



## Mount Polley Mine Tailings Pond Breach - A Local Government Perspective

CRD Chair Al Richmond  
CAO Janis Bell



### What is a Tailings Pond?

- The phone rang at 5:30 a.m.
- Staff & officials told the Mount Polley tailings pond had breached. One staff member commented “*What is a tailings pond?*”
- This situation had never happened before!  
What do we do?

### The First 48 Hours

- Task number issued to CRD by 6:15 a.m.
- Emergency Operations Centre activated and opened by 7 a.m.
- Calls to First Nations leaders, MLA's, MP's.
- Over 90 media interviews completed in first 48 hours.
- Facebook saw over 26,500 unique page views, 45,000 total reach and 555 new likes on August 5.
- Facilitated meetings between the community and the provincial ministries and the mine and the community.




### Challenges

- Communication between provincial ministries and government agencies.
  - Holiday weekend
- Providing services for people remaining in their homes.
  - Showers, drinking water etc.
- Evacuation of non-residents from remote camping areas.
- Notifying people in rural areas
  - Labour and time intensive
- Lack of cell service, satellite service and high-speed connectivity.
- Affected residents did not know where to turn for accurate information – Single point of information needed.
- Protesters.



**Opportunities**

- Partnerships
  - Building existing relationships into a collaborative team
- First Nations
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Energy & Mines
- Ministry of Justice
- Emergency Management BC
- Ministry of Transportation
- RCMP
- Community groups
- Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Skills Training
- Tourism Association
- Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Ops.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- University of Northern BC Fisheries Research Station

**On-going Activities**

- Attending regular public information meetings with residents.
- Supporting a long-term fish monitoring commitment.
- Supporting a comprehensive environmental and cultural restoration plan for the Hazeltine Creek and Quesnel Lake area.
- Working on an economic recovery plan for the region.
- Working with Likely residents to explore economic development opportunities.
- Discussion with other mining operation to develop a co-ordinated emergency response for their mine site.