

Slave Lake Lessons Learned Report

Summary of Themes

Preparedness	An advanced level of planning and preparation is required so that emergency response and recovery systems are scalable to address incidents of similar magnitude to the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires.
Coordination	A clear and well-understood command structure is necessary to coordinate the many people and resources involved in responding to a disaster.
People	It is crucial to involve people who have the right experience and expertise to respond to an emergency, and then to empower them to make decisions.
Jurisdiction	Boundaries related to jurisdiction, mandate or geography must not prevent people from working together in an emergency.
Evacuation	When it is time to evacuate, everyone has to be ready to act together based on a shared understanding of an evacuation plan with defined roles and responsibilities.
Communications	Clear communications, which are absolutely critical during a disaster, require planning, preparation and organization in advance.
Local Capacity	Although local communities must be prepared for emergencies, they also will likely require a great deal of outside support and expertise to cope with disasters similar in magnitude to the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires.
Health and Wellbeing	A deliberate approach is required to mitigate the profound impact of a disaster on the long-term health, wellbeing and recovery of individuals, families and communities.
Financial Support	Communities that experience a disaster of this scale require significant, co-ordinated financial support not only to respond to the emergency situation, but also to make long-term recovery possible.
Donations	Planning and preparation can help in managing the outpouring of generosity to support those affected by a disaster.
Recovery	Recovery is an essential element of a comprehensive emergency management system. Although some aspects of recovery will be specific to each event, other aspects can and should be planned in advance.

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Summary of Recommendations

OVERARCHING	
Recommendation #1	Build on the successes and experience of addressing the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires to ensure that emergency preparedness, response and recovery systems across the province are consistent with a set of shared principles.
PREPAREDNESS	
Recommendation #2	Enhance the system of supports for emergency planning and preparation by local communities.
Recommendation #3	Reinforce Alberta's emergency response system by formally incorporating a Task Force or similar cross-ministry governance model, and by ensuring the availability of additional ministry personnel to support response and recovery efforts following large-scale disasters.
Recommendation #4	Strengthen the Government of Alberta's role in quality assurance for emergency management.
Recommendation #5	Build on existing programs that enable regional collaboration by establishing formal expectations for, as well as more actively encouraging, municipal collaboration and resource sharing in emergency planning, response and recovery.
Recommendation #6	Work with local communities to improve the preparedness of individual Albertans commensurate with the risk of an emergency.
Recommendation #7	Improve provincial capability and infrastructure to manage personal information during an emergency.
Recommendation #8	Improve local and provincial preparedness for the possibility of evacuation, building on the experience gained from coordinating the evacuation of much of the Lesser Slave Lake region.
RESPONSE	
Recommendation #9	Ensure that Incident Management Teams are available to quickly deploy so that local governments have access to qualified incident management where needed and requested.
Recommendation #10	Fully implement the Incident Command System so that emergency response roles and mandates are firmly established within a single, clear chain of command.

Recommendation #11	Build provincial and local capacity, competencies and strategies for crisis communications.
Recommendation #12	Improve integration of provincial expertise in environmental hazard testing and public health, in order to streamline testing, interpretation and communication of results following a wildfire.
Recommendation #13	Develop an approach for the Government of Alberta to coordinate delivery across ministries of those Disaster Social Services that are delivered provincially.
Recommendation #14	Create guidelines to help plan and execute re-entry following an evacuation, building on the successes of the re-entry after the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires.
Recommendation #15	Build on the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires experience by formalizing policy, improving processes and building capacity to ensure timely distribution of funds, effective financial management and demonstration of accountability during future emergency response efforts.
RECOVERY	
Recommendation #16	Clarify the Government of Alberta's overall disaster recovery philosophy and specific role with respect to housing and stimulating the local economy following a disaster.
Recommendation #17	Formalize a provincial approach to support disaster recovery planning, building on the success of the shared planning process used after the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires including the regional Tri-Council model.
Recommendation #18	Develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach for funding of disaster recovery plans that coordinates streams of funding that are essential to restore an affected community, including government funds, the insurance industry, and donations.
Recommendation #19	Develop and implement a province-wide approach to managing donations following a disaster.