



Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre

Supporting Community
through Recovery from the
2024 Jasper Wildfire
Complex



The Event

- July 22, 2024:
 - wildfire discovered 35 kilometers south of the Jasper townsite.
 - Evacuation orders: more than 20,000 people evacuated from the townsite and backcountry of Jasper National Park.
- July 24, 2024:
 - burning debris creates numerous spotfires, mostly in the western half of the town.
 - All wildland firefighters evacuated, only structural firefighting crews remain
 - Structural fire crews from across Alberta succeeded in protecting 755 structures, but another 358 were lost.
- The evacuation and firefighting efforts in town were conducted safely without any major injuries or loss of life. Sadly, wildland firefighter Morgan Kitchen passed away on August third while fighting the wildfire as it continued move up the Maligne Valley to the east of Jasper.



Response, Re-entry and Recovery

- Response managed through a unified command structure involving the Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada (ICS)
- Evacuation order lifted on August 16th, paving the way for re-entry.
- Re-entry began with the re-establishment of critical services, including wastewater utilities, electricity, emergency services, grocery store and gas stations.
- Transitional housing for “essential workers” in hotels.
- Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre grew out of the Unified Command system and is lead jointly by Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper



Organizing Recovery

- Identified Recovery Priorities:
 - Interim housing
 - Debris Removal
 - Housing Rebuild
 - Social Recovery
 - Economic Recovery
 - National Park Infrastructure
- JRCC-led working Groups established for each priority
- Daily operational briefings to coordinate work between working groups
- DRP-funded positions in Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada-funded positions in the Jasper Field Unit



Interim Housing

- Establish an adaptable, scalable interim housing program
- Establish a fair and transparent allocation system
- Establish a regional transit system
- Ensure that interim housing solutions do not unduly limit that potential to address longstanding and future housing needs



Debris Management

- Ensure public, contractor and environmental safety
- Facilitate a coordinated approach
- Ensure the completion in time for 2025 construction season



Rebuild

- Simplify review and approval processes
- Amend land use policies to enable increased housing options
- Coordinate construction to ensure safety and environmental protection, minimize impacts
- Identify and address construction logistics and material barriers



Economic Recovery

- Achieve business and employee retention through targeted supports
- Establish interim commercial spaces for businesses whose commercial spaces were damaged or destroyed
- Adapt licensing policies and procedures to recovery circumstances.
- Promote the participation of Indigenous partners through contracting, procurement, guided-business licensing and other business opportunities.





National Park Infrastructure

- Rebuild park infrastructure to support visitor experiences and operational needs
- Protect sensitive areas to promote natural regeneration
- Implement strategies to manage visitor congestion, demand and safety issues to support quality experiences.
- Reduce wildfire risk for the Jasper townsite while recognizing the natural role of fire on the landscape
- Indigenous stewardship remains a vital component of park recovery

Social Recovery

- Facilitate awareness of and to access community health supports
- Establish programs and supports to enhance psychosocial resilience
- Ensure systems are in place to recognize and address unmet needs
- Work collaboratively to ensure that recovery programs are responsive to assessed recovery needs
- Foster and develop respectful relationships with Indigenous partners in recovery



Health Impacts

Needs Assessment

9% of households reported at least one member facing serious health issues

- 90% accessed care

56% of households reported at least one member facing stress or mental health challenges

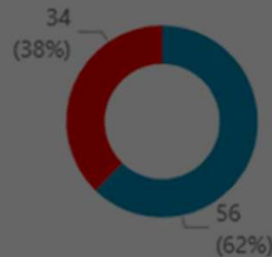
- Random Sample Survey
- Developed in collaboration with recovery partners
- 6 months post-event
- Part of an ongoing needs assessment strategy



1. Houses without children | 37.5% reported stress or mental health challenges



3. Houses with children | 37.5% reported stress or mental health challenges





Pathfinders



Conclusions

- Wildfire recovery is a massive, complex undertaking that takes place within the context of mass trauma.
- The costs and complexity of recovery underscore the critical importance of prevention and risk mitigation.
- The political context of recovery has a huge impact on processes and outcomes.
- Recovery is a years-long process.
- Housing is the foundation.

