



# Building on the Basics: Lessons learned about recreation's role in emergency response and recovery

Prepared for Alberta Culture and Tourism

Final Report

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## Disclaimer

KPMG LLP (KPMG) has been engaged by Alberta Culture and Tourism (ACT or the Client) to conduct a review of lessons learned by the recreation sector from the May 2016 Wood Buffalo Wildfire (also known as the Horse River Wildfire) pursuant to the terms of an engagement agreement with ACT dated March 23, 2016 (the Engagement Agreement). KPMG neither warrants nor represents that the information contained in this Report is accurate, complete, sufficient or appropriate for use by any person or entity other than the Client or for any purpose other than set out in the Engagement Agreement. This Report may not be relied upon by any person or entity other than Client, and KPMG hereby expressly disclaims any and all responsibility or liability to any person or entity other than the Client in connection with their use of this Report.

KPMG's role in this Lessons Learned Report was to: identify key themes from a stakeholder facilitated session held by ACT; review best practices; and offer our comments and recommendations for ACT's consideration. KPMG relied on the completeness and accuracy of the information provided by ACT. KPMG's comments, by their nature, largely relate to opportunities for change or enhancement and do not fully capture the many strong features of the recreation sector's current activities and undertakings.

Through normal business processes, ACT and stakeholders to this project will be responsible for the:

- Assessment of lessons learned
- The decision to implement any recommendations, and
- Consideration of impacts that may result from the implementation of recommendations.

Implementation will require ACT to plan and evaluate any changes to make sure that satisfactory results are realized.

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## Introduction

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### Background

Recreation is a fundamental human need in all ages and stages of life. It is the pursuit of physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual experiences that enhance individual, family and community wellbeing. We participate in recreation because of how it makes us feel, because of the energy we get from it, and because it is **fun**.

In good times and bad, recreation, active living and sport are vitally important to Albertans. The benefits of recreation cannot be overstated; it can enhance mental, physical and social wellbeing, help build strong families and communities, help connect people to nature, and provide economic benefits such as jobs and tourism.

The recreation sector includes those from the not for profit, private, and public sectors; including volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations, and governments working collectively to provide opportunities and enhance individual and community wellbeing. In Alberta, municipalities are the primary public providers of direct recreation services, often in cooperation with community-based, not for profit organizations.

In recent years, Alberta has experienced a number of natural disasters, from local states of emergency to some of the largest evacuations in Canadian history. In just five years Alberta has faced three large scale events. In 2011, a wildfire resulted in the evacuation of and extensive damage to the community of Slave Lake. The Southern Alberta Floods of 2013 impacted communities across southern Alberta and forced 100,000 people from their homes. In May 2016, wildfires in Wood Buffalo seriously impacted the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) in northern Alberta, resulting in the evacuation of over 88,000 residents on May 3, and additional community and industry camp evacuations in the days that followed. The evacuation lasted until June 1, 2016, when the RMWB was opened to voluntary re-entry. Evacuation supports in Alberta had never been needed, or offered on such a large scale or over such a lengthy period of time as they were during the 2016 wildfire season.

Communities across the province will continue to face disaster situations in the future, and the increasing severity and frequency of these types of events means we must come together to respond efficiently and effectively while addressing the unique circumstances and needs of each situation. In Alberta, as with other provinces and territories, municipalities are required to have a *Municipal Emergency Plan* and are responsible for any local emergency or disaster situation. The provincial government only steps in when the situation is beyond a municipality's capacity to

**Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:**

**“That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.**

**That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”**

manage. Municipal resources, including recreation facilities and staff, can be key components of emergency management plans, whether for a local emergency or a provincial level disaster situation.

The role of the recreation sector in disaster response and recovery efforts evolves over time, growing from the immediate role of providing shelter in recreation facilities such as arenas and leisure centres, to providing recreation programming for evacuees; supporting individuals, families, and communities through the recovery process; and complementing systems of psychosocial supports that improve individual wellbeing and community resilience.

For example, recreation programs and services can offer a sense of normalcy for individuals and families who are living in temporary shelters and facing uncertainty about the future. Recreation can offer safe spaces where children can play and families can reconnect with other community members. Social capital, or connections within one's community, is one of the strongest influences on an individual's or family's ability to recover from a disaster. Being physically active helps with stress relief and mental health, and child care or children's programming can provide parents a much needed break for personal recovery or to focus on moving through the logistics of the recovery process. For children, who process traumatic events differently than adults, safe places and programs for play can be important outlets to express their emotions.

Staff in recreation facilities can become familiar faces in uncertain times and people will look to them for information and updates. Given appropriate support and information, recreation staff can become valuable communications resources throughout response and recovery. In addition, mental health issues resulting from the trauma of a disaster can begin to surface once the initial response to the emergency is over and people are faced with dramatic changes in their lives. Recreation providers may be the first to see emerging mental health concerns in their program participants and may be able to direct people to appropriate resources. Recreation programming can even specifically incorporate mental health or resiliency components.

Recreation has long been recognized as a facilitator of community development and resilience. This capacity to bring people together, strengthen community bonds, and enable positive social change is an important asset in times of community vulnerability and long term rebuilding.

It is important that learnings from emergency response and recovery are integrated into the recreation sector's support for future emergency events. Facilities, staff, programming, and partnerships all have roles to play in ensuring Albertans have access to the benefits of recreation during and after times of crisis.

## Purpose

The objectives of this report are to (1) capture the lessons learned by those from the recreation sector who have been involved in large scale disaster and evacuation situations in the past; (2) learn from leading practice in the use of recreation during and after crises to identify opportunities for improvement; and (3) identify concrete actions that can potentially improve the way forward for the recreation sector in disaster response and recovery.

## Method

Following the 2016 Wood Buffalo Wildfire, Alberta Culture and Tourism's Recreation and Physical Activity Division initiated a project to capture first-hand lessons learned about the recreation sector's role in recent natural disaster situations in the province. The goals of the project are to support ongoing recovery efforts in the RMWB and inform other communities' planning processes so that all Albertans have access to the benefits of recreation in the event of future disaster or crisis situations.

The first stage of the project was a forum held in Fort McMurray in November 2016, co-hosted by the Recreation and Physical Activity Division and the RMWB. The forum brought together recreation practitioners and other stakeholders who have experienced disaster in their community or who have supported others during a disaster (e.g. hosted evacuees). Participants included representatives from urban and rural municipalities, non-profit recreation service providers, funding organizations, school boards, and Government of Alberta. The forum was an opportunity to connect people with similar experiences, and to gather their knowledge and experience.

This report is the second component of the project. Alberta Culture and Tourism provided KPMG with the notes from the forum for analysis, and KPMG conducted a review of leading practices in the use of recreation during disasters, including preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. The analysis of the forum results and leading practices in this report are intended to identify ways the recreation sector can improve their preparation for, response to, and recovery from emergencies.

## Context

### Disaster Response

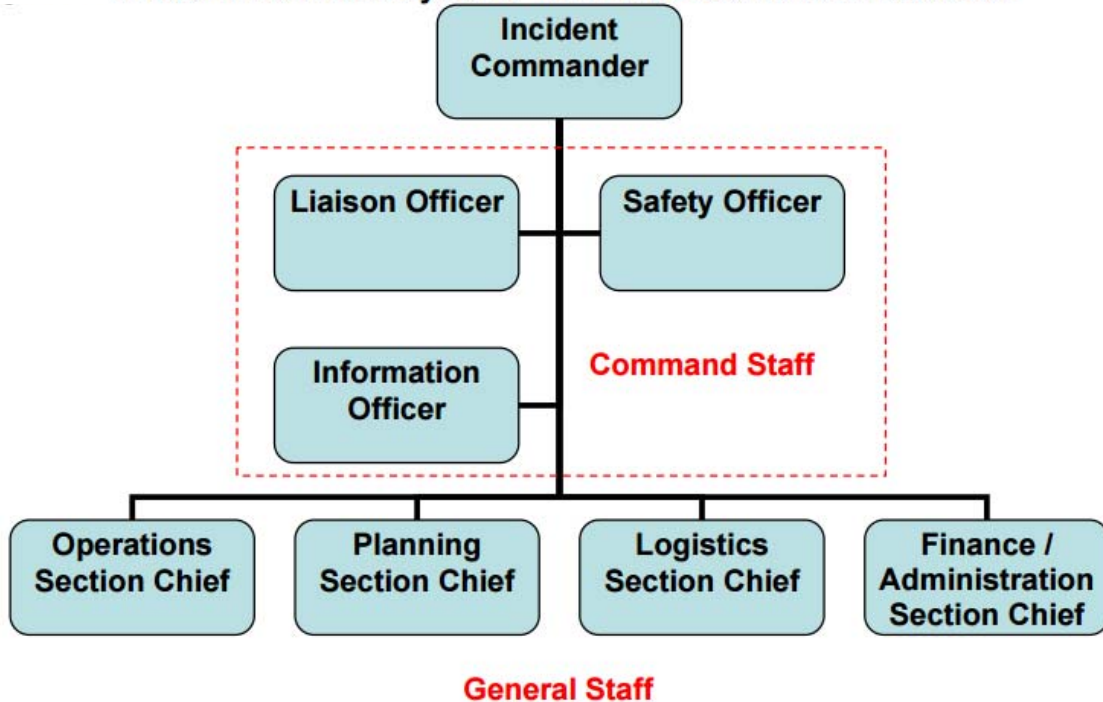
#### International Standards

With the growing numbers of serious disaster events occurring worldwide, standards and frameworks have been developed to support disaster recovery and response. For example, in Canada, the Incident Command System (ICS) is the widely accepted framework for structuring teams and communications when responding to disaster situations, and is used by all levels of government, industry, first responders, and others to support a coordinated response. It is important for the recreation sector to have a high level understanding of ICS, as it is the model local authorities would likely use to support incident response.

ICS<sup>1</sup> is based on 14 operating characteristics (e.g. unified command, information and intelligence management, incident facilities and locations, etc.) and a modular organizational structure.



#### Incident Command System: Command Staff and General Staff



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.icscanada.ca/images/upload//ICS%20OPS%20Description2012.pdf> Accessed on April 29, 2017

The structure is designed around five major management activities, called Sections:

- Command Section - Sets objectives and priorities, has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- Operations Section - Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan, develops the tactical objectives, organization, and directs all resources.
- Planning Section - Develops the action plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates information. Maintains resource status.
- Logistics Section - Provides support to meet incident needs, provides resources and all other services needed to support the incident.
- Finance / Administration Section - Monitors costs related to incident, provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

**Recreation fits within the Operations or Logistics Section of a local authorities' ICS structure, depending on how they organize it. It is important for recreation to understand the structure of their local emergency organization and have a key contact in the relevant section during an emergency.**

**Recreation organizations can also apply the full ICS structure within their organization as they respond to an emergency, setting up their own unified command, as well as appropriate management sections.**

More information about ICS and emergency planning is available on the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at [www.aema.alberta.ca](http://www.aema.alberta.ca)

## The Emergency Lifecycle

The findings of this report are presented along the emergency lifecycle. The following framework for the emergency lifecycle was developed by KPMG based on recognized emergency management, response, and recovery standards<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Standards referenced include the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) 22320:2011 (Societal security – Emergency Management – Requirements for Incident Response Standard), Incident Command System (Canada), the Alberta Emergency Management Framework, the Alberta Provincial Recovery Framework; An Emergency Management Framework for Canada, and the Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework.



**Figure 1: Phases of the emergency lifecycle**



The prevention and preparedness phases of the emergency lifecycle include ongoing efforts to mitigate the potential risks of an emergency situation and to prepare for responding to, and recovering from a potential disaster. Response and recovery are time bound phases tied to a specific emergency event. However, while response may last a few days or months, it takes many years for a community to recover from a major emergency.

## Emergency Management in Alberta

The *Emergency Management Act* sets out the framework for emergency response in Alberta. Local authorities, including municipalities, First Nations reserves, and Métis Settlements, are responsible for managing the first response to an emergency event. The Province is available to the local authority to help as requested. Coordination of the provincial response is led by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) through the Provincial Operations Centre, and is supported by Provincial Emergency Social Services. The Province can declare a State of Emergency at the provincial level to take over management of an emergency when needed (for example, if the emergency is impacting more than one municipality or requires a high level of provincial coordination), but in most situations the local authority manages the emergency response. For most local authorities in Alberta, there is an emergency management department or team within

the municipal government’s organization responsible for planning and preparing for emergency situations, including completing a Municipal Emergency Plan, ensuring staff emergency and ICS training, and holding emergency practice exercises.

The recreation sector ties into emergency management in Alberta in two key ways:

- At the provincial level, where Alberta Culture and Tourism works within the Alberta Emergency Management Framework, to support the Provincial Operations Centre, and other province-wide initiatives, to address needs in and after emergency situations; and
- At the municipal level, where the recreation sector can (1) support municipal plans to use facilities and staff to meet basic needs during response; and (2) provide recreation opportunities for those impacted by the emergency, through the response phase and well into recovery.

### Provincial Emergency Social Services

Emergency social services in Alberta are guided by the Provincial Emergency Social Services (PESS) Framework published in 2016 by Alberta Community and Social Services (formerly Human Services), in partnership with key stakeholders.

The PESS Framework sets out outcomes and guidelines for social services in emergency situations.

The Framework emphasizes the importance of providing emergency social services at the municipal level, with appropriate support from the Province as requested. The PESS guidelines state a requirement for local authorities to include an Emergency Social Services Plan as part of their emergency management planning. The Framework also notes that during emergencies, local authorities are responsible for

**Recreation has a role in each of the objectives and policies outlined in the PESS Framework:**

- **Participating with local authorities in emergency planning**
- **As part of the local authority response as well as the network of ESS supports**
- **Contributing toward stability and self-reliance**

initiating contact and maintaining communications with Emergency Social Services (ESS) partners at the local level to coordinate service, which would include recreation sector representatives as appropriate. The PESS Framework sets out the following objectives and policies for the phases of the disaster lifecycle:

<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Local authorities, provincial government organizations, and other ESS partners are prepared to respond to emergencies that require ESS. Planning for ESS is integrated with the overall emergency management planning process for all partners.
	<b>Policy:</b> Local authorities, the Government of Alberta, and other ESS partners should proactively address ESS as a core component of their overall emergency preparedness.

	The Government of Alberta will provide consistent and accessible information and resources to support ESS planning and preparedness.
<b>Response</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Local authorities are supported to maintain the lead for providing ESS. When a local authority exceeds its capacity to respond independently, they are able to quickly and consistently access a coordinated network of ESS supports.
	<b>Policy:</b> Consistent with Alberta’s broader emergency management system, local authorities lead the response to emergencies, including ESS. When local resources are insufficient to meet needs, local authorities should activate agreements with ESS partners as appropriate.
<b>Recovery</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Individuals, households, and communities are enabled to transition toward a state of self-reliance and stability. Local authorities also experience planned and orderly transitions away from reliance on external services. Partners have a shared understanding of how ESS contributes to the recovery phase and how their roles and responsibility may change as the focus shifts from meeting immediate needs to supporting the transition toward stability and self-reliance.
	<b>Policy:</b> Recovery operations should begin alongside response. While response operations focus on dealing with the immediate needs of those affected, recovery operations look at long term needs and the transition back to stability and self-reliance. ESS may support both response and recovery phases depending on the size and impact of the emergency. Local and provincial ESS organizations and personnel must work with the broader emergency management system and the community to plan services that facilitate a smooth transition to longer term supports.

## Municipal Emergency Response

When a municipality calls a local State of Emergency, the authority to deal with the emergency passes from the municipal mayor and council and emergency management department to the local Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). The EOC is staffed by the municipality according to the ICS framework and the Municipal Emergency Plan. While the State of Emergency is in place, the EOC manages the response to the emergency, including addressing the incident itself (e.g. fire, flood, etc.), providing direction to the public, initiating social services, etc.

The EOC is supported by municipal departments and service providers, including the recreation sector, to meet the basic and psychosocial needs of people impacted by the emergency. The primary source of information and coordination in an emergency is the EOC. For the recreation sector, a member of the EOC’s Logistics Section is likely to be the primary contact for information about the emergency, and for coordinating services.

## The Recreation Sector in Alberta

The *Moving Together: Promoting psychosocial wellbeing through sport and physical activity* report from the Psychosocial Centre of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent<sup>3</sup> describes physical activity in its broadest possible sense to promote psychosocial wellbeing. This includes fitness, swimming, traditional and international games, relaxation techniques, martial arts, gymnastics, and dancing. Some sport and physical activities are organized; others are not. Some are competitive; others are played cooperatively in teams or as individuals. Recreation is further defined by the Canadian Framework for Recreation<sup>4</sup> as the experience that results from freely choosing participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Four components of the recreation sector are particularly relevant to emergency response and recovery: facilities, programs and services, staff and volunteers, and partnerships.

### **Facilities**

Recreation and sport infrastructure includes indoor spaces and places such as arenas, indoor pools, community centres and halls, cultural centres, and seniors and youth centres. Outdoor recreation spaces and places include parks, playing fields, play-structures, trails, forested areas, outdoor pools, splash parks, pavilions, waterfronts, marinas, outdoor courts (e.g. tennis, basketball), outdoor rinks and golf courses<sup>5</sup>.

All types of recreation infrastructure can play a role in disaster response and recovery. While recreation facilities such as indoor arenas, leisure centres, community centres and halls, are spaces and places often used in Emergency Management Plans as evacuation/reception centres or staging areas for first responders, other types of recreation infrastructure can also play a significant role through all stages of the disaster lifecycle.

### **Programs and Services**

Recreation programs and services can be defined as designed opportunities for social, emotional, intellectual and physical development, through theme or skill focused recreational activities<sup>6</sup>. The term program is a broad concept, including activities, events or services. These can be structured or unstructured, targeted or available to all; they may be a single activity such as a bike ride, or a class meeting over several weeks.

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<sup>3</sup> *Moving Together: Promoting psychosocial wellbeing through sport and physical activity*, Access on April 11, 2017 [http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702\\_psc\\_spapsi\\_bog\\_T1\\_low.pdf](http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702_psc_spapsi_bog_T1_low.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing <http://iin.ca/national-recreation-framework>, Accessed on April 11, 2017

<sup>5</sup> A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing <http://iin.ca/national-recreation-framework>, Accessed on April 11, 2017

<sup>6</sup> [bcrpa.ca](http://bcrpa.ca)

### ***Staff and Volunteers***

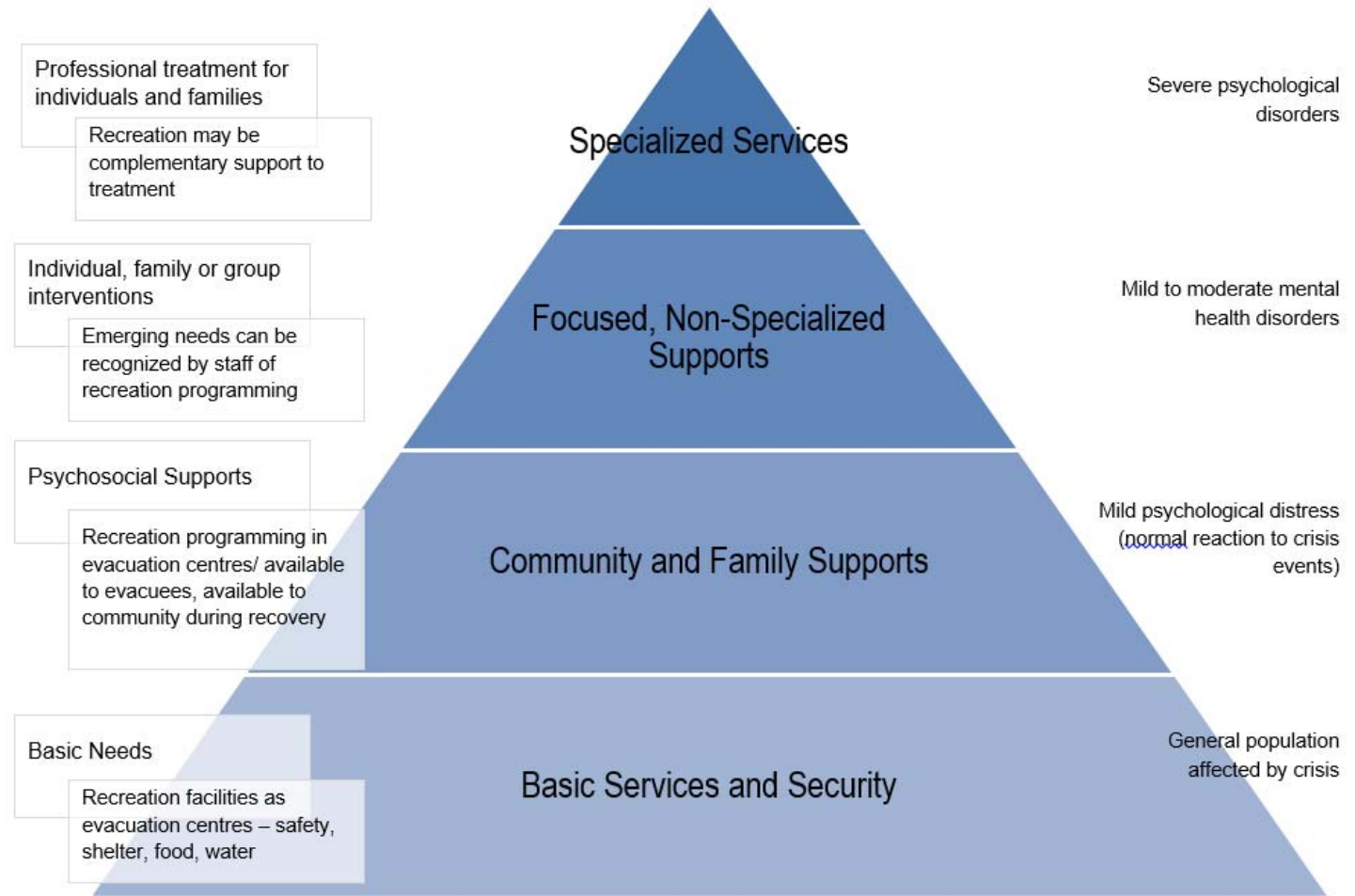
Recreation staff can be paid staff, as well as volunteers or community groups, engaged in the recreation sector. Staff and volunteers are responsible for a wide range of activities including recreation programming, facility operations, and supporting overall coordination efforts.

### ***Partnerships***

The recreation sector is strengthened by partnerships among recreation organizations and between recreation organizations, municipalities, and others outside the sector. These partnerships may be formal or informal, encompassing specific activities or driving to common long term outcomes.

## Role of Recreation in Providing Psychosocial Supports

The work of recreation strongly supports the psychosocial needs of those impacted by an emergency. The diagram to the right, prepared by Alberta Culture and Tourism based on the International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support's *Handbook of psychosocial interventions* (2009), illustrates how recreation can meet psychosocial needs.



Based on the International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support's *Handbook of psychosocial interventions* (2009)

## Roles of the Recreation Sector in Emergencies

The roles of the recreation sector during an emergency event can be broad and diverse. At a high level, these may include the following, depending on the type of emergency:

	Prevention and Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
<b>Facilities</b>	Provide a gathering place for communities to build connections and resilience	Identify and prepare facilities for potential emergency roles	<p>Offer opportunities for active recreation to manage stress</p> <p>Shelter those impacted by a disaster in evacuation or reception centres</p> <p>Serve as a staging area or shelter for first responders</p> <p>Be a site for donation collection and management.</p>	<p>Potential role as information or welcome centre as community stabilizes</p> <p>Transition back to regular recreation roles</p> <p>Provide gathering place for community to rebuild community connections</p>
<b>Staff and Volunteers</b>	Build understanding of recreation's role in community resilience	<p>Train staff as appropriate in emergency response, ICS, psychosocial supports, child development, trauma-informed practice, etc.</p> <p>Participate in both local authority and organization / facility level emergency planning</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers administer programs and services, manage facility, donations, etc.</p> <p>Staff often become familiar faces and contact points for community members/evacuees. They must be equipped with the information and resources necessary to help people find the supports they need</p> <p>Support staff through relief, overtime, policies and procedures, mental health supports, etc.</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers administer programs and services, manage facility, etc.</p> <p>Support staff through relief, overtime, policies and procedures, mental health supports, etc.</p>

	Prevention and Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
<b>Programs and Services</b>	Encourage participation in recreation activities and community connectedness to build community resilience	Participate in both local authority and organization / facility level emergency planning	<p>Encourage and provide opportunities for movement, exercise, being outside, etc.</p> <p>Provide safe environments for children and youth impacted by the emergency, and provide development activities, child minding, etc.</p> <p>Encourage and provide opportunities to access mental health supports and psychosocial wellbeing, use trauma-informed approaches, etc.</p> <p>Facilitate inclusion, provide culturally sensitive supports, accurate information sharing, community connectedness, etc.</p> <p>Provide information about the emergency and available resources and services</p>	<p>Transition programs and services toward longer term recovery services</p> <p>Encourage and provide access to community events and gatherings</p> <p>Provide a psychosocial focus to recreation activities</p> <p>Encourage participation in recreation activities and community connectedness to build community resilience</p>
<b>Partnerships</b>	Build partnerships with emergency management organizations, recreation and other services providers, and local authorities	Build partnerships with local authority emergency management organizations, other potential support organizations, and regional municipalities	Collaborate and coordinate with other service providers, levels of government and emergency management organizations	<p>Work with local authority and other service providers to rebuild community connectedness and support individual wellbeing</p> <p>Build on informal connections created during the response into more formal partnerships</p>



## Lessons Learned

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The following sections provide an overview of the lessons learned from the response to previous disasters, both in terms of the experience of the recreation sector in Alberta, and the leading practices in use across Canada and the world.

The lessons from the recreation sector were identified through analysis of the information and insights offered by participants in the Alberta Culture and Tourism forum in November 2016, and are presented according to the phases of the disaster lifecycle outlined above, as well as the components of recreation where relevant. It is important to note that the information presented here is reflective of the notes provided by Alberta Culture and Tourism and has not been validated for accuracy by KPMG.

KPMG conducted a review of leading practices in the use of recreation during disasters, including preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Alberta Culture and Tourism provided documents to inform the leading practices review, and KPMG conducted a further internet review. The following leading practices were identified and used to inform the recommendations

## Prevention and Mitigation

The goal of prevention and mitigation is to eliminate or reduce the risks of disasters to protect lives, property, the environment, and reduce economic disruption. Prevention/mitigation includes structural and non-structural mitigation measures applied holistically across the community, including building community resilience to cope with and recover from an emergency situation.

### What We Heard

#### *Programs and Services*

#### **Importance of a common understanding of the role of recreation in community resilience and recovery**

Participants of the November 2016 forum shared that there is no common understanding of the importance of recreation in responding to and recovering from disasters, and its potential contribution to individual mental health and community resilience. Participants noted that people are most likely to participate in recreation activities after an emergency if they had participated in some before the disaster. It was reported that there needs to be emphasis on building an understanding among emergency management providers and levels of government in Alberta about the importance and potential roles of recreation in an emergency and for recovery, and facilitating inclusion of the recreation sector in municipal emergency planning.

## ***Partnerships***

### **Need for partnerships with the local municipality including key emergency management organizations, other service providers, and neighbouring municipalities**

Participants noted that where existing partnerships were in place it was more straightforward to work together and communicate. There were many instances, though, where new relationships were formed during the emergency response, which was challenging. Participants suggested that partnerships should be built, and formalized with agreements where appropriate, prior to a disaster. Examples included partnerships with neighbouring municipalities for use of their facilities if the local facilities are not usable during an emergency, having stronger ties into the Emergency Operations Centre and Emergency Management Department, and connections with service providers who provide a resource that may be needed to effectively support people during an emergency (e.g. translation), etc.

## ***Leading Practices***

### ***Community Resilience***

The Canadian Centre of Community Resilience<sup>7</sup> emphasizes the importance of community resilience in the face of challenging events. A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change. The resilience of a community includes factors that impact recreation, including people's pride in their community, and the willingness of local organizations to work together. At the same time, recreation can help build community resilience by encouraging both bridging and bonding connections between community members. The stronger and more active a community is prior to an emergency event, the better they will be able to weather and recover from the emergency.

### ***Partnerships***

Calgary Neighbourhoods, the City of Calgary's business unit responsible for addressing the social needs of the individuals and communities, including recreation, has a close partnership with the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA)<sup>8</sup>. CEMA works closely with 30 city departments and a number of external organizations and service providers to prepare for and respond to emergency situations. The CEMA Municipal Emergency Plan documents the roles and responsibilities of internal, external, and support agency representatives during all phases of an event, as well as the EOC governance structure. Calgary Neighbourhoods is clearly identified in that

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, The Community Resilience Manual, Accessed April 11, 2017  
[http://communityrenewal.ca/sites/all/files/resource/P200\\_0.pdf](http://communityrenewal.ca/sites/all/files/resource/P200_0.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/cema/Pages/home.aspx?redirect=/cema>, Accessed on April 12, 2017

governance structure, which supports the recreation sector with clear communication and decision making lines into the emergency management organization.

## Preparedness

The goal of preparedness is to be ready to respond to a disaster and manage its consequences through measures taken prior to an event, such as emergency response planning, mutual assistance agreements, resource inventories, equipment, decision-support processes, training and exercising.

### What We Heard

#### *Staff*

##### **Need for staff training**

Participants reported that staff were not adequately trained for their role during an emergency. Potential training was suggested to include the use of emergency plans, trauma sensitivity, and managing secondary trauma. Other training around the additional responsibilities staff take on during disaster response might include areas such as considerations for cultural sensitivities while housing evacuees (e.g. food requirements, separate spaces for men and women, etc.), or particularly vulnerable populations. These considerations are also important as staff plan and provide recreation opportunities during the response. In addition, it was suggested that schedules be prepared for adequate staffing support while ensuring staff have time to recover from shifts.

#### *Programs and Services*

##### **Need for emergency planning for the recreation sector**

Participants emphasized that the recreation sector needs to actively participate in their own emergency planning, as well as the emergency planning of local government. Some participants noted acting on their local municipal plans, but others did not report having recreation-specific emergency planning in place. Many of those that did act on their plans indicated that because of the length of the displacement in the RMWB Wildfire the need for recreation was higher than anticipated. It was suggested that planning components could include:

- Creating a framework of principles and guidelines that allows room for creativity to meet specific needs in disaster situations. Staff willingness and ability to be creative to meet needs was noted as a strength in previous responses.
- Ensuring authorities responsible for decision making are clear to recreation sector staff so that decisions can be made quickly and efficiently, and so that staff know where to go for decisions.
- Creating formalized agreements and processes for coordinating with EOCs, levels of government, Provincial Emergency Social Services (PESS), and other providers. The recreation

sector needs to be kept informed of evacuations and changes to the disaster situation and they need to coordinate with other providers to ensure efficient supports and avoid gaps.

- Developing communication processes with the public to inform them of supports and services available and how to access them, including the use of social media, as part of a larger communications process for overall emergency response.
- Documenting an inventory of available facilities and resources and how they could be used for emergency supports and recreation in a disaster and during recovery, as well as gaps in services that will need to be addressed. The recreation sector could document the services they are willing and able to take on, allowing for coordinated service delivery. This could also be extended across municipalities.
- Determining emergency policies and procedures, for example around facility use, staff pay, overtime, etc., and build and maintain an awareness of these policies among staff and management.
- Initiating long term planning through recovery, including the potential impact of long term supports, and long term recovery metrics.

## Leading Practices

### *Planning*

The United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>9</sup> (Sendai Framework) outlines the need for ongoing supports and services to prevent and reduce exposure and vulnerability to disasters, increase future preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience. One of the four priorities of the Sendai Framework is to enhance disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Disasters provide communities with the opportunity to “Build Back Better” if they properly plan for, and prepare for disaster risk reduction ahead of the emergency. Important to this is: the review and update of disaster preparedness plans periodically; continued promotion of public awareness for emergency preparedness; and preparing the workforce, including volunteers, to participate in emergency responses.

### Response

The goal of response is to act immediately before, during, or after a disaster to manage its consequences through such actions as emergency response, emergency communication,

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<sup>9</sup> The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction website and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Accessed on March 21, 2017 at: <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291>  
[http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

evacuation, search and rescue, emergency medical assistance and emergency social supports to minimize suffering and loss.

## **What We Heard**

Participants noted that beyond providing for basic needs, such as shelter for evacuees, there was no clearly established and previously defined role for the recreation sector during emergency situations. Despite the lack of established role, the recreation sector was reported to have served the following functions during recent emergencies:

### ***Facilities***

#### **Infrastructure and resources**

- Supporting first responders – served as a shelter, staging area, and recreation facility for first responders.
- Meeting basic needs – provided safe shelter, food, clothing, medical, pharmacy, etc. to displaced people.
- Coordinating donations, supports and services – coordinated service providers and volunteers and managed donation and supply logistics. Donation management was noted as a challenge for many organizations, both in terms of logistics to manage input and distribution, and physical space to store donations.

### ***Staff***

#### **Relief**

- Ensuring appropriate space and regular relief for staff to ensure they are supported and do not suffer from burn-out, given that staff take on new, demanding roles in highly stressful circumstances.

### ***Programs and Services***

#### **Physical activity**

- Encouraging and providing physical and recreation activities – encouraged physical activity, provided free access to recreation facilities, and provided free recreational programming.

#### **Child development**

- Supporting children and families – provided programming to support and entertain children and youth and provided child-minding activities for families.

## **Community connections**

- Bringing people together – served as a point of welcoming and gathering for affected people, including providing information, a gathering place, and community events.
- Adapting to different cultures, backgrounds, and situations – supports needed to be tailored to meet the needs of potentially marginalized populations such as new immigrants and those with mental health challenges.

## **Partnerships**

### **Managing partnerships**

- Worked with other agencies and service providers, including social services agencies, to provide coordinated supports. Participants reported working successfully with a wide variety of previously established partners during the response, including First Nation communities, school divisions, not for profits, municipal departments, funding partners, etc. Participants also noted that there were some new partnerships that created challenges because they were not based on existing relationships and clear delineation of roles.

### **Need for consistent funding**

- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with funders was a challenge for some participants, particularly around appropriate processes and supports.

## **Leading Practices**

### **Sheltering Considerations**

There are several documents and organizations that set out requirements and considerations for using non-shelter buildings to safely shelter those impacted by an emergency; for example, recreation centres, post-secondary institutions, schools, etc. These include considerations for physical infrastructure requirements, planning shelter arrangements, accommodating the specific needs of some populations, e.g. the elderly, new immigrants, people with mobility challenges, etc.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>The Campus Recreation Facility as a Disaster Relief Shelter, Accessed April 10, 2017 <http://www.sportrisk.com/2011/04/the-campus-recreation-facility-as-a-disaster-relief-shelter/> Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, *The MEND Guide: Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters*, pages 88-96

## ***Child Safety and Development***

UNICEF<sup>11</sup> and Save the Children<sup>12</sup> have published extensive guidelines on establishing safe and developmentally appropriate shelter spaces for children and youth. For example, the specific objectives of the UNICEF Guidelines for Establishing Child Friendly Spaces are to: (1) mobilize communities around the protection and well-being of all children, including highly vulnerable children; (2) provide opportunities for children to play, acquire contextually relevant skills, and receive social support; and (3) offer inter-sectoral support for all children in the realization of their rights.

## ***Psychosocial Supports***

Once safe shelter arrangements are established, it is important to provide psychosocial supports for the duration of the response and well into recovery. Five essential elements of trauma intervention have been identified as 1) a sense of safety, 2) calming, 3) a sense of self and community efficacy, 4) connectedness, and 5) hope. The Psychosocial Centre builds on these elements to identify the role of physical activity in supporting trauma intervention, including helping facilitators consider the space, tasks, equipment, and personnel requirements to meet these essential elements.<sup>13</sup>

## **Recovery**

The goal of recovery is to repair or restore conditions to an acceptable level through measures taken after a disaster. This may include stabilizing conditions for return of evacuees, trauma counseling, reconstruction, economic impact studies and financial assistance. Recovery should consider continuous improvement of prevention and mitigation measures to further reduce disaster risk. Community resilience should provide the foundation for all phases of the emergency management program.

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<sup>11</sup> A Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Spaces, Accessed April 10, 2017  
[https://www.unicef.org/protection/A\\_Practical\\_Guide\\_to\\_Developing\\_Child\\_Friendly\\_Spaces\\_-\\_UNICEF\\_\(2\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/protection/A_Practical_Guide_to_Developing_Child_Friendly_Spaces_-_UNICEF_(2).pdf)

Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies, Accessed April 10, 2017

<sup>12</sup> Protecting Children in Disasters: A Guide for Parks and Recreation Professionals, Accessed April 10, 2017  
[http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/061215\\_PARKS&REC\\_GUIDE\\_FINALB%20LOW%20RES.PDF](http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/061215_PARKS&REC_GUIDE_FINALB%20LOW%20RES.PDF)

<sup>13</sup> Alberta Culture and Tourism, Siksika Flood Response Lessons Learned Report, November 2014  
Hobfoll, Stevan E., et al, *Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence*, *Psychiatry* 70(4), pages 283-305

Moving Together: Promoting psychosocial wellbeing through sport and physical activity, Accessed on April 11, 2017  
[http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702\\_psc\\_spapsi\\_bog\\_T1\\_low.pdf](http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702_psc_spapsi_bog_T1_low.pdf)

Moving Together Training Guide, Accessed on April 11, 2017  
<http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/Moving-together-training-for-web.pdf>  
[https://www.unicef.org/protection/Child\\_Friendly\\_Spaces\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Field\\_Testing.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/protection/Child_Friendly_Spaces_Guidelines_for_Field_Testing.pdf)

## What We Heard

### *Facilities*

#### **Recreation as critical infrastructure**

Participants noted that recreation facilities should be considered critical infrastructure for the stabilization of evacuated and recovering communities. The recreation sector should also have plans for how to stabilize and re-enter their facility after an emergency, particularly a prolonged emergency.

### *Staff*

#### **Ongoing staff support**

Participants also noted that staff supports established during response need to continue through recovery to help prevent burn-out, turnover, trauma, and secondary trauma.

### *Programs and Services*

#### **Transitioning back to regular recreation programming**

Participants noted that transitioning from a reception centre or shelter to normal recreation programming requires care and planning and that they did not have plans for transitioning following a disaster.

#### **Importance of initial recreation services**

Participants reported that an initial emphasis on recreation and community activities was effective at supporting residents during their first few weeks back in their communities. However, lack of child care was noted as a gap for those returning to the community after evacuation.

#### **Emphasis on long term recreation services**

Participants noted that recreation activities, particularly for children and youth, need to continue long into recovery, not just for one to two years following the disaster. Participants reported the importance of long term funding arrangements to ensure ongoing access to free or affordable recreation supports for the community.

#### **Role of mental health supports**

Participants indicated that the recreation sector should partner with mental health supports to meet local needs of those affected by an emergency, as illustrated in the pyramid of psychosocial supports on page 13.



## *Partnerships*

### **Challenges around communication**

It was noted that clear communications to the public about the importance of recreation in the long term recovery and resilience of a community, as well as the way recreation services will be provided to the community in the long term, are important to managing public expectations.

## *Leading Practices*

### *Psychosocial Supports*

Dr. Rob Gordon's report<sup>14</sup> on disaster recovery explores the psychological effects of a disaster and the importance of returning to normalcy as part of recovery. He describes the tasks of recovery, what he described as the "Third Stage", including to reconstruct the fabric of life and identity, recapture social involvements, and rebuild disposable energy for recreation supports. He also notes that counselling supports are often targeted around medical mental health rather than naturally within organizations affected people would normally access, such as schools and recreation centres, leading to underutilized medical model services. Community recovery guidelines from British Columbia and Australia also note the importance of community based psychosocial supports<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Rob Gordon, Community and Psychological Responses to Disaster, Accessed April 10, 2017  
<http://www.psychology.org.au/assets/files/bushfire-rob-gordon.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Community Disaster Recovery, Accessed April 25, 2017 [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/community\\_disaster\\_recovery\\_guide.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/community_disaster_recovery_guide.pdf)

Australian Emergency Management Handbook Series Community Recovery Handbook 2

<https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1488/handbook-2-community-recovery.pdf> Accessed April 10, 2017

<https://www.aidr.org.au/publications/handbook-collection/handbook-2/>, Accessed on April 25, 2017

<https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1560/a-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-disaster-recovery-programs.pdf>  
Accessed on April 25, 2017

## Opportunities

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The recreation sector worked to respond to the needs emerging from the recent disasters in Alberta. They formed partnerships, provided services and information, and met needs. However, they report that the services provided were often ad hoc and responsive, rather than intentional based on previous planning and partnerships.

The leading practices and lessons from the recreation sector outlined above provide specific examples of ways planning and prevention efforts can support all of the phases of the disaster lifecycle, including:

### ***Prevention and Mitigation***

- Building partnerships and communication lines with key emergency management stakeholders and service providers. Of particular importance, building inroads with the local emergency management department can help improve information flow and coordination during an emergency.
- Building participation in community recreation and community resilience during normal operations, including building partnerships to deliver public awareness programs, to better prepare the community to cope with and recover from future disaster situations.

### ***Preparedness***

- Planning for emergency situations to make sure that the emergency essential service and recreation roles undertaken are intentional and appropriate, and that the resources and tools needed to work effectively in those roles are there and are understood by staff.
- Providing staff with appropriate training regarding recreation's role in emergency response and recovery, trauma and secondary trauma, psychosocial supports, child and youth development, etc.

### ***Response***

- Ensuring sheltering services and other services meet specific needs, including safety, inclusivity, child and youth development, etc.
- Protecting staff from burnout and secondary trauma.
- Having recreation opportunities available, where possible, to those impacted by the emergency, particularly those living in evacuation or reception centres.

### ***Recovery***

- Increasing the focus on recovery efforts over the long term to address trauma, provide psychosocial supports, and continue to develop community resilience.

## The Way Forward

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Consistent with the philosophy of emergency management to empower the local level to respond to emergency situations, the recommendations below are focused on building the capacity of the recreation sector at the local level to (1) foster relationships with local emergency organizations and integrate recreation into the local emergency plan; (2) plan for, respond to, and support recovery from emergencies; and (3) build community resilience. With that in mind, the suggestions are focused on the ongoing prevention and preparedness phases of the disaster lifecycle, although in practice they will also address the way the recreation sector responds to the other phases.

### Prevention and Mitigation

***Develop and strengthen local and community level relationships with key emergency management stakeholders, including municipalities, service providers, and mental health supports, as appropriate.***

Work with these organizations to build an understanding of the importance of recreation in an emergency situation and throughout recovery, and the roles the recreation sector can play. Relationships should be built at the local level between the recreation sector, emergency departments of municipalities, and other local service providers and mental health supports, community health centres, etc. Messaging could include how the recreation sector can be effectively included in communications with emergency partners, and the benefits of recreation in emergency situations and throughout recovery, including for improving psychosocial wellbeing and community resilience.

### Preparedness

***Clarify the guiding principles and roles for the recreation sector in and after emergency situations.***

There is little common understanding of what roles recreation can and should play in an emergency. This should continue to be dependent on the recreation organization / facility and context of the disaster, however defining principles, potential roles, and considerations for taking on those roles could improve the consistency and appropriateness of the use of recreation during emergencies.

For example, principles for use of the recreation sector in emergencies could include:

- **Outcome Driven** – Ensure the services provided are working toward achieving specific outcomes for those affected by the emergency.
- **Relevant** – Ensure the services provided are relevant both to the normal functions of the recreation organization / facility, but also to the specific needs of those affected by the emergency.

- **Coordinated and Collaborative** – Work closely with emergency management, service provider partners and neighbouring communities to provide coordinated services.
- **Safe** – Create safe and supportive environments for all those receiving services, particularly for children, youth and vulnerable populations.
- **Trauma Informed** – Utilize a trauma informed approach when working with people affected by the disaster and setting up supports or programming.
- **Inclusive** – Consider the needs of those from different cultural backgrounds or potentially marginalized populations.
- **Flexible and Adaptive** – Consider how plans may need to change depending on the nature of the disaster, how needs change over time, and how different individuals and families will respond differently to their circumstances.
- **Contextual** – Consider the range of needs and expectations of individuals and families impacted differently by the disaster; from those impacted directly who may have lost their home, school and/or place of work, to those only moderately impacted.
- **Informative** – Consider the communication and information needs of those affected by disaster and what must be in place to support recreation staff on the front lines of facilities and evacuation centres.

Additionally, potential roles (see pages 13-14 of this report) and considerations for taking on those roles could include:

- **Infrastructure** – Consider the physical space available, including bathrooms, food preparation facilities, storage facilities, etc.
- **Physical activity** – Consider the usual activities provided by the organizations / facility, easily accessible spaces nearby including the outdoors, schools, etc.
- **Child and youth development** – Consider the training and experience of staff to work with children, available resources and spaces, potential partnerships for children and youth support services, etc.
- **Mental wellbeing** – Consider the training and experience of staff to deal with trauma and to provide appropriate mental health supports, potential partnerships for mental health services, psychosocial supports through physical activity, etc.
- **Community connections** – Consider the relevant demographics that will need to be served, information channels available, potential partnerships with relevant services, capacity to hold community activities, etc.

- **Partnerships** – Consider existing partnerships, or partnerships that could be the most effective and simple to establish, emphasis on the need to partner with the local emergency management department, etc.

***Build an understanding of the emergency management context that the recreation sector operates within.***

Frameworks and processes for emergency management organizations and levels of government are very structured in Alberta. For example, all levels of government and many emergency management partners and stakeholders follow the ICS model. A more thorough understanding of ICS and general emergency management could make it much easier for the recreation sector to operate in emergency situations. It could support information exchange, service coordination, and relationship building. Training resources should consider training already available, simple training materials, and partnerships with other organizations and municipalities to participate in training.

***Enhance recreation planning for emergencies and emergency recovery.***

The lack of recreation-specific emergency response planning was a challenge for the recreation sector as they had to define their role and take action in the moment. Refining, practicing and using their emergency plans would help the recreation sector be better prepared for a disaster. It is important to note that emergency plans should tie into the local Emergency Management Plan established by the municipality. Recreation-specific emergency plans could include:

- Defining the scope of services that could be provided, and under what circumstances different services would be offered, including immediate services to address basic needs and longer term recreation services to support psychosocial wellbeing
- Identifying target outcomes and outcome measures that tie into the PESS Framework outcomes
- Communications planning, including with emergency management departments and emergency operations centres, partners, staff, and those receiving services
- Procedures for scaling up in an emergency, and down after an emergency
- Staff policies and protocols, including decision making authorities, overtime, relief, and mental health support
- Training policies, including consideration for emergency response, child and youth supports, inclusivity, psychosocial supports, trauma, secondary trauma, etc.
- Recovery planning process, including duration, types of services, funding, community resilience practices, and a framework for measuring recovery impacts and outcomes over time

Plans could be supported by tools and templates based on leading practices to support the recreation organizations / facility in planning and providing support. Examples of tools that could be used include:

- A shelter readiness checklist
- Templates and guidelines for ensuring child friendly and safe spaces for emergency shelters
- Approaches to psychosocial supports through physical activity
- Recovery planning process, sample plan, and checklist

## Response

### ***Focus response efforts on creating and encouraging opportunities for recreation.***

While the initial response to an emergency should always be on meeting basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, etc., the longer people are impacted by an emergency the greater the need for psychosocial and recreational supports. As reasonable and appropriate, the recreation sector should provide opportunities for those impacted by the emergency to participate in recreation activities such as sports, yoga, child and youth activities, outdoor activities, etc. Recreation opportunities should be as inclusive as possible. Partnerships with other recreation and service providers can expand opportunities and reduce overlap in available recreation opportunities.

## Recovery

### ***Focus recovery efforts on creating recreation opportunities that create and encourage psychosocial wellbeing and community resilience.***

As the recreation sector transitions back to normal operations, it can be an indicator that the community is also beginning to recover from the emergency. As with before an emergency, the recreation sector has a strong role in the overall wellbeing and resilience of the community. Supports targeted around the psychosocial needs of the community following an emergency can help individuals and the community cope with and begin to recover from the impacts of the emergency. Community events, sporting activities, and other community recreation activities can help rebuild the sense of normalcy, community connectedness and resilience.

## Next Steps

KPMG will work with Alberta Culture and Tourism to issue a survey for the recreation sector to identify how the resource guide can be most useful to them. Based on the survey results, KPMG will work closely with Alberta Culture and Tourism to create a draft resource guide. The resource guide will be tested with a few recreation sector organizations for their input, after which it will be finalized and made available to municipalities and recreation providers across the province.

## Appendix A | Glossary of Terms

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The following terms are used throughout the report:

**Alberta Emergency Management Act** – addresses the province’s emergency preparedness and response authority at both the municipal and provincial level.

**Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)** – a coordinating agency accountable and responsible to the provincial government and to Albertans for effectively ensuring the protection of people, their property, their communities and industry, and their environment from the effects of emergency events.

**Communications** – the process of transmission of information through verbal, written, or electronic means.

**Community Resilience** – communities that take intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change.

**Coordination** – the integration of multi-agency efforts and available capabilities, which may be interdependent, in order to achieve defined objectives.

**Critical Infrastructure** – assets, systems, and networks vital to a municipality. Their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on the economy, environment, public health or safety, or any combination thereof. For example, power lines, medical centres, wastewater services.

**Disaster** – an event that results in serious harm to the safety, health or welfare of people or in widespread damage to property.

**Disaster Lifecycle** – the disaster lifecycle sets out the phases of a disaster, which include prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

**Emergency** – an event that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the safety, health, or welfare of people or to limit damage to property.

**Emergency Management** – the management of emergencies concerning all-hazards, including all activities and risk management measures related to prevention, preparedness, response, stabilization, and recovery.

**Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)** – the physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place.

**Emergency Social Services (ESS)** – a planned emergency response program intended to meet the immediate and long term survival and psychological needs of individuals impacted by an emergency or disaster.

**Evacuation** – the organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of individuals from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.

**Incident Command System (ICS)** – a standardized, on scene, all hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional or political boundaries.

**Local Authority** – a municipality, Métis Settlement, or First Nations community in Alberta.

**Municipality** – a city, town, village, summer village, municipal district or special area that includes the area comprising an Indian reserve where an agreement is entered into with the Government of Canada in which it is agreed that the band council is a local authority for the purposes of the *Emergency Management Act*.

**Municipal Emergency Plan (MEP)** – the master document which outlines the policy, operations, and roles and responsibilities for the corporation and the Agency Members when the MEP is activated.

**Provincial Operations Centre (POC)** – serves as a communication and response coordination centre which is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by Provincial Duty Officers (PDO). The POC is responsible for coordinating the initial response and maintaining support for a response to a natural or man-made disaster.

**Psychosocial Supports** – use community resources to rebuild coping capacities of individuals affected by disasters, enhancing their resilience, or inner strength, responsiveness, and flexibility in the face of high levels of stress and traumatic events.

**Recovery Plan** – a plan developed to restore an affected area or community.

**Re-entry** – the systematic return of individuals back to the emergency-affected area based on direction of local authorities.

**Recreation** – the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

**Recreation Sector** - includes stakeholders and providers from the nonprofit, private, and public sectors; including volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, research, organizations, and governments working collectively to provide opportunities and enhance individual and community wellbeing. In Alberta, municipalities are the primary public providers of direct recreation services, often in cooperation with community-based, nonprofit organizations.

**Resident** – a person who resides within a municipality such as the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo or the Town of Okotoks.



**Resources** – all the assets, people, skills, information, technology, premises, and supplies and information that an organization has to have available to use, when needed, in order to operate and meets its objectives.

## Appendix B | Leading Practices and Resources

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The Framework for Recreation in Canada<sup>16</sup> sets out the benefits of recreation, physical activity and exposure to nature:

- **Enhance mental and physical wellbeing** - Public recreation and parks services have an important role in enhancing physical activity, which in turn, is a critical factor in improved physical and mental health.
- **Enhance social wellbeing** - Participation in recreational experiences is shown to enhance social wellbeing. For both children and adults, recreation can facilitate and support social relationships – through clubs, social organizations, participating on a team or making a new friend. Among youth, recreation can help decrease anti-social behaviours.
- **Help build strong communities and families** - Recreation can be an important vehicle for promoting family cohesion, adaptability and resilience. Community events help keep neighbours in touch with each other and reinforce relationships that make neighbourhoods strong.
- **Help people connect with nature** - Studies have shown that exposure to the natural environment and green spaces have an independent, positive effect on health and health-related behaviours.
- **Provincial economic benefits by investing in recreation** - Spending on recreation creates jobs, fosters tourism, and makes communities more attractive places in which to live, learn, work, play and visit. “Upstream” investments in recreation can lead to improvements in individual and community wellbeing, which helps to reduce costs in health care, social services and justice.

In addition to these benefits, there are a variety of documented leading practices around the use of and benefits from recreation during and after emergencies. To build on these leading practices, this report includes a summary of relevant leading practices. Alberta Culture and Tourism provided documents to inform the leading practices review. Further, KPMG conducted an online review of leading practices in the use of recreation facilities during disasters, including preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. The following leading practices were identified and used to inform the recommendations; they are organized by phases of the disaster lifecycle. The leading practices will also inform the development of the Resource Guide.

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<sup>16</sup> A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing <http://lin.ca/national-recreation-framework>, Accessed on April 11, 2017

## Prevention and Mitigation

Community Resilience Manual - Canadian Centre for Community Renewal	Canada
<p>A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change. The resilience of a community includes factors that impact recreation, including people’s pride in their community, and the willingness of local organizations to work together.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, The Community Resilience Manual, Accessed April 11, 2017 <a href="http://communityrenewal.ca/sites/all/files/resource/P200_0.pdf">http://communityrenewal.ca/sites/all/files/resource/P200_0.pdf</a></p>	

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – United Nations	International
<p>The Framework outlines the need for ongoing supports and services to prevent and reduce exposure and vulnerability to disasters, increase future preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience. One of the four priorities is to enhance disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Disasters provide communities with the opportunity to “Build Back Better” if they properly plan for, and prepare for disaster risk reduction ahead of the disaster. Important to this is: the review and update of disaster preparedness plans periodically, considering the changing conditions and relevant stakeholders in emergency management; maintenance of investments in disaster forecasting, monitoring, and warning systems; promotion of resilience in new and existing critical infrastructure (across all sectors); continued promotion of public awareness for emergency preparedness; and preparing the workforce, including volunteers, to participate in emergency responses.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction website and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Accessed on March 21, 2017 at:  <a href="http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291">http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291</a>  <a href="http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf">http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf</a></p>	

## Preparedness

Alberta Emergency Management Agency – Government of Alberta	Canada
<p>The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) leads the coordination, collaboration and co-operation of all organizations involved in the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters and emergencies. Free online training courses are available through their website including Basic Emergency Management and Incident Command System (ICS) 100.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> <a href="http://www.aema.alberta.ca/training">http://www.aema.alberta.ca/training</a>, Accessed on May 10, 2017</p>	

Calgary Emergency Planning Agency – City of Calgary	Canada
<p>The Calgary Emergency Management Agency works closely with 30 city departments and a number of external organizations and service providers to prepare for and respond to emergency situations. The Municipal Emergency Plan documents the roles and responsibilities of <a href="#">internal, external, and support agency representatives</a> during all phases of an event. Calgary Neighbourhoods, the City of Calgary's business unit tasked with addressing the social needs of the individuals and communities, is also represented in the governance structure if the Municipal Emergency Plan is activated.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> <a href="http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/cema/Pages/home.aspx?redirect=/cema">http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/cema/Pages/home.aspx?redirect=/cema</a>, Accessed on April 12, 2017</p>	

## Response

The Campus Recreation Facility as a Disaster Relief Shelter - SportRisk	United States
<p>Based on the experiences of the Student Relief Centre's supports for victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the University of Alabama identified a checklist of preparatory steps that a recreation facility can undertake to prepare to shelter evacuees in a disaster situation.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> The Campus Recreation Facility as a Disaster Relief Shelter, Accessed April 10, 2017 <a href="http://www.sportrisk.com/2011/04/the-campus-recreation-facility-as-a-disaster-relief-shelter/">http://www.sportrisk.com/2011/04/the-campus-recreation-facility-as-a-disaster-relief-shelter/</a></p>	

The MEND Guide: Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters - Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster	United States
<p>The MEND document notes that it is important to plan shelter arrangements that meet specialized needs, particularly in cases where it may be inappropriate to house such individuals with the general evacuated population. Examples of individuals who may require tailored accommodations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing home residents;</li> <li>• The physically disabled and other individuals requiring continual and/or comprehensive medical support;</li> <li>• Mentally ill;</li> <li>• Prisoners and/or individuals with legal restrictive status, such as those with restraining orders against them.</li> </ul> <p>The MEND document also outlines suggestions about communication information to evacuees, as well as gathering important information from evacuees, such as the original location of evacuees and kinds of assistance they needed.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, <i>The MEND Guide: Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters</i>, pages 88-96</p>	

Protecting Children in Disasters: A Guide for Parks and Recreation Professionals – Save the Children	International
<p>Save the Children provides a guideline for parks and recreation professionals in protecting children during disasters. It emphasizes the important role of recreation centres in protecting children: “Parks and recreation professionals are on the front lines of ensuring children’s safety every day. They provide the structures and programs that help children learn, play and thrive in safe and familiar environments where they feel protected... When disaster strikes, the role of parks and recreation agencies is often transformed instantaneously, transitioning from a program provider to a community stronghold”.</p> <p>The Save the Children guide provides specific direction around setting up shelters in a way that maximizes child safety and comfort. The guide also provides templates and suggestions for how recreation centres can support public preparedness for emergencies, including tip sheets for how to prepare for and how to respond in different types of emergencies.</p>	

**Source:** Protecting Children in Disasters: A Guide for Parks and Recreation Professionals, Accessed April 10, [http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/061215\\_PARKS&REC\\_GUIDE\\_FINALB%20LOW%20RES.PDF](http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/061215_PARKS&REC_GUIDE_FINALB%20LOW%20RES.PDF)

Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies - UNICEF	International
<p>UNICEF notes that Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) are used in emergencies to respond to children’s needs during the crisis, as well as to serve as a transition to long term recovery. Following established principles, Child Friendly Spaces can be established quickly to protect children and meet their needs. The specific objectives are to: (1) mobilize communities around the protection and well-being of all children, including highly vulnerable children; (2) provide opportunities for children to play, acquire contextually relevant skills, and receive social support; and (3) offer inter-sectoral support for all children in the realization of their rights. The commonly established principles of Child Friendly Spaces include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take a coordinated, inter-agency, and multi-sectoral approach</li> <li>2. Use CFSs as a means of mobilizing the community</li> <li>3. Make CFSs highly inclusive and non-discriminatory</li> <li>4. Ensure that CFSs are safe and secure</li> <li>5. Make CFSs stimulating, participatory, and supportive environments</li> </ol> <p>UNICEF provides a practical guidebook for implementing a Child Friendly Space, however it encourages organizations to create their own participatory methodology. This practical guide could be leveraged and adapted as a component of the resource guide.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> A Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Spaces, Accessed April 10, 2017  <a href="https://www.unicef.org/protection/A_Practical_Guide_to_Developing_Child_Friendly_Spaces_-_UNICEF_(2).pdf">https://www.unicef.org/protection/A_Practical_Guide_to_Developing_Child_Friendly_Spaces_-_UNICEF_(2).pdf</a></p> <p>Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies, Accessed April 10, 2017  <a href="https://www.unicef.org/protection/Child_Friendly_Spaces_Guidelines_for_Field_Testing.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/protection/Child_Friendly_Spaces_Guidelines_for_Field_Testing.pdf</a></p>	

## Recovery

Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention – Hobfoll et. al.	International
<p>A worldwide panel of experts on the study and treatment of those exposed to disaster and mass violence to extrapolate from related fields of research, and to gain consensus on intervention principles. The panel identified five empirically supported intervention principles that should be used to guide and inform intervention and prevention efforts at the early to mid-term stages. These are promoting: 1) a sense of safety, 2) calming, 3) a sense of self and community efficacy, 4) connectedness, and 5) hope. Of these five, they describe uses particularly relevant to recreation facilities in promoting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of Safety – includes bringing people to a safe place and making it clear that they are safe.</li> <li>• Calming – offer direct approaches in anxiety management including stress inoculation training, yoga, imagery and music, involvement in uplifting activities not associated with the trauma (e.g. exercise), etc.</li> <li>• Connectedness – treat temporary housing and assistance sites as villages, including sports fields, recreation activities, places for teens to congregate under supervision, mentoring services, community solidarity activities, etc.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Hobfoll, Stevan E., et al, <i>Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence</i>, Psychiatry 70(4), pages 283-305</p>	

Moving Together – Psychosocial Centre International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	International
<p>Well-designed sport activities offer a safe and friendly space for expressing and addressing problems and fears, and help participants gain resilience, coping skills and hope. The handbook explains the theoretical framework for sport and physical activities in psychosocial support interventions, and how to implement such activities, based on the Hobfoll essential elements of mass trauma intervention. It outlines the STEP model, which helps facilitators think through the modifications to space, tasks, equipment, and people needed for a psychosocial intervention using sport and physical activities. It also includes activity cards that can be adapted to suit different situations.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Moving Together: Promoting psychosocial wellbeing through sport and physical activity, Accessed on April 11, 2017 <a href="http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702_psc_spapsi_bog_T1_low.pdf">http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/1702_psc_spapsi_bog_T1_low.pdf</a>  Moving Together Training Guide, Accessed on April 11, 2017 <a href="http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/Moving-together-training-for-web.pdf">http://pscentre.org/wp-content/uploads/Moving-together-training-for-web.pdf</a></p>	

Community and Psychological Responses to Disaster - Dr. Rob Gordon	Australia
<p>Dr. Rob Gordon’s report on disaster recovery explores the psychological effects of a disaster and the importance of returning to normalcy as part of recovery. He describes the tasks of recovery, what he described as the “Third Stage”, including to reconstruct the fabric of life and identity, recapture social involvements, and rebuild disposable energy for recreation supports. He also notes that counselling supports are often targeted around medical mental health rather than naturally within organizations affected people would normally access, such as schools and recreation centres, leading to under-utilised medical model services</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Rob Gordon, Community and Psychological Responses to Disaster, Accessed April 10, 2017 <a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/assets/files/bushfire-rob-gordon.pdf">http://www.psychology.org.au/assets/files/bushfire-rob-gordon.pdf</a></p>	

Community Disaster Recovery – Province of British Columbia	Canada
<p>The Recovery guide describes community disaster recovery as community actions to limit losses, reduce suffering, and restore the psycho-social and economic viability of the community. The guide includes an approach for community disaster recovery management, as well as a sample plan and community recovery aids.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Community Disaster Recovery, Accessed April 25, 2017 <a href="http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/community_disaster_recovery_guide.pdf">http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/community_disaster_recovery_guide.pdf</a></p>	

Australian Emergency Management Handbook Series Community Recovery Handbook 2 – Australian Emergency Management	Australia
<p>This handbook provides a comprehensive guide to community recovery in Australia. It is intended for use by planners, managers and those involved in working with communities to design and deliver recovery processes, services, programs and activities. It sets out principles and approaches for recovery, including taking a community-led approach.</p> <p>The handbook is supported by the National Principles for Disaster Recovery and A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Australian Emergency Management Handbook Series Community Recovery Handbook 2 <a href="https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1488/handbook-2-community-recovery.pdf">https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1488/handbook-2-community-recovery.pdf</a> Accessed April 10, 2017 <a href="https://www.aidr.org.au/publications/handbook-collection/handbook-2/">https://www.aidr.org.au/publications/handbook-collection/handbook-2/</a>, Accessed on April 25, 2017 <a href="https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1560/a-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-disaster-recovery-programs.pdf">https://www.aidr.org.au/media/1560/a-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-disaster-recovery-programs.pdf</a> Accessed on April 25, 2017</p>	