



Black Swans, Grey Rhinos, and Dragon Kings: How Do We Think About What's Next in Emergency Management?

Presented by: **Christopher Godley, CEM, Stanford University, Office of Emergency Management, Director of Emergency Management**

Presentation Abstract: In this session, we will examine the paradigms by which we view future risk and how these paradigms shape our actions. The term “black swan” was made popular by Nassim Taleb and describes a significant event that surprises everyone because our outlook on what was possible is too narrow - an example being 9/11. A “grey rhino” event is a highly probable and understood (but ignored) threat - for example, a major earthquake in California. The term “dragon king” refers to an event that is extremely large or has an outsized impact and is statistically an outlier – Three Mile Island serves as an example here. Why do disasters usually take us by surprise? Can we learn to anticipate even “impossible” events? What will it take to move from being “resilient” to becoming truly “anti-fragile”? How will we manage the unmanageable? We will also consider the “Big 5” potential disasters that will require changes in governance, policy, organization, and resources. Profound and extended drought, intense and catastrophic flooding, widespread and severe cyber disruptions, massive population migrations, and geopolitical conflict - each of these will fundamentally challenge our government, education, community, and private sector organizations in ways we have to yet to

imagine. How do you view future hazards - will you be ready? Come help find the answers for questions we are all just starting to ask.

Speaker Bio: Christopher Godley is the Director of Emergency Management for Stanford University where he leads the oversight and execution of the University's comprehensive emergency management programs. Previously, Chris led the creation of the new Department of Emergency Management in Sonoma County following their devastating 2017 firestorms. He has served as a local government emergency manager for more than 20 years in Sonoma County, Marin County, and the City of San Jose. Chris also served as a senior consultant for a large multinational consulting firm where he directed their Cyber Incident Consequence Management team. Chris's specialties include emergency management program development and climate change adaptation. A UCLA graduate, Chris obtained his master's degree from California State University, Long Beach in Emergency Services Administration with a focus area of climate change preparedness. As a 20-year veteran of the U.S Army National Guard, Major Godley led a NATO Military Professional Exchange mission in the Ukraine to develop enhanced flood disaster response coordination.