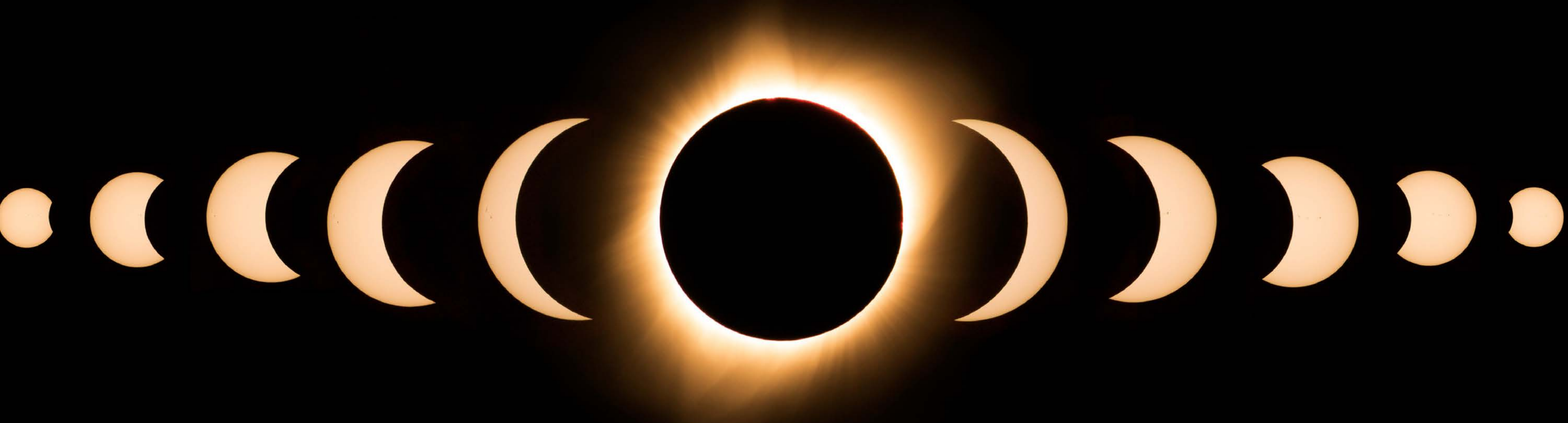


Emergency Management Under the Umbra



Best Practices for Effective Prevention, Mitigation, and Response

Mark Howell

Director/Emergency Management Specialist

Grounded Truths LLC

www.groundedtruths.com

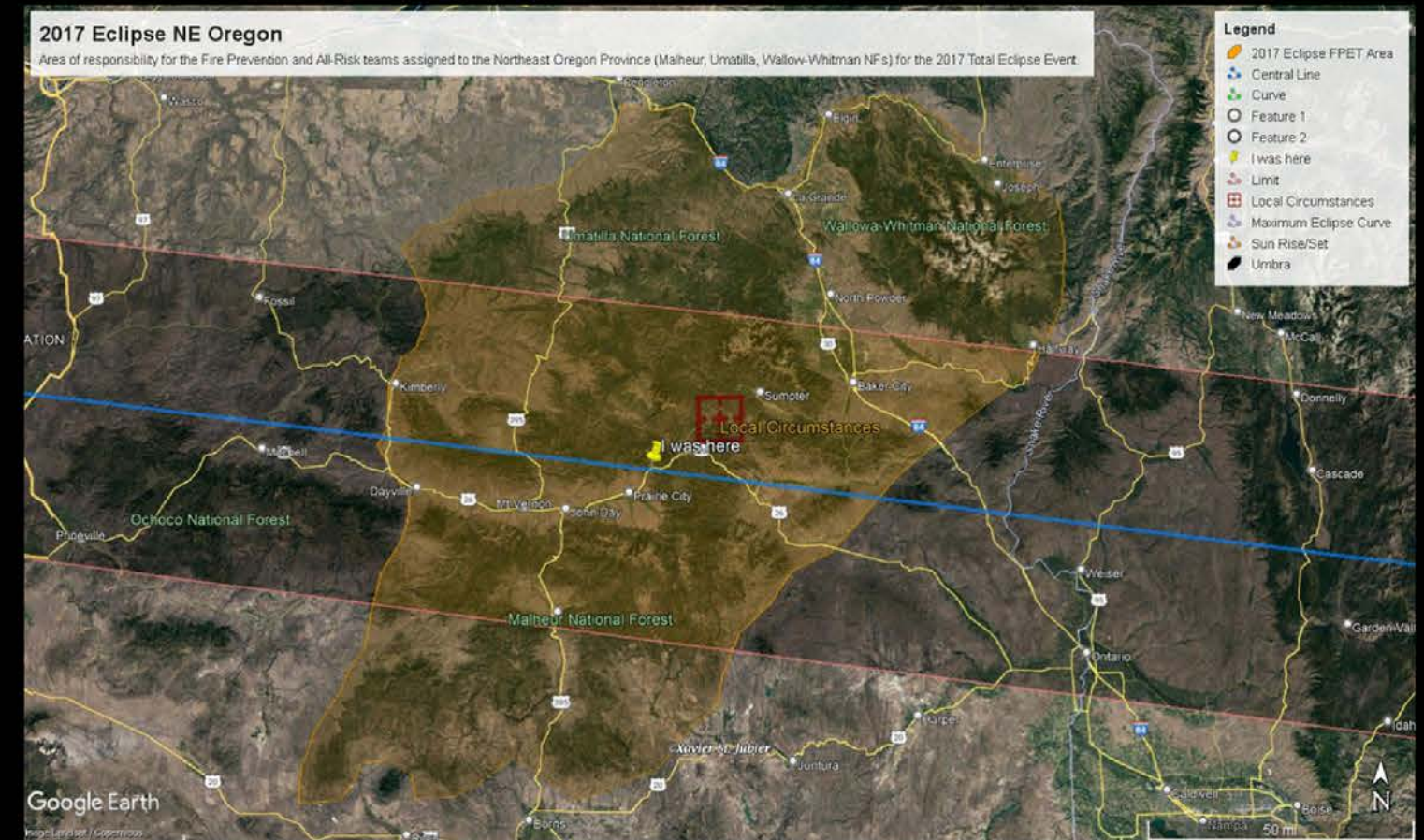


Who Is This Guy?

And Why Should We Listen To Him?

25+ years of Public Safety experience

- Large Event Staffing/Public Safety work while in and immediately after CA POST Police Academy
- 10 years California State Guard, Civil Support Task Force Fresno, CA - qualified Military Emergency Management Specialist
- 3 years all-risk structure/wildland firefighting, Kings County CA FD
- 14 years USFS - Permanent Full-Time in progressive Fire Management positions with Law Enforcement/Investigations work across most of the Western US
- Graduate of USFS Field Command School (Incident Management Team Academy) taught by the National Incident Management Organization
- Experience as both all-risk and wildfire Incident Commander and Planning Section Chief. Served as Plans Chief for the 2017 Rainbow National Gathering Law Enforcement Team on the Malheur NF in early summer prior to the Eclipse



During the 2017 Total Eclipse, I was an Interagency and Community Liaison between the USFS Northeast Oregon Province (Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman NFs) and other Federal, State, Local Government, and private cooperators and stakeholders, including a National Fire Prevention/Education Team assigned to the Province (area in yellow) for over 2 weeks prior to Totality.



Two Different Areas, Two Different Experiences

Madras, Oregon "Oregon Solarfest 2017"



The "Oregon Solarfest 2017" experience was built up and marketed as a giant "Eclipse Party" with concerts, games, food - while well-organized, it brought numerous people to a rural area not well equipped to handle the attendant issues of "Giant Party" in their back yard. Fire, LE, and EMS resources responded to traffic accidents, medical incidents, and disturbances.

John Day Valley, Oregon Small localized gatherings



In contrast, the John Day/Grant County area kept things small and quiet. No giant parties or events were planned or promoted, STILL all lodging was sold out and ranchers filled freshly-hayed pastures with campers. All developed campsites were at capacity and every piece of flat ground on Forest System lands had a dispersed camp on it. Calls for service were largely medical (altitude sickness) with the occasional scuffle over camping or parking.



Large/Concentrated Event Considerations

Strengths

- Tend to be better-organized with clear internal communication channels and designated points of contact for event
- Event is often internally sufficient with sanitation, food, & water provided by vendors
- Often have their own security and first-aid/medical response with infirmary set-up
- Likely have safety and emergency response plans in place with contingencies
- Usually have maps available of event area
- Event is easy to find – well-advertised with signage placed in advance



The Symbiosis Gathering 2017 at Big Summit Prairie near Mitchell, OR is said to have brought 30,000 people together for a week-long event culminating in the Totality experience.

Weaknesses

- Traffic near the event area may hamper access for responders and/or evacuation of attendees if needed
- Event goers may count on event/local vendors to provide for food and drink needs
- Increased chance of Mass Casualty Incident due to number of attendees in close proximity – these factors also amplify severity if a Public Health Incident occurs
- Drugs/Alcohol may be present – can lead to issues beyond response capabilities of event Security/Medical teams
- Large number of people may overwhelm cell network

Public Safety/OEM Things to DO

- Meet with event organizers – designate an experienced LEO and/or Fire Officer from the nearest station to the event as liaison with event staff – build relations and communication BEFORE event
- Liaison LEO/Fire Officer develops internal event incident plan based upon info/plans from event staff
- Obtain maps & safety/emergency plans from event staff – make copies of event and agency plans/maps and ensure each Patrol LEO, Fire Apparatus, and Ambulance in the area of the event has a copy, along with dispatch centers and EOC
- Circulate surrounding resources (2nd/3rd-due/neighboring beats) through event and ensure they are familiar with event layout and plans
- Consider EOC standby and/or standing up an Incident Management Team – particularly if multiple large events are planned within a jurisdiction



Small Event/Rural or Remote Location Considerations

Strengths

- Fewer people congregated in one location – may lessen congestion issues
- Visitors are more likely to come prepared with some food, water, and fuel
- Small gatherings or dispersed visitors are less likely to result in altercations or disturbances
- Reduced risk of Mass Casualty Incident



John Day Fossil Beds NP – an ideal quiet, serene place to experience the Eclipse. Help is only hours away, and that's AFTER you hike and drive hours to get to cell service

Weaknesses

- Locations of dispersed visitors and small gatherings are more difficult to ascertain
- Visitors unfamiliar with area will likely not know their exact location or key landmarks
- Poor cell coverage in remote areas means lag-time between incident and report as visitors have to find cell coverage to call 911
- Small gatherings/events likely not as organized, no in-house security or medical staff
- LE/Fire/EMS capacity will be spread **EXTREMELY** thin, several simultaneous or one large incident may drain capacity
- Neighboring jurisdictions may not be able to provide mutual aid

Public Safety/OEM Things to DO

- Get as much info as possible on small gatherings, farms/ranches renting out camping space, etc – coordinate on a map if possible; GIS capability is a big help!
- Multi-jurisdictional/interagency resource sharing may help with limited response capacity
- **Plan ahead** – get public and private partners and stakeholders involved and ask the community to help with safety messaging and information
- Learn to think **Outside the Box** – learn to utilize non-traditional resources as force multipliers in limited resource situations



Outside the Box Resources



RACES/ARES "Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services"/"Amateur Radio Emergency Service" - Amateur Radio organizations engaged in support of emergency management and incident operations. by enhancing radio telecommunications capability. Some groups are equipped for field work and can embed with Search & Rescue, EMS, or other less-hazardous emergency operations.



CERT "Community Emergency Response Teams" Citizen volunteers who have completed a training program in Disaster Response, Light Search & Rescue, Basic Fire Suppression, advanced First Aid, as well as basic Incident Management activities. CERT volunteers could be used for traffic control, aid/information stations, at an EOC, or can assist in Triage or Treatment in a Mass Casualty Incident



COPs "Citizens on Patrol" - volunteers who have completed a background check, a Citizen's Police Academy, then required Field Training; once this is complete COPs are allowed to use police/sheriff's radios and patrol in specially marked patrol cars. They can perform traffic control, answer questions and provide information, and other less-hazardous duties. Aside from this they're extra sets of roving eyes and ears for patrol officers/deputies.



The Conclusion

Ultimately, this is just a primer

Situations vary widely and a 5-slide, 10 minute overview can't possibly account for every possible circumstance

Your specific situation matters.

Grounded Truths can help you create and execute specific plans for your unique situation.

Grounded Truths LLC

Mark Howell - Director/Emergency Management Specialist

www.groundedtruths.com | mark@groundedtruths.com

573-889-2559

