

Tsunami Preparedness Exercise at Quinault Indian Nation Brings Together Partners from All Levels of Government

Release Date: May 31, 2018

TAHOLAHA, Wash. – How would the Quinault Indian Nation respond to a major tsunami that devastated Washington’s coastal communities and prevented outside help from getting to the tribe immediately?

This week the tribe hosted a tabletop exercise – collaborating with personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) and Grays Harbor County – to explore how it would put its emergency plan into action to save lives and protect property, and discuss the process for getting help from FEMA and other partners.

A tabletop exercise involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios. Exercise participants look at the issues in depth and develop decisions through problem-solving discussions, rather than through the fast-paced, spontaneous decision-making that is necessary during actual emergency conditions. In this case, the scenario was a 9.2 magnitude earthquake in Alaska that left the tribe about three hours to prepare before a series of tsunami waves roared ashore.

Wednesday’s 4-hour exercise was preceded on Tuesday by a presentation on the tribe’s history, an overview of the tsunami warning system from EMD, and a presentation from FEMA about the process for requesting a major disaster declaration.

In all, more than three dozen emergency management personnel from all levels of government participated in the two-day event.

More information about disaster preparedness is available at www.ready.gov or www.fema.gov.

In a large room, several dozen people sit around six circular tables. The wall in the back of the room is covered with maps and charts.



FEMA

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