Research Report

Context

The Research Question: This study investigated how residents of Whitefish Lake First Nation 459 were affected by an evacuation of their community during the summer of 2011 due to wildfire. Three objectives guided this research:

1.) Identify the characteristics of the wildfire evacuation that influenced how residents were positively and negatively affected by the evacuation;

2.) Identify characteristics of individuals, their social context, and the First Nation community that affected how residents were positively and negatively affected by the wildfire evacuation; and

3.) Identify ways to reduce the negative impacts of wildfire evacuations on the community.

The Problem: During the summer of 2011, 4,216 wildfires burnt 2.6 million hectares of forest across Canada[1]. Aboriginal communities were severely affected by these fires, with thousands of residents in 35 communities in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan being evacuated for up to three weeks. These communities were evacuated due to (1) fire proximity, (2) smoke, and (3) power outages due to wildfires. Some of these residents were evacuated to nearby towns, but others were evacuated to towns and cities located a considerable distance away.

The large number of Aboriginal communities involved in wildfire evacuations in 2011 was not a rare occurrence. Despite comprising only 4% of the population of Canada, nearly one-third of wildfire evacuations in Canada between 1980 and 2007 involved Aboriginal peoples[2]. Wildfire

evacuations can be very complex, particularly in isolated areas where access is restricted, which is the case for many Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal leaders across Canada have called for improvements to emergency services and have pointed out that Aboriginal people suffer more during evacuations than non-Aboriginal residents due to pre-existing vulnerabilities, remoteness, and lack of critical security infrastructure, resources, and capacity. [3(p1)] However, the wildfire evacuation experiences of Aboriginal residents have received little attention by researchers.

Research on other hazards indicates that evacuations can cause social, psychological, health, and economic impacts on evacuees, their families and communities[4,5]. For instance, evacuees can experience a disruption in their normal routines and sense of place; a loss of control and uncertainty about the future[6,7]; and there may be a loss of support and community networks. Wildfire evacuations can be particularly stressful due to (1) scale – large wildfires can affect numerous communities due to fire proximity, and smoke can affect communities up to hundreds of kilometres away, (2) timing – residents may have little advanced warning of an evacuation and evacuations may occur at any point in the day, including the middle of the night, (3) duration- wildfire evacuations may last from a few days up to several weeks, and (4) multiplicity of events – residents may be evacuated numerous times in one fire season, either from the same wildfire or other flare-ups[6,8].

Wildfire evacuations in Canada are likely to increase in the years ahead and may happen more frequently and require longer periods of evacuation, due to factors such as climate change[9–11], mountain pine beetle[12], and the build-up of fuel from a history of fire suppression increasing the wildfire risk to many communities, particularly remote, isolated Aboriginal communities[13–16].

Furthermore, growing fiscal pressures may reduce attention being paid to preparedness planning and development. This makes it even more important to examine how to develop programs to increase resilience and adaptive capacity in susceptible populations.

The Study Community, Whitefish Lake First Nation: Whitefish Lake First Nation (Atikameg 459) is located in Northwestern Alberta, 387 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. Whitefish Lake First Nation is comprised of three reserves which cover 8,299.7 ha (20,509 acres) of boreal forest, with two communities (Atikameg and Whitefish River). The total registered population (2015) is 2615, with 1,186 living on reserve.

In May 2011, the community was suddenly evacuated due to the Utikuma Complex Fires which burned approximately 100,000 hectares. Host communities included High Prairie, Valleyview, Grande Prairie, and Edmonton. Residents were evacuated for up to three weeks, and the community was without power for over a month. Approximately 20 residents stayed in the community during the fire and provided security and information for evacuees and were also involved in fighting a fire that ignited near the community during the evacuation. No structures were lost, although there was significant damage to community infrastructure including the water and sewage plants. Local residents and the community are still recovering from the evacuation.

Implications for policy makers, community leaders, and agency partners

Evacuation Planning and Preparedness:
- **Resources and support for emergency management**. Government agencies should provide additional financial and other resources to First Nations communities for emergency management. Although all First Nations in Alberta have a Director of Emergency Management (DEM), this position is currently a volunteer position in the majority of

communities including Whitefish Lake. In order to improve the safety of First Nations communities, the DEM position should be converted to a paid position so that this person can devote the time needed to updating emergency plans, assisting the community in an emergency, and other emergency management tasks. Government agencies should also work with First Nations to ensure the development and implementation of emergency plans specifically tailored to their communities.

- **Provision of transportation for evacuees should be incorporated into emergency plans and communicated to community members.** At Whitefish Lake, the band arranged bus transportation for evacuees who did not have a vehicle, and provided free gas for those who did not have gas in their vehicle or who were unable to afford to buy gas. These enabled community members to leave the community safely.

During an Evacuation:

- **Social support provided during the evacuation can positively impact evacuees.** At Whitefish Lake, most immediate families were kept together during the evacuation. Some extended families were separated initially but were brought together by the band during the evacuation, which helped to provide social support to evacuees. In addition, opportunities should be provided to bring evacuees together to provide each other with social support during evacuations.

- **Financial assistance provided during an evacuation should assist evacuees to buy clothing and food during the evacuation and cover the costs of food and other losses once evacuees return home.** During future evacuations of communities, money provided to evacuees should be distributed in a way to ensure that it is spent on goods that are needed and minimize negative impacts on evacuees.

- **Local leadership is important in evacuations.** Evacuees from Whitefish Lake First Nation looked to their Chief and Council for information about how and where to evacuate, the status of the fire, how long the evacuation would last, and instructions on returning to the community. They also looked to other community leaders for reassurance. Other communities could follow the example of Whitefish Lake by having at least one Councillor present in each host community to provide information briefings, answer questions, and provide reassurance.

Post-Evacuation Recovery and Evaluation:

- **Bringing community members together with Chief and Council after an evacuation is an opportunity to provide emotional support and to identify lessons for community leadership.** After an evacuation, evacuees should be given an opportunity to share their experiences with leadership and other community members. This could help to identify those community members who need ongoing emotional support. It would also be an opportunity to identify how community leadership can make changes to reduce negative impacts of future wildfires.

- **Evacuations are a considerable administrative and financial burden.** The evacuation at Whitefish Lake and associated impacts to the community's infrastructure had significant implications for the community. The process to seek reimbursement for costs associated with the evacuation was challenging and some costs incurred by the community during the evacuation were not reimbursed. This has negatively affected the community's ability to provide essential services. All costs incurred by First Nations during evacuations need to be reimbursed, and government agencies must take into account the unique structures of Aboriginal communities and families.

Approach

This research with Whitefish Lake First Nation 459 is part of a multi-year community-based research program. The study, carried out as part of the First Nation Wildfire Evacuation Partnership (http://www.eas.ualberta.ca/awe/) was developed in fall 2011 to conduct research to understand how First Nations residents and communities in Canada are affected by wildfire evacuations. Funding for the research partnership is provided by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council Partnership Development Program to support the multi-year research that builds on this research with Whitefish Lake First Nation, and will include First Nations in Alberta (Dene Tha' First Nation & Driftpile First Nation), Saskatchewan (Onion Lake First Nation & Lac La Ronge Indian Band), and Ontario (Deer Lake First Nation, Sandy Lake First Nation & Mishkeegogamang First Nation). The First Nations Wildfire Evacuation Partnership brings together researchers and agencies involved in the evacuation of Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario (see appendix A for a list of all partner agencies). This study in Whitefish Lake provided an important first stage in the larger research program.

This research project with Whitefish Lake First Nation 459 used a qualitative community-based case study approach[17]. Qualitative research methods enabled us to make sense of people's experiences by focusing on ordinary events in a natural setting[18,19] and have also been found to be appropriate for studies with Aboriginal communities[20–22]. This research also used a community-based approach where Whitefish Lake First Nation 459 was involved throughout the research process. For instance, Chief and Council provided support, community advisors assisted and provided feedback throughout the research process, and two community research assistants were hired and provided crucial assistance during the data collection process. Lastly,

research results have been presented to Chief and Council and will also be presented to the community.

Data Collection: In June 2014, research team members T. McGee and A. Christianson travelled to Whitefish Lake First Nation 459 to meet with Chief and Council to discuss the research and establish a community advisory committee, meet with key contacts, and to begin the recruitment process of two community research assistants. T. McGee and A. Christianson travelled back to the community a month later to begin data collection. A. Christianson returned two months later to conduct further interviews. The two community research assistants Sheila Laboucan and Sharon Sahlin recruited interview participants, helped to conduct interviews, acted as interpreters during interviews where required, and provide advice to the research team. In total, 31 interviews with 30 women and 15 men took place. Interview participants included a range of youths (10), young adults (5), older adults (23) and elders (7) and included people who evacuated and people who did not evacuate. Participants were recruited by the research assistants and via referrals from other interview participants and key contacts. Recruitment of participants continued until no new information was emerging from the interviews [17].

During the interviews, residents were asked about their own and family's positive and negative experiences during the 2011 wildfire evacuation, including the evacuation process while they were still in their community, while they were leaving their community, when they were in their 'host' community, and upon returning home to Whitefish Lake. We also asked about any lasting positive or negative effects of the evacuation. Interview participants were also asked for any suggestions about how future wildfire evacuations could be improved.

The findings from the qualitative interviews revealed a broad range of experiences before, during and after the wildfire evacuation which are summarized in this section.

Before the Evacuation: On the day the first of the Utikuma complex fires started, most interview participants were aware that there was a fire near their community because they saw or smelled smoke, or saw ash falling. Many said they were not overly concerned because seeing or smelling smoke during the summer is a fairly regular occurrence. However, over half of the interview participants went outside or drove towards the fire to see where the fire was and find out how close it was to the community. The following day, there were high winds and more smoke and ash fall in the community, which made people concerned.

> *"In the beginning there wasn't any, nobody came around to tell us, 'hey this is serious'.*
> *We had to go outside and see it, the cloud of smoke and it wasn't just the cloud, it's the*
> *color of it. It was looking red and fiery. But it was pretty intense, just the way it looked"*
> -Participant 15

A second fire also started the next day. Due to concerns about the fires near the community, increased smoke, and wind direction, a local Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) staff member contacted a Councillor and suggested that the community be evacuated.

Getting Ready to Evacuate: Since the Whitefish Lake Chief was in Edmonton when the fire started, the Councillor started the process to evacuate the community. Participants heard about the evacuation from family, other community members, and the RCMP. Some participants received the information in person, others via cell phone, home phone, or Facebook. Participants expressed a range of feelings about finding out about the evacuation. Some were surprised there

was an evacuation, others felt concerned about their own and their family's safety, and a few felt

a rush of excitement that something out of the ordinary was taking place.

> "*At first we didn't know what was going on 'cause there was a whole bunch of people driving erratically around, and we didn't know what was going on. And there was ashes coming from above. I thought that this was just a normal grass fire. So we didn't know. I had my grandchildren with me, my brother. And we didn't even know anything was going on until someone came and told us, 'are you guys gonna leave 'cause the fire is not too far and we have to evacuate....You guys were supposed to leave a long time ago'. 'Why, what for?' And then, 'the fire's coming this way'. We didn't know, nobody alarmed us about it until they came along and told us that we had to evacuate".*
> -Participant 3

Reflecting back on the experience, some interview participants expressed concern about how

little information they received when they were told to evacuate.

> "*You don't have to panic, explain to them the best thing to do instead of saying we gotta leave right now is they should have explained it and tell them instead of scaring them. You know that's scary, somebody to come and tell you there's fire not far from here, pack up and go. They should have more or less explained everything, tell them you can say real fast you can tell somebody there's fire, you have to leave. I think some of them got scared because of the way you have to leave now, right now. Somebody come and tell you that you have to leave right now. For what?...How far is that fire you wanna know".*
> -Participant 2

When asked how long they had to prepare, some participants had a few hours to get ready to

leave, others had 15 minutes, and some left immediately. In some cases, participants recalled

leaving behind medication and other essentials. Pets, including dogs and horses were also left

behind.

> "*As we were packing we forgot lots of stuff, 'cause I'm the caregiver of my parents and they're elderly, so we forgot all their medications at home so we had to go to the hospital".*
>
> - Interview 9

Issues emerged related to transportation out of the community since some people did not have a vehicle. Those who did not have their own vehicle were either given a lift by family members or took a school bus that was organized by the band. Some people who had a vehicle did not have enough gas or money to pay for gas.   Residents were advised through word of mouth to stop at the reserve gas station and fill up their vehicles with gas that was paid by the band.

Leaving Whitefish: Most participants said they were unsure of where to go when they were told to evacuate. Some drove to High Prairie because it was the nearest larger community or because they followed the line of traffic there. When they arrived in High Prairie, many were able to get a hotel room, but because hotels also had evacuees from other communities, some people had to keep driving southwest to Valleyview, about 90 km away. Upon arriving in Valleyview, a few participants were told to continue on to Grande Prairie.

Out of our interview participants, most stayed in hotels in High Prairie, Grande Prairie, Valleyview or Peace River. A couple drove to friends or family members' homes in nearby communities, and a few refused to leave and stayed at home in the community.

 Being outside the community when evacuation took place: Some Whitefish Lake First Nation members were in other communities in Northern Alberta at the time the evacuation occurred.   Some of these participants said that they were aware there was a fire nearby when they left Whitefish Lake, however others found out about the fire when family or other community members called them during the evacuation. Some said that they only found out about the evacuation after they were stopped at the roadblock that was set up to prevent people from going into the community during the evacuation. The majority of these participants who were outside the community when the evacuation was called were extremely concerned and

wanted to return home to their family and community. As is common in Aboriginal

communities, some children were staying on the reserve with their grandparents or family friends

while their parent(s) was travelling outside the community, causing extra concern for those

parents who were not in the community at the time of the evacuation and were unable to get

home.

> "*My only concern I wanted to go back with my kids to High Prairie 'cause my mom had*
> *them at the time. I tried to go home about 3 days [with a ride from the] Red Cross, for*
> *somebody to take me all the way around*"
> - Participant 210

Those who were outside the community at the time the evacuation was called were told to

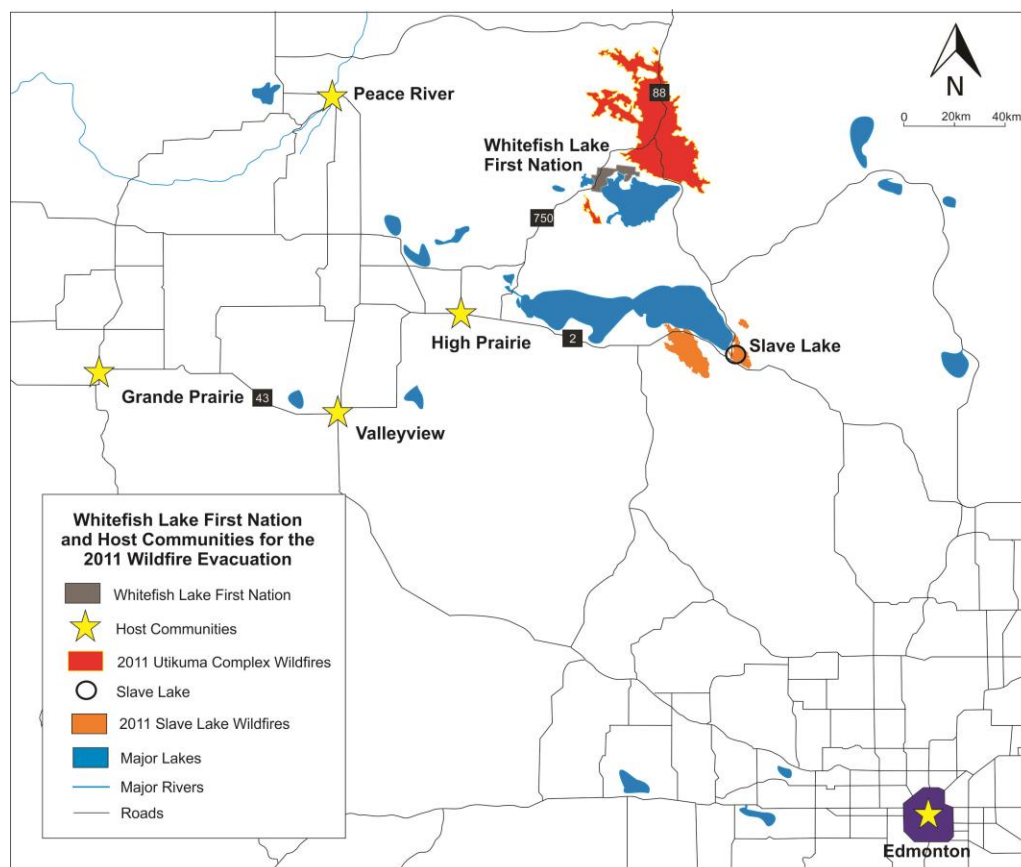remain where they were. The majority were in either Grande Prairie or Edmonton, and were

Figure 1: Whitefish Lake First Nation and Host Communities for the 2011 Wildfire Evacuation

advised by either the Chief or Councillors to go to hotels that had contracts with the band. These participants were very concerned about not having enough clothes and money to buy gas, food or a hotel room for an extended stay away from the community.

Staying in Host Communities: In each host community, a member of Chief and Council took a leadership role to look after evacuees and provide information about the impacts of the fire. Most participants had their immediate family with them, but in some cases extended family were located in other communities. As the evacuation progressed, organizers tried to move evacuees to other communities so that extended families could be together.

Evacuees ate their meals in an arena or in their hotels. Participants missed food that they would normally eat, including bannock and moose meat. Nearby Sucker Creek First Nation offered some meals of traditional foods for First Nation and Metis people evacuated during the wildfires.

Most media coverage during the evacuation focused on the Slave Lake fire, so Whitefish Lake evacuees obtained information about their community from other sources. Community spokespeople provided updates during some meals or in hotel meeting rooms in the host communities. Most participants also called or texted family members and other band members, including those who did not evacuate.

The evacuation lasted two weeks for most band members and three weeks for those with illnesses, newborn children and some Elders. Most participants said when they left, they thought they would be away from the community for a few days, and were unprepared to be away for weeks. During the evacuation, some participants tried to keep busy by volunteering or visiting band members, while others stayed in their hotel room because they were too upset to leave.

> *"Well, in Grande Prairie nobody really did anything because they were too busy thinkin' about home, even though the mall was just next door. Just basically went to eat and go back to our rooms, 'cause they could have went to the park or something but nobody really wanted to do anything".*
>
> - Participant FG2

Children and teenagers participated in activities that were arranged for them, including movies, bowling, swimming, sports and games. But parents and caretakers said that it was difficult to entertain children in hotel rooms.

> *"The youth were hard to keep in High Prairie 'cause they're so much energy that they have to burn. And us mostly we just stayed at the room and tried to get them to do stuff. That was not that much in High Prairie. Yeah, they were getting bored. They wanted to go home."*
>
> -Participant 9

The evacuation was a stressful experience for interview participants. Participants were concerned about whether their home would survive the fire and if it did not, how this would affect their future.

> *"And all the kinda stories that you hear from all the people you know taking care of places back here that your house might burn down or where am I gonna live? What am I gonna do? All that kind of stuff came to mind on everybody's mind and I think stress was one of the main issues there. That really was a struggle for everyone".*
>
> - Participant 205

> *"I think there was a lot of fear, there was a lot of people that were scared, we didn't wanna lose our place. And we said, in the back of our mind it's gonna happen, 'cause we were gone two weeks from here.*
>
> - Participant 206

Most participants said that the two to three week evacuation was a long time to be away from their home and community, particularly for those who never or rarely leave the reserve. Many adult participants were also concerned about the impact of the evacuation on community Elders.

Although participants said most community Elders seemed outwardly to be handling the evacuation well, there was still concern amongst caregivers.

> *"The Elders, some of them, they didn't really mind. It was something that they were brought to a place and they didn't really complain. I don't think that any of them really minded because they didn't voice it, but sometimes Elders will not voice anything regardless, they'll just accept it. That's how Elders are".*
> – Participant 212

The Government of Alberta provided money to evacuees either as cheques or as pre-loaded visa cards about 10 days into the evacuation. Each adult evacuee was given $1250 and each child was given $500. Participants spent the money mainly on clothes and food during the evacuation and for food to bring home after the evacuation ended. Although all participants said that the money was useful, most participants also mentioned that this money created problems in the host communities when some evacuees used it to buy alcohol. Many participants told us that the bars and liquor stores in the High Prairie area benefited from this money and sometimes extended their hours, which added to the problem.

Staying in Whitefish: It is estimated that 20 members of the band stayed on the reserve during the evacuation. Some of those who stayed in the community were band employees who needed to stay behind to look after infrastructure while others were band members who refused to leave when they were told to evacuate. All were men, predominantly between the ages of 20-50. A participant said that those who stayed behind organized themselves into a security team. They met daily at the parking lot of the band office with the RCMP and a councillor who brought in gas and food for those who remained in the community.

> *"So it was up to us now to watch everything. It was exciting but I wouldn't want that to happen again here. It's not a good thing anyways. You know the dogs are out here and we had to feed the dogs… The RCMP went around too and we, plus we went and we had*

to clean their fridges, freezers, and you know, we didn't want to break into people's houses but they at least said it was OK but still, you know. And we did that, we did the whole community".

- Participant 7

During the fire, there was no electricity, water or septic services in the community. Participants who stayed behind either had generators or cooked their food outside on a barbeque. These participants said that most days they drove around to patrol the community to check on the fire, ensure homes were not being broken into, and fed pets that were left behind. Later in the evacuation, those who stayed behind went around to homes in the community to remove food that had gone bad in fridges and freezers due to the power loss. The meat was fed to the dogs or placed in a large pile at the community dump. Those band members who stayed behind in the community obtained information about the fire and evacuation from a police scanner but received little information from government agencies or the media. These participants then provided information to evacuees via phone calls or text messages.

Returning Home: Evacuees found out that the evacuation had ended in various ways. In High Prairie, evacuees were informed in an announcement at the arena. Others found out through meetings in their host community while the rest were informed through phone calls, text messages, and word of mouth. Those evacuees with health conditions or those with babies were asked to evacuate for an additional week until essential services were established. Some other band members stayed with this group to provide assistance. Once evacuees found out that they could return, most rushed back to the community. Most drove back in their personal vehicles; and others caught rides with friends, on buses, or the medical cab from the reserve. Some Elders were brought back to the reserve by cabs.

Due to electricity loss during the fire, many participants had to throw out fridges and freezers full of wild and store bought meat. This was a major setback for most participants, particularly the loss of wild meat that would take a lot of effort and energy to replace. A large portion of the money from the government went to replace the store bought food that had to be thrown out. Many of the fridges and freezers also had to be thrown out.

Lasting Effects: During the interviews, which were held three years after the evacuation, it was evident that there were lasting effects of the evacuation on interview participants and the community. A few participants said that they were still dealing with the emotional toll of the evacuation. Several participants cried while re-telling the story of the evacuation. Participants also mentioned that their children are concerned about being evacuated again. Seeing smoke in the sky, which is common in the summer, seemed to trigger people's concerns.

The band was responsible for paying all bills associated with the evacuation, then had to apply to the provincial government to be reimbursed for these funds.   However, the process to get reimbursed was confusing and it was difficult to claim for all expenses incurred during the evacuation. For instance, due to the size of large extended family, multiple hotel rooms were booked under the same name. However, the province only reimbursed the band for one hotel room per family. The band lost a lot of money from this problem alone. At the time of our interviews, the band had only been reimbursed for approximately $500,000 of the $700,000 spent on the evacuation. This put considerable financial pressure on the First Nation and had other impacts. For example, the water and sewage treatment plants were damaged during the evacuation due to the power outage, and there have been ongoing maintenance problems that the band cannot afford to fix before the water treatment plant is replaced in 2017.

Conclusions: Key Factors that Influenced Experience

This research examined how residents in Whitefish Lake First Nation were impacted by the wildfire evacuations that occurred in 2011. This study has identified how the evacuation affected residents and the personal, social, cultural and societal factors that influenced positive and negative outcomes. These factors include:

Limited warning time and uncertainty: Consistent with the findings of McCool et al.[8] and Stidham[23], this research has found that the time between notification of an impending wildfire evacuation and the actual evacuation, significantly influences how a person copes with an evacuation. The limited time to prepare for evacuation resulted in participants bringing a limited number of personal items with them to their host community, which made many evacuees heavily reliant on donations to evacuation centres, on money provided by the band or the government. Interview participants also said they felt panicky as they rushed to evacuate. Uncertainty about where to go when told to evacuate also increased stress levels for evacuees.

Being with Family: All participants said that being near their family made it easier to cope with the evacuation. Councillors and volunteers from Whitefish Lake recognized this, including the importance of the extended family, and tried to move families around so that extended families could be together.

Slave Lake: Multiple fires in the region meant that 9,500 residents from Slave Lake evacuated the same day as the evacuation of Whitefish Lake First Nation, which made it difficult for Whitefish Lake residents to find accommodation. The Flat Top Complex wildfires that affected Slake Lake burnt 344 houses, six apartment buildings, three churches, 10 businesses and the government centre in the Town of Slave. There was little media coverage about the fire that

threatened Whitefish Lake and its impact on the community, which meant that Whitefish Lake evacuees were unable to obtain information about their home and community through the media and instead relied on information from community leaders and those who had remained behind in the community.

Financial Assistance: Funding provided by the government enabled evacuees to buy clothing and food during the evacuation. This funding also enabled community members to buy food for taking back to their home once the evacuation was over, which helped to replace some of the food that was lost during the fire.   Importantly, the way that this money was provided to evacuees caused some negative impacts when some evacuees used this money to buy alcohol, which created problems for many evacuees. Participants reported that liquor stores and bars in the host communities benefited from this and contributed the problems by extending their hours during the evacuation. The money was also used sometimes to purchase goods unrelated to the evacuation.

Loss of Electricity: The loss of power to the community during the evacuation resulted in lost food for community members. Many participants described having to throw out fridges and freezers full of meat, which included wild and store bought meat.   Most participants said that this was a major setback, particularly the loss of wild meat that would take a lot of effort and energy to replace.

Financial Impacts: The evacuation and associated impacts to the community's infrastructure caused considerable financial problems for an already financially distressed community. The process to get reimbursed was confusing and it was difficult to claim for all of the expenses incurred during the evacuation.

Further Research

Further research on the impacts of wildfire evacuation on First Nations communities is being conducted with seven other First Nations communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario through the First Nations Wildfire Evacuation Partnership. The diversity of the communities included in the partnership and the ways that the evacuations were carried out will enable us to understand the factors that influence peoples' evacuation experiences. The goal of the First Nations Wildfire Evacuation partnership is to bring together researchers, First Nations communities and agencies involved in wildfire evacuations to learn from each other and identify ways to reduce negative impacts of wildfire evacuations on First Nations people, which will inform the development and implementation of evacuation policies and practices.

Additional Resources

First Nations Wildfire Evacuation Partnership website: http://www.eas.ualberta.ca/awe/

Natural Resources Canada: http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/36035.pdf

Alberta Emergency Management Agency - First Nations: http://www.aema.alberta.ca/regional-offices-first-nations

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry - Wildfire: http://wildfire.alberta.ca/

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada - Emergency Management: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1309369889599/1309369935837

Canadian Red Cross - Planning for Forest Fires: http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/for-home-and-family/make-a-plan/planning-for-forest-fires

Canadian Red Cross - Emergency and Disaster Planning for First Nations, Metis and Inuit Communities: http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/for-first-nations--metis-and-inuit-communities

References

1. Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. National Wildland Fire Situation Report: Sep 14, 2011, 15:00 Hours. 2011.

2. Beverly JL, Bothwell P. Wildfire evacuations in Canada 1980–2007. Natural Hazards. 2011 [accessed 2014 Feb 19];59(1):571–596.

3. Assembly of First Nations. AFN Supports Calls for Action and Effective Emergency Response to Fires in Northwestern Ontario. 2011 [accessed 2013 Sep 10]. http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/latest-news/afn-supports-calls-for-action-and-effective-emergency-response-to-fire

4. DeSalvo KB, Hyre AD, Ompad DC, Menke A, Tynes LL, Muntner P. Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in a New Orleans Workforce Following Hurricane Katrina. Journal of Urban Health. 2007 [accessed 2015 May 13];84(2):142–152.

5. Sorensen JH, Sorensen BV. Community Processes: Warning and Evacuation. In: Dynes RR, Quarantelli EL, Rodríguez H, editors. Handbook of disaster research. New York : Springer, c2007.; 2007. p. 183–199. (Handbooks of sociology and social research).

6. Cohn PJ, Carroll MS, Kumagai Y. Evacuation behavior during wildfires: results of three case studies. Western Journal of Applied Forestry. 2006 [accessed 2014 Feb 19];21(1):39–48.

7. Hodgson R. Emotions and sense making in disturbance: Community adaptation to dangerous environments. HUMAN ECOLOGY REVIEW. 2007 [accessed 2015 Mar 12];14(2):233–242.

8. McCool SF, Burchfield JA, Williams DR, Carroll MS. An Event-Based Approach for Examining the Effects of Wildland Fire Decisions on Communities. Environmental Management. 2006 [accessed 2014 Feb 19];37(4):437–450.

9. Gillett N, Weaver A, Zwiers F, Flannigan M. Detecting the effect of climate change on Canadian forest fires. GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH LETTERS. 2004;31(18).

10. Flannigan MD, Amiro BD, Logan KA, Stocks BJ, Wotton BM. Forest Fires and Climate Change in the 21ST Century. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change. 2006 [accessed 2014 Feb 19];11(4):847–859.

11. Tymstra C, Flannigan MD, Armitage OB, Logan K. Impact of climate change on area burned in Alberta's boreal forest. International Journal of Wildland Fire. 2007 [accessed 2015 May 22];16(2):153.

12. Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada, Pacific Forestry Centre. Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative interim report. Victoria: British Columbia; 2005.

13. McFarlane, B.L. Human Dimensions of Fire Management in the Wildland-Urban Interface: A Literature Review. In: Hirsch KG, Fuglem PL, editors. Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy: Background Syntheses, Analyses, and Perspectives. [Edmonton]: Canadian Council of Forest

Ministers; 2006. p. 27–34. http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/nrcan-rncan/cdn_wildland-e/Fo134-4-2006E.pdf

14. Stocks, B.J., Wotton BM. The History of Forest Fire Science and Technology in Canada and Emerging Issues Relevant to the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy. In: Hirsch KG, Fuglem P, editors. Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy: Background Syntheses, Analyses, and Perspectives. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council of Forest Ministers; 2006. p. 49–55.

15. Wotton BM, Stocks, BJ. Firemanagement in Canada: vulnerability and risk trends. In: Hirsch KG, Fuglem PL, Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, editors. Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy: Background Syntheses, Analyses, and Perspectives. 2006. p. 49–55.

16. Christianson AN. Wildfire Risk Perception and Mitigation at Peavine Métis Settlement. University of Alberta Edmonton; 2011.

17. Creswell JW. Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2007.

18. Longhurst R. Interviews: In-Depth, Semi-Structured. In: Kitchin R, Thrift N, editors. International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography: Methods. 2009. p. 580–584.

19. Miles MB, Huberman AM. Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook. Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook. 1994.

20. Kingsley J, Phillips R, Townsend M, Henderson-Wilson C. Using a Qualitative Approach to Research to Build Trust Between a Non-Aboriginal Researcher and Aboriginal Participants (Australia). Qualitative Research Journal (RMIT Training Pty Ltd trading as RMIT Publishing). 2010 [accessed 2014 Jul 8];10(1):2–12.

21. Maar MA, Lightfoot NE, Sutherland ME, Strasser RP, Wilson KJ, Lidstone-Jones CM, Graham DG, Beaudin R, Daybutch GA, Dokis BR, et al. Thinking outside the box: Aboriginal people's suggestions for conducting health studies with Aboriginal communities. Public Health. 2011;125(11):747–753.

22. Shahid S, Bessarab D, Howat P, Thompson SC. Exploration of the beliefs and experiences of Aboriginal people with cancer in Western Australia: a methodology to acknowledge cultural difference and build understanding. BMC Medical Research Methodology. 2009 [accessed 2015 May 25];9:60–60.

23. Stidham M, Toman, Eric, McCaffrey S, Shindler B. Improving an inherently stressful situation: The role of communication during wildfire evacuations. In: McCaffrey S, Fisher C, editors. Proceedings of the second conference on the human dimensions of wildfire. Newtown Square, PA: USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station; p. 96–103.

Communities:

Alberta	Saskatchewan	Ontario
• Driftpile Cree Nation • Whitefish Lake First Nation • Dene Tha' First Nation	• Lac La Ronge Indian Band • Onion Lake First Nation	• Deer Lake First Nation • Sandy Lake First Nation • Mishkeegogamang First Nation

Government & non-government agencies:

Provincial	Federal	Non-Government
• Alberta Emergency Management Agency • Alberta Agriculture and Forestry • Saskatchewan Environment • Saskatchewan Ministry of Health • Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services • Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Relations • Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources • Emergency Management Ontario	• Health Canada – First Nations & Inuit Health Branch • Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada – Regional Emergency coordinators in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario	• Assembly of First Nations • First Nations Emergency Services Society