



Katy Trail Fire Exercise

Leo Larkin, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

for the Heartland EDEN Conference – November 18, 2021

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Tabletop Exercises - Benefits

- Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Increase awareness and understanding of hazards and their potential impact.
- Assess capabilities of existing resources and identify needs.
- Improve coordination between teams and organizations.

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Tabletop Exercises - Benefits

- Test and evaluate preparedness plans.
- Obtain participant feedback for program and plan improvements.
- Identify training and education needs.
- Measure improvement.

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Today's Goals:

- Assess Extension's role(s) and responsibilities in a disaster event.
- Identify Extension's response to a disaster.
- Provide opportunities for teams to discuss plans, policies, and procedures using a simulated emergency scenario.

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Directions:

- Assign one person at your table to be the recorder.
- Assign one person to report during the debrief.
- You can use the flipcharts and markers as you discuss the scenario questions.
- Engage! The discussions should be low-stress. There are no wrong answers.

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DAY 1 – Wednesday, 11 a.m.

- Central Missouri is experiencing a drought. Temperatures are in the 90's and the forecast is for unusually low humidity and strong winds.
- Outdoor burning bans are in place and a Red Flag Warning has been issued.
- The US Forest Service has responded to several small brush fires near the Katy Trail Lewis Missouri Trailhead.
- The threat of wildfire extends to populated areas so the Henry County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated.

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Day 1: Discussion – 5 minutes

Your local extension office is in the Red Flag Warning area.

- What are your immediate concerns?
- Are there any decisions your office should make at this time?
- As a Cooperating Agency, your extension office has a representative in the EOC. What is their role?

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DAY 2 – Thursday, 10 a.m.

- The U.S. Forest Service reports a rapidly moving wildfire 30 miles from your community. Heavy smoke is visible. The fire is 5% contained.
- Overnight, first responders evacuated rural residents along the Katy Trail. All evacuees are being taken to the area Community Center.
- Your office is not in immediate danger but power outages are disrupting operations. Three staff members are unable to come into work.

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Day 2: Discussion – 5 minutes

- What is your emergency action plan for the office?
- Power outages are occurring.
 - What communications tools are you using to stay connected with your office faculty/staff and local residents requesting information?
 - What types of questions from the public might you be receiving?

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DAY 10 – Friday, 1 p.m.

- The Incident Commander reports the fire is 80% contained and is no longer threatening populated areas. However, rural areas along the Katy Trail are still affected.
- The Emergency Manager asks your local extension office to coordinate a location to shelter 15 horses, 25 cattle, and 3 goats evacuated during the fire. This number may grow.
- Your office manager reports they lost their home and outbuildings in the fire.

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Day 10: Discussion – 5 minutes

- Your office is listed in the Emergency Manager's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) to be the contact for sheltering livestock in an emergency. You didn't know. What do you do?
- What are your expectations for staff who have suffered personal loss in the fire? How can you help?

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DAY 20 – Monday, 8 a.m.

- The fire is contained and damage assessments are underway.
- The fire has damaged the 4-H Activity Center near the Katy Trail.
- County residents affected by the wildfire are eligible to apply for Disaster SNAP benefits (D-SNAP).
- The Community Center is overwhelmed with donations of clothing and household items.
- A request for a disaster declaration has been made but it is unlikely the fire event will meet the threshold for Individual Assistance.

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Day 20: Discussion – 5 minutes

- Review Day 20
 - Identify resources your local extension office/unit can offer during this early phase of disaster response.
 - Who will you connect with to address unmet needs in the community?

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Exercise Debrief – 10 minutes

- ❖ What challenges did you face addressing this scenario?
- ❖ How did your local extension office/unit adapt to the challenge?
- ❖ Do you understand your role as a Technical Specialist or Cooperating Agency in the Incident Command System.
- ❖ Did you have another role responding to this incident? What was that role?

“

Success is when Persistence
meets Preparation.

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by Sherrilyn Kenyon

Resources:

- [Prepare Your Organization for a Wildfire Playbook – FEMA](#)
- [D-SNAP Resources for State Agencies and Partners - USDA](#)
- [Exercise Preparedness Tools - FEMA](#)