



Summary - Understanding Community Resiliency Workshop

Date: May 10th, 2022

Time: 1 pm – 4 pm

Format: Vanderhoof Fire Hall

Overview

On Tuesday, May 10th, 2022, participants from the HRVA Committee for Electoral Area 'F' came together at the Vanderhoof Fire Hall to review and discuss community vulnerabilities. This document provides a summary of what was discussed throughout the first in person session. Thank you to everyone who took the time out of their week to contribute to this session.

The Understanding Community Resiliency workshop objectives were as follows:

- Review list of selected hazards.
- Review and identify additional vulnerabilities in Area 'F': Social, Economic, Environmental, Physical, and underlying risk drivers.
- Review and discuss hazard scenarios to better understand vulnerabilities.
- Discuss the need for additional information before embarking on likelihood and consequence scoring of hazards.

Participants

Organization	Name
Area F Director, RDBN	Jerry Peterson
District of Vanderhoof Fire Chief	Ian Leslie
Saik'uz First Nation Fire Chief	Gilbert Vickers
RDBN Agricultural Coordinator	Michelle Roberge
Health Administer - Vanderhoof, Fort St. James and Fraser Lake	James Simpson
Omenica Regional Response Coordinator - ORR	Michelle Racher
Rio Tinto, Plant Protection Coordinator head of safety	Ken Isaak
YRV Road Maintenance Contractor	Geoff Sargent, Quality Manager
RDBN	Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services
RDBN	Christopher Walker, Emergency Program Coordinator
RDBN	Liliana Dragowska, HRVA Coordinator

Welcome and Review of Selected Hazards

The session began with a round table of introductions asking participants to share what they feel is a strength in their community or neighbourhood that will assist them during an emergency event or recover from an emergency event. This was followed by a short presentation from Liliana reviewing the objectives of the meetings, overview of the HRVA committee process, and reviewing the 42-hazard selected at the February 3rd, 2022, HRVA Hazard Identification workshop.

The notes below summarize the discussion and reflections on the hazards selected to date:

- Bird Flu – no one knows what to do with animals and where to take them. This is a provincial response, yet communication has been very hard for rural areas.
- Big question on hazard response is whose jurisdiction is the event?
- Avian flu is highlighting some of the impacts to our communities:
 - Supply chain issues continue to be a hazard, resulting in food security issues.
 - Misinformation makes the public skeptical of trusting.
 - Resources for response are being consumed by larger population centers, leaving resources for rural areas sparse.

Discussion on Vulnerabilities in Area 'F'

In this section Liliana presented the key findings from the Area F Understanding Community Vulnerabilities backgrounder paper and began to explore with participants four grouping of vulnerabilities that may be considered in this project. The information presented and discussed is a starting point in the collection of known vulnerabilities within the region. The intention is that the HRVA process will help to strengthen our collective community knowledge of our vulnerabilities to enable future conversations that will focus on resiliency strategies. Both vulnerability and resiliency are important, and closely related, concepts for evaluating a community's ability to cope with the impacts of a hazard event. It is important to differentiate between the two:

- Vulnerability looks at the factors that increase a community's susceptibility to damage from a hazard;
- Resiliency is a measure of a community's ability to resist or recover from damage (SOPAC, 2002).

Participants were asked if there is any missing information or insight members might have on specific factors that they perceive have the potential to contribute to vulnerabilities within Electoral Area 'F'. The notes below summarize the discussion and additions under each topic presented and will ultimately assist HRVA committee members in subjectively scoring the likelihood and consequence of each hazard in our area.

Area 'F' Response Agencies:

- No fire protection in the rural areas – years ago Forestry had fire wagons and trailers with pumps. It was a great resource that no longer exists.
 - Wildfire BC is starting a pilot project with trailers in the Vanderhoof area.
- Important to note SAR is not self deployed, relies on being called by RCMP, Fire Departments, BCEHS, and local authorities. There has been an improvement in response times for SAR but still something to consider (12 Min record response time)
- Remembering people are volunteers, if they are dealing with personal evacuating, the capacity of the community is limited in its response.

- Volunteer pool gets smaller and smaller every year. Volunteers are a large resource for responding to emergencies in this region.
- Training standards for volunteer's vs liability and resources creates a local challenge.
- Vanderhoof fire service has a great partnership and communication with BC Wildfire Service.
- ESS the volunteer's numbers are down.
- Saik'uz fire department responds to fires on and off reserve, they are a resource in the rural area.

Social Factors

- limited supports to account for the influx of people during an emergency event.
- How do we bring in social services into response, identified a need for stronger networks? Opportunity to bring under ESS.
- Can Northern Health place services during events?
- Opportunity for another role for the Omenica Regional Response (ORR) group. Vulnerability with interagency communication. Covid brought those interagency together the talk about a coordinated response and build communication through ORR.
- Carrier Sekani Family Services is a resource during ESS response and can be an integrated service.
- Literacy is a vulnerability. RDBN is looking at creating options for reducing literacy for emergency notifications.
- Indigenous engagement and interaction are a challenge and vulnerability. Saik'uz has an elder's coordinator, this service goes with the elders in the case of an evacuation.
- Seniors being left out.
- Rural residents don't have internet and don't have libraries or access to those internet services.
- There was a change in the way residents are being notified of evacuations. Caused some confusion in 2021 with the logos on the top.
- HEMBC - not a first responder but a resource in the region.

Economic Factors

- Only one hotel in Vanderhoof that will take vouchers from ESS or evacuees in Vanderhoof. The rest will not deal with the province as they have either had damage or no payment.
- Example, in 2017 the Collect of New Caledonia in PG lost millions of dollars, they had to replace the gym floor after all the evacuation traffic. In addition, there were problem individuals, those with social support needs who did not have the support.
- Burn out of businesses supporting evacuees.
- Group lodging is a vulnerability in the Vanderhoof area, as there is limited to no availability. A need for red cross or NGO to be called for group lodging.
- There is a challenge to response to concentrated social issues during emergency events.
- One slaughter facility Newsat Farms closed.

Environmental Factors

- There has been an update on Fire interface numbers in the rural areas.
- Air quality, dryer the weather the more road dust and particulate matter. Burning in rural areas is a concern. Vulnerability that presents itself with the need to burn to mitigate fires vs ensure air quality is not harmful.

- Recently the RDBN Environmental services is doing curtain burning at landfills. Challenge as farmers and rural residents do not want to pay the cost of this and other waste disposal techniques. Chipping is another option, RDBN tried this in the past.
- Largest Dam

Physical Critical infrastructure

- 14 new homes in 2021 on the Saik'uz reserves.
- [Bulkley-Nechako Emergency and Public Alerts](#) – need to share and advertise this service to residents. The system will provide communication via landline, cell, app, and email; however, individuals need to sign up.

Discuss Hazard Scenarios

These scenario worksheets were designed to help guide the committee through an alternative discussion process that would help to highlight and articulate additional vulnerabilities within the Electoral Area. The participants broke into three groups and discussed five hazard scenarios on Wildfire, Hazardous Material Spill, Electrical Outage, and Animal Disease.

Hazard Scenarios have been updated and included in the Final version of the Understanding Community Resiliency Backgrounder document available on the RDBN's HRVA website under Electoral Area 'F' updates.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

To wrap up the session committee members had a brief overview of the likelihood and consequence scoring excel spread sheets that will be sent out to committee member for completion by June 3rd. This was followed by some final remarks and reminders of next steps in the process:

- Liliana to send a summary of this meeting along with a request for committee member to reflect and respond to Liliana if they feel there is a need for additional information before embarking on likelihood and consequence scoring of hazards?
- Liliana to draft and send out Hazard Likelihood and Consequence Scoring instructions, followed by committee members completing the Likelihood and Consequence Scoring surveys.