

Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

February 2017 Newsletter

President`s Message



PMKCA President Joe Clarkson

CERT Activities

I recently had the opportunity to attend a bimonthly meeting of our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). In addition to a delicious potluck lunch, I got to hear about the latest news and discussion on the ongoing and upcoming CERT projects. The CERT program was originally developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As FEMA describes it:

CERT educates individuals about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT volunteers can assist others in their community following a disaster when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT volunteers are also encouraged to

support emergency response agencies by taking an active role in emergency preparedness projects.

Twenty-four CERT teams are in place in communities throughout the island already, and Hawaii County Civil Defense has developed a plan to more than double the number of teams as soon as possible. When one considers the number of discrete communities on our island, even a doubling may not be enough. We are lucky to have one CERT already working in our community.

Our local Pa'auilo Mauka/Kalopa area CERT team has 11 members who have all gone through the extensive CERT training program. Most of them attended the recent meeting along with me and Jim Braun as guests. Jim is a member of the Laupahoehoe CERT and has graciously provided materials for creating detailed laminated topographic maps of our area for use by our CERT. Such maps had been found very useful by the Laupahoehoe team.

Team members reviewed some first aid training materials provided by member Ken Hinck, who has an extensive background as a rescue and emergency first responder. Plans were also made to update first aid and CPR training in the near future.

The team has also assembled an emergency response trailer, with a walk-in enclosure that contains tools, an electric generator, first aid materials and other emergency response equipment. It was decided that the trailer will be based at team member Suzanne Carpenter's house, which has also become the default emergency incident command center for the team. We greatly appreciate Suzanne's generosity in accepting this responsibility.

Participants at the meeting discussed a recent exercise by the entire team, which involved training for the support of a paraplegic community resident during a power outage and communications failure. It was reported that the result of this exercise was helpful for the team members involved and very reassuring to the family involved.

As discussed during the meeting, communications during an emergency become especially important when, as during tropical storm Iselle, cell service, phone service and internet service are down over large areas of the Big Island. Hawaii County Civil Defense has finalized plans to greatly expand the use of amateur radio as a means of emergency communication between our local communities and Civil Defense emergency operations center when normal communications have failed.

Since good communication is a critical part of any emergency response effort, our CERT has invited Doug Wilson, who is a volunteer amateur radio coordinator working with Bill Hanson, the CERT coordinator with Civil Defense, to attend their next meeting and present the latest plans for enhancing the amateur radio Auxiliary Communications System (ACS), an island-wide network of amateur radio operators called upon in emergencies. Wilson will discuss the timetable for the placement of radio repeater equipment, which should allow CERTs throughout the island to more effectively communicate with each other while members are in the field and, equally importantly, with Civil Defense headquarters during emergency response activities. We look forward to this communication system coming into full fruition. I will report on the progress of the ACS in future posts.

Kalopa Park Support

PMKCA has long supported enhancements at Kalopa State Park. A volunteer group, coordinated by PMKCA board member Linda Gallano, works at the park on a monthly basis. Linda reported recently that the Polynesian garden is looking wintered but that the endemic plants are thriving.

She reports that at the last work day, volunteer stalwarts Mike Crosson, Diana Nui and Kristina Adams showed up despite the rainy conditions. Dave DeEsch also came early and cleaned the signs along the park entrance road. The volunteers, who often also include Anna St. John,

Rob Culbertson, Pete Sparks, Monica Gebhart and Ken Hinck plan to tackle maintenance of the nature trail on the next work day.

The volunteer group meets the first Tuesday of every month at 11 am. All are welcome to come and work and also learn more about the Polynesian garden plants as well as the endemic plants growing in the park. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,

Joe Clarkson
President, PMKCA

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