Survival Retreat Operations Manual

This is the complete operations manual for an established remote survival retreat. It is being shared to help others understand the complexities of establishing, operating, and defending a survival retreat in the event of a complete grid-down economic collapse, EMP (foreign, terrorist, or false flag), or other TEOTWAWKI survival situation. The author is a retired senior military officer with 30 years of real world experience.

The retreat itself is a two-story rural home constructed from the outset as a survival retreat (water well, oversized septic, back-up generator, wood burning stove, safe room, etc.) The survival group is 12 adults and 8 children with the ability to provide a limited amount of charity to others. The manual was created to formalize retreat procedures and create a guidebook for operational continuity should anything happen to the retreat's founder. The manual is offered as a template to help others create their own survival retreat and as a reminder to all that the most critical component to surviving an TEOTWAWKI situation is: Salvation and a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It was he who provided the prescience, wisdom, and resources to establish this retreat and it is to his glory that we share this life saving knowledge with you.

The manual is being shared on the internet on ***The Discourse of Involuntary Servitude*** at http://www.InvoluntaryServant.BlogSpot.com and at ***SurvivalBlog.com*** at http://www.SurvivalBlog.com . Neither of these publishers knows the name of the author or the location of the retreat. Individuals that are interested in finding a retreat of their own, creating a retreat, or finding members for their own retreat are directed to: http://www.survivalblog.com/others.html

[Name of Retreat Redacted] was purchased in 2003 with the dual purpose of providing a retirement home and a "family retreat" should the need arise. The home was built with "aging" in mind so the main level is handicapped accessible. It was designed to support 4 families for extended periods of time, but could support more if required, with less comfort and privacy. Location was based on "sustainability" (agriculture and water), "community" (conservative Christian values), "rural" (low density population, for the eastern US), and "defensibility" (no pass-through traffic). It is situated in a rural mountain farming community, near the small town of [Redacted], which includes a small community hospital (30 beds). It is an hour's drive to the closest mid-sized city [Redacted] and 200+ miles from the closest large city [Redacted] . The property is located at the end of a private "crush and run" road, ½ mile from a county "black topped" road which is another ¾ mile to the nearest county paved road. This road combination provides a single point of entry and exit for all residents, with multiple locations for "control points".

[Name of Retreat Redacted] is 5.5 acres in size, located on the south-east facing slope for maximum solar exposure and below the crest line, so it is blocked from the northern winter winds. The land lies as two sloped meadows and one level meadow at the river. The top meadow is the location of the home and orchard and there is room for a fair sized garden over the drain field. The second meadow is a two+ acre garden location, small animal area and the location of the barn, while the third area is a level camp ground area alongside the river and our "shooting" range. The third area also has access to a 4 acre meadow next to the river for additional garden space and our tactical training range. The surrounding properties are heavily wooded with the exception of our immediate neighbors land (unoccupied) which is composed of matching meadows. The [Redacted] River is a non-polluted, mountain fed river with native trout and other species (although not in abundance). The land is suitable for dry land farming and has a long history of being a farming community (first family settled in 1753).

The area is supplied electrical power by [Redacted] from a major coal fired power plant located in [Redacted]. Phone service is available through [Redacted] (owned by Verizon), but we do not have a hard line to the home, by choice. Internet access is through Verizon wireless broadband and two cellular phones. Water is supplied by our own 385 foot well which is powered by the grid, but also on the whole house back-up generator. The back-up generator has its own 1000 gallon underground propane tank, the HVAC heat pump utilizes propane as the backup heat source, the hot water heater and stove are supplied by a 500 gallon underground propane tank, while waste is handled by a 1500 gallon septic system. These infrastructure services provide the ability for [Redacted] to function as on off-grid location for extended periods of time, with the back-up generator.

The county is divided into 4 districts by the Sheriff's Department, with [Redacted] the largest area, but most lightly populated (cows outnumber people). The Sheriff has 2 or 3 patrol cars per shift in each district (there are a total of 50 deputies), but other duties reduce the available numbers most of the time to one or less actually on patrol. All fire and medical emergency services are provided by the local [Redacted] volunteer fire department. The town of [Redacted] has a 22 man police force and full-time fire department plus there are 5 State Troopers assigned to the county, all of which operate on a "joint" basis of responsibilities. There is also a [Redacted] National Guard unit (company size) with its armory located in [Redacted] [Redacted].

The county government seat and majority of businesses are located in the town of [Redacted] . Most local officials are long term residents of the county with a long history of family involvement . . . marriages within the various families' means that everyone knows everyone and most are related in some form or fashion. The northern part of the county encompasses [Redacted] Lake, which is problematic for our situation. It is made up primarily of "new" residents, with incomes well above the median and a very "sheeple" attitude toward government and self-reliance. Many of these properties are second homes to wealthy professionals from the DC and north-eastern seaboard areas. The lake is formed by a small to medium sized hydro-electric dam, which presents interesting possibilities in a grid down scenario.

The county in general is primarily an agricultural community, made up of numerous small and medium sized family farms, although there are a few large family farms of several thousand acres. Diary production is the primary income while second is beef production. Most of the acreage is planted in feed grains for the cattle, but several families operate small or mid-sized "truck garden" operations . . . while everyone has various sized "kitchen gardens". The county is capable of producing more than an adequate supply of the basic food stuffs.

The county is divided north and south by route [Redacted] , a divided access 4 lane highway and east and west by state route [Redacted] , a 2 lane road that runs the entire width of the state. The closest inter-state is [Redacted] that runs through [Redacted] and is a major north-south route out of the DC and northeast corridor. Most fold-out maps of [Redacted] do not accurately show the counties secondary roads, but the large format book maps do a good job of showing the secondary routes, but labeling is often incorrect. The bottom line is that "local" knowledge is required to access most of the [Redacted] area roads. There is a major north-south railroad line that runs through the county. Coal is the principle product moved, but general cargo also transits the area . . . the closest point to [Redacted] is within 3 miles of our location, but it is not visible and there are 2 mountain ridges that separate us with no roads leading in our direction.

It has taken us several years to be accepted into this small, tight knit community, but we are now considered part of the community and not the "new" strangers. It will be incumbent that you adapt into this rural community and their sense of community . . . it is not only critical, but well worth the effort!

The rest of this manual will follow the four S's:

Salvation . . . Sustenance . . . Shelter . . . Security

SALVATION

Survival for the sake of survival has no long term meaning or advantage. It is therefore our intent to continue to develop our own personal "walk" with the Lord and help others who would wise to learn the "Good News". We will do this in the following ways:

We will encourage all to accept the truth of the Bible, but will not force any acceptance to one belief or another, but we will speak the truth of God's Word . . . salvation is an individual journey and we only wish to help along that path.

We will observe the Sabbath as a day of reflection and rest. Essential activities will still continue, such as LP/OP duty, but only as required for the safety and security of the group.

We will attend or hold our own worship service, were friends and neighbors will be welcomed. If transportation is available it is better to worship in the larger congregational setting, but if transportation or circumstances dictate then an announced local service will be held.

We will conduct weekly Bible Study classes for all age groups and open to all those seeking to deepen their walk with the Lord

> *All services/studies will need to be held in a location that does not compromise the security of [Name of Retreat Redacted] and its occupants; if it is open to individuals we do not know well. Services or studies held outside of [Redacted] will require a threat assessment and the possible posting of security.*

EDUCATION

We will conduct general education for all children at [Redacted] and any neighbors that would care to participate. We have the knowledge and resources to teach to the college level, but the intent is to give a basic foundation in the 3 R's, as well as history and government(s) which will be taught as a foundation to forms and styles of government.

In addition to the general educational skills we will also teach the skills required to survive in a changing society. This will also be part of the regular curricula with practical application of: farming, construction, animal husbandry, hunting and tactical skills. It would also be of benefit to cross train/apprenticeship with any specialist we have contact with; such as farmers, medical or military personnel.

By necessity the schedule will be flexible, but it is envisioned that half the day will be foundational education with the other half being devoted to "homesteading" practical skills. Time should be set aside, daily, for "play"; this can be organized or unstructured, but we should allow the children to have a childhood despite the circumstances of the situation that would find us all at [Redacted] . This will be a six day a week schedule with Sunday as the Lords Day.

SUSTENANCE

AIR

The only scenario that would force this issue is nuclear fallout. Although [Name of Retreat Redacted] was not built as a bomb or fallout shelter, it can function as a "last refuge". We will need some warning that a single nuclear weapon detonation or limited exchange has occurred. The prevailing wind patterns will blow most fallout away from this location, unless it is a detonation at [Redacted] (there is a large military munitions plant near REDACTED). The other threat is a general exchange and the fallout patterns are from the west and mid-west missile fields, this is our worst case scenario for fallout.

Resources: Radiological Detection Kit, Potassium Iodide, Tyvex suit and N95 mask.

1. Determine the threat with the radiation detector. Follow the instructions included in the kit and conduct a sweep of the immediate area for detectable levels. If radiation is at an actionable level (see chart in the RAD KIT, but as good rule of thumb use 1 rem per hour or greater) then go to step 2.
2. Get everyone into the safe room, including anyone on OP/LP duty.
3. Fill all 5 gallon jugs with fresh water and ensure the chemical toilet and dry bag toilets are in the safe room.
4. Bring in cots, mats and sleeping bags as required.
5. Start everyone on the Potassium Iodide routine, but read the dosage information and cautions carefully.
6. Close both safe room doors, if the outside air is moderate to highly contaminated, or radiation is building up in the basement common areas. If there is no or little radiation in the basement common area then leave the "inside" door open. With both doors closed there will be a build-up CO2 and humidity, so it will be necessary to periodically open the inside door and do an "air exchange" (once a day should be adequate).
7. Water and food should be kept to a minimum, with "dry" or "cold" food used (reduce the human "waste" load). Do not cook in the safe room or heat the safe room with the propane stoves.
8. A watch/guard should be posted at the inside door to ensure no "surprises" all others should rest, read or play games. The "watch" will monitor the emergency radio for any news or updates (monitor the weather alarm radio as well as the AM/FM bands). If radiation is acceptable in the main level then post the watch there.
9. Monitor "safe room" radiation levels once a day. Conduct exterior survey every 24 hours. The "monitor" should wear a Tyvex coverall, rubber boots & gloves and an N95 mask; the Tyvex suit and mask should be taken off and placed in a plastic garbage bag just outside the safe room, the rubber boots & gloves will be kept outside the safe room, but reused for future surveys.
10. This procedure is designed to handle "transit" fallout, not direct exposure from a nearby detonation (the nearest potential targets are [Name of Nearest City Redacted], but they are a very low priority target and are more than 50 air miles away).

WATER – If Power is Available

Fresh water at [Name of Retreat Redacted] is provided by a 385 foot deep well with a 220v pump in the well head and a 220v pump in the 300 gallon water tank in the basement that feeds the house system. The water head is about 40 feet from the top of the well casing. All pumps in the water system are powered by "grid" electricity, but are also on the whole house generator. As long as the "grid" is functioning there are

no emergency actions that must be taken for the water supply. If the local, regional or national power grid is not functioning then emergency actions are required to sustain a long term supply of fresh water.

At the onset of a power failure determine if it is local, regional or national. If you can contact the [Name of Utility Redacted] trouble number then you can assume it is local and the only check is to be sure the generator has automatically started. If you are unable to contact [Name of Electrical Utility Redacted] then assume a regional or national grid failure, check secondary sources such as AM/FM radio bands and the NOAA weather alert radio. A failure of this magnitude will require some steps on your part. The generator will have automatically started so you will notice no interruption of water, but you must begin to "conserve" your resources to extend the usable timeframe of the propane:

1. Turn off all unnecessary electrical loads; go to a bare essential load, turn-off circuit breakers to the washer, drier, dish washer, microwave and heat pump (in severe cold weather this can be left on). During the warmer weather windows can be opened and during the colder months the wood stoves will be the primary heaters.
2. Conserve propane by securing the gas flow to the hot water heater and plan all meals to make maximum efficiency of the gas stove.
3. Hot water for washing dishes can be heated on the stove and the "solar shower" bags can be filled and left outside to heat for bathing later that day. During winter months the gas water heater can be temporarily turned on for bathing (turn it on several hours prior to use for evening bath's or showers . . . Navy showers save more water than baths and don't require you to "share" bath water).
4. At this point we will be manually starting and securing the generator, to save fuel. By running the generator only part-time we can extend the propane supply and the life of the generator. The limit of self generated electrical power is limited to the amount of propane on-hand. The 1000 gallon propane tank is dedicated to the generator and under normal conditions is used once a week during the self test cycle of 20 minutes, this means that at worst we will have 800 to 900 hours of run time on the unit. It is recommended that we only run the generator for a few hours each day, just enough to keep the 300 gallon water tank filled and to keep the refrigerator and freezer functional (as long as they hold food, which we will be using first). Showers and such should be taken during this time. Water for drinking and cooking as well as toilet flushing will be hand drawn from the tank into portable containers for use. The generator can also be run to provide additional heating in the event of extreme cold weather, otherwise the wood stoves will be the primary heat source. We can also make exceptions, maybe once a week or several times a month, in which to watch a movie (entertainment is a necessary function in times of high stress) . . . but the generator should never be run after dark, to reduce our noise signature or cover the sound of approaching vehicles or individuals.

WATER – Power Unavailable

Should the generator not function, either through an initial failure or lack of fuel you are now facing an emergency situation. Fresh water is essential to survival and without it time is measured in days. At this point conservation of water is an absolute necessity, we have the 300 gallon internal tank and 60 gallons in the hot water heater. The following are ideas that will allow [Redacted] to continue to function as a retreat.

Water -The preferred method

Position the mobile 300 gallon water tank uphill from the well head and connect the hose bib to the outside water facet (next to the garage) with the garden hoses provided. Uncap the well head (but always recover the well head) and use the manual bucket and rope to fill the water tank (these buckets come from Lehman's and are made for this purpose) . . . this is a long and tedious task, but the water is "clean". Turn OFF the water valve to the house filter, to stop the outside tank from trying to fill the inside tank. Once you have filled the tank about half way open both the water tank valve and the outside facet valve and you should have enough pressure to supply the house's regular water pipes for most functions . . . it will still be necessary to conserve water, since filling the tank is a demanding task. The outside tank will need to be protected from direct sunlight (reduce algae growth) and in the winter protected from freezing . . . enclosing the entire tank with square hay bales is the most logical approach I can think of (these can be obtained from [Name of Local Dairy Farmer Redacted] and prepositioned early, my guess is it will take 15 to 20 bales). If we have extended extreme cold weather the tank can be moved into the garage to keep it from freezing, but this will result in little or no water pressure. It is recommended that the Berky water filter be used to "sanitize" all drinking water as a precaution when using this method.

Water - Emergency method

If for any reason the well goes dry or is unusable, you must then rely on the [Redacted] River to supply your basic needs. In this case we will utilize the same external 300 gallon water tank, rigged as in the preferred method. The difference is in how you fill it.

The "lazy" method is to place the water tank in the dump trailer and use the tractor to take it down to the river and fill it using the gas powered sump pump. The problems with this method are; it uses gas for the sump pump and diesel for the tractor, both of which would be critical resources. A secondary problem is the sump pump sucks up all the sediment from the river and puts in the water tank . . . this sediment must be filtered out before it gets into the house piping. So in reality you would not be able to connect the water tank to the house system and you would have to move the water in buckets or containers that you had filtered the water in (use the large supply of coffee filters we have for this purpose).

The "hard" method, but a smarter way than above is to place the external water tank as described in the "preferred" method, but you fill it with 5 gallon jugs from the river. Jugs are filled by hand and the water is "pre-filtered" before it goes in the jug. The containers are then driven up the hill in "Gator" or the tractor, but this method used fuel, which could be problematic . . . so plan on hand carrying the jugs up the hill to the tank. This is a "hard" task and will require multiple trips (it takes 30 jugs to fill the tank half way . . . and it is probable that we will use at least 50 gallons of water per day . . . which is 10 trips just to stay even). However this does not use scare resources and can be a method of physical conditioning (if it doesn't kill us first).

Sanitation should be "arranged" to limit the use of water. Outside latrines will be constructed for human waste; inside bathrooms should only be used in extreme cold weather conditions or for the young and sick. This should be considered anytime the grid is down as a normal course of action. The septic system will hold only so much waste before it must be pumped out by a "contractor" . . . an overflowing septic system would present serious health hazards.

WATER – future solutions

In future upgrades to [Redacted] we plan to install a solar electric array to charge a battery bank that can power the two water pumps. The cost of this system is currently not in our budget, but the price of solar cells is actually coming down. It is estimated that the desired system would run about $10,000 with the principle costs being the battery storage units and 220v inverter.

A secondary manual method is also being reviewed as a less expensive alternative to solar. This would entail a manual deep well hand pump that would supply the main water tank. This cost is measured in the hundreds of dollars, but involves a good deal of effort and time, but less than lugging 5 gallon jugs up our hill from the river. This system would not provide water pressure to the house system, but would fill the house water tank, which could then be manually drained into jugs or containers for use. This method addresses the issue of freezing of the outside water tank as described in the "preferred method".

FOOD

We store food to keep our options open and not have to rely on the government or charity for our survival. Stored food is "insurance" against "bad times". Those "bad times" could be loss of a job and your income, or a more serious problem with the transportation infrastructure, bad harvest, or out of control inflation, any of these could cause a disruption in feeding your family. This disruption could last from a few days or weeks to even months or years . . . it is an unknown future we prepare for.

Resources: 18,000 meals in stored food, large garden area, non-GMO seed, tractor and necessary implements, garden hand tools and the basic equipment to can and dehydrate the harvest. The meal count does not take into account the 2,000 pounds of white soft summer wheat, which can be used as a "wheat berry" cereal, turned into pasta, cakes & cookies, but not bread (insufficient gluten).

Limitations: We have a 12 month supply of "stored" food, but the calorie count is less than optimum (about 1800 calories or less per day). We are short enough multi-vitamins to last 1 year and any special requirements for growing children.

FOOD – stored food and health

Current resources allow each of us a breakfast, a light mid-day meal and dinner. Our diet will provide about 1800 calories per day, which is less than the recommended 2200 calories, but can be raised to the required level by adding locally procured milk, butter and/or possibly beef. The critical point for food storage would be a crisis that hits at or after the "smaller" garden is planted. While using the "stored" food it will be essential that a multi-vitamin be taken daily to make up for the shortfall in vitamins and the stress the new circumstances will bring to everyone. This diet will cause weight loss in the adults and we will have to monitor the children to ensure a proper nutritional balance and healthy growth, this may require increasing their daily rations or supplemental vitamins.

Once the main garden and orchard begin producing we will have more than adequate vitamins through the fresh produce. This is when we will need to barter/trade with our farmer friends for dairy products and meat, these will address the protein and calcium issues that a "fresh fruit and vegetable" diet alone

brings on. We have to remember these are “seasonal” fruits and vegetables, so we should plan accordingly.

FOOD - sustainable agriculture

We have a 2+ acre meadow that we have set aside as a “truck farm”. It is on a south facing slope, drains well and has deep fertile soil. We have designed two 125’x125’ garden areas, with each area having sixteen 25’x25 garden plots, each plot will be plant specific with the exception of “companion plants”. It is estimated that it will require both garden areas to grow an adequate supply of fresh vegetables for The Group size plus the requirement to “save seed” for next year and a little extra for charity and trade. An additional garden area could be accommodated if it was required to make up for an increase in group size or additional charity or barter. Two gardens this size are a huge undertaking and very manpower intensive. We do have the tractor and implements to assist us in the tilling and early preps of the garden (as long as there is diesel fuel), but the bulk of the planting, weeding, thinning, pruning, harvesting and preserving will be done manually.

Although we would like to plant a grain crop; wheat, oats and/or barley it is unknown if this area will sustain this type crop. The goal would be to provide our own bread making resource, which has been a basic food source for thousands of years. Specifically we are looking into “hard wheat” categories of seeds, locally only “soft wheat” is raised, which is not an effective bread grain. Even if we find a seed variety that works we have the problem of harvesting and thrusting by hand, another very labor intensive process. The alternative is corn, which does grow locally, for the making of corn meal.

Resources: tractor with both tine plow and tiller, various and assorted hand tools, non-GMO seed, green house and the portable water tank in the event of drought.

Limitations: we do not have enough of the hand tools for a Group our size to tend the garden efficiently (hoe's and shovels specifically, but also a sickle or two for bulk grains), nor any stored fertilizer or pesticides (it is questionable if we even want to start using these, the local German Baptist farmers use "organic" farming and it seems to work well), we have a barely adequate supply of non-GMO seed for the planned "expanded" garden size.

FOOD – preserving the harvest

Once we begin to harvest the garden and orchard we can expect to enjoy fresh vegetables and fruits for about 3 months, but that leaves 9 months before we can expect to repeat the process. We have the basic requirements to "can" (in mason jars) and dehydrate this harvest for use during the year. Both of these processes are labor intensive and require a good deal of "prepping and cooking". Unfortunately dehydrating the harvest requires electricity for extended periods of time, so this method, when we are using the generator is problematic.

Several variety of produce can be air dried and we will plant these in addition to the other produce, but as a rule they do not provide a good vitamin mix. We will plant several "root crops", like potatoes, both sweat and regular, and these actually store will in a cold dark area (root cellar). Additionally we planted a number of Fuji Apple trees, which also store well without special treatment. All that said we will still need to supply our daily needs from a "canned" source for 6 to 8 months.

Resources: (1) large dehydrator, (1) vacuum sealer machine with bulk bag rolls, (2) pressure cookers, (2) large "steamer/cookers", (500) quart canning jars and spare lids. We also have two large chest freezers, which are hooked to the emergency generator, so we have the ability to keep frozen meat and veggies. The [Redacted] community also has a "commercial" cannery operation that is available for the community . . . it is an old facility, but can be operated off-grid . . . they can both "can" by the "mason" jar method or actual "tin" can, but either must be provided by the individuals.

Limitations: serious lack of mason jars (we will need 2000 plus the extra lids for a group our size for just one year), additional pressure cookers and "steam cookers" to reduce preserving time.

Priority Purchase's: we will add (1) more dehydrator, we will keep adding to the mason jar count but this will continue to be a serious shortage through this year. We added a second chest freezer this fall and plan on purchasing a butchered steer from [Name of Local Dairy Farmer Redacted]. This will help address the calorie issue and increase the protein count. We will continue to buy and butcher a steer per year from Mr. Mason, so this will be in addition to the already stored food count.

MEDICAL

Our most serious deficiency is skill. We have a good supply of the basic medical supplies and OTC medicine, but no "specialty" meds. Another area is any specific medications taken daily by any group member, each family will have to ensure they have an adequate supply of any special meds required. It is recommended that anyone with special needs look into "natural" sources for a substitute, which can be purchased without prescription or grown by the group.

We have a very rudimentary dental kit, but prevention will have to be a big part of our dental hygiene. We have a good stock of extra toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss and even a few dental tools (picks). We do not have any dedicated dental "extraction" tools, but we do have a variety of hand tool pliers in the event of an emergency.

We keep and store all the older prescription glasses and it is recommended you do the same. It will be difficult or impossible to get these in a true SHTF scenario, so even old prescriptions will be better than nothing. The only other "preventive" we can do for our vision is to ensure a balanced diet.

[Name of Retreat Redacted] is located 10 miles from the small community hospital and there are several nurses within easy walking distance. Additionally the senior surgeon at the local hospital lives on the main county road we connect to. So we have some access to "professional" medical aid, assuming they stay in the local area. It should be in everyone's best interest to take advantage of any first aid or medical training they can get in their area (the Red Cross offers good basic training). I have been tentatively signed up for EMT training, in January/February of 2011, through our local volunteer rescue squad . . . that will mean taking weekly shifts for the squad, but the training and access to better medical equipment makes this a win-win, plus it is another way to help being accepted into the larger community.

Resources: (3) platoon size battle aid kits, (3) GSW blow-out kits, (2) surgical kits, (1) manual ventilator, a good supply of individual first aid kits plus various band aids/bandages, ace wraps, and wound cleaning solutions.

Limitations: medical knowledge/skills, antibiotics and pain control. A portable AED, current cost is about $1000, but it may be a prudent investment, given the aging of the group, time delay in a volunteer response . . . this device would be more appropriate in a slow collapse scenario than a total collapse, since follow-on care would be required for a heart condition.

SHELTER

HOME

[Redacted] is a frame construction home on a full walk-out basement. It has a "hardi-plank" exterior and asphalt roof tiles, it is neither fireproof nor ballistics proof, but it is fire resistant. The basement is reinforced concrete on three sides and 2x6 wood framing on the downhill side. The "safe room" is a 24x24 enclosed reinforced concrete structure built under the main level garage; it is accessed through one of two fire proof metal doors (one interior and one exterior door). It was designed for secure storage and a controlled temperature environment. The safe room maintains a temperature range of 48 degrees in the winter to a high of 68 degrees in the summer. The basement maintains a consistent cool temperature year round without any "conditioned air". Our utility bills, both electric and propane, show the home is well constructed and insulated (our electric bill is well less than half of our neighbors). The home has a single heat pump for "conditioned air" on both levels, but basement vents are kept closed. Screens are on most windows for cross ventilation, so AC is not required except for comfort in extreme heat or humidity. Primary heating is the "heat pump" with back-up propane in the event of severe cold; however the wood burning stove on the main level can heat that level comfortably and provides two surfaces for cooking or heating water. It is our intention to add a second

wood stove to the basement. Our preferred stove would be a true wood/coal cook stove so that we could "bake" in a total grid down, no propane event. Limitations are cost and availability.

There is a 12Kw Kohler emergency generator with an automatic switch panel that powers essential electrical circuits. It is supplied by a 1000 gallon underground propane tank, which we top off when the smaller 500 gallon house propane tank is refilled and we never let this tank go below 50%. This allows [Name of Retreat Redacted] to operate, off-grid, for extended periods of time. During an extended grid down situation we will be limited by the available propane and consumables for the generator. If we only utilize the generator several hours per day we can extend the propane available to about one year (a total of 900 to 1000 hours run time). We stock enough consumable and normal parts to keep the generator in operation for this one year period of time. The long term solution is a solar electric system that can power the water system, but until we have the funds for that project we will have to adapt and make-do. With the electrical limitations we have it will be best to go straight to the mobile water tank to supply the house instead of trying to power the entire water system. In this case we can utilize the system to power the outside hose bib and fill the outside tank from the well and at the same time it is filling the inside tank, then secure the generator and let gravity feed the house. This means reduced water pressure and a requirement to filter all drinking water (just set up the Berky filter in the kitchen), but will give us electrical power for other resources for a longer period of time.

CLOTHING

[Name of Retreat Redacted] has four distinct seasons, but none are extreme. So the "layered" clothing approach works well in this climate. It is up to each family unit to provide adequate type and numbers of appropriate clothing, but we do carry a limited amount of the following: heavy winter coats, hats and gloves, "long john" sets, tactical German flectar BDU's with matching Gore-Tex rain gear, extra rain gear, work pants, shirts and hats (Boonie hats & ball caps), but all of these are in limited sizes. We carry a very limited amount of spare underclothing and socks, but an even more limited supply of boots/shoes. It is recommended that each family stock at least 2 sets of boots per person, preferably a good quality waterproof variety. It is also recommended that you purchase one pair of "tall rubber boots", you will find these very helpful when working the fields or garden . . . they are easy to clean and are fairly inexpensive (Sierra Trading carries these). You can not have enough good quality socks; wool is your best choice, followed by the synthetics . . . cotton is not your feet's friend. Our biggest shortfall is adequate children's clothing as they grow. It is recommended that you take advantage of yard sales, Good Will and such to stock up on various sized children's clothing, particularly shoes and boots . . . and don't forget winter wear.

CAMPING

In the event of [Name of Retreat Redacted] becoming uninhabitable we do have the option of moving to the travel trailer, shipping container and barn. Since both the trailer and shipping container are under the barn, they are fairly well insulated from the extremes of weather and precipitation, although neither retains heat in the winter well. The best use of these assets would be for the children to be in the trailer, it can sleep 6 kids, and the adults in the shipping container. We have 4 GI cots, 4 Coleman cots, 2 stretchers (attach these to the overhead and use them as "bunk beds") and 13 sleeping bags (various weights); this will be a very crowded situation, but beats being exposed to the cold or rain. If there is grid power available we will have both water and electricity to the barn, but this circuit is not on the backup generator.

We have a limited number of 3 season tents available, but not enough for the entire "group" to have "light shelter". It will be up to each family to bring with them their "bug-out bags", sleeping bags and family

shelter/tent. The bug-out bag should be kept "complete and ready" at all times, even AFTER you have arrived at [Name of Retreat Redacted] . Consider this your bag(s) of last resort and the only thing you must grab in an emergency (you can exclude water, but you should stock it with emergency rations of your choice).

For cooking we have two Coleman 2-burner camp stoves with a generous supply of portable propane bottles. We also have a military surplus wood burning field kitchen, fully equipped and capable of providing for the group+, but neither of these is really backpack capable. We have a supply of individual folding camp stoves which run on Tri-Ox, but these are best used as backpack emergency gear. We have a very limited supply of cast iron wear, so a traditional campsite fire would be difficult to prepare bread or biscuits for a group our size.

Should we have to "bug-out" of [Redacted] our plan B is to utilize a small hidden valley on the [Redacted] River, not far from [Name of Local Dairy Farmer Redacted] farm. It has water and cover, but all shelter we would have to provide. With some warning of the need to evacuate [Redacted] we could pre-position as much equipment as can be moved by tractor and truck. Access to this location is by tractor or high clearance 4 wheel drive only and has adequate look out and defensive positions should the need arise. This contingency would be a genuine TEOTWAWKI.

SANITATION

Improper sanitation is the quickest way to "kill" the group, water borne bacteria is the leading "killer" in the third world today . . . so prevention is our best preparation. [Name of Retreat Redacted] has a large, 1500 gallon, septic system . . . but it will rapidly be overcome by "the group" if we do not plan and use it to our maximum advantage. Soap scum is one of the big septic enemies, so we will plan on most of our bathing to be done so as to NOT go into the septic system. That means solar showers or bathing in the actual river.

Keep food scraps to an absolute minimum that go down the drain, both food preparation and cleaning up afterwards. All food scraps should be retained for composting or added to the dog food bowl. Cleaning of cooking and eating ware should encompass cleaning each with a paper towel (or local foliage) to keep any fat from entering the septic system. All fat and grease should be "captured" and placed in a jar for storage and later use (soap making, etc.)

Human waste is the one area we must exercise extreme care, both in recognition of the septic system limitations and the spread of disease. It is permissible and recommended that both "liquid and solid" waste be done in a prepared latrine and not into the septic system . . . the exception would be small children, very bad weather and illness of an individual. Latrines will be prepared on the two joining properties on the circle; these will be "pit type" latrines with shelters built over them (we will explore the purchase of a used "port-a-potty" which we can remove the bottom from and retain the enclosure). We will have to "move" these around the area as they fill, but space is not an issue. To keep the "pits" from becoming a health hazard each "user" will have to place a shovel full of dirt in the pit after each use. It would be helpful, but not required, to have "lime" available for odor control . . . that will be something for us to plan for as a bulk purchase.

Personal cleanliness is another factor in maintaining a healthy body. During the warmer months "river bathing" will be the preferred method of washing, during the cooler months the "solar showers" will be used to heat the water and then be utilized in outside shower enclosures on the first deck. In extended cold weather we "could" use the solar showers in the house bathrooms, but this would put soap scum into the septic system and would be an "emergency" situation only. It is also worth noting that personal hygiene is not only healthier, but it also helps with your "mental state" . . . you feel better when you are feeling clean.

Once we have taken care of keeping our body clean we must look to keeping our clothing and bedding clean. This is also for health and sanitation reasons. Once again the river will provide for the basic washing of general items (we have large wash tubes for this purpose and stock bulk washing powder), but a case can be made for using the automatic washer in the case of underwear and bed linen. These are "high" use items and need to be cleaned properly and often, since river washing may be hard on the material . . . the wash cycle can be matched to the period when we run the generator to fill the water tank and cool the freezers, this would mean no additional generator run time. Another reason for using the automatic washer is "task" overload, we have a great many jobs to accomplish on a daily basis and anything that can reduce that burden should be considered. Drying will always occur outside on the provided clothes line.

VEHICLES

Although not "technically" part of shelter, they are a critical part of the [Name of Retreat Redacted] plan. The most critical piece of equipment is the Kubota tractor and its implements. The utility of this vehicle has been proven over and over again since we purchased it 5 years ago. We currently stock enough consumables to last 300 operating hours (we can stretch that), but have nowhere near that much fuel available. Our current diesel fuel inventory is less than 100 gallons, but we are looking for a used 250 gallon fuel tank that can be elevated to gravity supply the tractor.

The next most useful vehicle is "Gator", our John Deere 6 wheeled ATV. It provides the primary means of transporting people and gear up and down our hill. This will be the vehicle that transports fire teams to their assembly point in the event of an alert/warning, one of the females will drive with the male fire teams being given priority. This vehicle is fairly easy to maintain and has a reasonable set of stored consumables and parts. The good news is this vehicle is EMP immune . . . the bad news is it is a gas engine so will be limited to the fuel available or the shelf life of that fuel. We currently keep in inventory 60 gallons of gas for the Gator, chain saws and small engines (we have consumables and parts for all of these, with the chain saws being the most critical). We have enough containers to increase this to 80 gallons, which we will do as the situation dictates and we will have access to the fuel in the other vehicle fuel tanks, which could add another 100+ gallons to the mix (assuming they are full).

If "transportation" is the concern then the diesel powered K3500 4x4 is our primary vehicle. It has a 36 gallon fuel tank and with the stored diesel fuel has an impressive range (in excess of 1500 miles), but that would only be used in a bug-out situation (a true TEOTAWKI for us), or to pick up a group member in difficulty. We also have a 4x4 Jeep, but since it is gas powered it would have limited utility for us, since the gas is more valuable for the Gator and small engines. There are no "group member" vehicles that would be considered an asset for our situation (grid down), since all are gas powered.

SECURITY

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is one of the most import parts of a security system; it lets us communicate with each other, our neighbors and gather distant information that can be utilized to enhance our security. We currently have a number of radios that cover the AM/FM bands, both powered by the grid, batteries and hand crank. We have two radios that cover a number of shortwave bands, but these are "hand tuned" and are not ideal for the purpose. Reception on all of these bands, AM/FM/shortwave, are for information broadcast by media and government

outlets . . . it must be remembered that these "reports" may or may not be accurate, but even "inaccurate" information can be used to put together a picture of events.

We have one specialty radio and that is the common NOAA weather alarm radio; it operates on one of 7 frequencies that broadcast weather information and alarms for a specific geographic area. Since these are remote transmitter sites and are operated by the government they could be used in an emergency to broadcast "other" types of information. Once again with the caveat that it is government controlled. We will monitor this radio 24/7 for weather and any other information it may broadcast (assuming it is "on air"). Another specialty "radio" we have is a pair of surplus military field telephones and 2,000+ feet of communications wire. This radio will be the primary communications between the OP/LP and the Base. Another specialty "radio" is the Dakota alert system. This is an infra-red warning system designed to "notify" us of approaching vehicles and foot traffic. It sends an alarm to the receiver, which will be located at the Base. We currently have one base station and one remote sensor, but the system can handle 4 sensors, additional sensors will be added to the budget, since it acts like "more eyes". It is currently used to monitor traffic on [Name of Road Redacted].

We have an adequate number of two-way FRS/GRMS radios to equip each Group member. These will be the primary tactical radios used by The Group. Although they are advertised to have a range of many miles, in actual use they can only be counted on to be effective for less than ½ mile, depending on terrain. We have one pair of FRS only two-way radios (Radio Shack), these will be the units that are used by the OP/LP for communications with anyone at the road gate.

At this time we do NOT have any longer range communications gear, but we are looking into CB and/or VHF or even HF as possible options. In the budget, but not purchased yet is a base station CB/SSB with an exterior antenna. This unit will have the capability to communicate up to 10+ miles with suitably equipped CB/SSB units. This radio will be setup at the Base and monitored 24/7 for information . . . CB/SSB is the two-way radio of choice for a lot of the locals and is the radio of choice for long distance truckers. It is our intent to put a compatible mobile unit in any vehicle that would be used to go beyond [Redacted] proper, such as the K3500 for "mobile" communications; either when going into town to buy/barter/trade, when traveling to neighbors or as a support base for longer range patrols.

We will research a HAM radio and VHF scanner to add to the Base communications system, since they would be an invaluable source of information and intelligence, but a transmitter version in either band would require a federal government license to operate.

One of the major hurdles is a reliable 24/7 power source for all the radios. Fuel is the limiting factor for continuous operation of the generator, so some sort of solar powered battery set-up will be needed to power the communications system. This is an on-going project, but whole house solar is "out", since the cost is too much to justify it as a priority. Northern Tools sells a "complete" 1800 watt solar system; with panels, inverter and batteries for $2,000 . . . this will be a top priority for the budget next year. This system would provide enough power to run all the radios and charge the portable two way radios and tactical lights . . . and in a pinch could provide power to lights.

DEFENSE

This portion of the operations manual will be the most controversial and it is therefore desired that you review this and your part . . . and then give me your input.

The function of [Redacted] as a retreat is to be as "defensible" as we can make it, within the resources of the group and the laws of [Redacted] . . . but it is assumed that, if "The Group" has gathered, we are in a worst case scenario and society may not be that "civil". With this in mind we have equipped [Redacted] to provide both lethal and non-lethal means of defense. The whole concept of "defensible force" is a subject that engenders a spectrum of beliefs, from horror to "bring it on" . . . neither of which is correct. It is very difficult to think of or consider "defensible force" today; in a nation of laws, courts and a civil society . . . but it is when that society breaks down that we must think of the lessons of history and do what "man" has always done, adapt and survive. It is with that thought in mind that I'll discuss the rest of this topic.

We never fight from the home.

The actual home at [Name of Retreat Redacted] is a resource too valuable to be turned into a bullet magnet. It provides us shelter and is the storehouse for all our resources; it should not be made a target. It was not built as a bunker and would be impossible to turn into one, despite all the information that is contained in "Patriots . . . ". Therefore it makes no sense to actively invite someone to shot at it! It is therefore imperative that all our efforts at "defense" be made with "defense in depth" as the goal.

We will start by physically controlling access to [Name of Retreat Redacted] . This will involve a secured gate across the road and no "escape" paths on either side of it; several locations have been selected, depending on "neighborhood" cooperation. A gate by itself is not a real deterrent (although it will be fortified; radiator puncture rods, attached caltrops, etc.), since it can be cut or rammed open, so to be effective it must have "eyes on". An OP/LP (observations post/listening post) will be built and located about 120 yards from the physical gate. This "watch" will be concealed, fortified and manned 24/7. The watch's primary duty is to "notify" [Redacted] of any unauthorized activity and give us the time to ready ourselves and preposition assets to meet the threat. The watch will not engage the target(s) unless the threat forces the gate and is closing on [Redacted] , but remain undetected and allow the mobile fire teams to respond. Obviously the OP/LP watch will need to be in contact with someone at [Name of Retreat Redacted] 24/7. This position will actually be in [Name of Retreat Redacted] proper and be known as "base"; it is the communications hub for not only contacting the other members of group, but also all neighbors that are on our communications network. These two watches' place a tremendous burden on our ability to staff them, but they are absolutely essential to maintaining that defense in depth. It is hoped that several neighbors will be part of this watch system and reduce the burden on [Redacted] . . . they benefit as well from having a defense in depth.

A second OP/LP may/will be needed to "cover" the non-road accesses in specific situations. Since staffing is already critical this position will only be manned when we believe the conditions warrant the "cost" . . . this is where communications and "intelligence" is an absolute necessity. The physical terrain around [Redacted] makes a "zone" shaped in a tri-angle; two sides are protected by water, the [Redacted] River and [Redacted] Creek, both of these have steep banks, heavy woods and are not fordable by vehicles or ATV's, but can be accessed by foot. With the exception of a few locations the actual terrain leading to or away from the river and creek are very steep and heavily wooded. This makes it possible for only "foot traffic" to traverse this terrain, but even that will be very limited as access to even these areas are limited to two private gravel roads and one dirt track . . . these roads are not marked on any map, so local knowledge is required. It is these two sides that

the second OP/LP would observe. Because of the terrain slope and several open meadows a single elevated OP/LP could cover the entire area. The third side has "our private road" down the center and very steep and/or heavily wooded terrain on either side . . . this is the side most likely to present a threat, since it is the "easiest" access, once again there is no "through traffic" since the neighborhood roads do not lead to anything other than the local homes. In the attached appendix I'll give examples of staffing options, ROE's (rules of engagement) and several locations for the OP/LP's.

Refugees

Not everyone that shows up at the gate will be a "bad guy", but access to [Name of Retreat Redacted] will be strictly controlled to members, friends and neighbors THAT HAVE A NEED TO KNOW! The less folks know about [Name of Retreat Redacted] the better off we are . . . remember rule one "Low Profile". A number of our neighbors as well as a good many others (a majority unfortunately) will be totally unprepared for a collapse of the magnitude we are discussing. We can provide charity to some, but not all and a cardinal rule is we will never provide charity from [Name of Retreat Redacted] itself. We should look at a church that wants to provide "shelter" and/or a soup kitchen; ideally that would be [Redacted] Church, but distance may make that difficult in which case we should contact the Baptist church on [Redacted] Road.

The gate will have a two-way radio (one of the Radio Shack FRS radios) visually identified and with instructions, it will be the OP/LP watch's duty to establish contact with the individuals (the ROE's will give specific details on what to ask and say). The watch will notify "base", at first visual or noise contact, of the situation and a full response will be deployed (all fire teams), but the "team lead" will be the only one that physically approaches the gate and holds a face to face until a threat assessment is done. In most cases the best we can do is give directions and have them be on their way, the one exception would be clean drinking water (within reason, but only in the container(s) they provide). It is possible that some individuals may possess skills that would be useful to the group and [Redacted] , but NO invitation will be given (or even hinted at) unless the entire group agrees (adding anyone will reduce the available stored food for all). This situation works reasonably well with a single family or two driving up to the gate, it is another thing altogether to have a large group approach the gate; this could be either multiple vehicles or large capacity vehicles with numerous individuals in or on it. It will be up to the "team lead" to determine the best course of action, but extreme caution would be called for in these circumstances.

The resources at [Name of Retreat Redacted] give us a limited capacity to use non-lethal force, but this must be carefully weighed as it will reduce the overall effectiveness if lethal force is eventually used. The non-lethal force assets are the 12 gauge shotguns with rubber slugs or bird shot, either of these if improperly applied can result in unintended deaths or serious injuries. We also have the ability to use the 300 gallon portable water tank and the sump pump as a fire fighting rig and therefore an effective "water cannon" on individuals. The problem with this is the time it takes to set everything up and get it running . . . so this option is available, but not very realistic. Our best defense will be our verbal skills at defusing what could be a tense situation and convince the refugees that help can be found at a better location. My guess is that unprepared "locals" with local knowledge will be our greatest threat in the beginning and later followed by the "golden hordes" from suburbia and the cities that survive the journey and develop the "survival instinct".

TACTICS

It is the unfortunate truth that along with all the "self-reliant skills" we will also need to learn some fundamental tactical skills. It would be a poor plan if our only idea is to "stay in the house" and hope that nothing bad happens . . . we must be ready AND willing to defend [Name of Retreat Redacted] . It is not enough to just "defend" [Redacted] ; a good defense has an "offensive" capability as well. Everyone who is physically able will learn to handle and shoot firearms. Everyone will undergo basic weapons training; this will include marksmanship, care and maintenance of all weapons, tactical employment and the concept of "fire and movement". Our training will be based on several training videos from [Redacted] and the practical knowledge of several group members with combat experience. This will be reinforced with "hands-on" training until you are an "asset" to the [Redacted] team. At this point I've made a command decision that all eligible males will provide the "offensive punch" of [Redacted] , while the ladies provide "defense in-depth" and support, but both genders will cross-train for common knowledge. Any individual, who is incapable of either the physical requirements or the mental "toughness" to handle the tactical scenarios, will be assigned other functions at [Redacted] . . . a poorly trained individual is a liability, not an asset . . . so we will utilize them where they are best suited.

Individual Gear

It is the responsibility of each individual to provide his or her own tactical gear, however [Redacted] does have a limited amount of older style "spare" equipment for "replacement" of damaged gear or to barter (no guns or ammo will be bartered or traded, except under the most informed decision . . . we don't want to be "ducking" our old ammo). I will add here that there is a lot of "cheap" gear on the market and you do get what you pay for . . . if we ever have to use this gear, it will be under very harsh conditions and a gear failure can be lethal! Here is a basic and minimum list to assist you and provide some standardization:

(2) Sets of BDU's (battle dress uniform) in German Flectar pattern . . . include a cold weather outer garment (layers work well here) . . . [Redacted] has a fair supply of these, but limited sizes. Flectar is the pattern of choice, but any camo is better than nothing . . . but for identification purposes consider this: the old US Army Woodland camo is readily available to the public and therefore "confusing in our scenario, current issue and the commercially available "hunters camo's" have the same issue, too available . . . a foreign countries surplus (British and Swiss come to mind) makes a better option.

(1) Pair good quality boots (must provide good ankle support and two pair is even better) . . . need your own.

(1) Rimmed "boonie" hat in any camo pattern (water proof is better . . . ball cap is OK, but not preferred) . . . [Redacted] has a limited supply of these.

(1) Good quality "shooters glass's", ANSI approved (you will need both a clear lens and a smoked or color lens) . . . [Redacted] has a limited supply of these.

(1) Pair of quality gloves (not work gloves, but tactical gloves to maintain finger dexterity) . . . [Name of Retreat Redacted] has a fair amount of work gloves available, but not tactical gloves.

(1) **Required**- Kevlar helmet (your head is the most exposed part of your body and the source of greatest injury) . . . [Name of Retreat Redacted] has a limited supply of surplus German Kevlar helmets, but fit can be an issue and even though these have the 3 point attaching system, they are problematic when prone.

(1) Highly Recommended – body armor, either "soft" or "tactical" (my personal recommendation is a set of stand-a-lone SAPI plates at level IV and a plate carrier in a Molle configuration) . . . [Redacted] has a limited supply of surplus level IIA outer vests, but more capable or "hard" armor is up to the individual. This is the one expense that is the hardest to justify today . . . until the bullets start flying!

(1) Tactical holster; either a drop leg or a belt holster that does not interfere with your support gear . . . [Redacted] has a limited supply of both types, but are not gun specific nor of the highest quality . . . that means they flop around when you run (which for me is a huge issue).

(1) Set of "slick" or "patrol" LBE/LBV gear . . . to carry magazines, water, med kit, etc. . . . [Redacted] has a good supply of "patrol" gear, but very limited "slick" rigs.

(1) Males only – a set of "patrol" LBE/LBV gear, carry everything you need to support you for 3 days (many times this will be the same gear, just rigged differently) . . . [Redacted] has a fair supply of surplus and quality "patrol" rigs.

(1) Long gun for each adult, military semi-auto in 5.56 or NATO 7.62 . . . the Soviet 7.62 is acceptable, but ammo is NOT stocked at [Name of Retreat Redacted] in this caliber . . . a minimum of 10 spare magazines for each long gun . . . currently the [Redacted] armory is adequate for all current members, but we can always use addition bulk ammo and quality weapons.

(1) Pistol for each adult, semi-auto recommended, but not required and 5 spare magazines . . . [Redacted] provided, but limited selection which may not be the best "fit".

Fire Team

The "fire team" will be the basic maneuver element; ideally each fire team will consist of 3 or 4, but never less than 2 members. Assignment into a fire team will be based on who actually makes it to [Redacted] and is qualified (trained). Specific team assignments will be finalized when everyone, or whoever makes it to [Redacted] .

An actual chain of command and a "continuity of command" will be established when the actual teams are assigned, but it is imperative that everyone understands what to do in the event of casualties. Another issue is the young children; it should be understand that anyone physically able will do their part, since a "defeat" will be deadly for all! That said the young children will remain in the basement of [Redacted] under the supervision of the oldest child . . . since we have several young teens this should not be too difficult . . . we will have to "teach/train" for these responsibilities so they occur "automatically".

Once [Redacted] is "activated" all members will carry or have within arms reach their weapons and support gear. The reason for this is we will never know the day or time of an incursion, so we must be ready to respond immediately from any location or activity we are engaged in. All the male fire teams will have fighting positions that support the OP/LP and gate while providing flanking and blocking fire to [Redacted] . All the female fire teams will take up supporting and blocking positions, but will not attempt to engage the target(s) until directed or operational necessity dictates.

It is hoped that the community at large, probably centered on the county seat and existing government, will band together and establish some form of local authority. This would be to provide a more secure environment and establish some sort of "economic" trade for goods and services. It would be in our best interest to be part

of this from early on . . . this may require a change in procedures at [Redacted] , but the gain maybe worth the additional risk.

[Name of Retreat Redacted] Rules of Engagement

No set of rules or instruction can address all possibilities or circumstances, so this is a general guide to at least have a starting point. It will be presented as "continuum" of increasing responses to the circumstances that are present.

Slow Collapse Scenario

In this situation . . . and the most likely one we will find ourselves in . . . we have a functioning government, but it is not as efficient or as effective as we would wish. The poor economy has done considerable damage to the lives of the lower and middle class and this has resulted in an increase in property crimes and burglaries. Reduced tax's revenue has resulted in fewer police officers on the street and slow response times to crimes. This is a case where there will be more crime in the city and metro areas, but there will be a more reactive police force because of the population density . . . on the other hand rural folks will see less crime, but have very slow response time to even violent crimes . . . it is just the nature of time and distance, not a lack of desire on the part of police officers. This slow collapse will mean that the "rule of law" is still in effect, if somewhat diminished. This means your actions will be taken into account and you can be held responsible in a court of law.

You still have the "right" to self-defense in [State Redacted] , but it must be an actual threat to you or your family, not a perceived threat. Self-defense means you must have the means at your disposal to defend yourself, for this reason I recommend a concealed handgun permit and level IIA concealed body armor. The gun gives you the means to defend yourself or family if required, while the concealed armor allows you to place yourself between the threat and your family if required. It also gives you a "second chance" if it comes to reacting to an active shooter. There is no need to go into an elaborate set of "rules of engagement" in this scenario; the state has already done that for us, by restricting our actions under penalty of imprisonment if we violate them. It is not likely under a slow collapse that everyone or even anyone will come to [Redacted] as a retreat . . . visits, vacations and just drop-ins are the exception

So the "rules" for us at [Name of Retreat Redacted] are fairly simple at this point. To carry your concealed handgun and wear your armor any and all times you are away from [Name of Retreat Redacted]. How "you" react away from [Redacted] is your business.

Threat at [Name of Retreat Redacted] – Rule of Law still in effect

The real threat during a slow collapse is property crimes and break-in, so there are two scenarios' we should plan for; one is a break-in while no one is home and the other is a break-in while someone is home. It would be impractical to eliminate all trips outside of [Redacted] at this point, so travel (even if only going to town for groceries) is never announced or discussed in ANY public setting (internet social sites are traps to be avoided), even among friends. There should be no discussion of how long you will be gone, like discussing additional stops while standing in a check-out line, it should always appear that you are heading right home. Be very aware of discussions on a cell phone, they can be overheard and even intercepted (although that is unlikely at this point). It is not possible to fortify [Redacted] enough to stop a forced break-in, but we can look at a gate across [Name of Road Redacted] as a limited deterrent, but that would require we get our neighbors approval,

since it would impact them. We are really left with notify the authorities and our insurance company should this happen.

An attempted break-in while someone is home solves one problem, but sets up a completely different scenario. It must be assumed that someone breaking-in while folks are home has no good intentions and should be considered a real threat. It does not matter if the individual(s) are drunk, high on drugs or mentally disturbed . . . they all present a real threat to your safety and the security of [Name of Retreat Redacted]. Since we already know that a police response will be too slow to affect the outcome, we will still call 911 and report it as a CYA (cover your ass) . . . the actual response will be up to us. Any break-in will be met with a "forceful" and potentially lethal response; for a night time break-in you will respond with a pistol and tactical light (handheld or weapons mounted, but the handheld is preferred in this scenario). A security sweep will be conducted (this will be taught in the tactical training portion) until the intrusion/intruder(s) are identified or eliminated. If the suspect has a weapon (it must be assumed they do, until proven otherwise) they will be given one chance to lay it down and go face down on the floor . . . the tactical light should blind the suspect long enough for you to determine if there is a weapon . . . if you cannot see BOTH hands or/and the suspect is unwilling to comply then deadly force is needed . . . remember you cannot shoot a warning shot or try and wound the suspect . . . aim for center mass, or whatever portion of the suspect is presented and fire enough rounds to drop the suspect . . . do not check the suspect at this time . . . keep them covered, but do not move closer until "backup" arrives (a wounded individual is still a serious threat), this can be another [Name of Retreat Redacted] member or the local authorities.

In that slow collapse scenario, where there is still the "rule of law" confronting a possible threat OUTSIDE of [Name of Retreat Redacted] itself may give you more defensive options, but it brings in the state rules on self defense and property rights . . . and remember [Name of State Redacted] does NOT have the "Castle doctrine", so confronting an individual(s) before they have actually done anything will get you charged with a misdemeanor if not a felony. Just "showing" a firearm to "frighten" an intruder can get you charged with "brandishing" . . . so until overt action is taken on the part of the intruders you are left with "call 911" and waiting for events to unfold (yes, that sucks!).

Threat at [Name of Retreat Redacted] – Rule of Law has broken down

This is the scenario that would bring "the group" together at [Name of Retreat Redacted] and now we have a whole new set of options available. The most important is that we will have closed the access to [Name of Retreat Redacted] by means of a reinforced road gate and posted a 24/7 watch in an OP/LP for continuous "eyes on". This "watch" will be responsible for alerting/warning [Name of Retreat Redacted] to the presence of a potential threat and make the initial call if any direct action is necessary.

Notification Posture

This is the response by the OP/LP when a "known or expected" individual or group approaches the gate. The OP/LP will NOT show themselves or allow access past the secured gate (the gate will NEVER be opened unless there is at least one fire team in position), but will inform the individual or group that "we" will open the gate for them in a few minutes and if they would please just be patient and wait (this communications will be done through the Radio Shack FRS two-way radios that will be prepositioned at the gate and the OP/LP). The OP/LP will contact the "base watch" on the field phone and the base watch will contact the team leader and inform him of the "guests". The "team leader" will assemble at least one fire team before they head to the gate, the fire team will take up defensive positions as previously determined, while the team leader approaches the

gate and lets the guests enter. The remaining fire teams will remain "ready" to respond, "geared up" and with radio's on, just in case they are needed . . . this precaution is taken in the event a hostile group has "co-oped" or threatened our "guests" and are using them as a ruse to gain access to [Name of Retreat Redacted] .

Alert Posture

An "alert" is called by the OP/LP when the gate is approached by any individual or group that is not know or expected, but does not show aggressive intent or actions, the mere display of weapons is NOT hostile intent. Signage at the gate will tell the driver to exit the vehicle and use the two-way radio (instructions for the radio will be placed at this location) to communicate with the "residents" ALL other occupants are to remain in the vehicle or by the side of the road, if walking. The OP/LP will "call" an ALERT by contacting the base watch on the field phone and informing them of the situation, the base watch will sounding the "horn" (this is a portable boat fog horn . . . three short blasts, followed by three more short blasts) from this point on all communications will be with FRS/GRMS (the base and OP/LP will have to allow the team leader enough time, 30 seconds, to turn on his radio once the horn has sounded). At this time the OP/LP will give a "situation report" (see the appendix) via the radio to the team leader and base (the base will enter all the information into the [Name of Retreat Redacted] "log" . . . in case it is ever needed in a court of law or to assist in building patterns of behaviors for later study.

Upon the "alert horn" sounding all fire team members will grab their tactical gear (this gear is ALWAYS carried close at hand, but does have to be worn) , activate their radio's and proceed to the "assembly point" for that team, once assembled they will proceed to their forward fighting positions. At this point weapons will be loaded, but on "safe" and the condition is "weapons tight" . . . NO FIRING unless specifically directed by the team leader . . . or until a direct threat engages the group.

The "team leader" will position him-self on the road, visible to the activities at the gate and attempt to keep their attention, while the fire teams are getting in position. Once the fire teams are in position, communicated by radio, the team leader will proceed to the gate and engage the individual(s) in conversation to determine the nature of their "visit". At no time will any individual(s) be allowed past the gate, nor will any charity be dispensed from [Name of Retreat Redacted] directly . . . we can offer to fill any drinking water containers they may have (within reason), but then they must be sent on their way. If arrangements have been made at a local church or charity to feed or house refugees, this information will be provided, along with directions.

It will be worthwhile to take a digital photograph of the individual(s) plus any vehicles they are using, this would be used to "enforce" the "no return" policy and build a data base of potential threats. Individuals with specific skills (medical skills specifically, but there are others), which may be of value to [Name of Retreat Redacted] or the community at large may be considered for "membership", but that will be "a group" decision and only after extensive discussion and vetting of the individual(s) . . . the risk is adding more mouths to feed, the advantage is more skills to establish a viable community. This entire process will be discussed in detail when the members of [Name of Retreat Redacted] have gathered or during a causal visit.

Warning Posture

A "warning" is called by the OP/LP when the gate is approached in an aggressive manor; attempting to open or cut the gate, ramming the gate, tactical deployment of individuals, or the firing of weapons toward [Name of Retreat Redacted] or the OP/LP. Shots fired by the intruders is adequate "warning", but in all other situations the OP/LP will contact the base watch to call a "warning", the "warning" sound with the horn is one long blast, followed by a second long.

Upon hearing the "warning" horn or the gun fire all fire team members will grab their tactical gear, activate their radios and proceed immediately to their forward fighting positions as rapidly as possible. All "tactical rules" apply at this point (these will be taught during the tactics portion of our training) for cover and concealment. Once a team member is in position they may engage the threat as previously determined, since it is imperative to get "fire" on the threat and support the OP/LP. When the entire fire team is present the fire team leader will determine the best tactical employment and disposition of the team . . . the team leader may direct fire team leaders and their teams to certain prepared positions, if he is able.

Night Operations

Darkness is not our friend when we are stationary, as is [Redacted] , so all night scenarios have a heightened sense of urgency and danger. With our limited night vision capabilities the OP/LP will have to depend on their sense of hearing to get any sense of activity at the gate (you can hear vehicle traffic, even very slow traffic, on the crush and run road, but foot traffic would require a very quiet night). If the OP/LP has a "sense" of activity at the gate they may engage the remote spotlight to light up the gate or the green laser, but these should be used sparingly to keep from rendering their night vision reduced (with the spotlight) and a visible sign of our presence and alert posture (either one of the lights). The night time primary detection system will be the Dakota Alert sensors placed in various locations; one magnetic sensor forward of the gate on the road, and one each infrared sensor on either side of the road in the wood line. The Dakota Alert base station will be monitored 24/7 by the "base" watch . . . and senor activation at night will require the base watch to notify the OP/LP by field phone AND wake the members up to respond to the threat . . . since the infrared sensors cannot tell the difference between a human and an deer we can expect false alarms . . . but we must NEVER assume it is a false alarm. The same procedure will be followed as during the day, but care will have to be taken by the fire teams to ensure noise and light discipline is maintained and we do not have a "friendly engagement". Fire teams will go to assigned assembly areas and then make their way to their forward fighting positions. If the sensor (or alert) was generated by something in/on the road then the team leader will proceed up the road as during the day . . . care will have to be exercised since muzzle control is more difficult at night. If the sensor or alert was for "off road" then the team leader will assume responsibility for that side of the road and investigate with support from that sides fire team.

Active Patrols

Patrols are needed to check on neighbors and gather intelligence, but they also increase the risk of "unfriendly contact" and engagement. It will be considered a patrol anytime we leave [Name of Retreat Redacted], regardless of the distance or duration. Patrols will only be as large as required, but will never deplete the defenses at [Name of Retreat Redacted] as to make them ineffective . . . as a rule this will never be more than a one fire team patrol. If the object is to contact neighbors or the community at large it may be beneficial to have a "mixed" fire team . . . females are considered less threatening when you are approaching a member of the community you do not know, or doesn't know you. The primary purpose of a patrol is to gather intelligence of the surrounding areas . . . this can be by questioning neighbors and what they have observed or by direct observation . . . a patrol is NOT designed to engage an enemy intentionally. Offensive patrols are an entirely different beast and this document will not address them, but will be a point of discussion the longer the "crisis" lasts.

OP/LP Procedures

The OP/LP is the "eyes and ears" of [Name of Retreat Redacted] and our first and last line of warning . . . it is therefore an extremely critical and necessary part of [Name of Retreat Redacted] in the worst scenarios. With that in mind these are the rules a "watch stander" will operate under.

There is NEVER any sleeping or day dreaming on watch . . . attention to detail is the key.

There is NO reading or listening to music or any other form of distraction.

The watch will not be engaged in casual conversation at any time, visits to the OP/LP will be for "official" functions only.

The OP/LP will NEVER be left unattended, for ANY reason. The team leader will determine if severe weather warrants an "inside" watch (the weather must be REALLY sever to do this, since a well disciplined aggressor will know too use the weather to their advantage).

If a relief is required, before the end of the watch, then notify the base watch to arrange this . . . AND the base watch notify the team leader of the change. If an individual is sick or ill, prior to assuming the watch, arrangements will be made to replace them.

A port-a-potty will be located in the OP/LP, but it is recommended that all "private business" be conducted before assuming the watch (if you use it, you clean it).

The watch will come with all their combat gear and must wear it, with the exception of the helmet, but it should be were the watch can quickly put it on. The OP/LP will hold the 30-06 loaded with armor piercing rounds as well as the Remington 1100 (tactical employment will be taught during training) . . . in addition to the individuals personal weapons.

The watch will NOT wear the two way radio head piece until we are in an "alert" or "warning" posture (this allows them to "hear" noise better).

At least 3 times an hour the OP/LP will contact the "base watch" on the field phone with a status report . . . this ensures a double check of communications, the condition of the two watches and the current situation . . . these contacts will be noted in the base log.

You will utilize the OP/LP binoculars to get as much information as possible about any gate "situation".

The OP/LP will have the Gen I NVG's, but these should only be used on a moonlit night and when a noise or sensor has been activated.

When in doubt call an "alert" or "warning", it is better to be safe than sorry . . . and in this case it could be fatal to [Name of Retreat Redacted] to wait for "certainty".

Gate Contact

The Radio Shack two way radios will remain "off" until visible contact is made. Instructions at the gate will tell the "visitor" to turn the radio on and how to operate the radio, and then wait to be contacted. The OP/LP should turn their radio on at first sign of movement (AFTER they have completed the [Name of Retreat Redacted] notification procedures) and do the following, when they see the visitor has the radio:

“Please state your name and how many are in your party?” If the individual volunteers “I’m Doctor Smith” or some professional title, then pass this along to the team leader. You may address the individual by name, but keep it formal; Mr./Dr. Smith, Ms/Mrs. Smith.

“Are you or any of your party armed?” If they are then tell them to “keep their weapons holstered, slung or placed on the ground, but under no circumstances should the weapons be pointed as to present a threat . . . we will respond with deadly force”!

“Are any members of your party ill or sick”? If yes, have them describe symptoms . . . and pass this along to the team leader . . . who will determine if “physical contact” is advisable.

“Please state your business”? Listen to the answer but to do not respond directly to the information or any requests, but once again pass it along to the team leader (the short version, if it is a long story) . . . remember only you have the gate radio frequency tuned in, so you must pass all this information on YOUR tactical two way radio . . . all [Name of Retreat Redacted] members will be monitoring the tactical frequency, including the base watch, once an alert or warning has been sounded.

Once the team leader has made it to the road (he will take up a position “near” but not at the OP/LP) tell the visitors that the individual they “see” will be coming up to the gate and “talk with them, so please keep all firearms in a non threatening manor”.

The OP/LP will keep their primary weapon ready and covering the team leader, but will remain on “safe” until the situation changes or directed by the team leader.

CAUTIONS:

The team leader will be IN FRONT of your weapon, so muzzle discipline is critical. He will be staying to the right side of the road as he goes forward and will use the right hand ditch or woods line to seek cover if required.

If the team leader is comfortable with the situation he will say “weapons tight” . . . safety remains ON and a “visual” picture is maintained on the target(s), but the fire teams will keep a “low ready” posture on the gate. The target(s) should NEVER see the fire teams (we don’t want to raise the tensions any higher than they already are).

If the team leader is “uncomfortable” but there is no other indication of trouble he may call “safeties OFF”, but keep your finger OFF the trigger (tactical training) until further notice and assume a ready fire position (the fire team leader may assign a target if there is a larger group of targets).

The team leader may call “weapons free” (about the same time he is diving into the ditch), this is authority to engage all targets at will . . . this may occur as he gets closer and see’s something the OP/LP was unable to, which makes this an immediate threat.

If the team leader starts to fire then it is automatically “weapons free”.

In some situation the team leader may ask the DM (designated marksman) to “set up a shot on XX, weapons hold” the DM should setup on the designated target, safety OFF, but hold until directed, the DM will call “setup” when he has a set up on the target. The team leader will call “green light” for the DM to take the shot . . . this would be a very unique circumstance (a hostage situation comes to mind,

where a neighbor or friend has been taken and is being used to gain entrance) the remainder of the teams should hold "weapons tight" until told differently. The critical point for the OP/LP is team leader location and muzzle control, since this would be a dynamic situation and may require the team leader to be "inline" with the threat and the OP/LP. The DM will always be in the fire team that has the left hand side of the road as their forward fighting positions (it has a better sight of line).

SITUATION REPORT

The OP/LP and or base watch will use the following format to pass along a situation report to the team leader and fire teams:

Number of individuals at the gate/observed and gender plus the number of vehicles, if any.

If the individuals are visibly armed, and what type of firearms, if possible (shotgun, long gun/rifle, assault type, pistols only, etc.).

Activity(s) the individuals are engaged in at that time . . . are they complying with our requests?

IF HOSTILITIES HAVE ALREADY STARTED

Number of individuals and where they are located (2 or 3 to the left of the road in the wood line . . . 1 at the gate, 2 in the vehicle . . . tactically employed to both sides of the road).

Location of point man or leader (not necessarily the same person).

(This information should be repeated several times to ensure that all fire teams are aware of the disposition of the threat. However, it is more important for the OP/LP to actively engage the targets successfully than be communicating . . . in that case the base watch will have to pass on what they know as best as possible.)

NOTES:

The OP/LP watch will be "relieved" by the "fighting watch" individual as quickly as possible when an alert/warning has been sounded (this will be a permanent individual whose fight position IS the OP/LP, this will free up the current watch stander to join his/her fire team or free up the team leader for his job . . . yes, the team leader stands watches. The relief will have to observe "cover and concealment" tactics to avoid drawing attention to themselves . . . it is assumed that the OP/LP physical location has been compromised when it starts shooting!

The base watch will be "relieved" by one of the older teens or non-combat trained female/male to release that watch for their assigned fire team duties.

BASE WATCH

The "base" watch is a 24/7 "communications watch, this post will never be left unattended. The primary purpose of this watch is the two way communications with the OP/LP through the field phones, but it also has the primary function of alerting/warning the other members of [Redacted] to a threat passed on by the OP/LP. This procedure is utilized to avoid compromising the OP/LP's physical location and should the OP/LP become engaged in an active shooting situation it will not have time or opportunity to be "notifying" [Redacted] members of the threat, hence the "base watch" has that responsibility. During the day that will involve the use of the "fog horn" (or other method as best fits the situation) for those members in more distance locations

(working in the meadow, tending chickens, etc.) and verbal notification for those members close by (any member working in a distant area will wear their two way radio). At night all the members should be inside [Name of Retreat Redacted] so notification will be by "rely method", they will wake up one family, who in turn will wake up one family and pass it along in that fashion. (Upon initial notification the male member will quickly "gear up" and proceed to his assigned assembly/fighting position, while the female will continue with the notification procedure BEFORE she "gears up".)

A secondary function of the base watch is the monitoring of all available "signals intelligence". It is assumed that most radio stations will NOT be broadcasting, but we can assume that some "emergency" information will be broadcast and it is these bands and frequencies that they will monitor . . . this will include the NOAA weather alert radio and the emergency CB and VHF channels. Any information gathered in this manor will be noted in the base log book, to ensure accuracy and retention of the information. It is assumed that not all (if any) of the information passed via open broadcast is either inaccurate, misleading or just plain false . . . but even that tells us something and ALL information has value.

The base watch set up will include the field phone, which is hard wired to the OP/LP, but will also have the FRS/GRMS base station radio. This base station will be set to monitor the assigned tactical frequency at all times, if a spare FRS radio is available it can be set to monitor the gate frequency to provide a backup to the OP/LP. This is a "multi-tasking" watch, which is why a log book is critical in retaining accurate information, it is also imperative that other members of [Name of Retreat Redacted] do not distract from the duties of this watch. This watch CAN read on duty and listen to music that is on an open air frequency (since that also monitors for any periodic or special news broadcasts).

Another secondary function of this watch will be to monitor and ensure the solar charging system is working properly, ensure that all two way radios are being charged or are charged and that any tactical light battery charging systems are working. The solar system will be an 1800 watt self contained system (a Northern Tools item) which can provide all the power required to run the different radios and chargers. The solar panels will be located on the deck off the family room; while the actual watch location will be in the family room at the window overlooking the OP/LP.

Sample Watch Standing Schedule

With 11 adult watch standers this is one of the potential schedules and shows the challenges:

OP/LP	Base
0000-0400	0000-0800
0400-0800	0800-1600
0800-1400	1600-0000
1400-2000	
2000-0000	

Every adult will stand one watch period every day for eight days, before two days off. The OP/LP limits "night" periods to 4 hours and 6 hours during the day . . . the base watch is indoors and less stressful so is 8 hours. We still have to tend the garden, prepare food, preserve food, teach children and cross train in all skills.

Obviously the more adults we have "in" [Name of Retreat Redacted] the less a burden it becomes and in the event we have teenagers, who are mature enough, they can stand "base" watch's. The farther the OP/LP from [Name of Retreat Redacted] the longer the response time to support a threat . . . so trying to increase the number of families covered by the OP/LP, but farther away from [Name of Retreat Redacted] the more problematic it becomes.

Good Luck and God Bless in the months and years ahead!