floods and high winds. These protocols and assessments help determine which buildings are available for immediate occupancy and reduce the demand for temporary shelters. Per a recent ASCE article, many of the buildings were given a red placard, which means that they were unsafe to occupy and additional study is needed to get the building to yellow or green status (some or full occupancy allowed, respectively). Oftentimes funds are needed from businesses to perform that secondary activity. If buildings are red tagged, they are commonly demolished, which is concerning for heritage buildings. APT Disaster Resilience Initiative requested $5K to help fund two building professionals experienced with culturally significant buildings and post-disaster assessments to travel to Puerto Rico. The goal of their travel would be to help with surveys of heritage buildings as a means to minimize the demolition of these properties and to assist in the identification of necessary repairs and stabilization measures. To all HENTF Members: can you help me spend this money wisely?

**Cameron Baxter Lewis**, Director of Emergency Relief and Recovery Services, CERF+

Cameron provided a timeline of CERF+ work for Puerto pre- and post-2017 hurricanes. 2018 was one of the biggest years for CERF+. In 2019 it was given funding from Flamboyan Arts Fund and Global Giving, which turned into Get Ready grants and Emergency Relief grants. CERF+ participated in a celebration of Zulma Santiago (voice of Puerto Rican artist community), attended the Clinton Global Initiative conference in Puerto Rico, and last Monday, hosted a webinar on economic resilience for artists.

Launched CERF+ COVID-19 Relief Grant program, which provides one-time, $1000 grants to artists in dire financial straits due to food, medical, or housing needs. Of 1800 applications, 200 were accepted; 47 of them were artists in Puerto Rico. Will launch second round soon. For Puerto Rico, it was a challenge to understand the arts “ecosystem” on the island. Where are they living and how can we reach them? Artists had technology accessibility issues, etc. Have adapted their grant cycle/processes to accommodate challenges (paper applications and translation services).

Now, during COVID-19, artists are more interested in increasing their online presence and marketing skills, understanding how to take higher-quality photos of their work, and are also interested in more grant writing. CERF+ wants to continue to instill disaster risk planning in artists, especially for those that are most vulnerable. Also teaching about career protection.

**3:25**

**Other Business** – Lori

Emerging topic, reiterating Tatiana’s call for action re: colleges/universities at risk of closing:

- What will become of their records and collections in museums, libraries, archives, science departments, etc.?
- Would like to explore possibility of setting up a HENTF working group

What can you do as a HENTF Member?

- Consider joining a HENTF WG
- Sign up for HENTF News Brief
- HENTF Specialist position: Had to be federally focused to get position made available out of disaster funds. Will work hand-in-hand with Lori to address disaster. Position will be based at FEMA HQ in DC, will be liaison to existing FEMA programs, but will always continue to strive to protect cultural heritage.
- Be ready to act when the next disaster occurs
- Will do another quarterly briefing in Nov.

**3:30**

Adjourn