



Solar Eclipse Support Narrative

Portland National Incident Management Organization

Summary, Accomplishments, AAR, Lessons Learned

August 23, 2017



Executive Summary

The Portland National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) supported the Pacific Northwest Geographic Area since January in preparation for the 2017 solar eclipse. Initial work provided structure and means to organize in a logical manner to address a very large collective challenge. A Communications Strategy was developed as well as a blogspot - the regional landing page www.2017eclipse.blogspot.com.

On August 15, 2017 a delegation of authority (DOA) was given to NIMO Incident Commander, Bill Hahnenberg, signed by Regional Forester James M. Pena and State Director, Jamie E. Connell. The DOA asked that we engage in "... strategic management for effective coordinated public safety response...to complement and support...rather than replace..." ongoing local efforts.

In the DOA, the event objectives were well-described and provided supportive guidance. Specific items requested in the DOA included an Incident Action Plan (IAP), a summary of the situation to be reviewed and discussed by agency executives and for coordination with the SORO duty officer. Accordingly the following were accomplished:

1. A multi-day IAP was developed initially on August 16 and finalized on August 17. The IAP described who was responsible for which portions of the event and helped establish clarity for those involved concerning the role of NIMO.
2. Eclipse events were discussed with NW MAC on August 15, with the executives on August 19 and daily on the eclipse coordination calls with executives and a larger interagency audience. The SORO duty officer participated in these updates. Given the relatively quiet unfolding of the event there was no need to provide further updates.

Command and General Staff Area Accomplishments

SAFETY

Accomplishments

- Developed a communications plan (due to concerns of cell phone calls dropping) which identified means to communicate with projected cell tower overload-hard line phones, radios and satellite phones
- Drafted an eclipse safety message for fire personnel; SORO approved and assisted in distributing the message through mailing lists and to individual IMTs
- Drafted and shared a stand-down message with the R6 fire director for a proposal within PNWCG for review and distribution
- Engaged in daily support and coordination with the SORO fire risk manager
- Participated on the IMT safety officer daily conference call

INFORMATION

Accomplishments

- Helped facilitate getting consolidated closure maps updated and sent to the JIC
- Worked to get BLM closures added to the FS ARCGIS story journal

- Supported Milli fire PIOs who had no ability to create or maintain Inciweb during a period of dynamic fire growth and evacuations
- Fed information from OEM VOST back to SORO
- Assisted SORO Fire PIO to send messages to PIOs, PAOs and prevention personnel
- Monitored VOST Skype room for questions
- Monitored social media
- Created and maintained a large PIO/PAO/PREV/RO contact list to have good primary and contingency numbers

FINANCE

Accomplishments

- Supported regional Incident Business and AD-Business Ops by taking the lead for all eclipse questions and allowing them to focus on fire business and IMTs in the region
- Provided assistance with developing Complex financial guidance to IMTs
- Created a google drive for IMTs to help provide information that included a folder specific for eclipse memos/guidance
- Participated in the finance conference calls and provided eclipse updates
- Worked with ODF on the FireCode that was set up erroneously for Solar Eclipse support -ODF removed the resources showing under the corresponding incident number
- Chased down ODOT “rumors” that were being heard by INBAs to provide or clarify what really was occurring or not.
- Supported Plans with the IAP development prior to RESL arrival

OPERATIONS

Accomplishments

- Worked with SORO duty officer on eclipse tourist impacts
- Worked daily with the SORO duty officer and placed calls to unit duty officers to monitor eclipse related issues
- Assisted in development of the contingency communication plan
- Worked with “path of totality” forest duty officers on potential tourist impacts
- Identified gaps in resource availability with options for recovery
- Monitored Oregon Emergency Management Real-time Assessment and Planning Tool for Oregon (RAPTOR) site for traffic issues and event populations
- Communicated with Oregon State OEM SORO liaison

PLANNING

Accomplishments

- Edited and distributed Strategic Planning Timeline
- Prepared and managed the Planning Schedule and meetings
- Managed the Eclipse mailing list and distributed multiple documents in support of Eclipse to SORO staff, field units and partners
- Prepared and distributed 2017 SORO Eclipse Support IAP
- Facilitated daily conference calls; prepared and distributed notes
- Presented an eclipse briefing to the Regional Leadership Team on Friday, August 18th

COMMAND

Accomplishments

- Accepted, reviewed and clarified expectations portrayed in the delegation
- Worked with SORO staff to ensure NIMO was adding value while not duplicating efforts and communicated with others as to our mission to build working relationships
- Participated in briefings and reports to develop situational awareness to effectively track eclipse-related issues
- Contacted agency administrators daily to track developing issues summarized and reported to the NWMAC, agency executives and a broader audience during the daily eclipse coordination conference call

After Action Review-What Went Well, What Could Be Improved

INFORMATION

What went well

- Supported the Milli Fire until they could get a PIO in to help
- Supported Public Affairs Officer Traci Weaver as needed for messaging
- Supported the JIC as needed (minor need)
- Solved (to some degree) larger issues such as coordination of closure maps and coordination of smoke predictions

Areas of improvement

- OEM JIC needs to plan for a trained JIC manager to get processes in place early in the event
- Conference call times overlapped-consider different timing
- It should have been realized earlier that communication on clarity of views of the eclipse would be a smoke issue which could have been managed differently
- Readily available information on closures could have been made available and roads information could have been integrated with TripCheck

FINANCE

What went well

- Coordination with SORO incident business
- Communication with SORO Liaison at Salem ECC
- The logistical needs for work area and connectivity was all in place upon NIMO's arrival
- Administrative support was awesome

Areas of Improvement

- Nothing that needed to be improved but business questions related to eclipse were generated the week prior to NIMO's arrival. Questions ranged from lodging over 150%; how to fund additional staff specific for eclipse as BLM had funding they could tap into but the FS did not; procurement of solar eclipse glasses; use of government assets for private citizen response; and how to deal with heavy equipment demob during ODOT's temporary halt on issuing permits, to name a few.

OPERATIONS

What went well

- Communication with SORO duty officer was good
- Communication with forest duty officers within “totality zone” went well
- Oregon State OEM RAPTOR site was useful
- Good coordination with central Oregon EOC
- Attempted to locate a fire service person to assist with Chetco Bar FLA

Areas of Improvements

- Retrieving information from State Office of Emergency Management

PLANNING

What went well

- All the planning and preparation done in advance across the state with federal, state, local and county cooperators really paid off
- Incorporating a contractor with NIMO worked well
- Having Monica Neal (RF’s Administrative Assistant) working as the RESL for the team was a definite benefit; her skill set was a definite asset
- Although agency administrators did not participate in all coordination conference calls when they were available it helped having them provide context and ensure awareness as the event unfolded

COMMAND

What went well

- A high level of participation by each eclipse zone and law enforcement was an efficient means to share information and ensure broad situational awareness
- NIMO having informal access to SORO staff allowed for effective coordination
- Allowing for the SORO Fire Operations Specialist to serve with NIMO initially as the team Operations Section Chief provided for good early understanding of expectations of NIMO
- Ordering two other command and general staff persons; Tim Sampson-Safety and Lonnie Click-Operations helped NIMO significantly
- Daily discussions with key SORO personnel and their willingness to help us meet our mission was excellent

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Planning pays. Preparation pays. Persistence pays. Prevention pays. All of this hard work had significant payoff, although it's difficult to measure. However, it is safe to say the multifaceted coordination efforts which have taken place for several months paid great dividends in alleviating an untold number of worst case scenarios. Positive outcomes for individuals, the public and responsible entities were the result.

One of the most notable successes was in the area of fire prevention with no known human caused incidents evolving into any fires of significance. BLM State Director Theresa Hanley requested during the 8/22 coordination conference call the quantification if possible of the effects of the prevention efforts. This request could be addressed by SORO prevention staff.

The collective information effort on the part of several individuals working in public information was very successful and included the following:

1. Development of a communication strategy several months ago
2. A Joint Information Center established in Salem including interagency staffing
3. Tracking social media messages as part of the Virtual Operations Support Team to identify major themes displayed in daily reports
4. SORO and NIMO information personnel engaging in development of messaging

The "Tri-County MAC" was established at the Deschutes County Fairground. It brought cooperators together and allowed for very effective leveraging and force multiplier of efforts and was notably successful. With one event alone estimated at 70,000 people on site, the MAC was challenged in many ways and rose to the occasion. David Summer, Shane Jeffries and Alex Robertson were key to this success as well as many individuals from cooperating agencies.

In conclusion, the role of NIMO was to provide additional capacity and ensure maintenance of situational awareness for SORO staff and agency executives associated with eclipse events. NIMO could have only accomplished this through good collective communication flow which was appreciated.

