

2019 Annual DART/WCGARP Airlift

On September 21, 2019 an important multicounty disaster drill took place in Washington State. The goal of this drill was to further develop the Disaster Airlift Response Teams (DART) readiness along with the overall West Coast General Aviation Response Plans (WCGARP) readiness to be able to respond quickly and effectively in the aftermath of the large Cascadia Subduction Zone Magnitude 8 plus earthquake for 3 to 5 or more minutes which would leave much of the west side of the Cascadia Mountain range in Washington crippled and with no land routes left to get supplies or people over the pass, General Aviation (GA) would be one of many key resources. The drill was a big success, but before we go into that it is worth noting that what we are doing on the West Coast is in many ways mirroring what is actually being done real time on the East Coast and as we were preparing for the drill the real thing was actually happening in the Bahamas. So it's truly good to know that what we are working on really can make that lifesaving difference. So below are some articles about what has been happening year after year for many years now on the East Coast. General Aviation (GA) is truly becoming a vital component of catastrophic disaster response.

1st Article;

https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fnbaa.org%2Faircraft-operations%2Fairspace%2Fhurricane%2Fhurricane-dorian%2Frelief-missions-continue-wake-hurricane-dorian%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2LF0xn_zobcwNdHeMzLmTyRz61KcUjWCfkwpLkojBu-W4yGGiwWO3I8Yw&h=AT3kd47IQGc3BQ6E3XfoqFTANbcCdGQde3w2Pt1T3TGPPpORfOKvS8DEUeoq55FUITwAN1kiGyjV_t0QTnDrDb1V8bwxKdabXQvFfoPkRvGR3rOnKvOgZATRMTLvleuN2nr

Operation Airdrop Facebook, has their response;

<https://www.facebook.com/opairdrop/>

2nd Article;

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/helicopter-pilot-discovers-villagers-stranded-debris-bahamas-n1054536?fbclid=IwAR3fwHCn6EZS0y4HUx3OQb-PoZ9sXJ7o4fO2G9NAzflLruhFSUT_KqyfBt0

3rd Article(This from last year NC hurricane response);

<https://www.robsonian.com/news/115753/aid-arrived-quickly-by-air>

All this to show that when things really do fall catastrophically apart, GA is a key element and for what we face, it's going to be vital.

The Drill;

Jefferson County Video Of Exercise;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYiYW72u9mM&feature=youtu.be>

The drill that occurred in our state on the 21st was a big step forward for our readiness to be able to maximize the use of general aviation through the local DART's to help our state maintain some level of mobility in the immediate aftermath of when the "Big One" hits.

This involved multiple counties, multiple DART's within those counties, emergency response resources, HAM radio support and many other aspects. We even had Paul Marshall, one of the original DART developers, fly a load up from California and we also had a load flown out of Walla Walla airport. All of these loads from those locations and the location at Bellingham International Airport, Clallam County and Kitsap County were dropped into Jefferson County to deliver a combined load of **5,043 lbs.** that was delivered to the Jefferson County Food Bank Association.

So while we are preparing for the future we are helping the present and the receiving county changes each year based on when their DART went live or their contribution to drills.

There were a lot of different locations a part of this drill so below is just from one of those sites. This is what occurred at the Bellingham location and in so doing will hopefully give insight into how this can help us when the time comes. This was occurring in many other counties at the same time, some difference between each county but regardless similar efforts.

Stage 1:

In the first week of August we started a food drive that ran until the 19th of September. During that time food was collected at the Lake Way Fred Meyers and stored there until the fly out date. The public was encouraged to participate by donating food. Additionally my place of work at Eden Home Health also did a food drive internally with my fellow coworkers. The total collected was **1,594 lbs.** Considering we did 480 lbs. last year and around 280 lbs. the year before, this year's total was a nice jump.

Fly Out Day:

For our site, members from Island County CERT joined my local DART team and together we collected the food from the Lakeway Fred Meyers and drove it to Bellingham Aviation Services terminal at Bellingham International Airport to off load from the vehicles and onto the DART planes that came in from Clallam, Jefferson Counties and the additional DART pilot from the state wide network. Additionally we had HAM operators that were providing invaluable support by ensuring we had communication between Jefferson County and us. This communication was significantly helpful as we were able to notify the receiving county when the planes were wheels up and in route with the load, weather was able to be transmitted and departure so that we knew what to expect between the two ends. Island County CERT was invaluable in helping with the DART forms and personal in this event. This drill significantly helped us understand the immense strength of mutually supporting each other, improved our understanding of how to do this more effectively and also the value of partnering with HAM operators to maintain communication with each other between the different DART hubs and also the outside GA responding groups. **This is an annual event and for our location this is our 3rd year of doing GA food airlift response exercises.**

I do believe a visual is helpful so here is the day in pictures.



Island County CERT, Local DART/EVAC element and the Lake Way Fred Meyers staff loading out.



The HAM operators providing critical communications throughout the exercise. This is on the tarmac just in front of Bellingham Aviation Services. The HAM's helped greatly with coordination between DART locations during the drill, weather aspects and letting receiving sites know when the planes were wheels up among many other things they did that day.



Planes parked awaiting loading. This at the Bellingham Aviation Services terminal at Bellingham International Airport. We had a total of 10 aircraft come in from 2 DART counties and one from state wide DART network.





Final organization performed of supplies after being let onto the tarmac by Bellingham Aviation Services.



Supplies taken out to the planes, next generation learning to serve.



Loading up the planes



Wheels up and in route to Jefferson County



That's a wrap.