

We Have an Evacuation Plan, But What If...?

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Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD)

Christina Carbrey, Protective Services Manager

Evacuations: One Order. Many Realities.

A decision to evacuate can be made in moments. Leaving safely is different for every resident.

THE PLANNING REALITY

A credible need to plan for approximately

10,000

people moving under time pressure.

The question was not whether an evacuation plan existed. It was whether it could be tailored fast enough for people whose needs were not visible in standard data.

1

Evacuation geography

Which areas/neighbourhoods could be affected next?

2

Human consequences

Who may be unable to self-evacuate or receive standard messages?

3

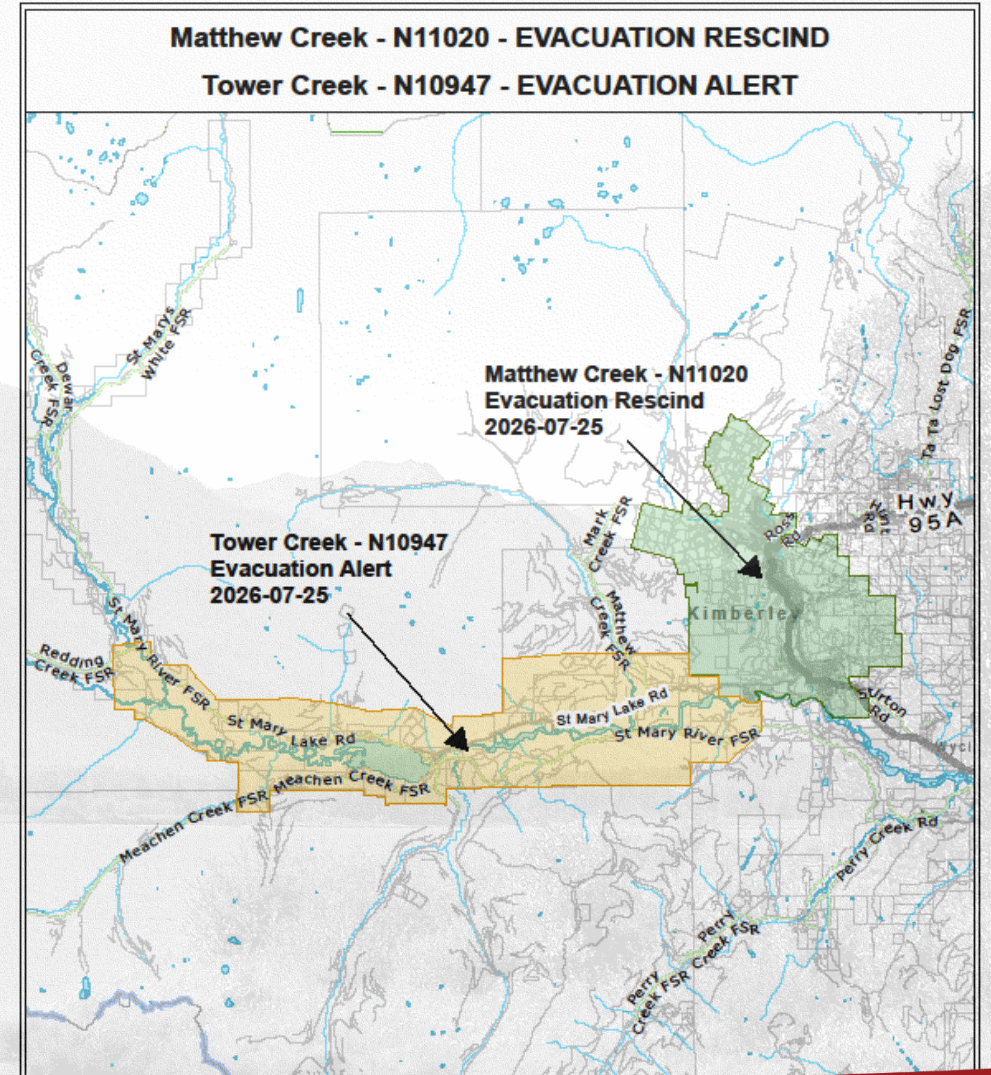
Resource decisions

What transport options are needed, what supports might be required, does this shift responder priorities?

Bootleg Wildfire Complex

SITUATION:

- **City of Kimberley placed on Evacuation Alert**
(Matthew Creek Wildfire)
- **66 Properties along St. Mary Lake Rd area of Electoral Area E** *(Tower Creek Wildfires)*
- **Upwards of 10,000 people to be evacuated**
 - Residents
 - Visitors / Tourists
 - Employees



Evacuation Complexity & Unequal Impacts

An evacuation order is issued to everyone, but not everyone can act on it in the same way.

- Limited warning or rapidly changing conditions
- No personal transportation or limited ability to drive
- Mobility, medical, or equipment-related needs
- Temporary barriers - for example, injury, illness, or a broken leg
- Mental-health, cognitive, sensory, or communication challenges
- Safety Concerns – including intimate partner violence
- Minors, caregiving responsibilities, or limited support networks

Vulnerability is not always permanent, visible, or known in advance.

Why This Is a Local Government Planning Issue

Health authorities support their patients. Local governments must plan for the wider community.

- EDMA requires emergency planning that considers vulnerable individuals and people experiencing intersectional disadvantage
- Health authorities are responsible for their patients, clients, facilities
 - *Many residents who may need support are outside health systems*
- Local government must plan for evacuation, reception, care, and community impacts
- Limited responder capacity requires early planning and informed prioritization

The gap is not “who is vulnerable?” it is how to anticipate needs across an entire community before an evacuation occurs.

What the Vulnerable Persons Database Is

Vulnerable Persons Database

This confidential vulnerable persons database is designed to assist individuals who may require extra care and attention during emergencies.

Residents from across the region are invited to register for the 2026 Vulnerable Persons Database.

This is a free, voluntary, and confidential database designed to assist individuals who may require extra care and attention during emergencies.

The Database helps emergency responders identify and support residents who may face challenges such as:

- Mobility issues
- Vision or hearing impairments
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health concerns
- Dependence on electricity for medical equipment
- Limited access to internet or technology
- No access to a vehicle in the event of an evacuation

A voluntary, consent-based tool to support evacuation planning

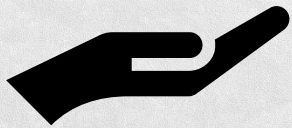
- Voluntary self-registration (or Friends/Family)
- Provides a clearer picture of community needs
- Informs planning assumptions, prioritization, and resource requests
- Supports - *not replaces* - personal preparedness, family and neighbour supports, health services

What Did We Ask?

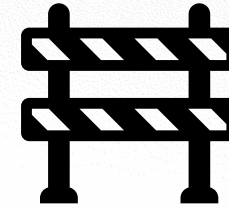
Only information needed to understand potential evacuation barriers
and plan support requirements



Location & Contact Information



Support Considerations



Evacuation Barriers



Planning & Privacy

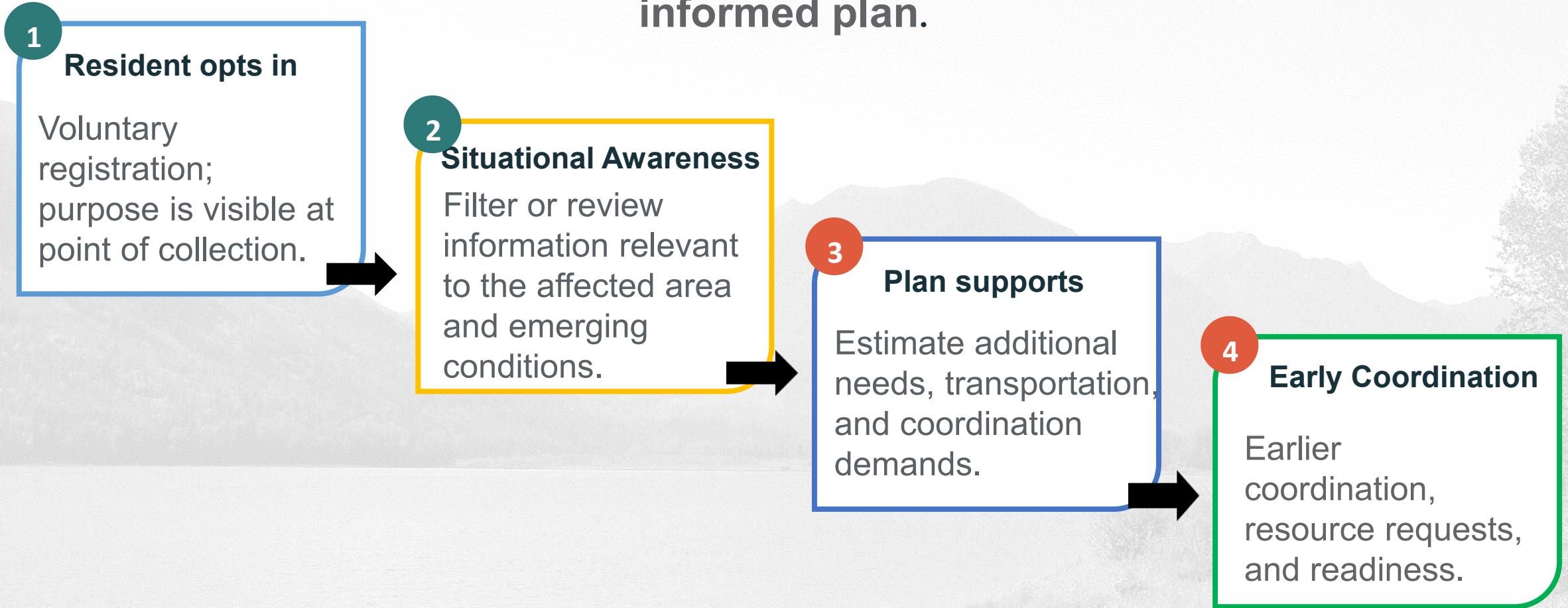
What We Heard

Understanding the varied realities behind a community wide evacuation.



What It Informed During the Evacuation Planning

The value is in turning a broad evacuation problem into a better-informed plan.



What the Database Can - and Cannot - Do

WHERE IT HELPS:

- Strategic or planned evacuations
- Understanding broad community needs and evacuation barriers
- Anticipating complexity- not managing each person's specific circumstances
- Early coordination with response, support, and transportation agencies

WHERE IT DOES NOT:

- Rapidly developing, highly dynamic incidents
- Immediate life-safety decisions
- Identifying every person who may require assistance
- Reliably reflecting changing circumstances hour by hour

The database is one layer in a wider evacuation system.

Roles in Evacuation Planning and Response

The database supports coordination, but each organization retains its own responsibilities and authorities

- BC Wildfire
- Health Authority
- Local Government
- Response Agencies



Privacy and Trust

The question is not privacy vs emergency management... it is how to manage both, deliberately.

OPERATIONAL NEED

The VPD was created to improve situational awareness and support planning for a potential large-scale evacuation.

EVACUATION NEEDS

Questions focused on challenges that may affect evacuation, such as transportation, accessibility, communication, and support considerations - not an individual's detailed health history.

PURPOSE & VOLUNTARY

Residents were clearly told why information was being collected, how it would support planning, and that registration was entirely voluntary.

From Just-in-Time Tool to Long-Term Capability

The first version had to meet an immediate need. Long-term value comes from governance, renewal, and exercise.

- Affirm the purpose
- Set governance expectations
- Support readiness
- Champion shared risk literacy

THE RISK LENS

We are accountable for the risks we take & the risks we choose *not* to take.

Key Takeaways

1. **Evacuation needs vary.** Residents differ in their ability to receive information, arrange support, adapt, and self-advocate.
2. **Early awareness improves planning.** The VPD provides voluntary, resident-informed insight into evacuation complexity.
3. **One tool - not the whole solution.** It complements partner systems, individual preparedness, and real-time response.
4. **Next step: a sustainable model.** Balance value with capacity, privacy, and secure data management.

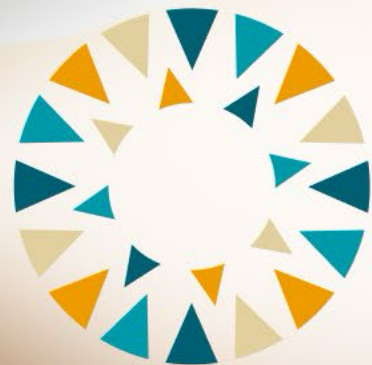
Thank you!

Contact Information:

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**EAST KOOTENAY
EMERGENCY**
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



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2026

A photograph of a herd of black and white dairy cows in a grassy field at sunset. The cows are in the foreground, and the background shows a line of trees and a fence under a warm, orange sky. A semi-transparent dark blue box is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

**WE HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN, BUT WHAT IF...
LIVESTOCK IS LEFT BEHIND?**

**We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the
Province of British Columbia through the
Ministry of Agriculture and Food**

The Government of British Columbia and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC are pleased to participate in the delivery of the project.

We are committed to working with our industry partners to address issues of importance to the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia. Opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter and not necessarily those of the Investment Agriculture Foundation or the Government of British Columbia.



A Unified Voice for Agriculture

BC Agriculture Council (BCAC)

- Works for B.C.'s farmers and ranchers as the lead industry advocate for key sector-wide priorities.
- Through their 29 farm association members, BCAC represents over 20,000 farming families and approximately 96% of farm gate sales in B.C.



The Emergency Landscape Is Changing

Emergencies are becoming more frequent, and agriculture is increasingly in the path of impact.

Wildfires, floods, drought etc. can disrupt:

- **Farms and ranches** — livestock, crops, equipment and infrastructure
- **Rural communities** — homes, businesses and livelihoods
- **Food security** — production, supply chains and access to food



Agriculture Has Unique Immediate Needs

Agriculture doesn't stop when an evacuation order is issued.

During an emergency, producers often need to:

- Access their **livestock, crops and essential infrastructure** quickly
- Care for, move or remove their **animals**
- Protect or move **feed, equipment or other critical resources**
- Make time-sensitive decisions which affect **animal welfare, farm viability and food production**



Agriculture Cannot be an Afterthought

In an emergency evacuation, Local Authority and First Nation Emergency Operation Centers must manage **public safety, housing, security, access, and the emergency response using limited resources**. Agriculture drops in priority.

The result:

Agriculture needs to be **part of emergency planning and preparedness — not an afterthought reaction during an emergency response.**

Bridging the Gap

BCAC's Agriculture Sector Emergency Response Project (ERP) was developed to help close this gap.

Funding was provided through the Investment Agriculture Foundation's Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund with a common goal.



To secure B.C.'s food supply and reduce the impact on the agriculture sector from climate-related and other emergencies.

A Coordinated Approach to Supporting Agriculture

BCAC received input from **Local Authorities, First Nations, member organizations, government and other partners** to strengthen coordination and build practical resources for agricultural emergencies.

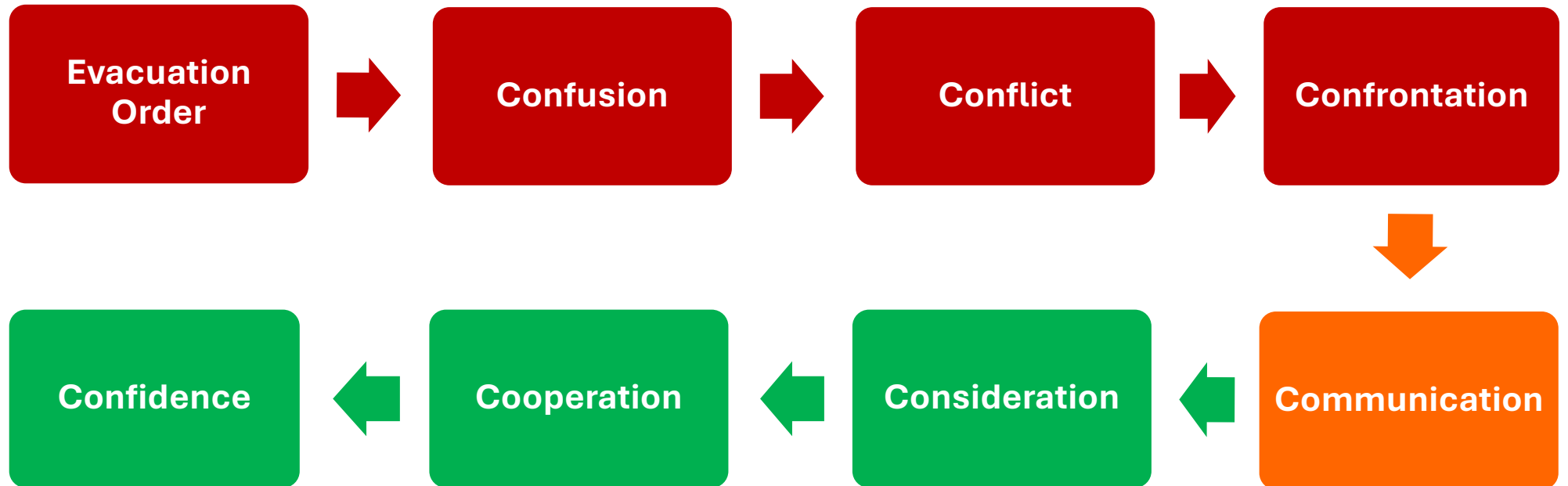
The project focused on three key areas:

1. Sector-wide coordination
2. **Tools for Local Authorities & First Nations**
3. Producer emergency preparedness

AGRICULTURE'S CHALLENGES & NEEDS



Normal Progression During Evacuation Orders Impacting Agriculture – What we Heard

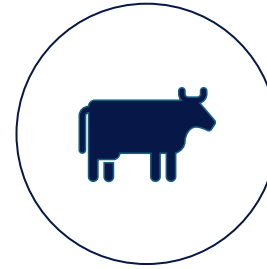


Top Concerns During an Evacuation Order

Farmers & ranchers have 4 key pain points:



Concerned they
won't get back in if
they leave



Concerned for
animal welfare



Concerned for their
critical infrastructure



Concerned for crops
and critical activities

Top Needs of Agriculture During Emergencies



Access during evacuations – often on Day 1



Access by service providers (feed, vets, etc.)



Agriculture Coordinators in the EOC



Animal relocation support (but not always)



More agriculture collaboration with the EOC



Coordinated access for crossing jurisdictions



LOCAL AUTHORITY CONSIDERATIONS

Agricultural Issues For The EOC During Evacuation

Human Safety

Animal Welfare

**Liability
Management**

Resource Needs

**Recovery
Concerns**

Communication

Why An EOC Might Provide Temporary Access

**Take advantage
of low-risk
situations**

**Protect critical
agricultural
infrastructure**

**Support animal
welfare and
relocation**

**Reduce losses by
allowing critical
operations**

**Keep track
of who is where in
the area**

**Build hope and
trust with
farmers/ranchers**



BRIDGING THE GAP WITH TOOLS & RESOURCES

Bridging the Gap

BCAC ERP is bridging the gap through enhanced tools developed with, and for, Local Authorities and First Nations:

- **Enhanced Temporary Access Pass (TAP) templates**
- **EOC Agriculture Coordinators**



What Are Enhanced TAP Templates?

A practical, adaptable tool for managing temporary access during emergency evacuations

- **A standardized starting point for all**
- **Locally adaptable** to the needs
- In both **Word and GIS-enabled** (ArcGIS) formats
- **Online, paper and out-of-cell checkpoint** features
- **All-purpose** system for authorized access

Keys:

Developed collaboratively with stakeholder input

Built on existing platforms - GIS-enabled template built on system provided by Township of Spallumcheen

One Framework With Practical Features

Digital Pass Tool

- Online application & **one-time user registration**
- **Streamlined processing and tracking** for EOCs
- **QR-code authentication** at checkpoints
- Adaptable for **checkpoints without cell coverage**

Additional Support for EOC

- Updated draft **liability waiver** based on case law



From Improvised Responses to Preparedness

Enhanced TAP templates help jurisdictions manage temporary access safely, consistently and efficiently.

Before an emergency:

- Tools and processes are made ready
- Local needs are built in
- Staff are trained and industry engagement can take place

During an emergency:

- Access requests can be processed efficiently
- Critical access can be supported
- Authorization and user identity can be verified at checkpoints
- EOCs can track and manage access to evacuation order areas

Who Are EOC Agriculture Coordinators?

An EOC agriculture resource who:

- Is aware of specific emergency resources available for agriculture
- Can be the EOC communication link with agriculture
- Often helps validate TAP requests
- Can coordinate agriculture support with other EOC's and the PREOC



EOC Agriculture Coordinator Support

BCAC can provide:

- Lists of existing AC candidates
- Training for your Agriculture Coordinator (AC) candidates
- Support for an AC you identify to engage in preparedness activities



BC Premises ID Program (BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food)

- Mandatory for all farm animals to be registered.
- Supports agriculture emergency response with quick access to farm locations, size and contact information.
- Gives responders a starting map. instead of relying only on urgent calls during an evacuation.
- No cost for producers.
- Agreements are in place with some producer groups.





THE PATH FORWARD

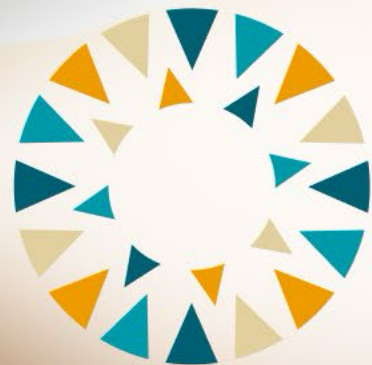
How To Prepare for Livestock Left Behind

- Engage with your local agriculture industry leaders
- Explore the BCAC Temporary Access Pass templates
- Make arrangements for an Agriculture Coordinator to support your EOC during emergencies
- Encourage all owners of livestock to register with the BC Premises ID program
- Access PID information for preparedness actions
- Look for upcoming training opportunities (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, BC Agriculture Council)



THANK YOU!





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What if Evacuees Must Leave Town for Support?

Ty Helgason, Emergency Preparedness
Manager



Canada's Tournament Capital

Understanding the Host Community Role

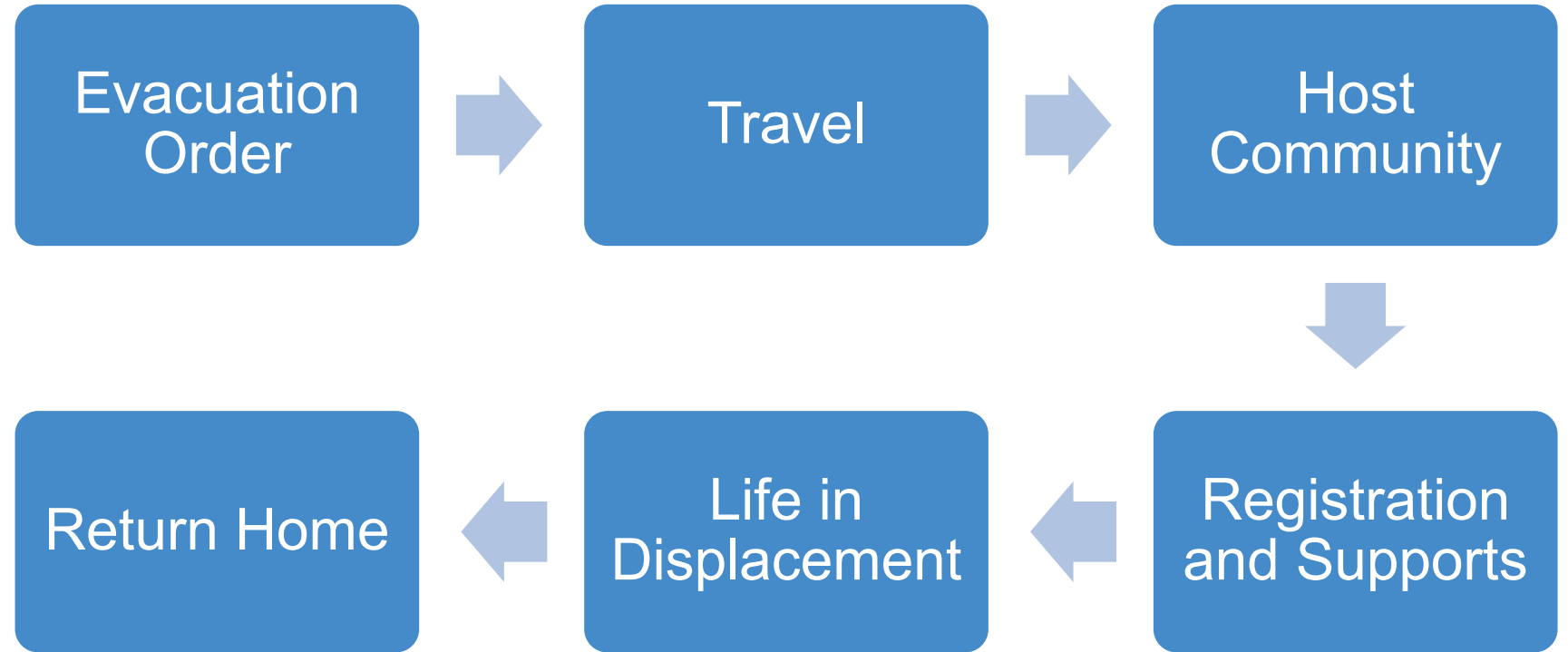
The evacuating community's focus is getting people out of harm's way

The host community's focus is what happens after that

- Receive evacuees, support them, and help navigate displacement



The Evacuee Journey



Success Starts Before the Emergency

Evacuating Community

- Build relationships with potential host communities
- Understand resident support needs and vulnerabilities
- Understand pet ownership and animal support requirements
- Identify transportation and mobility challenges
- Maintain situational awareness of evacuee destinations
- Encourage personal preparedness
- Promote BC Services Card app and ERA registration
- Share timely and accurate information with host communities

Host Community

- Build and maintain ESS volunteer capacity
- Establish relationships with local accommodation and food suppliers
- Develop a network of support across local agencies, NGOs, and community partners
- Build relationships with neighbouring First Nations and local governments
- Identify local accommodation and reception centre capacity
- Understand options for pet and animal support
- Exercise and test host-community plans and processes

Prepared Residents Help Us Help Them

Before an Emergency

- Download and verify the BC Services Card App
- Create an ERA profile
- Review insurance coverage
- Build a household emergency plan
- Know where to get trusted emergency information
- Have a grab and go and shelter in place bag



What Happens When Kamloops Gets the Call?

1) We Ask Questions

- How many people are coming?
- When will they arrive?
- Are they arriving in waves?
- What support needs exist?
- Are there pets?
- Are there cultural considerations?
- Are there accessibility challenges?
- How long might the evacuation last?

2) We Activate

- ESS Reception Centre
- Volunteer teams
- Suppliers
- Community partners
- Animal-serving agencies
- Health partners
- Municipal resources
- Emergency Operations Centre support

ESS Has Changed

Not everyone needs a Reception Centre

- ERA
- E-Transfer supports
- Access support remotely

Benefits evacuees

- Flexibility
- Reduced travel
- Faster access

Benefits host communities

- Reduced lineups
- Less administrative burden
- Reduced pressure on suppliers



Reception Centre Supports

Assistance available for those who attend the Reception Centre

- Registration and needs assessment
- Accommodation referrals
- Food referrals
- Clothing supports
- Incidentals
- Information
- Connection to partner agencies and community resources



Where do Evacuees Stay?

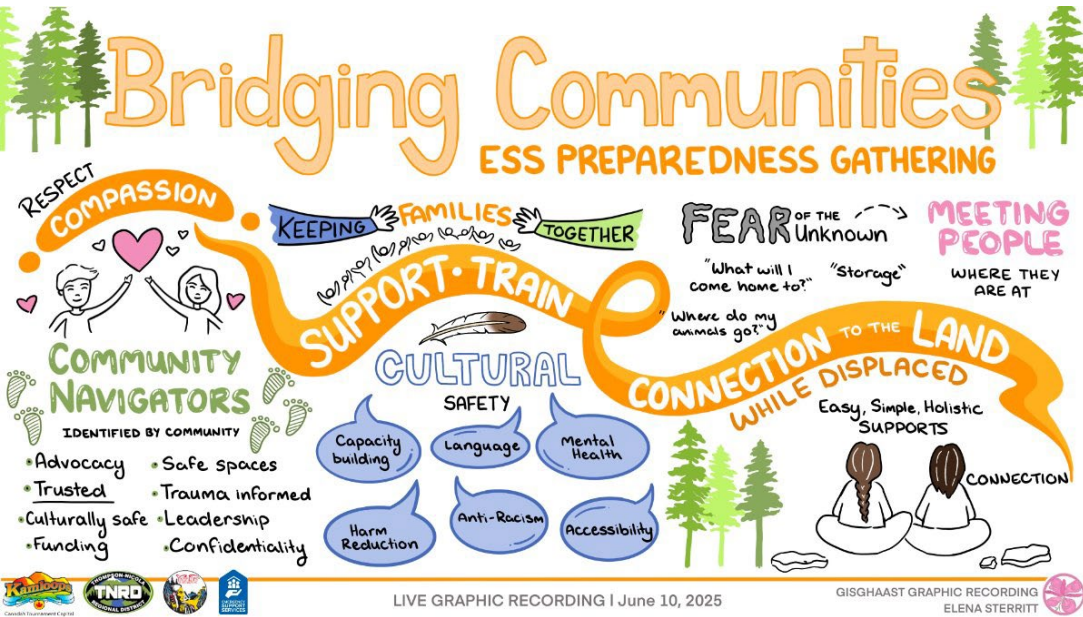
Accommodation options

- Hotels and motels
- Group lodging facilities
- Campgrounds and RV sites
- Staying with friends or family
- Emerging alternatives such as Airbnb

Host Community capacity

- Accommodations
- Food services
- Volunteers
- Suppliers





Supporting the Whole Person

Host communities may also help coordinate

- Cultural supports
- Animal care services
- Health services
- Psychosocial supports
- Accessibility supports
- Community gathering spaces
- Supports for vulnerable populations



It Takes a Community

Host communities don't do it alone

- ESS volunteers
- Accommodation providers
- Restaurants and food suppliers
- Health partners
- NGOs
- Neighbouring communities
- Social service agencies
- Animal-serving organizations
- Provincial partners



Living in a Host Community

Even when supports are available

- Families remain displaced
- Routines are disrupted
- People worry about their homes
- Children are separated from normal activities
- Community supports are no longer nearby
- Uncertainty remains

Long duration evacuations create challenges

- Evacuations can last days, weeks, or even months
- Support renewals are often considered in defined periods
- Families may not know how long they will remain away from home
- Host communities are often waiting for the same information evacuees are



Returning Home

Host community

- Supports evacuees while displaced
- Provides ESS and related supports
- Demobilizes host-community operations

Evacuated community

- Leads re-entry
- Coordinates return home
- Leads recovery



Final Takeaways

Be Prepared

Residents, communities, and organizations all have a role to play before an emergency occurs.

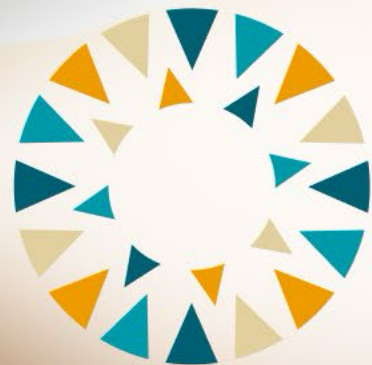
Build Relationships

Strong relationships between communities improve outcomes for evacuees.

Share Information

The better the information flowing between evacuating and host communities, the better support we can provide.

A host community isn't just a destination. It's a community ready to help another community through one of its most difficult times.



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WE HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN

But What If?

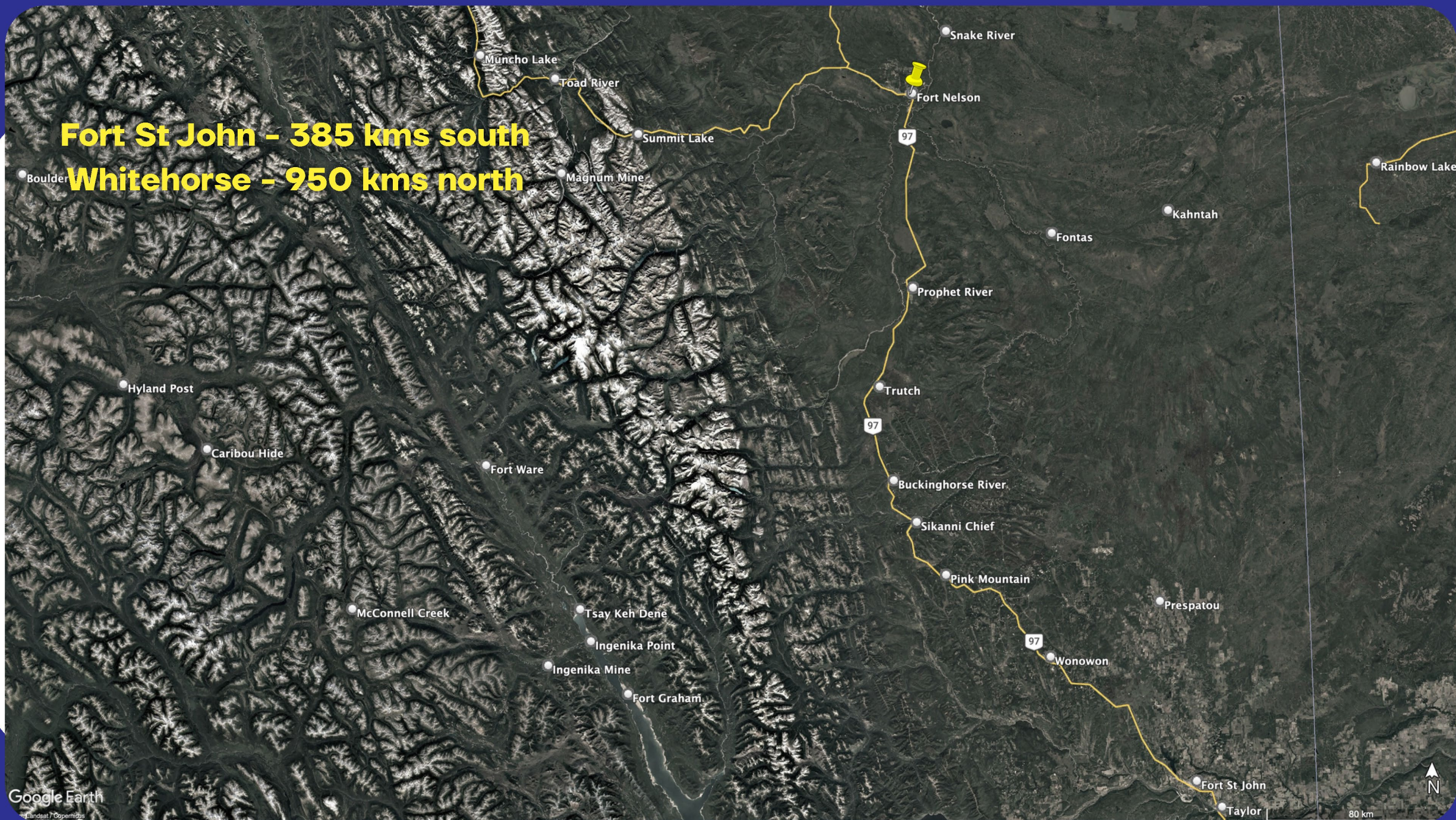
UBCM 2026



**We
Are
Here**



Fort St John - 385 kms south
Whitehorse - 950 kms north





Past & Current Emergency Response Plans

➡ 2013

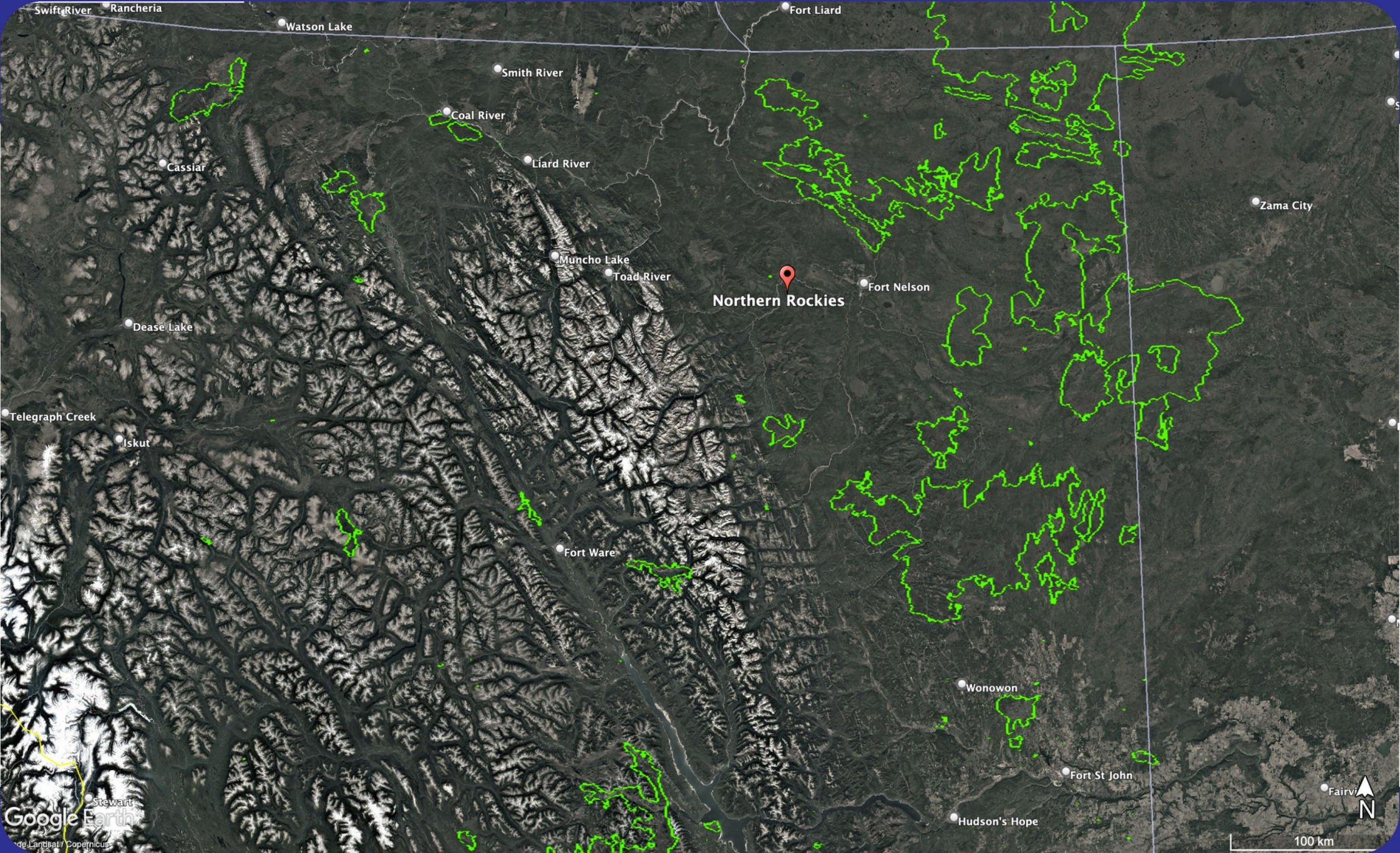
➡ 2020



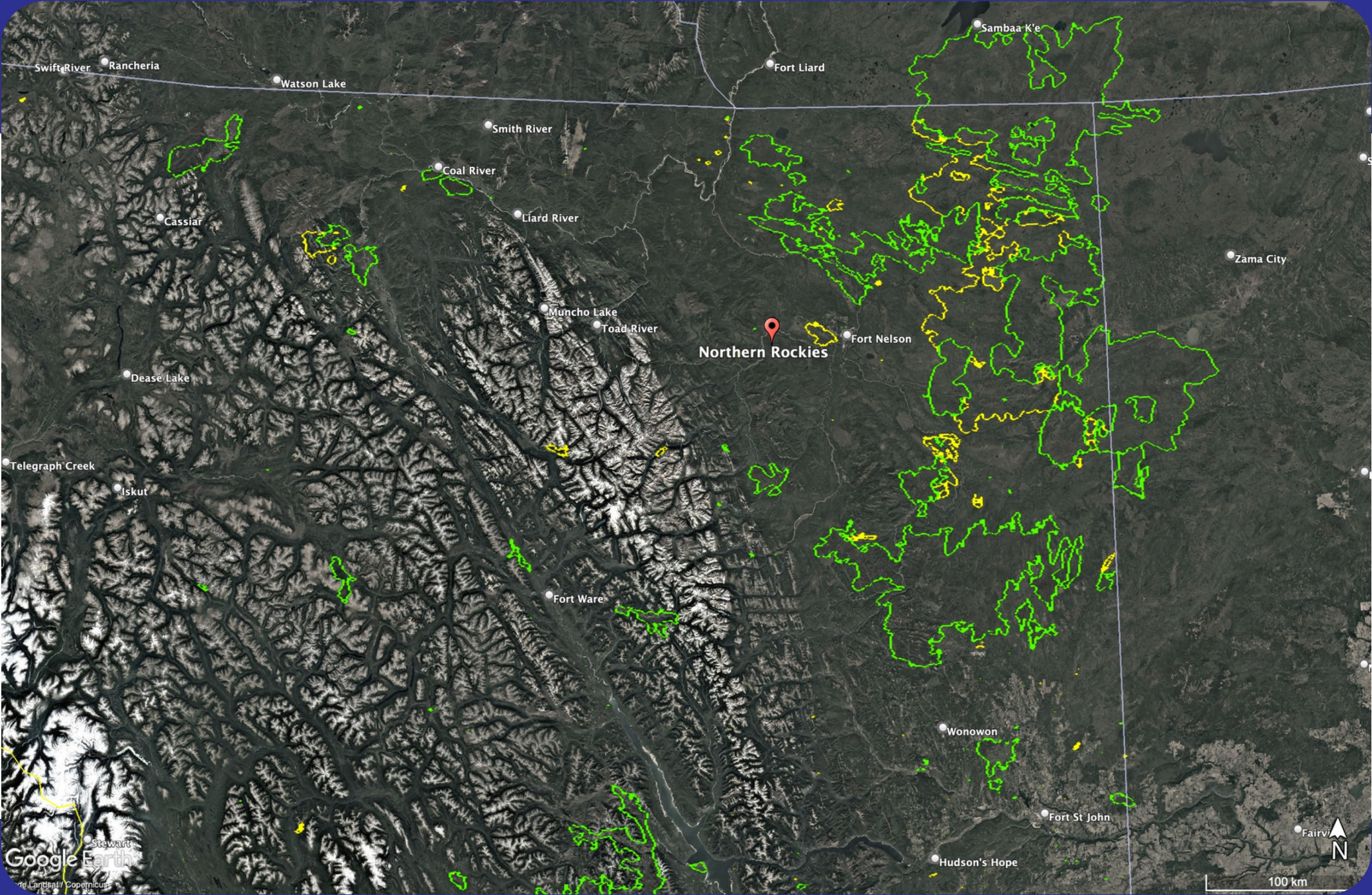
➡ 2026

2023

2023



2024







May 10, 2024 —



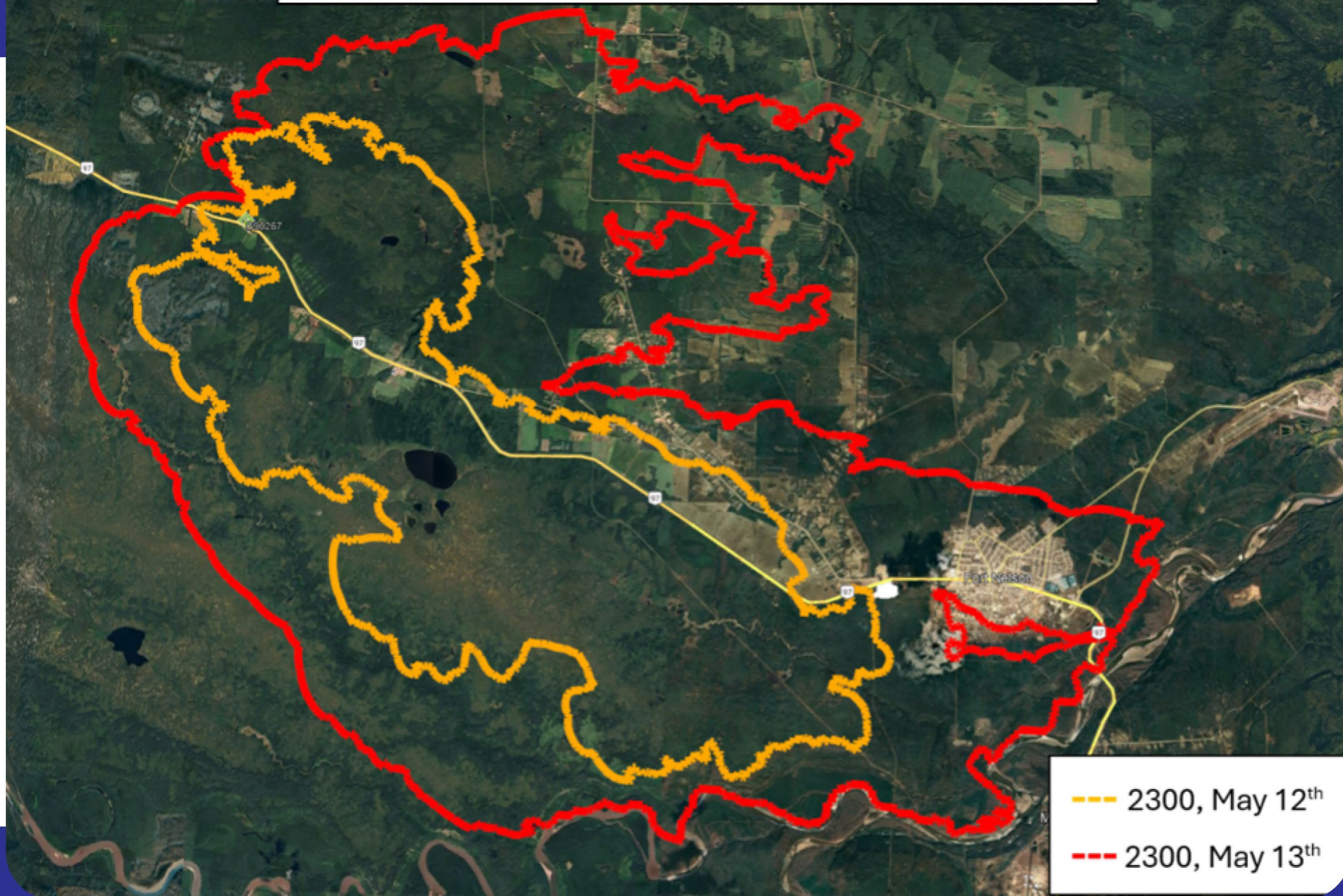
Highlighted by rapid multi-agency mobilization—progressing from initial tactical evacuations to coordinated municipal and First Nations EOC activations, followed by a comprehensive community evacuation and regional ESS support.

Knowing — Your Community



Having a clear understanding of your community's current needs and demographics is critical to providing the right types of support and preparing a responsive evacuation plan.

G90267 Fire Growth Projection for May 11 – May 13, 2024



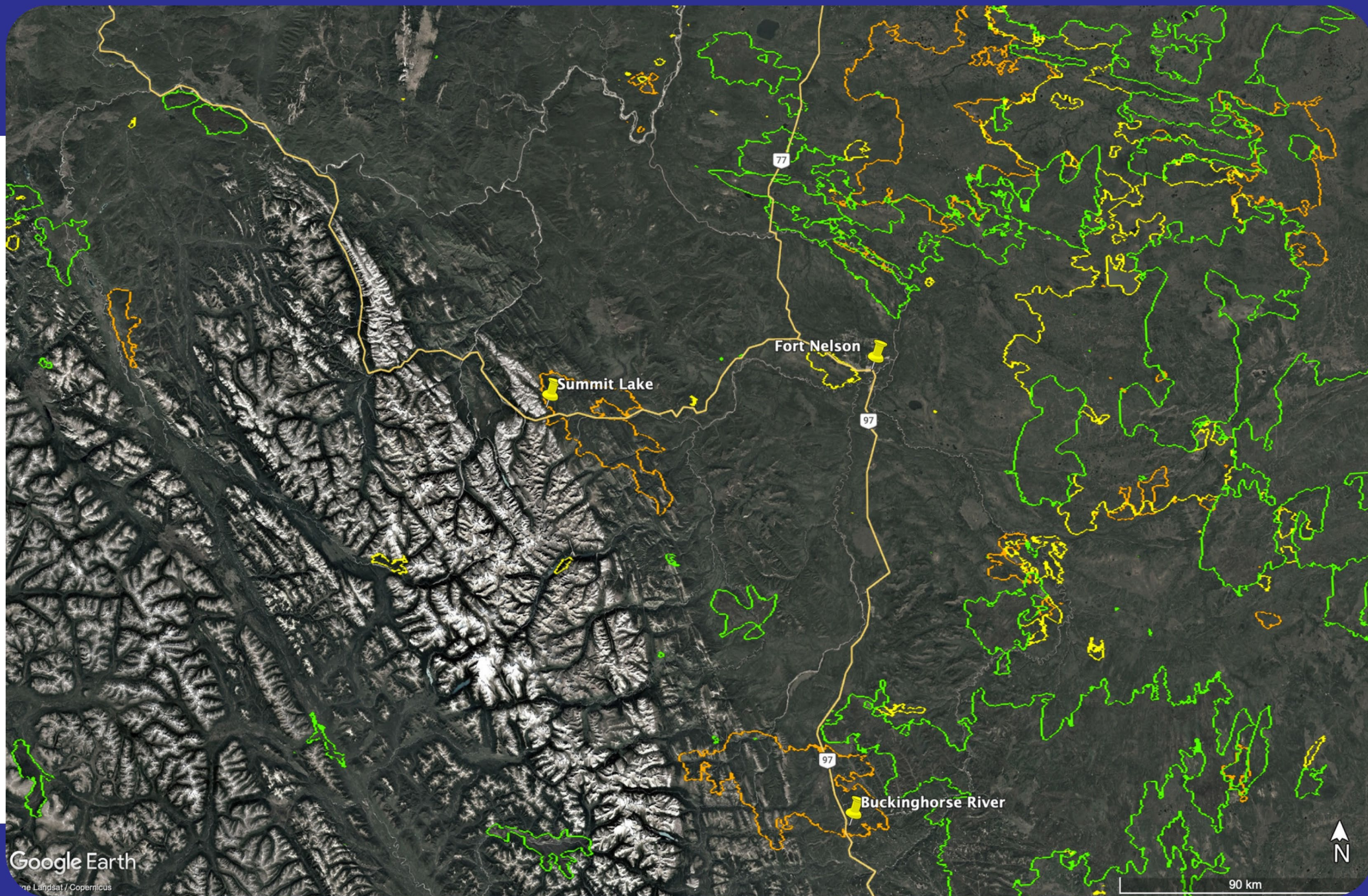


Threat to the Route

Mitigating the Risks

The regional transportation corridor is subject to many environmental and logistical hazards—ranging from active wildfires and zero visibility to damaged highway infrastructure and fuel shortages. The 2024 evacuation highlighted the critical risk of mid-evacuation route severing and personnel isolation, proving that single-corridor reliance leaves essential service workers and evacuees vulnerable without robust contingency alternatives.

2025





Just keep planning

photo credit the Pilot Project Podcast

Governance, Partnership Scope & First Nations Integration

Legislative and Statutory Alignment

Evacuation Routes & Structured Evacuation Zones

Vulnerable Populations & Animal Welfare Policies

Emergency Support Services (ESS) & Host Community Coordination

Communications, Canvassing & Return/Recovery Planning

Multi-Modal Contingency Evacuation Sub-Plans

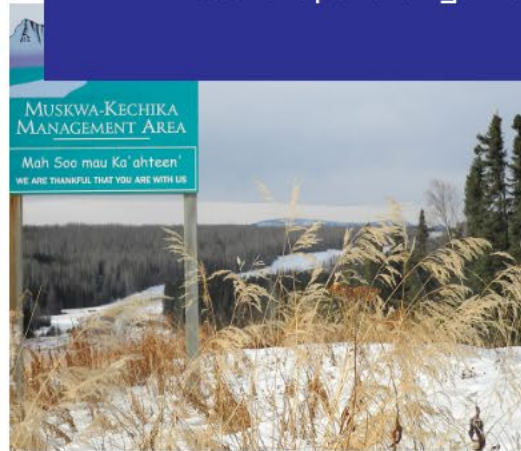
Aviation Evacuation

- Utilizes the local airport/airfields when all highway corridors are blocked.
- Prioritizes vulnerable populations, acute medical patients, and non-mobile residents.
- Coordination with provincial emergency management, RCAF/military assets, and commercial/charter airlines.



Northern Evacuation

- Pre-established agreements with Yukon government, northern municipalities, and First Nations.
- Remote corridor logistics: staging emergency fuel caches, mobile mechanic support, and rest stops along the remote northern route.



Shelter-in-Place



- Trigger conditions for when evacuation is no longer safe (e.g., rate of spread outpaces travel time).
- Designated community safe havens/post-disaster facilities (e.g., community recreation complexes, cleared airport aprons) equipped with air filtration, independent power, and fire suppression defences.

Speaking to Friends & Neighbours

Clear, Genuine Messaging

Communicate information in a priority order, respond to frequently asked questions, and when updates are available



Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

May 11, 2024 · 🌐

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to residents who have evacuated the community and to the groups who have tirelessly assisted our community during this challenging time.

As the wildfire situation remains volatile and fast-moving, all remaining residents are urged to evacuate the community immediately. Your safety is our top priority.

There is one remaining 44 passenger bus located at and receiving passengers at the Woodlands Inn available to facilitate evacuations. If you require transportation or assistance, please contact the NRRM Emergency Operations Centre at 250-775-0933. Those self-evacuating are encouraged to pre-register for the Evacuee Registration and Assistance website at buff.ly/3QHMQYz. Emergency Reception Centre information can be found on our website at <https://buff.ly/3USNi8S>

Search and Rescue and RCMP teams are actively visiting homes to ensure that everyone has evacuated safely. Please cooperate with them.

Those remaining in place need to be aware that emergency medical services are not available, nor are groceries or other amenities. Utilities may become impacted to support fire response efforts. Communication networks are precarious, which could impact the ability to reach residents to advise of changing conditions.

Your safety is paramount. Please heed the evacuation order and stay safe.

Situation and other updates will be provided by 1:00 PM local time.

ESS.GOV.BC.CA

www.ess.gov.bc.ca





Resource the Plan

Activating an evacuation plan will take far more person resources than a single agency has available. Building relationships, and understanding the strengths and limitations of partners is key to exercising a successful plan.



Re-entry & Recovery



Bringing people home

Ensuring an evacuation plan accounts for re-entry and recovery efforts will meet the goal of welcoming residents to a community that is safe and has essential services in place to meet their needs.

Lessons Learned

There are many!



Continuous Improvement



Robust Contingencies



Clear, Continuous Communication

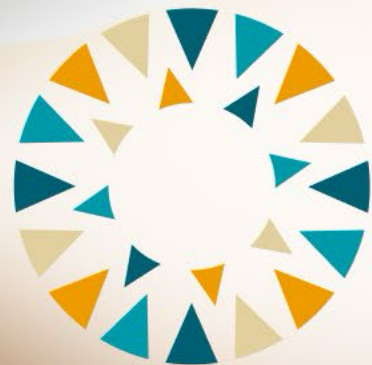


Collaborative Capacity





Thank you



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Vancouver Food Runners

In appreciation of our speakers today and with thanks for your contribution, UBCM has made a donation to the Vancouver Food Runners. Building connections between local businesses, nonprofits, and volunteers to ensure surplus food reaches essential community food programs. Vancouver Food Runners believe in turning surplus food into meaningful change. They believe good food belongs to people, not landfills!