

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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## R-2 REVISED PLAN IMPLEMENTED; IMAT DEPLOYED; CHANGES REVIEWED

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** RA Canton has identified Planning as among her top three Regional priorities for FY2012. (The other two are training/work force development, and THIRA.) This is the second in a series on the Region's planning initiatives, focusing on the Region's revised hurricane plan for 2011.

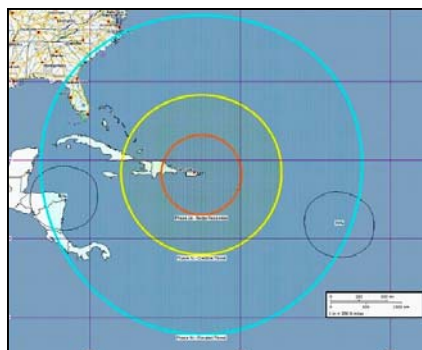
As 'plan' and 'practice,' Region II's 2011 Hurricane Response held center stage this week: On Monday, resources and personnel were deployed to our Caribbean areas of responsibility for the Region's first hurricane threat of the 2011 season; Wednesday, RA Lynn Canton detailed the Region's revised plan to the agency's leadership at the Response and Recovery Operational and Doctrinal Training summit in Memphis.

Everyone was home by Friday night.

The Lead Planner for the Region's 2011 Hurricane Plan, Brice Acosta, was recalled from his vacation last Saturday when RRCC Director Jose Dos-Santos got word of a tropical wave within the 700 mile circle surrounding Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, a proximity that signals an "Elevated Threat." Jose convened the Region's Operational Planning Cell, which analyzes available data, and briefs senior leadership on storm details, and the response plan's key decision points. As the interim Hurricane Program Manager, Brice was among those summoned.

Three concentric circles surrounding Puerto Rico and the USVI are among the major innovations of the new plan, Brice says. See below. "Earlier plans used latitude and longitude as trigger points. The new plan — with concentric circles tied to specific preparedness or response activities — is both more proactive and more flexible," Brice said.

Puerto Rico and USVI are in the center of orange circle, right. A storm within the blue circle denotes an 'Elevated Threat. When the storm crossed into the yellow circle, a "Credible Threat" invokes an IMAT deployment. Within the orange circle, a surge response is activated.



The plan's flexibility was demonstrated Sunday afternoon, when the five-day forecast cone projected a possible hit on Puerto Rico's southwest coast. By Monday, the RRCC was at an Enhanced Level III activation, and the IMAT team and DCE were en route.

While the DCE adhered to the plan as written, mobilizing "Force Package 1" — about 20 people — the RRCC and the Operational Planning Cell "tailed the response to the situation and excluded some emergency support function agencies," Brice said. "All the decisions were appropriate for the information we had at the time."



Tropical Storm Emily tracked further south Monday afternoon, sparring both Puerto Rico and the USVI a direct hit. See above.

Meanwhile, RA Canton was among the five Regional Administrators with regions subject to hurricanes that detailed their preparedness activities to the agency's senior leadership at the Response and Recovery training in Memphis this week.

Lynn reports the five regional plans were remarkably similar, despite the fact that some were still using the latitude and longitude system, and many regions were further along in their GIS infrastructures, and the identification of commodity staging areas. "But basically we're all using similar models," she said, noting, "the biggest change is that instead of aiming to be on the ground within 72 hours, we are now all aiming to have the situation stabilized within 72 hours. By being in stride with the state, our response speed has accelerated." Another reason for the agency's renewed emphasis on planning.

# R-2's 2011 HURRICANE PLAN: ***WHAT IMPLEMENTATION LOOKS LIKE***

Before Tropical Storm Emily veered south, away from both Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, R-2's IMAT teams were on site, supporting our territorial and commonwealth partners.

Governor de Jongh, right center, presided over a news briefing Monday to update Virgin Islands residents of the anticipated impact of Emily. The governor was flanked by Defense Coordinating Officer Colonel Robert Freehill, near right, FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Phil Parr, third from right, and Water and Power Authority Executive Director Hugo Hodge, Jr.

Below IMAT Communications Specialist Sean Kielty, left, discusses the communications plan with an unidentified member of the FEMA MERS (Mobile Emergency Response Systems) Communications Team, and EA Field Specialist William Slater.



"This was not an exercise. It was a response," FCO Parr said. "We used the opportunity when the storm didn't intensify or hit to continue to develop plans, procedures and tactics." Near right, above, OPC Sam Benson and Austin Callwood of the Division of Planning and Natural Resources of the Virgin Islands, in a tactics meeting.



U.S. Army officials, left, demonstrate the capabilities of a new Department of Defense emergency response vehicle to Caribbean Area Division Director, Alex de la Campa, center. The vehicles are stationed in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for the hurricane season. Called Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV), they can provide voice and data for up to 25-30 people via satellite. ERVs also have commercial internet that other Agencies can plug into and built in VHF UHF and 800 mhz radios, so DOD can talk to first responders when they come on the scene.



# CENTRAL PARK DIG HIGHLIGHTS EHP ISSUES

## *FEMA Team Gets Access Via Professional Ties*

Sometimes, it's who you know....

Last week, Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) DAE Dr. Kelly Britt led a FEMA team to an archeological dig being conducted on the ruins of Seneca Village in New York City's Central Park. Kelly was able to arrange the trip through a former faculty advisor who is leading the dig, as well as the auspices of the New York Archaeological Society, Metropolitan Chapter, an organization that organizes dig tours and for which Kelly is currently serving as vice president.

Seneca Village was Manhattan's first significant community of Afro-American property owners. It thrived between 1825-1857, when the city took possession of the land and turned it into Central Park. It was originally settled by prominent African-American clergymen and entrepreneurs. However, by the 1840s and 50s, the community had become more diverse as European im-



migrants from Ireland and Germany moved in. The community once housed a school, multiple residences, three churches and several cemeteries, and by 1855, it was home to more than 260 residents.

The history of the community has been overlooked until recently, where interdisciplinary research has begun to unravel its' rich legacy.

The goal of the Seneca Village project goal is "to conduct further research on the site and to commemorate it in an educational context."

Accompanying Kelly on this archaeological dig in one of the world's most densely populated urban centers were EHP DEA Barbara Jean Smith, Mitiga-

tion's Jason Fenn and the HUD three-month rotational hire Jacob Levine

## DISASTER RESPONSE; CAREER ACCOLADES

R-2 DAE Charles Bello, a professional archeologist, and A. Brooke Persons, the archaeologist for the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office, co-wrote and presented a paper at this year's International Association for Caribbean Archaeology Congress held in Martinique last month.

Their paper highlighted the recent partnership between FEMA, the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office, and the Government of the US Virgin Islands to analyze cultural resources and repair historic properties damaged during the flooding associated with 2010 Tropical Storm Tomas in Frederiksted, St. Croix. The storm damaged the LaGrange Ghut and a section of beach through tidal surges and high-velocity overland flooding. The ghut is an important functioning drainage channel and a contributing element to the Frederikstead National Register Historic District. The project provided the perfect opportunity to study the remains of St. Croix's prehistoric and historic past.