

What Happened on the Great ShakeOut 2022

Pete Steen —

Ellen and I were anchored high up the Trask River tidewater, a good 15-20 river miles from the ocean. The day was overcast, and you could smell that rain was on the way. We were confident when we arrived there. The water was near slack high tide. But it was soon apparent that the salmon had failed to show up for our appointment.

A few minutes before 10:30 that morning, we forgot all about the absent salmon.

The water around us was suddenly sloshing and quivering. But when we looked at the shoreline, it was acting more like water than the water was! It was undulating in a series of waves. Cows in the pasture on shore were staggering. Some had fallen down and were struggling to get up. It was then that we realized we were in the middle of the long-feared Cascadia Subduction Zone mega-quake!

When the earth stopped shaking, we looked at the time. It was 10:25 a.m. Now what? What should we do? What about the expected tsunami, which would probably be hitting the beach back home in the next quarter-hour? Could it reach us clear up here?

We keep a go-bag under the bow of the boat as well as in the pickup, currently back at the 5th St. boat ramp where we had launched that morning. We decided to go slowly back downstream the few miles to the boat ramp.

The tide had started out, so we drifted with it, watching to see if a big wave might be coming upstream toward us. I remembered that initial tsunami waves travel toward shore at phenomenal speeds, but slow down to about 15 miles per hour after they hit the shoreline.

We were miles inland from the beach. By the time we reached the 5th S. boat ramp, we had made it through an opening where the collapsed bridge below the Parker Hole blocked most of the Trask River. When we neared the boat

ramp in Tillamook at 11:30 a.m., we realized the current had reversed and the water level was rising.

When we reached the floating dock at the boat ramp, Ellen held the boat against the dock while I ran to the truck in the parking lot to grab our go-bag and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) medical bag. I saw a house on fire on 5th St., but heard no sirens and saw no people; perhaps those residents had fled eastward. I knew better than to attempt to hook up the boat and try to drive anywhere; the roads would be impassable.

Back in the boat and on the river, we decided to head downstream. The current had again reversed and was going back toward Tillamook Bay. But when we got to the bridge on 3rd St. that goes over the Trask River., we found it had totally collapsed and was blocking river passage. In fact, it had created a waterfall that we did not dare try to navigate.

We turned around and motored back up. The water level began rising again and the current reversed again. There was a lot of debris in the water. I remembered an old river channel entrance upstream above the Sand Hole. It led through brush and pastureland to emerge into the Tillamook River, across from the dock for the handicapped. As we made our way down from there, we could see the 3rd St. bridge across the Tillamook River had also collapsed, blocking access to the bay.

We beached the boat on the west shore and carried the anchor as high up the bank as we could. We didn't know if or when we might ever see our little wooden boat, Ford F150 truck and boat trailer again.

We shouldered our go-bags and I hand-carried the CERT bag as we started up Tomlinson Rd. off of Highway 131. I knew from elk hunting in that area for many years that a series of logging roads there would lead us over high ground to Cape Meares and our home.

We got to our house after dark, exhausted but grateful for the battery-powered headlamps that had been stowed in our go-bags. We could see a couple of windows were cracked. The door was slightly stuck, but we jerked it free. We fell into bed totally exhausted, thankful that we had had a seismic retrofit done a few years earlier.

Tomorrow we would survey the devastation in our village, and recovery would begin.

Jon Ziady—

I was at Fred Meyer this morning at 10:20 am when suddenly the whole building began to shake. Uh oh I said this is the big one. People were in quite a panic, but I managed with a mother and her little daughter to scurry under a display table as products crashed to the floor around us. When the shaking stopped. I emerged to see a chaos of broken glass, groceries and merchandise on the floor. Fortunately, the building itself had withstood the impact and only falling light fixtures had added to the chaos. Many people seemed to have sustained injuries, most that I saw were relatively minor but, given the amount of dislodged material, I'm sure there were more serious ones as well. I began to hear calls for help and a number of us tried to free people from debris and do what we could for the injured. Unfortunately, we couldn't do much more than grab first aid supplies from the drug department and get them to people who could treat their own injuries. Those who were more seriously hurt would have to wait for emergency responders to come. The likelihood of that happening anytime soon was slim. As the shock of what was happening began to sink in I felt I needed to try to get home as I was worried about Merrie as well as my own safety in this situation. The feeling of "I need to take care of myself and my own" began to be uppermost in my mind. Would I even be able to get home? It was a good thing that I was on the same side of the river as my house, otherwise chances of getting there would not be great. I made it to the parking lot and was able to get the car out onto the road but in about a mile the road was completely buckled and impassable. Behind me was a jumble of cars and trucks also in the same predicament as me. Now What?

Brad Ayers—

Shortly after 10AM this morning the big one hit. The one we have been warned about for years hit with all the force that had been predicted. Fortunately, I had exited the shower forty minutes earlier and was fully dressed. Had it hit just a few minutes earlier my story would have been quite different suddenly recalling my mother-in-law who was trapped in her shower during a big southern California Whitter earthquake when the sliding glass

door to her tub shower broke and was wedged tight. Only when family arrived five hours later, feeling the worst had happened, was she freed.

Today, after the shaking stopped, I was wading through broken glass, scattered wall and table debris, a busted water line, and no power suddenly plunging me into a state of confusion. My wife was upstairs. I called to make sure she was OK. Our Cape Meares emergency survival team had given us survival information for this very situation. But in the moment, not totally mentally prepared it seemed. She yelled back, "What do we do?" A good question that I did not remember the answer for. I had the go bag list and most of the necessities but what to do first, second, third, etc. did not come logically to mind. We seemed to be going in all directions. Hard to sit down and suddenly come up with a plan of action when your world has suddenly been turned upside down. Check for injuries? No cuts or broken bones. Turn off the water? No, that was already off. Check for electrical fires? No, the power was already off. Check on pets? No, we did not have any pets. And on and on the questions came at random and faster than we could make any logical plan for.

How do you go from a state of extreme confusion to a logical checklist of what to do? That's it, I said to myself. Our go bags should have an action plan specific for our own situation.

Olli Ollikainen—

This year's subduction zone earthquake had a much happier ending than some of the others, at least for us. At 10:20, the violent shaking began and lasted for what seemed like an eternity. All of the items on the shelves and walls came crashing down, but luckily nothing landed on us. Memo to Olli: you should really secure those items before next October. (I will REALLY regret not doing that if the actual quake happened before the next scheduled one.)

We knew that the big one was occurring as we were huddled down awaiting for the ground below the house to shift and slide. The home is fairly new, so upgraded earthquake construction techniques would allow this wood frame house to survive the shaking. But our fear is that the house would stay intact, but the ground beneath it would slide down the moderate grade. It didn't happen. The house was mostly intact and we survived without injuries. The propane tank fell off its footings, and the line broke at the tank itself. Thank

goodness that the house didn't fill with explosive propane since the tank was self-venting outside. The tsunami was the next threat.

Looking down the hill towards the community, we didn't see as much damage as we thought would be present after the quake. Trees were still standing, and it appeared that the roads were open, at least for foot traffic. The ocean was moving away from the beach rapidly. Off to the west, a white line of surf appeared far offshore. Within minutes it was coming over the berm destroying all structures not built on concrete piers. The water did not quit moving forward, and the level rose. We were witnessing what we saw in Japan on television. Back and forth the water came and went. The debris hid the surface of the water. It was devastation.

But we survived the event, and luck was on our side. The long dry spell of late summer and fall made the soils in our slide prone community more stable. If the rains had arrived earlier, the soils would have been saturated which would have really made landslides probable. Yes, we lucked out, but there was huge task remaining, starting with search and rescue. It would take months to recover; years to fully recover. Cape Meares would never be the same as before.

Diane Field (Mother of Devin Field)—

Earthquake!! Feels like a pretty big one!! Strong enough to cause a tsunami????? Better head up hill just in case.....

OOPs--need to get shoes on and take.....Shoot:---should have made a "To Go" bag----should we grab some food just in case? Flashlights? Where are they?

Phones for sure--are they charged??? Charge cables----- Change of clothes, warm jackets, water bottles----ask Dev--Is there a "To Go" bag here???? For future be sure there is!!!

Wait---think he said there was one in the downstairs closet---need to find quickly.

P.S. Did not find a "To Go" bag in downstairs closet.