FEMA

DATE: March 6, 2007

MEMORANDUM

FOR: Search Working Group   **DATE: March 2, 2007**
                   Chair

FROM: Canine Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Minutes: Canine Coordinator Telecon Facilitated by the Canine Subcommittee

Please find the attendance and items addressed at the recent Canine Coordinator conference call:

DATE March 2, 2007 Call #4	
Subcommittee Member	**Attendance**
Teresa MacPherson, Chair	Y
John Dean	Y
Joe Caputo	Y
Mike Marks	Y
Cathy Schiltz	N
Debra Tosch	Y
Darren Bobrosky	Y

COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE

TF	Canine Coordinator
AZTF-1	John Dean
CATF-1	Ron Weckbacher
CATF-2	Bill Monahan
CATF-3	Shirley Hammond
CATF-4	Darren Bobrosky
CATF-5	Marc Valentine
CATF-6	Sheila McKee
CATF-7	Rick Lee (for Randy Gross)
CATF-8	Steve Swaney
COTF-1	Rox Dunn
FLTF-1	Mike Marks
FLTF-2	Craig Radelman
INTF-1	Anne McCurdy
MATF-1	Lee Prentiss (absent)
MDTF-1	Mike Berry (for John Gilkey)
MOTF-1	Cathy Schiltz (absent)
NETF-1	Tara Arndt
NMTF-1	Kim Lark
NVTF-1	Paul Bailey (absent)
NYTF-1	Joe Caputo
OHTF-1	Athena Robbins

COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE

TF	Canine Coordinator
PATF-1	Marty Neville (for Jeff Snyder)
TNTF-1	Deborah Burnett
TXTF-1	Susann Brown (absent)
UTTF-1	Justin Poarch
VATF-1	Sonja Heritage (absent)
VATF-2	Jim Ingledue
WATF-2	Cyndie Fajardo

1) Roll Call

2) Questionnaire 2007
   - All Coordinators were asked to update the info on the survey as to their TF
3) Identify any needs CSG should address
   - All Coordinators were asked to advise the CSG of any canine needs that should be addressed on a National level
4) TFs without adequate number of certified teams to deploy—how can the CSG help?
   - A few TFS are short dogs and are having a hard time getting the older, pre-screened candidates.
5) 25K for CEs/CPs—
   - Canine Coordinators were asked to monitor the reduced funding for the CE's/CPs.
   - AZ-TF1 lodged the evaluators for Sunday night so that they weren't rushed to catch a flight and could shower easily from the rubble pile. They also had a motivational pile at their CP facilitated by an extra local evaluator. Everyone thinks both of these are good ideas, but may not be possible with the reduced funding.
6) TF reimbursement protocols—
   - Some evaluators cannot financially carry large amounts on their credit cards and would like to know ahead of time if this is going to be the case, and for how long. Realizing that every TF has their own finance procedures—if those who require more than 30 days before reimbursement could let the evaluators know in time, they can opt to refuse the event.
   - All CA TFs are under the JPA as far as funding and reimbursements are timely.
   - A couple of TFs have had some glitches outside the norm which have resulted in very late reimbursements. These are being addressed and corrected.
   - It was pointed out that many TFs cannot reimburse anyone until they have EVERYONE'S paperwork.

7) Upcoming events
   - March 24,25 NY-TF1 CE **in Lakehurst, NJ**
   - April 14, 15 (not 15, 16) VA-TF2 **CP is now a CE**
   - April 30—May 4 OH-TF1 CSST
   - June 9, 10 CA-TF2 CE **is now June 2 & 3**
8) Canine Travel Vest—interim rules of usage
   *The following are suggested guidelines until addressed by the system
   - Twelve per TF
   - One per canine
   - Must use the designated vendor
   - May phase the new vests in, as opposed to replacing all of the old ones at once
   - May be worn by canine when accompanying a TF member in TF uniform
   - Cannot add/subtract from the vest (ie, patches)
9) Certificates—all are completed and distributed
   - All certificates have been distributed to the respective TF Program Managers/Training Managers. Any requests for missing or corrected certificates must come to the Program Office from the TF Program Manager/Training Manager, through the Canine Sub-Group Chair.
10) Stats—
    169 T-1's (147 June '06)
    Pass rate—for T-1's
         2003=49%
         2004=54%
         2005=58%
         2006=63%
    Attempts rate—2006
         1st attempt—63 passed
         2nd attempt—8 passed
         3rd attempt—4 passed
         4th attempt—1 passed
    CP pass rate
         70% pass rate for teams who attended CP
         51% pass rate for teams who did not (excluding recerts)
11) Canine Roster—
    - All Coordinators were asked to check the current roster for accuracy as to your teams
12) Training Weekend parameters—
    - Coordinators were asked for input as to the CSG setting parameters for National Training Weekends to enable TFs to use Cooperative Agreement funds. The CSG can recommend the guidelines for sanctioning, if this is what the TFs want. Would like input from those TFs who regularly host these events.
13) 2008 Budget and Training plan—
    With the expected increase in the 2008 budget, CSG has been requested to develop a plan for 2008. Below is our "wish list"
    - Twelve CE/CP slots back
    - FSA preps included in the above
    - Two CSSTs
    - Two 3-day workshops developed with Search Working Group to include canine, tech search and STMs
    - Evaluator workshop
    - New videos—for training/testing/CSST

14) HR update—
- ARDA has completed a canine disaster Human Remains evaluation. They will offer this certification nationally. Until FEMA revises their mission statement and formally includes canine HR in their scope of work, FEMA US&R funds may not be used for this certification.

15) Excess Property—canines that are TF owned and don't work out or are retired
- Some TFs are inquiring about canines that were bought with federal funds and don't work out. How are they expensed? How is it determined if it was the dog or the handler? The FEMA Grants Branch and the Program Office will have to address the first question. Meanwhile, the CSG can recommend a screening process that can be used to determine if the dog is a potential candidate for US&R work. See below--

16) Screening tool—
- To increase the odds of a canine's success in US&R work, a screening process has been developed, tweaked and used widely by the FEMA canine program. It is the revised Brownell-Marsolais weighted screening tool and is posted on DisasterDog.org. There is also a "quick" version. In discussing this, several Coordinators spoke in favor of the full, long version. The CSG will further discuss as to developing a recommendation for a system-wide screening tool for canines purchased with federal funds.

Note: TN-TF1 has all TF-acquired canines and has a process for expensing the "excess property"

Roundtable—comments from the Coordinators
- Coordinators need to ensure proper training before sponsoring a team to test. CA is working on the additional steps between an FSA and CE to ensure a team is ready. They will welcome any other Coordinators who would like to be a part of this "self-policing" process. Contact Debra Tosch.
- In an effort to ensure quality teams going out of the door, many coordinators maintain a roster of "deployable" teams. (As opposed to the National Roster of "Certified" teams). If teams do not maintain attendance requirements, etc, they are removed form the TF deployable roster, even though they may still be certified. One TF sets up a committee that creates the deployment roster.
- Assuming responsibility on a TF level, Coordinators are enforcing attendance requirements, additional progress checks, and are sending teams outside of their home area to test.
- As quality increases along with the numbers, it was mentioned that the handlers are raising the bar for themselves. On TFs that have a full complement of certified teams, there is a healthy competition aspect to their training, resulting in a higher level of training.
- One Coordinator addressed the "Roles and Responsibilities of the Canine Coordinator" as helping to legitimize the position on the TF.
- Questionable dogs are sometimes given to an experienced handler, to determine if it's the dog or handler, on one TF.
- **Question**—where is the web-based log book? **Answer**—go to myblog.com and set it up tailored to your TF.
- **Question**—what are the CSST handler and canine requirements? **Answer**—handler must be attached to a TF. Though the course is directed to handlers and STMs, other TF members may attend. Two Program Managers attended the LA course last Nov. Minimum Canine requirements—passed the obedience, aggression and bark alert of the FSA.
- **Question**—is the OH CSST basic or advanced? **Answer**—Intermediate. It will be the same course as given in LA. In every course, the field work is tailored to the level of the dog. All exercises can be modified, so that no team "fails".
- Some TFs have training trips for the complete canine element.
- VA2's site is open for training—contact Jim Ingledue.
- A couple of TFs still transitioning—biggest problem is recruitment of handlers and dogs.

- Kudos to all from a TFL (Thanks, Marty)