SER FIRE NET – OCTOBER, 2020: TWO WILDFIRES (ONE AT EACH END OF SHINGLETOWN), HIGH WINDS, HIGH FIRE DANGER, INTERNET FAILURE, AND COMPLETE ELECTRICAL GRID SHUTDOWN FOR SHINGLETOWN.

The situation involved two wildfires burning (one starting after the first wildfire), in a volatile situation with High Winds, High Fire Danger; Internet Failure; all compounded by a complete electrical grid power shutoff for Shingletown as the two wildfires threatened Shingletown neighborhoods. As other wildfires were also burning in Shasta County, … Cal Fire was short on resources.

During October, 2020, the SER Plan activated a FIRE NET. This was a full activation, meaning all neighborhood nets (approximately 12 at this time) were advised to monitor the FIRE NET on the designated HAM repeater frequency, and requested to activate their own non ham nets on Each Neighborhoods Emergency "Ch 1" (each Ch 1 is a neighborhood's EMERGENCY allocated non ham frequency).

When the subject FIRE NET started, there was just one fire on the Westerly side of Shingletown. K6PDS was FIRE CONTROL (which is Net Control for a SER FIRE NET). During this particular FIRE NET, Shingletown was already on alert for High Winds, High Fire Danger, and had notice that there would be a PG&E Power Safety Shut Off planned due to the high fire danger.

A Shingletown Fire was toned out on Cal Fire and the SER FIRE NET was activated. Tacticals (net infrastructure) were set up – based upon stations who were on frequency). The concept is that – those who are on frequency matter. There is no wasting time with a net "roll call".

During this particular FIRE NET, Tacticals were activated, which included (based on Ham stations on frequency and who were monitoring at the time of activation) as follows:

-FIRE CONTROL: Net Control for a FIRE NET. K6PDS - NATHAN ZELIFF.

-TRIANGULATION: DOES PHYSICAL MAPPING ON A LARGE MAP, SHOWING THE THE LOCATION AND PROGRESS OF FIRES USING TOWNSHIP, RANGE, SECTION AND LAT/LONG. WIND AND DIRECTION ARE ALSO PLOTTED;AND ESTIMATED DISTANCES FROM NEIGHBORHOODS ARE ALSO PLOTTED) (K6PDS).

-AREA COORDINATOR (VILLAGE); Non Ham Ch 1 Emergency Frequency for the Village Neighborhood (K6PDS). Other Area Coordinators also on frequency for their neighborhoods.

Plus, the following Tacticals, each being a different Ham Operator at various times during the FIRE NET:

- CAL FIRE MONITOR: MONITORING CAL FIRE DISPATCH FREQUENCY. A Ham operator .

-FLIGHT RADAR: Monitoring aircraft traffic to/ from fire locations and type of aircraft (e.g., helicopter, bomber, etc…) - Another Ham operator.

-INKS RIDGE CAMERA: monitoring the Inks Ridge Cal Fire Camera - Another Ham operator.

-WILSON CAMERA: monitoring the Wilson Hill Cal Fire Camera -. Same operator as above.

-CAL FIRE TAC 9 MONITOR: monitoring the Cal Fire Frequency for the wild land fire burning on the East side of Shingletown - Another Ham operator.

- CAL FIRE TAC 11 MONITOR: monitoring the Cal Fire Frequency for the wild land fire burning on the West side of Shingletown - Another Ham operator.

-INTERNET WINDS: Monitoring the winds speed and direction over the fire(s) - Another Ham operator.

Each of the above Tacticals is performing a specific task and provides periodic reports into the FIRE NET as requested by FIRE CONTROL. The FIRE NET can thus be viewed as a wagon wheel where reports are transmitted into the Hub.

FIRST FIRE:

As the FIRE NET continued, periodic reports were made by each of the above stations to FIRE CONTROL, who recorded the information and provided periodic summaries over the HAM NET FREQUENCY FOR ALL NEIGHBORHOODS TO COPY (i.e., everybody can turn their radios to the Ham Frequency Channel and obtain real time facts and information). Also, AREA COORDINATOR HAMS are to relay into their Neighborhood Nets on each Neighborhoods Ch 1 for persons who can't hear the FIRE NET repeater. This could be due to a stations location. Based upon the reports and situation, FIRE CONTROL, will make changes to net operations, and may make appropriate recommendations. This is a dynamic and real time net procedure. It is to help Shingletown residents know, in this case, the status of fires.

SECOND FIRE:

To compound the existing FIRE NET situation, a second Shingletown Wildland fire was reported by Cal Fire during Net Operations. This one was at the other end of Shingletown (East side). Cal Fire assigned another Tactical frequency for that fire (TAC 9). FIRE CONTROL requested any Ham station to assist. A Ham responded that she would be take the position. She became TAC 9 Monitor. However, she latter responded that she couldn't hear the Cal Fire Ground crews due to location issues. Her husband (also a licensed Ham) was not at home, and he was more familiar with how to use the equipment and antenna use. The husband was mobile, heading to his home

(East Bound on highway 44). While mobile, FIRE CONTROL obtained reports from this Ham. As he approached his neighborhood, it was decided that this mobile station would continue to his home and act as TAC 9 monitor (so reports could be monitored from Cal Fire ground teams). This was in lieu of that station going to a pre-designated lookout location to view the Fire to the East of Shingletown. Radio operator assets are always in short supply, so needed to make the best use of those available. Upon arriving home, this station operator (Ham) then successfully acted as TAC 9 Monitor, and provided information concerning the East End fire into the FIRE NET. The Cal Fire ground command had apparently changed location which also facilitated this monitoring.

INTERNET PROBLEMS (offline) AND CHANGING STATION OPERATORS:

As the FIRE Net Progressed, INTERNET WIND, reported that his internet just went down. FIRE CONTROL had another STATION take over that tactical position. Thereafter, the Station monitoring CAMERAS (with views of the fires), advised that he needed to step away for approximately one-half hour. FIRE CONTROL had another station step in to fill the Tactical position. The FIRE NET continued seamlessly.

PG & E SHUTS OFF POWER TO ALL OF SHINGLETOWN DURING WILDFIRES:

Next, as if enough was not already taking place, PG&E shut off the power to all of Shingletown. The FIRE NET was now instantly being run totally on battery and back up power (which is part of the SER Plan). Having pre-planned for this potential, the FIRE NET continued seamlessly. Tacticals continued reporting, and TRIANGULATION continued mapping each fires status, location, wind direction and speed on the Map 36" X 36".

FIRE CONTROL continued requesting periodic reports from each tactical, while mapping the Fire Locations (two wildfires), keeping notes, and approximately every 10 minutes providing a bullet point summary of the situation for anyone listening to the FIRE NET. FIRE CONTROL, was at the time performing multiple tasks: FIRE CONTROL, TRIANGULATION, and AREA COODINATOR (Non Ham frequency) during this time, and was working 3 different radios each on specific frequencies.

LACK OF HAM OPERATORS TO FILL CAL FIRE MONITOR TACTICAL - USE OF A NON HAM ON THE FIRE NET HAM FREQUENCY:

At one point, FIRE CONTROL requested a report from CAL FIRE MONITOR. There was no response. … No hams were available to take over CAL FIRE MONITOR (those working Hams were already very busy each handling multiple tactical positions). A Non Ham briefly acted as CAL FIRE MONITOR, and relayed reporting from CAL FIRE DISPATCH. A Ham … thereafter resumed as CAL FIRE MONITOR.

FIRE NET DEACTIVATE – A GREAT JOB AND WELL DONE:

When the two fires were contained, the FIRE NET was deactivated. It was an excellent FIRE NET and ran very smoothly (including, the transitioning between stations performing different Tactical

tasks all while experiencing internet failures and a complete electrical grid shutdown for Shingletown).

It is well known that Shingletown is at the top of the Cal Fire list of California Communities vulnerable to fire devastation. Shingletown is just like Paradise, California (which was completely decimated by the Camp Fire in November of 2018); is surrounded by forested areas, with housing susceptible to fire and the home of a large elderly population. In Paradise, people were trapped and died from the fire.

The SER Plan is the only emergency communications plan in Shingletown and most likely the only emergency communications plan of its design in the State of California.

The SER Plan is a fully functional system integrating neighborhoods and Ham nets. It is designed to deal with wildfires, earthquakes, power outages, welfare checks, inter-area relay, smoke checks, mapping and triangulation to locate sources of smoke when it is late at night, and a lot more.

GREAT JOB TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED OUT!

Post Script.

[The very next day, after the above Fire Net, the President of the local ham club started an attack and takeover attempt on the SER Plan. This involved … seeking to deny the SER Plan the use of the 2 Ham repeaters under the plan and making false and defamatory statements. Such was followed by many hams boycotting subsequent Fire Nets and not responding to requests for assistance during emergency fire net operations, etc… . Notwithstanding such actions, The SER Net continues, but has been severely damaged].