Government of the
Northwest Territories

After Action Review – Civil Emergency Response
2014 Wildfires

August 2015

Whati NWT - Summer 2014

Northwest Territories Municipal and Community Affairs

Note:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summer 2014 marked the most severe wildfire season on record for the Northwest Territories (NWT), resulting in impacts which posed considerable challenges for the NWT emergency response system. When an emergency event of such magnitude and complexity occurs, it provides a rare opportunity to validate the current emergency management framework by identifying key success factors and highlighting gaps or deficiencies which require consideration for improvement. Lessons learned from such events will ensure emergency response systems keep pace with the effects of climate change, which present hazards that are increasing in frequency and intensity. The Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT), through Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), commissioned this review to identify recommendations to improve the NWT's ability to help prepare for and respond to emergency events of this nature in the future.

This examination considers input and feedback from communities, GNWT responders, critical infrastructure operators, and the public. It identifies key issues and challenges faced by the GNWT, and provides recommendations for improvement within the following functional areas:

- Control and coordination;
- Risk assessment;
- Emergency communications; and
- Civil emergency response.

The review recommends the following actions to improve and strengthen the territorial emergency response structure and build capacity for an effective emergency management system:

1. Address identified gaps in the NWT Emergency Plan by developing suitable approaches and plans for community and remote area evacuations, and management of the consequences of highway interruptions during major emergencies.

2. Facilitate training, interoperability, and the sharing of resources among response agencies by implementing a common incident management approach (e.g. Incident Command System).

3. Clarify communications roles and responsibilities and improve responsiveness during emergencies by reviewing and updating territorial emergency communications plans and procedures, including the sharing of risk information.

4. Improve emergency response capacity in the NWT by developing a strategy for emergency response training and exercises for key personnel involved in response activities.

5. Build community resilience by working with community governments to improve knowledge of emergency management, hazards and risk, and continue updating and improving community emergency plans.

In the coming months, the recommendations will serve to guide the GNWT's effort to modernize the NWT emergency management regime. This includes new civil emergency measures legislation and an update to the NWT Emergency Plan, including development of hazard specific emergency response arrangements and operational procedures for a territorial emergency operations centre. A key element of the modernization effort is implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS), which will also guide training and exercise delivery.

MACA will also review and update emergency communications protocols, evacuation and reception guidelines, operational response protocols and identify opportunities to

ensure key staff remain current on emergency measures best practise. GNWT departments and key stakeholders may also consider these findings when updating emergency plans and protocols.

Finally, this review is intended to give voice and recognition to the many employees, residents and businesses impacted by the events of last summer. Their experiences lend tremendous value and importance to those who will face similar challenges in the future.

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY i

INTRODUCTION 1

METHODOLOGY 5

DETAILED FINDINGS 7

1.0 Control and Coordination 7

1.1 Territorial Control and Coordination 8

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities 8

1.3 Training and Exercises 10

1.4 Resources 11

1.5 Discussion 11

2.0 Risk and Threat Assessment 13

2.1 Wildfire Risk Assessment 14

2.2 Community Risk Information 15

2.3 Discussion 16

3.0 Emergency Communications 18

3.1 Operational Communications 19

3.2 Public Communications 20

3.3 Social Media 21

3.4 Discussion 22

4.0 Civil Emergency Response 23

4.1 Community Emergency Preparedness 23

4.2 Evacuations 24

4.3 Highway Interruptions 25

4.4 Discussion 26

RECOVERY **27**

RECOMMENDATIONS **29**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE **31**

CONTACT INFORMATION **33**

APPENDIX B – RESULTS FROM GNWT AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS **34**

Control and Coordination **35**

Risk and Threat Assessment **37**

Communications **39**

Emergency Response **41**

APPENDIX C – PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS **43**

APPENDIX D – QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEY **47**

INTRODUCTION

The *Civil Emergency Measures Act* (*CEMA*) provides a foundation for emergency planning and response in the NWT. The *Act* outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Minister of MACA and community governments in preparing for and responding to civil emergencies. An emergency is when there is a present or imminent threat that is affecting or could affect the health, safety or welfare of people or is damaging or could damage property. Under *CEMA*, MACA is the GNWT's lead department for coordinating overall territorial response to a civil emergency or the imminent threat of an emergency.

On a continuing basis, MACA works with communities through its regional offices to improve emergency preparedness, and conduct mitigation and recovery activities. MACA's emergency response obligations under the *Act* are met through the development, maintenance and activation of the NWT Emergency Plan (the Plan). The Plan sets out the policy and guidance for GNWT departments and partners to provide a prompt and coordinated response to territorial emergencies and to support communities, when required, during local emergencies.

The Plan also establishes the Territorial Emergency Response Committee (TERC) which is the primary planning forum for government emergency preparedness. Membership in TERC includes GNWT, federal government, private, and non-government organizations with emergency management mandates in the NWT. All member agencies are responsible for fulfilling their designated emergency responsibilities and operate under the lead of MACA as Committee Chair.

Throughout summer 2014, wildfires threatened a number of NWT communities, primarily in the North and South Slave regions. This resulted in impacts on residents, including a number of evacuations, territorial park closures, health effects due to smoke, shortages of goods, and highway closures interrupting public travel.

GNWT departments, municipal governments, and businesses worked together to ensure the safety and security of residents and to lessen the impacts of the wildfires. This collaboration and collective response effort was challenged by the size of the area impacted, the number of incidents requiring a response, the period of time requiring monitoring of risk conditions and heightened readiness, and the numerous communications required to keep residents informed.

Whati NWT - July 2014.

Collectively, GNWT Departments worked together to maintain increased awareness, monitor wildfire risk, and plan for response actions from May to the end of August. Over that period, territorial and regional emergency response committees supported eleven communities experiencing increased wildfire risk; they managed the evacuation of two communities; and conducted four evacuations of remote areas. GNWT departments also collaborated on two territorial park evacuations, traffic interruptions on highways 1, 3, 4 and 5, the protection of critical communications and power distribution infrastructure, and communicated the risks associated with wildfire smoke to residents.

Despite the event being one of the worst on record, health impacts due to the smoke were marginal, there were no fatalities, and no losses occurred involving municipal infrastructure. While it is tragic that a few residents experienced property loss in remote areas, the NWT is considered fortunate to have experienced such a summer with minimal infrastructure loss overall.

"I believe the entire team needs to be commended for fighting the fire and avoiding loss of life. It was a scary time for all." – Public Comment

Under the NWT Emergency Plan, MACA is responsible for coordination and debriefing on emergency operations and the preparation of a final report on the response to major emergencies. As the wildfire season was a major event requiring large scale and sustained efforts by the GNWT, this after action review has been developed to ensure maximum value is achieved from lessons learned.

"I think the GNWT, community governments and residents learned some valuable lessons this past summer. I hope and trust that they will be incorporated in advance of the next major event and that the governments will appear highly coordinated and will be highly communicative straight out of the gate." – Public Comment

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METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this after action review is to evaluate response efforts by the GNWT and its support and collaboration with municipal governments and critical infrastructure owners. The goal is to identify key issues and concerns, and to make recommendations to improve GNWT's plans and processes for dealing with civil emergencies.

The review focuses on the following four key areas:

- Control and Coordination: Assess the control and coordination of emergency response efforts by the territorial government in support of municipal governments and the private sector, including level of understanding of roles and responsibilities and response structures.

- Risk Assessment: Assess the ongoing process for determining risk levels, including the assessment and communication of wildfire risks and evacuation requirements.

- Emergency Communications: Assess the effectiveness of emergency communications tools (e.g. situation reports, public emergency bulletins, electronic information, etc.) used by the GNWT.

- Civil Emergency Response: Assess the overall effectiveness of the civil emergency response, from preparations and readiness through to the evacuation and hosting.

Key stakeholder groups were identified in order to facilitate the collection of relevant information. Questionnaires and a survey were developed to obtain input from GNWT departments, communities, critical infrastructure owners, businesses and the public.

In early 2015, a total of 60 interviews were conducted with GNWT, municipal and business sector representatives, that were involved in emergency response efforts. The public survey was posted to the MACA website, shared with stakeholder groups and advertised in northern newspapers. The survey (French and English) was available for six weeks and resulted in 68 individual responses, 53 of which originated from Yellowknife.

DETAILED FINDINGS

The key issues, challenges and recommendations contained in this report are based on background provided by GNWT departments, information collected from questionnaires and a survey, and emergency measures best practice from other jurisdictions.

1.0 CONTROL AND COORDINATION

Effective control and coordination is critical to success when managing a response to an emergency event. Controlling and coordinating the response to the impacts of the 2014 wildfires proved to be a significant challenge. It involved a wide range of issues and events over an extended period of time and required effective cooperation and coordination by the GNWT, municipal governments, and critical infrastructure owners.

Results from the questionnaires and survey indicated strong agreement the GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating emergency response efforts throughout the summer. Respondents indicated roles and responsibilities were well-understood and responders had sufficient training and resources with which to perform tasks. All respondents indicated there was a clear process in place for municipal governments to access support from the GNWT when necessary.

While the magnitude and complexity of events were unexpected, and many new people were involved at all levels, emergency response efforts adapted and improved over the summer. Despite this overall success, there were a number of issues and concerns that stood out in relation to control and coordination of response efforts.

> ***"The situation started out chaotic, but over the summer it became more apparent that agencies and communities were coordinating. The direction improved and I had increasing comfort officials had a handle on things." – Public Comment***

1.1 Territorial Control and Coordination

In any civil emergency, effective control and coordination is essential in helping to ensure adequate communications, the protection of critical infrastructure, and the safety of residents. The territorial emergency response system for civil emergencies consists of the Public Safety Division in MACA which is supported by TERC in developing and coordinating a GNWT response. Communities receive support only when local capacity has been exceeded. Incident management is provided by MACA with support from other GNWT departments through a Regional Emergency Response Committee (RERC). Support is provided by TERC when additional communications and inter-agency coordination is necessary, as is the case when evacuation is required.

It was evident from the feedback that RERCs were effective in supporting municipal emergency response efforts. Overall, RERC coordination provided an effective mechanism for GNWT operational staff, regional federal staff, and critical infrastructure operators to establish situational awareness and develop and coordinate response actions. Pivotal to this effort was ongoing direct contact with key emergency response agencies and municipal officials throughout the course of the wildfire events.

> ***"Affected community governments were working well with the Regional Emergency Response Committees. MACA superintendents were directly involved in the field." – GNWT Comment***

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

For civil emergencies, the roles and responsibilities of GNWT departments and key partners are broadly defined in the NWT Emergency Plan. The Plan also provides the concept and structure whereby the GNWT supports community response efforts when an event stems beyond municipal capacity. Under such circumstances, detailed plans are commonly used to ensure a suitable strategy and resources.

Generally, feedback from respondents indicates an adequate understanding of emergency response roles and responsibilities at the community, regional, and territorial levels. However, there were circumstances which presented unique challenges which response agencies did not quite anticipate, nor where adequate response plans initially developed and implemented. For example, the situation when communities were impacted by stranded motorists and the necessity for a single source for public communications.

GNWT employee reports on wildfire ZF-020 (Birch Lake) - July 2014.

As the wildfire season progressed and the scope and complexity of response efforts increased, additional departments and partners became involved, which contributed to the challenges. These issues were eventually resolved utilizing improved tools and practices at both the territorial and municipal levels. This required sustained planning efforts to ensure adequate risk assessment and corresponding action plans, which eventually became common practise for regional and territorial response officials. Contributing to the success of the response was the recent implementation of a table-top exercise program to validate community emergency plans.

> ***"We were better prepared than in prior years. The use of tabletop exercises were effective where stakeholders came together to plan and coordinate. This was very positive." – GNWT Comment***

1.3 Training and Exercises

A comparative analysis of practices from other jurisdictions confirms training and exercises are a necessary key component of an effective emergency response regime. The NWT Emergency Plan does not contain provisions with which to help build and sustain adequate capacity and preparedness relative to the current hazard environment.

Through MACA, the GNWT provides training to communities to enhance emergency response capacity and offers emergency planning and tabletop exercise workshops to improve and validate community emergency plans. MACA also facilitates course delivery for basic emergency management and organizing emergency operations centres to departments through TERC and RERCs. In addition, the Department of Transportation (DOT) delivers a community airport emergency tabletop and live exercise program to ensure NWT airports meet their regulatory requirements.

While most GNWT and community stakeholders indicate they have sufficient training to fulfill their responsibilities, almost 20 percent disagree. Many highlighted the importance of regular training and emergency exercises in preparing for emergencies. Given the turnover in key personnel annually, standardized and ongoing training is very important to ensure key agencies possess the knowledge and ability to perform their roles. Tabletop exercises are important to build teamwork, understand mandates and discuss protocols. More live exercises will provide an opportunity to practice interagency control and coordination, build confidence, and identify unique circumstances requiring new or innovative practices.

> ***"These emergencies are so rare; some understood roles better than others. While tabletop exercises are helpful, additional full scale exercises would be useful." – GNWT Comment***

1.4 Resources

Like other jurisdictions in Canada, GNWT departments dedicate limited resources for civil emergency preparedness and response. Departments are expected to manage incremental capacity needs from within current budgets and staff contingents. Communities are expected to cover operational expenses related to emergency response, and where appropriate, seek recovery for damages and response costs through the GNWT's Disaster Assistance Program.

While community respondents strongly agree they had sufficient resources to respond to this particular event, some GNWT respondents feel their response agencies lack the necessary capacity for larger events. Response efforts in summer 2014 stretched the resources of most departments involved. It was obvious from the feedback received that issues around the lack of capacity related almost entirely to human resources. Many interviewed feel the civil emergency preparedness and response efforts took over their lives for the whole summer without any kind of break. It was clear, adequate coverage involving such circumstances is a challenge.

1.5 Discussion

Overall, civil emergency response efforts were considered effective and adequate control and coordination was a key factor. However, early during the event, some confusion occurred concerning roles and responsibilities involving inter-agency activities and overlapping mandates. It also became clear, some officials did not possess sufficient knowledge and experience, which then required planners to spend more time than necessary on preparatory discussions and tasks. Finally, due to the length of the event, capacity and available resources became stretched and limited options existed with which to assign or share resources.

Most other jurisdictions in Canada have adopted an incident management system as part of the emergency response structure. An incident management system provides a

common set of principles and a standardized organizational structure which supports effective control and coordination for key response agencies and municipal authorities. It helps establish clarity concerning roles and responsibilities, and it facilitates the sharing of resources. An incident management system will also help maximize the efficiency of training and exercises involving all elements of the emergency response structure.

2.0 RISK AND THREAT ASSESSMENT

Government departments and agencies require a thorough understanding of current and future hazards to implement an appropriate and effective response to disasters. The 2014 wildfires confirmed how important the management and communication of risk and hazard information is for those involved. In addition, timely communication of risk and threat information to the public is essential to ensure residents achieve situational awareness, permitting them to effectively decide how best to protect and prepare themselves.

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify hazards and threats; analyze and evaluate the risks associated with hazards and threats; identify and determine the appropriate mitigation approach; and prioritize planning and resource allocation. Factors which help us understand wildfire risk include event location(s), smoke intensity, wind velocity/direction, precipitation, relative humidity, topography, proximity to natural fire breaks, and the nature of any suppression activities underway. Most conditions change rapidly, rendering risk assessment most challenging. Ultimately, adequate risk assessment helps emergency officials protect residents and values at risk, which may include municipal infrastructure, highways, parks, historical sites, remote cabins/homesteads and critical infrastructure, such as power generation, distribution systems and communications lines and towers.

30 min after discovery, this fire quickly became a crown fire and caused the closure of highway 5 – August 2014.

It was clear from the interviews and survey that wildfire risk assessments are extremely important to emergency response officials to help prioritize activities and guide actions. In addition, a strong majority of respondents feel the territorial government was effective in notifying municipal officials of impending threats and providing timely information on the changing risk levels.

Key agencies collaborated and coordinated effectively to ensure risk and threat information was consistently shared by all stakeholders. Regular contact was maintained between headquarters and regions to communicate current hazards and risks which supported planning activities among government agencies. This helped to facilitate the work of both territorial and regional emergency response committees and it guided the GNWT's response planning efforts and communications to the public and municipal governments.

As with most elements of the response effort, the length and intensity of the event challenged the government's ability to sustain an effective process with which to ensure timely risk information is conveyed. This experience provided a unique opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of current practise and contemplate alternative approaches which may help address gaps.

2.1 Wildfire Risk Assessment

Success during emergency response events depends largely on the proficient distribution of risk related information between key agencies, and the development of corresponding response plans. Responsibility for risk related information rests with subject matter experts who are most familiar with the hazard and its behaviour relative to key factors. It was evident from the feedback received that the GNWT at the territorial and regional levels relied heavily on wildfire risk information and assessments to plan and prioritize civil emergency response activities involving municipal authorities, critical infrastructure, and public communications. Multiple sources are often necessary in order

to ensure an accurate risk assessment, which further lends to the challenges associated with this important activity.

> ***"We depended on Environment and Natural Resources for all sorts of information including fire and wind behaviour. Their advice was vital as part of the decision making process on when to open or close a highway."***
> ***– Department of Transportation***

Overall, the GNWT performed well in collecting and disseminating risk information to response agencies. However, further consideration should be given to developing practices and procedures that will help ensure consistent and timely receipt of this important information across regions and among response agencies – particularly when events become prolonged. As the number of locations involving wildfires grew, and the period of time for the event increased, improved coordination for collection and dissemination of risk-related information is necessary. Other jurisdictions utilize pre-established risk assessment procedures involving common terminology and defined threat levels, which help to guide action planning.

2.2 Community Risk Information

Under *CEMA*, municipal authorities are responsible to prepare and approve community emergency plans and to establish emergency response committees which are led by designated coordinators. When a community is facing increased risk due to wildfire, multiple agencies communicate and work with municipal governments to ensure a thorough understanding of the associated risk.

> ***"We were kept in touch with Environment and Natural Resources about the fire situation, but seemed to go days without an update." – Community Comment***

Early during the event, the GNWT performed well in developing and disseminating risk information to municipal officials; however, feedback indicates that as the event lengthened, information needs and ability to interpret that risk information became challenging. Some communities and agencies were able to reach out themselves to key officials to obtain information to help make planning decisions, while others required much more support and detail to help inform response efforts. This indicates risk assessment needs to be structured in a manner which addresses varied circumstances brought about by different types of sub-events. For example, floods occur over a short period of time while wildfires may span weeks, even months.

The GNWT works with communities to improve community emergency preparedness and response planning. This examination indicates that communities which are better prepared and understand risk assessment had participated recently in a community emergency planning workshop and had completed a community hazard identification risk assessment. Future activity needs to involve continued efforts to build capacity in this respect.

2.3 Discussion

Wildfire risk assessments developed and disseminated by the GNWT were critical to the planning and response efforts of key response agencies and municipal authorities. However, due to the length and magnitude of the event, and the number of regions, communities, and stakeholders involved, distribution of this critical information became problematic. Further, some communities found it challenging to apply the information in the context of emergency preparedness and response planning, further stretching the GNWT's ability to support municipal efforts.

Pumps and sprinklers set up by GNWT at Sandy Lake to protect property – August 2014.

Establishing a good understanding of wildfire risk is an ongoing and shared responsibility involving all key agencies. A structured approach to risk assessment during an emergency is a common practise in most other jurisdictions, which involves the use of common language and established procedures. Future work on modernizing the NWT's emergency management regime should consider these key success factors to help ensure maximum benefits are achieved from available risk information involving all prevalent hazards.

3.0 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is a critical element of all emergency or disaster response operations. Operational communications facilitate control and coordination of government emergency response activities by establishing situational awareness among response agencies and informing planning efforts. Public communications are critical in providing threat assessments to residents and immediate direction during a disaster. During the event, public communications included wildfire operations and activities, smoke advisories, highway status updates, territorial park status updates, and information on wildfire risk and emergency preparedness and response efforts.

A clear majority of GNWT staff surveyed indicate the situational reports used by GNWT officials were effective; the level of information sharing between responders was good; there was effective cooperation and coordination on public information products; and the information given to the public was timely and relevant. There is also strong agreement an adequate level of information sharing with municipal officials occurred. About 60 percent of public respondents agreed the GNWT was effective in communicating wildfire risk to residents, however only half of those surveyed feel the information was timely and relevant.

While the questionnaire and survey results indicate the GNWT's operational communications were effective, results concerning public communications appear somewhat less. Departments performed well in communicating to the public within their own mandated areas; however, as the summer progressed and the wildfire event expanded to encompass a larger area and more residents, public communications became challenging. Public feedback confirms a clear desire for frequent updates and a consolidation of information into a single, easily accessible source.

3.1 Operational Communications

Establishing situational awareness is critical in providing emergency related information to agencies involved in responding to a threat or disaster. To do so, MACA uses an established situational awareness protocol. The protocol helps create a common operating picture through the continuous coordination of collecting, evaluating and disseminating information to produce a shared understanding of the situation, the allocation and status of resources, and an action plan. The key element of the protocol is the situational report, which is used to update agencies and municipal officials on risk levels, response activities, potential outcomes, planning efforts, and communications activity. These reports are produced by operational staff and are not shared publically.

> ***"The situation reports from MACA were good and provided regular updates. Government stakeholders felt that MACA was available and on the ground in the community." – GNWT Comment***

Given the scope, complexity, and duration of the event, and the resulting civil emergency response efforts, it is critical to ensure good situational awareness among response groups. However, as the summer progressed and interest in response activities intensified, there developed a need for additional communications to help update elected officials who serve residents impacted by the event. New tools were subsequently created, which now need to be considered part of the GNWT's standard practise.

Burn area near Whati - July 2014.

3.2 Public Communications

Timely and accurate public information is an essential element of any emergency management system. The NWT Emergency Plan includes the GNWT Emergency Communications Protocol (the Protocol). The Protocol describes how the GNWT coordinates its communications efforts to ensure clear, consistent, and timely messages for the media and general public. The Protocol is implemented when an emergency involves more than one department. It calls for the creation of an Emergency Communications Group representing key departments, and it relies upon tools such as emergency bulletins, media interviews and press releases to inform the public.

During summer 2014, there were several departments using similar strategies in providing information to the public. To a large extent, this involved departmental websites, media releases, interviews, Facebook and Twitter. Information varied widely, which included wildfire operations and activities; smoke updates and related health care advice; highway closures; territorial park updates; and emergency measures updates. In addition, some municipal authorities, such as the City of Yellowknife, kept residents informed via website, the media, Twitter and Facebook.

All in all, residents of the NWT received large volumes of information which became somewhat challenging to process as the event progressed. Eventually, the numerous sources for public communications became a source of confusion and frustration. At some point during the summer, it became apparent that a single source for public information from the GNWT would offer tremendous value, which is standard practise in most other jurisdictions in Canada. In response, the GNWT established a single-window approach utilizing the GNWT's homepage. Emergency bulletins were also released daily to media outlets with updated information from key departments.

> ***"It was stressful to coordinate information with family from a distance. One trusted site for coordinated information would be effective." – Public Comment***

3.3 Social Media

The use of social media (e.g. Facebook; Twitter) is quite common in most jurisdictions to inform the public during emergencies. Some GNWT departments and municipal authorities have been relying on it for some time, which is evidenced in its application during summer 2014.

Update via Twitter - August 2014.

The results of the public survey indicate that in addition to government websites, 50 percent of respondents received information via Facebook and 43 percent via Twitter. By comparison, 50 percent of respondents relied upon radio and 20 percent received updates from newspapers. Although most respondents who support social media as a source of information reside in Yellowknife, a striking majority feel social media is a much more timely and direct form of communication during emergencies.

Early during the wildfire event, the GNWT began using Twitter to keep travellers and residents informed of highway closures. While considered highly successful, this effort required a team effort, dedicated resources, and sufficient personnel to sustain this activity for the duration of the event. This provided a clear demonstration how social media tools and a formal strategy could enhance communications to the public.

"Excellent work was done by individuals in DOT, other agencies lacked the ability to provide timely or effective information." – Public Comment

3.4 Discussion

Communications during any emergency event is a challenge given the level of coordination required across numerous groups and the relatively short timeline required to keep information relevant and timely. In addition, public communications must keep pace with technology and how the public seeks out government information during emergencies.

Future consideration should be given to a permanent single window communications approach that will consolidate all public safety related information into a single portal that will receive continual updating during critical periods. This needs to be combined with a formal strategy involving the effective application of social media. Secondly, the GNWT requires an effective means to inform elected officials on current status and activities relative to their constituencies. Situation reports are far too detailed and they tend to be somewhat speculative in terms of outcomes for that purpose. Finally, given the frequent turnover in the GNWT, a common training and exercise platform would be most helpful to ensure the necessary experience and knowledge exists among those responsible for emergency-related communications.

4.0 CIVIL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Civil emergency response requires effective territorial and community emergency plans. Territorial legislation obligates the GNWT and municipal authorities to create emergency plans, which require periodic validation through exercises or actual events. This helps encourage a suitable level of preparedness that will help key agencies and municipal authorities respond to emergency events. Most of those involved in civil emergency response efforts during summer 2014 feel the GNWT and its partners were effective in supporting municipal governments and remote area residents; providing notification of voluntary evacuations; and addressing the needs of displaced residents.

During the event, the GNWT dealt with a number of wildfire threats and impacts on NWT residents. In addition to responsibilities for wildfire management, the GNWT took direct defensive action around eleven communities that were at increased risk; two territorial parks were evacuated and subsequently closed; extensive traffic interruptions were managed involving highways 1, 3, 4 and 5; evacuations were conducted in two communities and four remote areas; and public health messaging was issued concerning the health effects of smoke. Additionally, departments worked with facility managers to minimize the impact on critical communications and power distribution systems. While these response efforts were considered successful, there are a number of areas identified that merit consideration.

"The evacuation of Kakisa went very well." – GNWT Comment

4.1 Community Emergency Preparedness

The GNWT works with communities to improve emergency preparedness through community emergency planning and table top exercises, which help improve and validate community emergency plans. Over the past four years, 16 communities have participated. It was evident from the interviews that the level of community emergency preparedness varied widely and those communities that had updated and practiced

community emergency plans were much more confident and prepared to deal with the impacts of the wildfires.

4.2 Evacuations

A critical activity during a civil emergency response is the evacuation of a population at risk and the hosting of residents. While there have been numerous evacuations in the NWT over the years, very little direction is contained in the NWT Emergency Plan with which to guide efforts. This has led to a somewhat ad hoc approach which is dependent largely on the experience and knowledge of those involved at the time.

Fieldhouse set up to lodge evacuees – August 2014.

Feedback from those involved in evacuations during summer 2014 indicates initial uncertainty on how evacuations should be coordinated for communities and remote

areas. There are no territorial plans or clear procedures in place to guide individual and departmental efforts. In addition, terminology used in coordinating evacuations varies by event, which caused confusion among response agencies. It was noted that just prior to the 2014 wildfire season, the GNWT had updated emergency plans for the parks and had conducted tabletop exercises, which contributed towards a successful approach in terms of parks closures.

4.3 Highway Interruptions

The GNWT is well practiced in dealing with traffic interruptions; however, summer 2014 presented considerable challenges, given the volume of highway closures over an extended period of time. These interruptions impacted residents, visitors and the flow of goods and services into many communities.

> ***"There were long lines of trucks and other vehicles along the highway and DOT was stretched to keep up. There should have been more coordination between DOT and EMO to support the people on the highway." – GNWT Comment***

While most respondents agree, the GNWT performed well managing and communicating information on highway closures, uncertainty remained concerning the movement of traffic and supplies. Although typical of wildfire situations, this event resulted in volumes of traffic backing-up near smaller communities, which were unprepared. While communities adapted and provided assistance to the extent possible, it was felt more could have been done to assist them in dealing with the influx of sometimes angry travellers and transport vehicles.

> ***"Thanks to the RCMP for the information they gave out at the Edzo roadblock and the work that the community of Rae did for all of us stranded motorists, otherwise the situation at the roadblock would have been awful." – Public Comment***

4.4 Discussion

Current and validated emergency plans are essential to highly effective emergency preparedness and response. They build confidence and teamwork for emergency response agencies and encourage a sharing of knowledge and understanding within and between all levels of government.

While the GNWT's response efforts during the event were considered effective, respondents identified issues concerning out-dated community response plans, the lack of detailed evacuation plans for communities and remote areas, and uncertainty concerning the handling of stranded motorists and communities impacted by highway closures.

Consideration should be given to developing detailed plans for community and remote area evacuations; enhancing efforts to support communities wishing to develop and/or validate emergency response plans; and developing plans to support communities impacted by major highway closures.

RECOVERY

While not specifically examined as part of this review, recovery activity is included to ensure a complete picture of emergency measures activity and lessons learned from summer 2014.

Aerial view of burn scars surrounding Kakisa - Summer 2014.

Financial assistance for major disasters for all jurisdictions in Canada is available through the federal government's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA). The purpose of DFAA is to assist provinces and territories with the costs of dealing with a disaster where those costs would otherwise place a significant burden on the provincial or territorial economy and would exceed what they might reasonably be expected to fully bear on their own. In the past ten years, the GNWT has recovered $4 million for damages occurring from the 2005 Fort Good Hope and the 2006 Aklavik floods. A $1.7 million claim is currently receiving final audit for the 2012 Nahanni Butte flood. The 2014 wildfire event resulted in approximately $55 million in direct firefighting costs. This was roughly eight times the annual budget normally allocated. Given the

financial burden placed on the GNWT by this unexpected event, the GNWT is seeking reimbursement of eligible costs under the DFAA to the extent possible.

Expenditures for wildfire emergencies eligible under DFAA are of an extraordinary nature and are related to wildfire operations in defence of communities; evacuations; disruption of the delivery of essential goods and services (highway management, closures, monitoring and convoys); and critical infrastructure protection. In February 2015, the GNWT requested approval from Public Safety Canada to advance a claim amounting to $4.7 million. If approved, a formal claim will be submitted by the GNWT which will eventually require detailed financial information and a territorial and federal audit of expenses before funds can be recovered. This process usually takes two years or more.

Lessons learned from activities stemming from summer 2014 illustrate a necessity for improved guidance for officials responsible for spending decisions involving major disaster events. DFAA claims involve a detailed analysis of financial costing and related procedures and considerable advantages and efficiencies can be gained by ensuring a suitable approach for the tracking and accounting of financial information within the context of the GNWT's financial administration regime. These efforts will serve to improve the GNWT's ability to recover costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MACA is in the process of modernizing the civil emergency response regime in the NWT. This work includes a new territorial emergency measures statute and an updated NWT emergency plan. The following recommendations stemming from this examination will inform this work:

1. Address identified gaps in the NWT Emergency Plan by developing suitable approaches and plans for community and remote area evacuations, and management of the consequences of highway interruptions during major emergencies.

2. Facilitate training, interoperability, and the sharing of resources across emergency response organizations by adopting a common incident management approach.

3. Clarify communications roles and responsibilities and improve responsiveness during emergencies by reviewing and updating territorial emergency communications plans and procedures, including the sharing of risk information.

4. Improve emergency response capacity in the territories by developing a strategy for emergency response training and exercises for key personnel involved in response activities.

5. Build community resilience by working with community governments to improve knowledge of emergency management, hazards and risk, and to update and improve community emergency plans.

After action reviews are part of an emergency management cycle to assess response efforts and identify recommendations to improve emergency procedures and plans. During the development of this examination, some GNWT departments conducted their

own internal after action reviews and have made changes, or are in the process of making changes reflective of lessons learned during summer 2014.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The following table identifies operational and strategic actions which form the GNWT's response to the recommendations contained in the review:

Recommendations	Actions	Status
1. Address identified gaps in the NWT Emergency Plan.	• Implement interim guidelines for evacuation and reception.	Completed June 2015
	• Update territorial emergency measures legislation as a foundation for a new territorial emergency response plan.	Introduction of Bill - Spring 2016
	• Update the NWT emergency response plan, including provisions to ensure a common operating picture and risk assessment. The new plan will adopt an *Incident Management System (IMS)*.	Work commencing Fall 2015
	• Develop a mass evacuation plan for communities and remote areas.	
	• Develop hazard specific plans to guide emergency planning and response, including wildfires, floods and major transportation events.	
2. Facilitate training, interoperability, and the sharing of resources across responder organizations.	• Conduct incident management and emergency operations centre training during Op NANOOK 2015.	Completed August 2015
	• Coordinate system-wide incident management training to support implementation of the new NT Emergency Response Plan.	Upon completion of NWT Emergency Plan Fall 2016 – Winter 2017
	• Implement standard operating procedures for the territorial and regional emergency operations to clarify roles and responsibilities and facilitate interoperability and the sharing of resources.	Work commencing Winter 2016
3. Clarify communications roles and responsibilities and improve responsiveness during emergencies.	• Update emergency communications protocols to ensure effectiveness and consistency with the new emergency response system.	Work commencing Summer 2016
	• Implement a training and exercise strategy for GNWT Communications staff.	
	• Establish a web-based information centre for public safety information.	Completed June 2015

Recommendations	Actions	Status
	• Continue identifying opportunities to improve the use of social media as a means to communicate with the public during disasters.	Ongoing
	• Implement a standard emergency advisory to ensure timely information for senior staff and elected officials.	Completed May 2015
4. Improve emergency response capacity in the GNWT.	• Continue efforts to improve and sustain regional emergency management operational capacity via workshops and exercises.	Ongoing
	• Develop a territorial emergency measures training and exercise strategy aimed at sustaining capacity at municipal and territorial levels.	Work commencing Summer 2016
5. Build community resilience.	• Continue efforts to deliver community emergency planning and exercise workshops.	Ongoing
	• Work with communities to assess emergency response readiness in response to hazard environment (e.g. floods; forest fires; etc.).	Ongoing

CONTACT INFORMATION

To provide comments or to obtain further information, please contact:

Public Safety Division
Municipal and Community Affairs
Government of the Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 3S9

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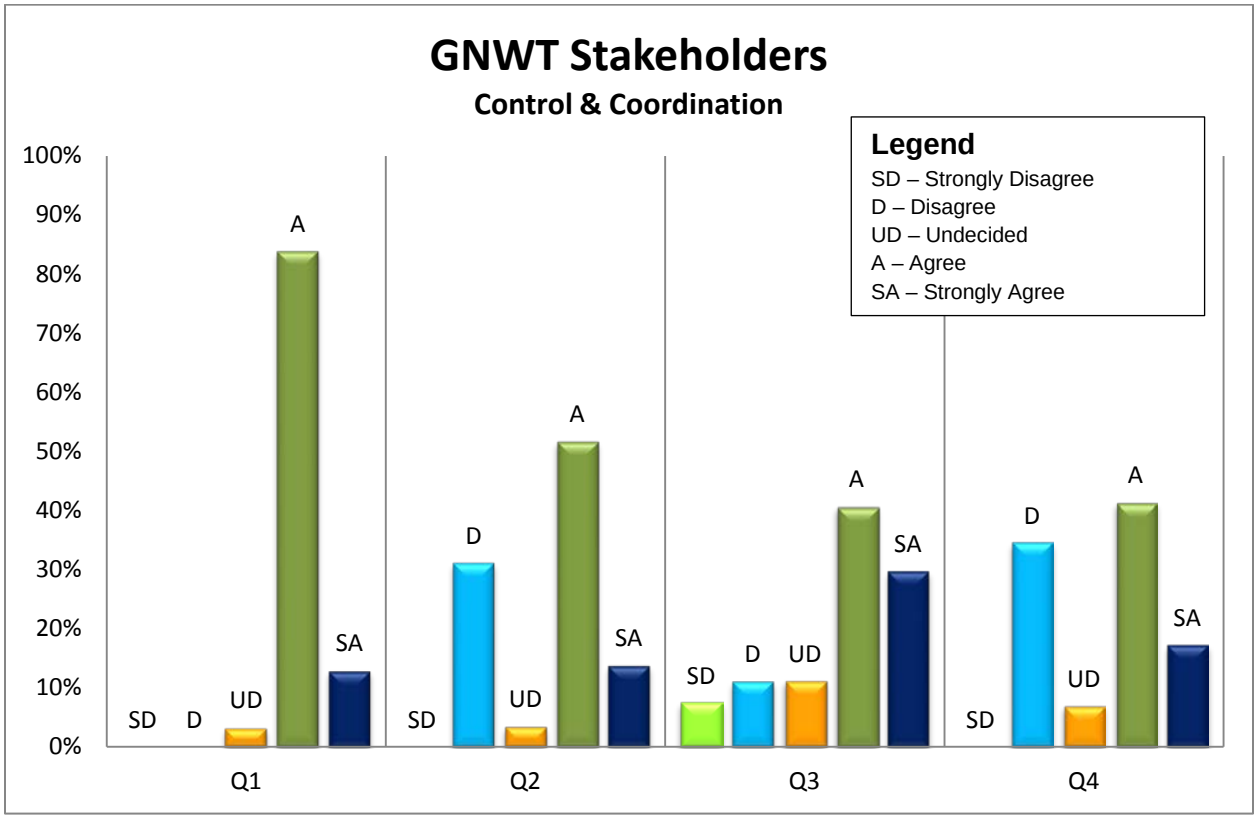
APPENDIX B – RESULTS FROM GNWT AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

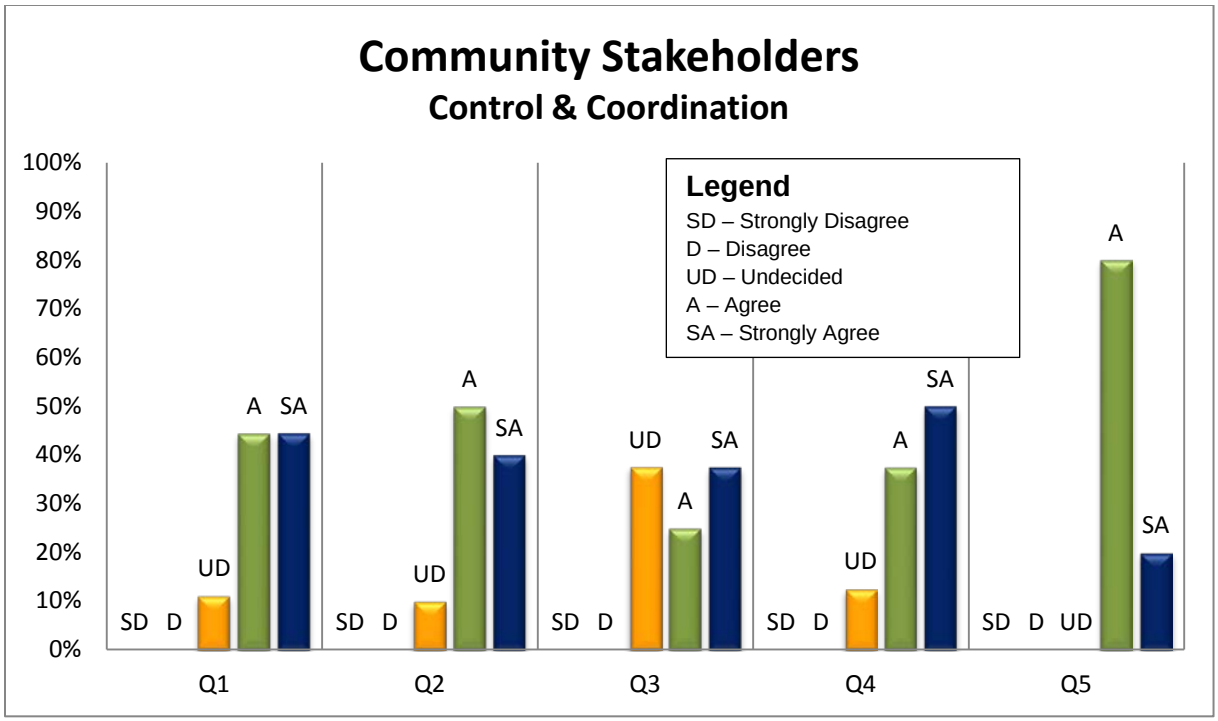
Control and Coordination

The following diagrams summarize the results by stakeholder group on the Control and Coordination theme. The vertical axis represents a percentage of the total number of people interviewed. Interviewees were asked to respond to each question and indicate their agreement with the statement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



Questions:

- Q1 - The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the wildfires.
- Q2 - Roles and responsibilities during civil emergency response efforts were well understood.
- Q3 - I had sufficient training to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.
- Q4 - I had sufficient resources to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.

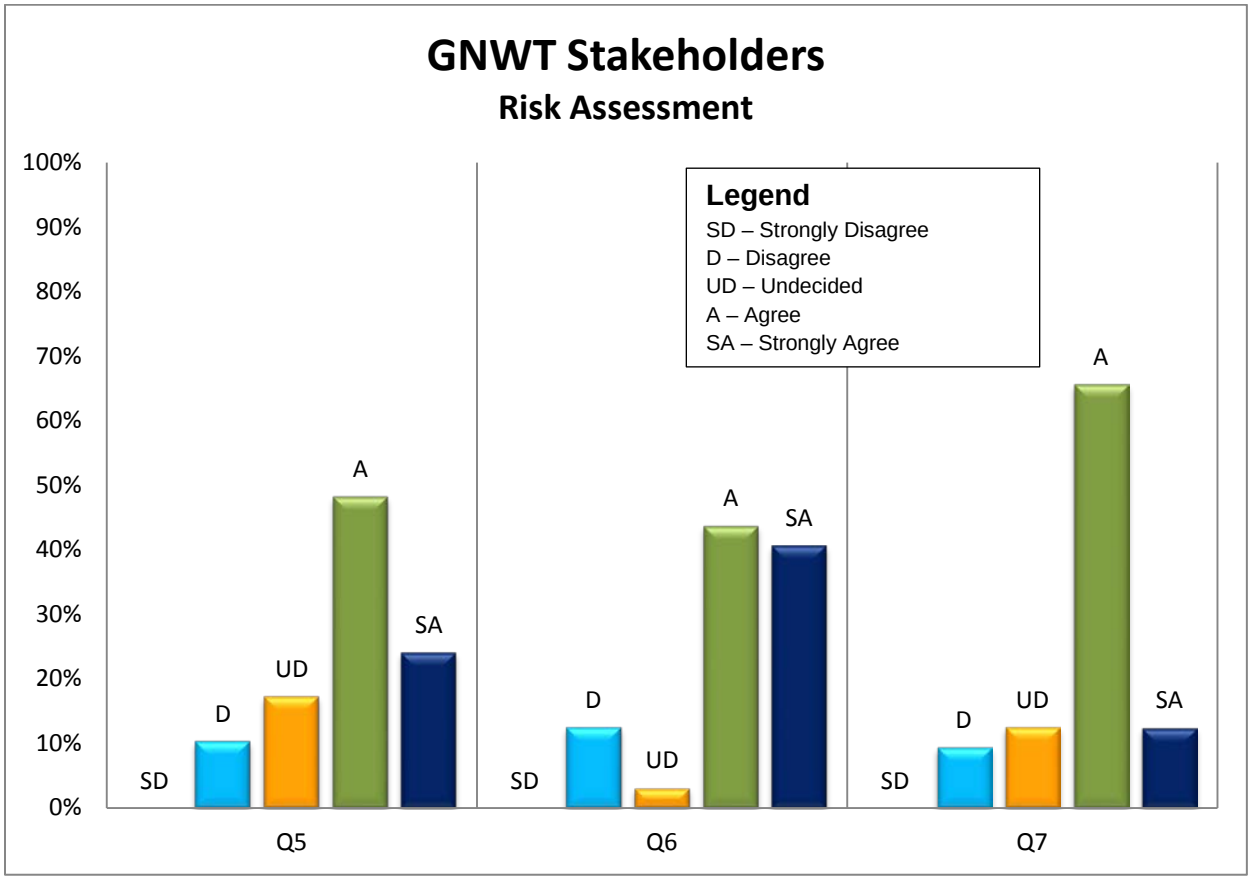


Questions:

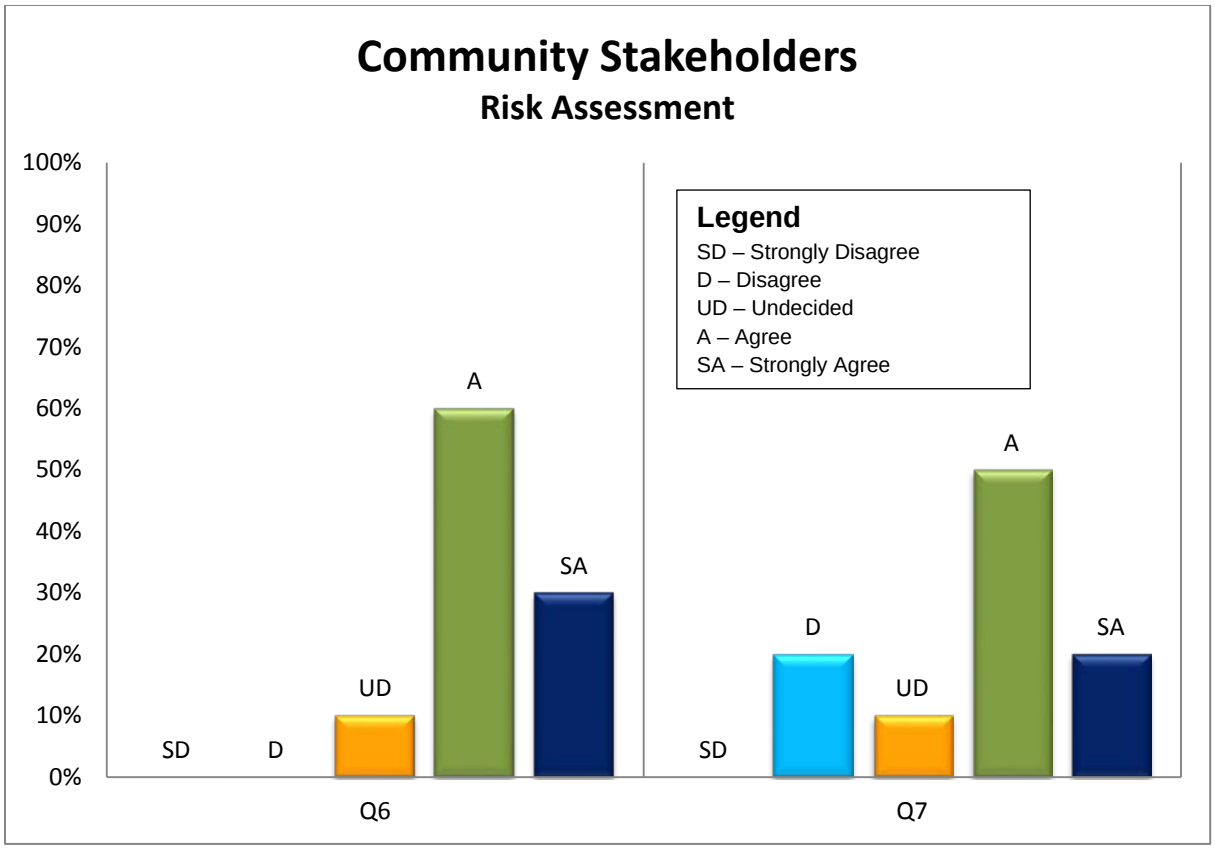
- Q1 - The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the fire.
- Q2 - Roles and responsibilities during civil emergency response efforts were well understood.
- Q3 - I had sufficient training to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.
- Q4 - I had sufficient resources to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.
- Q5 - There was a clear process for the municipal government to access support from the GNWT.

Risk and Threat Assessment

The following diagrams summarize the results by stakeholder group on the Risk and Threat theme. The vertical axis represents a percentage of the total number of people interviewed. Interviewees were asked to respond to each question and indicate their agreement with the statement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



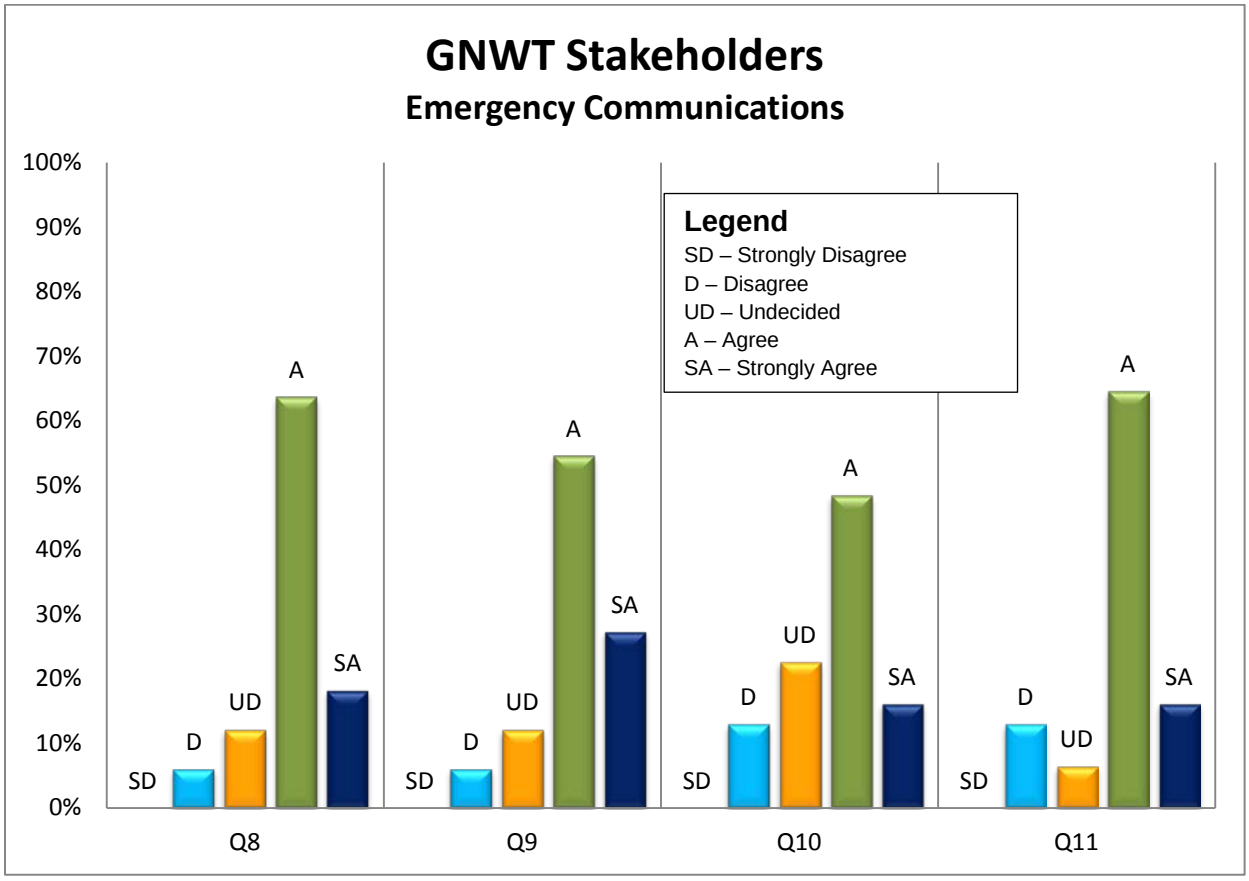
Q5 - The territorial government was effective in notifying communities and key stakeholders of the wildfire risk.
Q6 - My departmental/ organizational activities were dependent on wildfire risk assessments.
Q7 - The amount of lead time given when receiving notice of increased risk situations was sufficient.



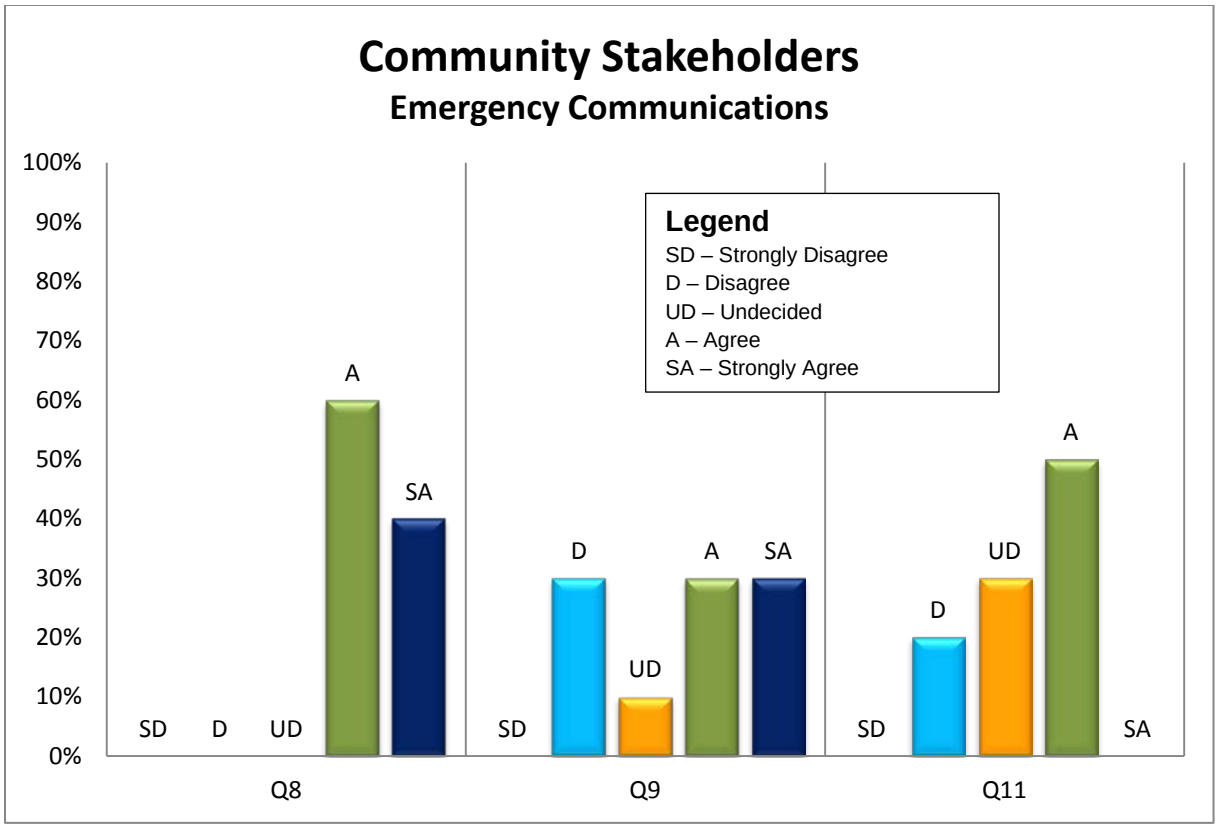
Q6 - The territorial government was effective in notifying communities of the wildfire risk.
Q7 - There was sufficient information provided on wildfire smoke impacts.

Communications

The following diagrams summarize the results by stakeholder group on the Emergency Communications theme. The vertical axis represents a percentage of the total number of people interviewed. Interviewees were asked to respond to each question and indicate their agreement with the statement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



Q8 - The situation reports issued by MACA were effective.
Q9 - There was a good level of information sharing between stakeholders.
Q10 - There was effective coordination and cooperation on public information products.
Q11 - The information given to the public was timely and relevant to actions they needed to take.



Q8 - There was a good level of information sharing between the GNWT and your community.

Q9 - The GNWT was effective in communicating or providing information regarding wildfires and smoke to community residents.

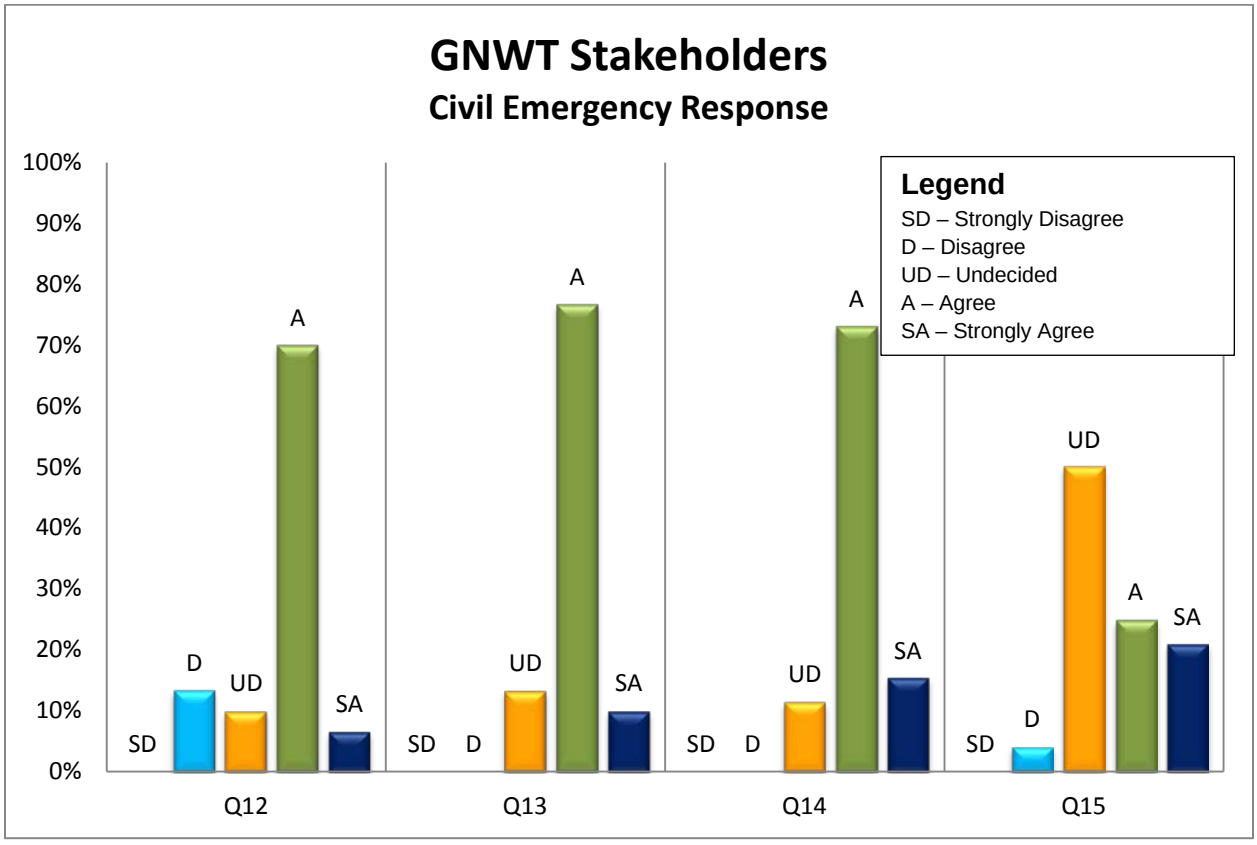
Q11 - The information provided to the public was timely and relevant to actions they needed to take.

Q10 - Where did you obtain your information on the wildfires, smoke, highway closures etc.? (Newspapers, radio, emergency bulletins, Facebook, twitter, other?)

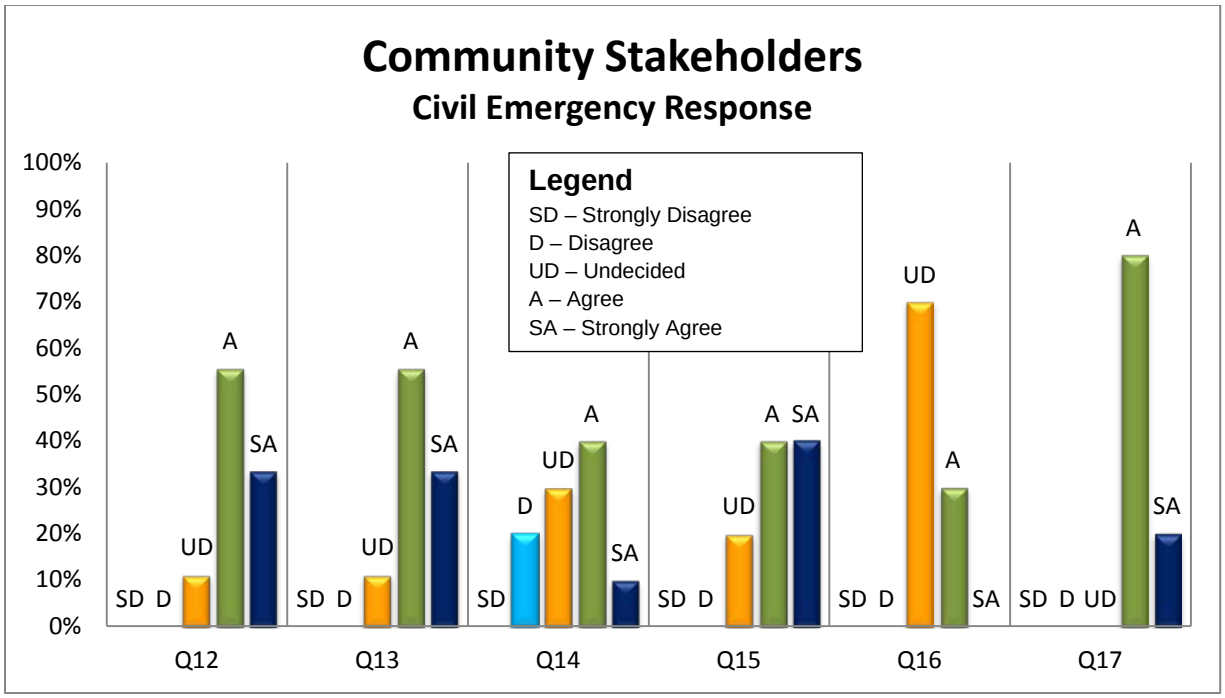
Answer Choices	Responses	
Newspapers	19.57%	9
Radio	50.00%	23
Emergency bulletins	39.13%	18
Facebook	50.00%	23
Twitter	43.48%	20
Total Respondents: 46		

Emergency Response

The following diagrams summarize the results by stakeholder group on the Civil Emergency Response theme. The vertical axis represents a percentage of the total number of people interviewed. Interviewees were asked to respond to each question and indicate their agreement with the statement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



Q12 - Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.
Q13 - There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.
Q14 - The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.
Q15 - The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.



Q12 - Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.
Q13 - There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.
Q14 - There was sufficient notice given when evacuation was required.
Q15 - The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.
Q16 - The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.
Q17 - There was sufficient and effective liaison and coordination with the territorial government.

APPENDIX C – PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS

Q1 Please enter your personal information. This information will be kept confidential and will not be included in the After Action Review Report.

Answered: 59 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Name (optional):	**52.54%**	31
City/Town/Village:	**100.00%**	59

Community	Responses
Yellowknife	**50**
Ingraham Trail	**2**
Hay River	**1**
Norman Wells	**1**
Gameti	**1**
Other	**4**

Q2 The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the fire.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	15.69% 8	17.65% 9	25.49% 13	33.33% 17	7.84% 4	51	3.00

Q3 I was satisfied with my own level of preparedness to deal with wildfires and smoke.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	11.76% 6	17.65% 9	9.80% 5	52.94% 27	7.84% 4	51	3.27

Q4 I was satisfied with the direction given by government officials and/or emergency responders during response efforts.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	19.61% 10	21.57% 11	17.65% 9	37.25% 19	3.92% 2	51	2.84

Q5 The territorial government was effective in informing the public of the risk from wildfires and smoke.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	23.53% 12	25.49% 13	5.88% 3	37.25% 19	7.84% 4	51	2.80

Q6 The amount and timeliness of information on wildfire risk, road closures, park closures, smoke etc. was sufficient.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	13.73% 7	19.61% 10	9.80% 5	50.98% 26	5.88% 3	51	3.16

Q7 Where did you get information on wildfires, road closures, park closures and smoke impacts?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 14

Answer Choices	Responses	
Newspapers	19.57%	9
Radio	50.00%	23
Emergency bulletins	39.13%	18
Facebook	50.00%	23
Twitter	43.48%	20
Total Respondents: 46		

Q8 The information I was given was timely and relevant to the actions I needed to take.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	13.73% 7	23.53% 12	15.69% 8	43.14% 22	3.92% 2	51	3.00

Q9 Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.

Answered: 47 Skipped: 13

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	4.26% 2	10.64% 5	40.43% 19	40.43% 19	4.26% 2	47	3.30

Q10 There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.

Answered: 47 Skipped: 13

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	8.51% 4	12.77% 6	36.17% 17	36.17% 17	6.38% 3	47	3.19

Q11 The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.

Answered: 47 Skipped: 13

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	2.13% 1	10.64% 5	57.45% 27	25.53% 12	4.26% 2	47	3.19

Q12 The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.

Answered: 47 Skipped: 13

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
	10.64% 5	19.15% 9	42.55% 20	23.40% 11	4.26% 2	47	2.91

Q13 Did you experience loss of some kind as a result of the wildfires?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 37

Answer Choices	Responses	
Financial?	43.48%	10
Emotional?	78.26%	18
Property?	8.70%	2
Total Respondents: 23		

APPENDIX D – QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEY

Emergency Response Questionnaire – GNWT and Local Authorities

Introduction:

The GNWT is conducting an After Action Review of the civil emergency response to the 2014 wildfires. The purpose of the after action review is to evaluate and obtain a better understanding on how the territory, communities, and private industries responded to the wildfires. Specifically the after action review will cover the following areas:

- Control and Coordination: Assessing the control and coordination of emergency response efforts by the territorial government, municipal government and private sector. This section seeks to understand how effective and well understood the roles, responsibilities and response structures used during the response to the 2014 wildfires were.

- Risk Assessment: Assessing the ongoing process for determining risk levels. This section seeks input of stakeholders regarding how the territory assessed and communicated wildfire risks and evacuation requirements.

- Emergency Communications: Assessing the effectiveness of emergency communications tools (eg. operational situation reports, public emergency bulletins, emails, etc.) used during the 2014 wildfires.

- Civil Emergency Response: Assessing the overall effectiveness of the civil emergency response, from preparations and readiness through to the evacuation and hosting process.

1. GNWT Stakeholders

Target audience: Territorial – Operational, Territorial – Other (less residents associations), North Slave, South Slave and Other Stakeholders (face to face or phone interviews)

Name:
Position:
Agency/Municipality/Company/Department:
Contact information:

CONTROL AND COORDINATION

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

1. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the wildfires.

Rating____
Comments:

2. Roles and responsibilities during civil emergency response efforts were well understood.

Rating_____
Comments:

3. I had sufficient training to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.

Rating_____
Comments:

4. I had sufficient resources to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.

Rating_____
Comments:

RISK ASSESSMENT

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

5. The territorial government was effective in notifying communities and key stakeholders of the wildfire risk.

Rating_____
Comments:

6. My departmental/ organizational activities were dependent on wildfire risk assessments.

Rating_____
Comments:

7. The amount of lead time given when receiving notice of increased risk situations was sufficient.

Rating_____
Comments:

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

8. The situation reports issued by MACA were effective.

Rating_____
Comments:

9. There was a good level of information sharing between stakeholders.

Rating_____
Comments:

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

10. There was effective coordination and cooperation on public information products.

Rating_____
Comments:

11. The information given to the public was timely and relevant to actions they needed to take.

Rating_____
Comments:

CIVIL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

12. Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.

Rating_____
Comments:

13. There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.

Rating_____
Comments:

14. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.

Rating_____
Comments:

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

15. The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.

Rating_____
Comments:

16. A State of Local Emergency was not declared during summer 2014. Do you think a State of Local Emergency was warranted? If so, why or why not?

Comments:

2. Community Stakeholders

Target audience: City of Yellowknife, Town of Behchoko, Tłįchǫ Community Governments of Gameti, Whati and Wekweeti, Town of Fort Smith, Town of Hay River, Designated Authority of Kakisa, and Hamlet of Fort Providence (face to face or phone interviews)

Name:
Position:
Community:
Contact information:

CONTROL AND COORDINATION

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

1. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the fire.

Rating_____
Comments:

2. Roles and responsibilities during civil emergency response efforts were well understood.

Rating_____
Comments:

3. I had sufficient training to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.

Rating_____
Comments:

4. I had sufficient resources to fulfill my role(s) and responsibilities for civil emergency response.

Rating_____
Comments:

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

5. There was a clear process for the municipal government to access support from the GNWT.

Rating_____
Comments

RISK ASSESSMENT

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

6. The territorial government was effective in notifying communities of the wildfire risk.

Rating_____
Comments:

7. There was sufficient information provided on wildfire smoke impacts.

Rating_____
Comments:

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

8. There was a good level of information sharing between the GNWT and your community.

Rating_____
Comments:

9. The GNWT was effective in communicating or providing information regarding wildfires and smoke to community residents.

Rating_____
Comments:

10. Where did you obtain your information on the wildfires, smoke, highway closures etc.? (Newspapers, radio, emergency bulletins, Facebook, twitter, other?)

Comments:

11. The information provided to the public was timely and relevant to actions they needed to take.

Rating_____
Comments:

CIVIL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

12. Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.

Rating_____
Comments:

13. There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.

Rating_____
Comments:

14. There was sufficient notice given when evacuation was required.

Rating_____
Comments:

1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)

15. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.

Rating_____
Comments:

16. The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.

Rating_____
Comments:

17. There was sufficient and effective liaison and coordination with the territorial government.

Rating_____
Comments:

18. A State of Local Emergency was not declared during summer 2014. Do you think a State of Local Emergency was warranted? If so, why or why not?

Comments:

Public Survey

GNWT After Action Review - Public Consultation

General Information

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) is seeking your participation in a review of government response activities during the summer 2014 wildfire season. MACA is coordinating government efforts to evaluate territorial and regional civil emergency response efforts in order to improve emergency response procedures and plans.

Please review the following statements and provide your answer to the best of your knowledge. Any additional comments can be captured in the 'Additional Comment' box.

1. Please enter your personal information. This information will be kept confidential and will not be included in the After Action Review Report.

General Information

Name: ☐

City/Town/Village: ☐

CONTROL AND COORDINATION

This section focuses on assessing the control and coordination of emergency response efforts by the territorial government, municipal government and private sector.

This section seeks to understand how effective and well understood the roles, responsibilities and response structures used during the response to the 2014 wildfires were.

2. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating their activities during the fire.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

3. I was satisfied with my own level of preparedness to deal with wildfires and smoke.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

4. I was satisfied with the direction given by government officials and/or emergency responders during response efforts.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

Risk Assessment

This section focuses on assessing the ongoing process for determining risk levels.

This section seeks input of stakeholders regarding how the territory assessed and communicated wildfire risks and evacuation requirements.

5. The territorial government was effective in informing the public of the risk from wildfires and smoke.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

Emergency Communications

This section focuses on assessing the effectiveness of emergency communications tools (eg. operational situation reports, public emergency bulletins, emails, etc.) used during the 2014 wildfires.

6. The amount and timeliness of information on wildfire risk, road closures, park closures, smoke etc. was sufficient.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

7. Where did you get information on wildfires, road closures, park closures and smoke impacts?

☐ Newspapers ☐ Radio ☐ Emergency bulletins ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter

Other, please specify:

Additional Comment?

8. The information I was given was timely and relevant to actions I needed to take.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

Civil Emergency Response

This section focuses on assessing the overall effectiveness of the civil emergency response, from preparations and readiness through to the evacuation and hosting process.

9. Emergency response efforts were effective in supporting communities and remote area residents.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

10. There was effective notification and evacuation of communities, parks and remote areas.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

11. The GNWT and municipal governments were effective in coordinating support to evacuees when displaced.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

12. The GNWT was effective in providing medical support to those affected by wildfire smoke.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Undecided ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Additional Comment?

13. Did you experience loss of some kind as a result of the wildfires?

☐ Financial? ☐ Emotional? ☐ Property?

☐ Other, please specify:

14. Do you have any final comments?

Thank you for your participation in this survey. We appreciate your time and feedback in this process. Please feel free to contact us via the following email if you have additional comments.

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