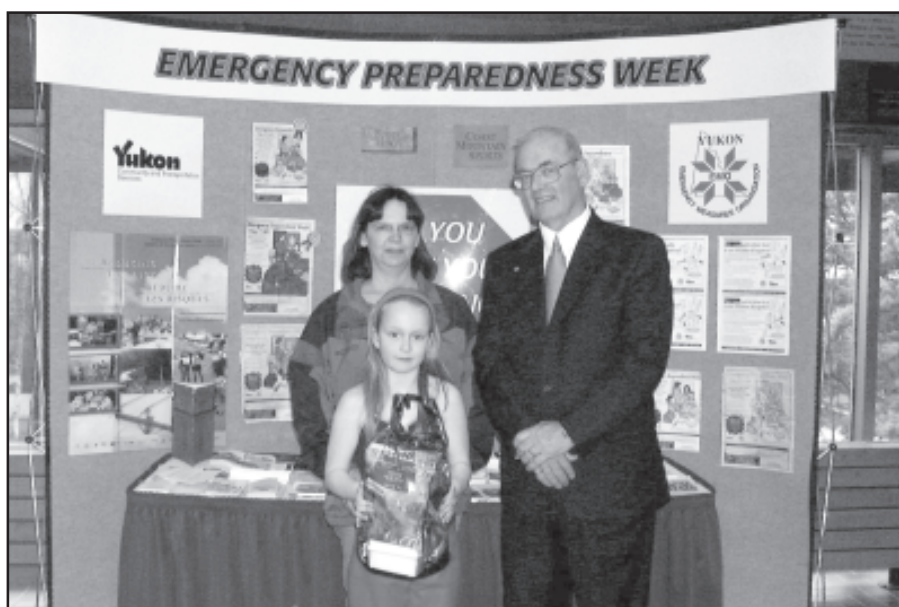


Emergency Preparedness Week Held in May

Emergency Preparedness Week was held May 7 to 11th, 2001. Local communities were encouraged to hold events that demonstrated the need for emergency preparedness in the home and in the community. Displays were set up throughout Yukon, and were well attended by the public. In order to encourage family participation in planning for emergency preparedness, a colouring contest was held to involve children as key members of a community's readiness. As more children become interested and involved, they instill the need to prepare amongst older members of society.

On May 11th, an award presentation took place at the Yukon Government's Main Building to recognize winners of the colouring contest. Three prizes were awarded. A waterproof bag containing some basic items necessary for a home "grab and go" kit, were presented by Mr. Jim McLachlan – MLA for Faro. Mr. McLachlan told those attending that:

"In disaster films, the emergency measures people always seem to be there, rescuing people immediately. But movies aren't real. Experience tells us that in a real disaster,



Faro MLA Jim McLachlan presents award to Allison Comeau during Emergency Preparedness Week.

everyone needs to be prepared to survive on their own for two to three days because it may take that long to get outside help.

This means that every Yukoner, every family, should pack a survival kit, know what to do in an emergency at home, at school, at work, and rehearse an evacuation plan that includes everyone in the household, even the pets.

If you're not ready, Emergency Preparedness Week is a good time to get started."

Winners of the Colouring Contest were Chase Hobbis, Allison Comeau and Marie Khan in their respective age categories. All of the winners were from Whitehorse.



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SARSCENE 2001 UPDATE



This will be the last SARSCENE Update, as the next edition of the MEMO Newsletter (September 2001) will be reporting on the workshop held in the middle of September. Much has been done over the last 3 months to prepare for SARSCENE.

- ✓ Invitations have been sent to VIP's
- ✓ Outdoor demonstrations are being planned to include swift water rescue, vehicle extrication and SAR Technician parachutists
- ✓ Speakers are being confirmed
- ✓ Events for the SAR Games have been decided
- ✓ There are plans for a K9 SAR Games
- ✓ Registrations are coming in
- ✓ Social events are being planned
- ✓ A Silent Auction will be held
- ✓ The Trade Show is attracting more registrations

This is a reminder to all Yukon SAR Teams to enter your team in the SAR Games to be held Wednesday September 12, 2001. For information on registering your team for competition, contact:

John Chaffey

National Search and Rescue Secretariat
Phone: 1-800-727-9414
Fax: (613) 996-3746
Email: jchaffey@nss.gc.ca

For more information on SARSCENE 2001, go to:

<http://www.nss.gc.ca/page1.htm> or;

<http://www.wdsar.yk.ca/main.html>

Call Letter Out for New Initiatives Fund Projects

The National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) has recently issued the annual "Call Letter" requesting project proposals for funding under the New SAR Initiatives Fund (NIF). Each year, opportunities for sponsoring search and rescue programs, projects or equipment purchases are made available to Emergency Measures, and we rely on Yukon SAR partners to identify and apply for project funding under NIF.

Projects sponsored in the past include the original purchase of SAR assets for Yukon SAR, Field Training Modules, and development of standardized certification procedures. If a project is approved, the federal government will provide up to 75% of the funding, and the sponsoring agency is required to provide the remaining 25%.



To get details on how to apply for funding under NIF, contact your local SAR President, the Emergency Measures Branch, or visit the NSS Website at: <http://www.nss.gc.ca/page1.htm>



Earthquake Reminder for Yukon

On June 26, 2001 at approximately 0700 hrs a moderate earthquake rattled residents of southwestern Yukon. The quake was centred approximately 140 kilometers northwest of Haines Junction, Yukon at a depth of 10 kilometers. The preliminary magnitude was recorded at 5.7.

If the magnitude were higher, and serious damage had occurred, what would you have done? Think back to what you were doing at 7:00 am on that day, and ask yourself what you would do if your home began to crumble around you. Would you have made it to safety along with some critical items for survival? Where was the rest of your family? Your pets? Would you have had access to food, water, or shelter? These are all questions that we need to ask ourselves. Knowing the answers will go a long way to make us better prepared for any emergency.

Earthquakes are one of the most difficult emergencies to respond to, as they occur with little or no warning, and can be very devastating. Other emergencies often provide additional time to gather belongings and move to safer locations. If we are prepared for the worst, our chances of recovering from any disaster are increased.



A Report on Interface Fires in British Columbia with Some Yukon Implications

By David Milne, Fire Prevention Coordinator, DIAND Fire Management

How prepared are Yukon emergency services personnel to deal with wildland fire in “the interface” – that zone in and around our communities where human habitation meets the forest? Looking around us we find that there are other jurisdictions that are also very concerned with this issue.

The spate of interface fires in recent years within the British Columbia interior have led to questions regarding the preparedness of different levels of government in BC to handle the interface issue effectively. A lengthy report titled *Managing Interface Fire Risks* has just been released through the BC Auditor General’s office that researches the interface problem and provides recommendations for government. The background information was gathered through a series of surveys and interviews that targeted wildland and structural fire response personnel, officials in planning, development and financial administration, as well as emergency coordinators.

Yukon is not without its share of examples of interface disaster and near-disaster. Interface fires that destroyed homes in Faro in 1969 and Burwash Landing in 1999, as well as many fires that came too close for comfort like the Logan fire of 1998, spring to mind. Dozens of fires are extinguished each year in the Whitehorse area alone that have the potential to erupt into situations that would seriously threaten homes or commercial buildings. Most of the communities in the Yukon are at a high



Emergency vehicles and airtanker work to protect structures in Burwash Landing. (Summer 1999)

or moderate risk to interface fires.

Although we don’t have the numbers of people living in the interface that British Columbia does, Yukoners live in and adjacent to a potentially more volatile forest. The closed boreal spruce fuel types that we find in the Yukon carries crown fire much more readily than does the typical open pine of the BC interior.

However, the results of this report are of interest to both Yukon emergency services providers and residents alike because many of the issues found in BC are similar to what we face. Issues concerning public education, interagency coordination, planning and awareness are definitely of concern here in the Yukon as well. The key findings of the BC Auditor General were:

- There is a lack of formal definition for the term “interface fire” and poor information gathering makes it difficult to measure and evaluate the magnitude of the problem.
- The assignment of responsibilities among provincial agencies involved in managing interface fires is unclear, leading to the limited attention given to this issue.
- Awareness of interface fire risks is adequate among firefighters and emergency responders, but not among other key local officials.
- Efforts are underway to formally assess interface risk in

Continued on page 7



Northern Response



Control Staff and simulators receive briefing during Northern Response III Exercise.

The last edition of MEMO reported on the planned “Northern Response - III” emergency exercise, to test a transportation response to a catastrophic earthquake in Juneau, Alaska. One consideration of the response is that Whitehorse, Yukon will be used as an initial staging area for the receipt and redeployment of resources to assist with recovery operations.

Northern Response III was held in Victoria, B.C., May 22 – 24th 2001, and the Yukon was represented by Emergency Measures Branch and Aviation and Marine Branch staff. Representatives were also on hand from:

- Transport Canada,
- Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness,
- Canadian Dept. of National Defence,
- U.S. Coast Guard,
- U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency,

- Alaska State Dept. of Emergency Services,
- U.S. National Guard,
- U.S. Air Force,
- U.S. Federal Aviation Administration,
- U.S. Dept. of Transport.

The exercise was primarily intended to evaluate U.S. transportation capability and readiness for such a response. Canadian agencies were involved to highlight our capabilities to provide the appropriate level of assistance. On the first day of the exercise, each agency was given an opportunity to describe their role in this type of a response. The U.S. emergency management organization is set up in a number of specialized teams. The transportation response is the first on the list of these Emergency Support Functions (ESF).

Exercise play started on the second day with copies of the full scenario distributed to the Emergency Support Function (ESF

Exercise Held

The U.S. Federal Government has established the following Emergency Response Functions

- **ESF 1:** Transportation. Providing civilian and military transportation.
Lead agency: Department of Transportation
- **ESF 2:** Communications. Providing telecommunications support.
Lead agency: National Communications System
- **ESF 3:** Public Works and Engineering. Restoring essential public services and facilities.
Lead agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense
- **ESF 4:** Fire Fighting. Detecting and suppressing wildland, rural and urban fires.
Lead agency: U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture
- **ESF 5:** Information and Planning. Collecting, analyzing and disseminating critical information to facilitate the overall federal response and recovery operations.
Lead agency: Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **ESF 6:** Mass Care. Managing and coordinating food, shelter and first aid for victims; providing bulk distribution of relief supplies; operating a system to assist family reunification.
Lead agency: American Red Cross
- **ESF 7:** Resource Support. Providing equipment, materials, supplies and personnel to federal entities during response operations.
Lead agency: General Services Administration
- **ESF 8:** Health and Medical Services. Providing assistance for public health and medical care needs.
Lead agency: U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services
- **ESF 9:** Urban Search and Rescue. Locating, extricating and providing initial medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures.
Lead agency: Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **ESF 10:** Hazardous Materials. Supporting federal response to actual or potential releases of oil and hazardous materials.
Lead agency: Environmental Protection Agency
- **ESF 11:** Food. Identifying food needs; ensuring that food gets to areas affected by disaster.
Lead agency: Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture
- **ESF 12:** Energy. Restoring power systems and fuel supplies.
Lead agency: Department of Energy

– 1) participants, Federal Emergency Management Agency reps. and the simulators. Each group was sequestered into separate rooms where messages and requests for assistance were transmitted by phone or runners.

A full debriefing of the exercise was held on May 24th that allowed all participants an opportunity to highlight some of the successes and to identify areas where additional work needs to be done. Many of the improvements suggested from the previous two exercises had been incorporated into Northern Response III, and as a result, this was considered the best exercise held to date. The fact that federal and Yukon participants were able to directly answer questions made the response more realistic than had been in the past.

The most significant benefit of holding this type of exercise is the opportunity for interaction between emergency managers. Information can be shared on procedures, technology, resource availability and the various roles and responsibilities. All of these aspects are critical components in delivering a response during an emergency.

For further information on Northern Response, go to:
<http://www.akrrt.org/nr3/index.shtml>

For further information on the US Federal Emergency Management Agency, go to:
<http://www.fema.gov/>



Yukon Disaster Committee Meeting Touted as “Best Yet”

The Annual General Meeting of the Yukon Disaster Committee was held in Whitehorse on May 16th, 2001.

The Minister of Renewable Resources, Education and the Public Service Commission, Mr. Dale Eftoda welcomed the delegates on behalf of Yukon Government and Minister Pam Buckway. Special mention was made of those participants who had traveled from British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Alaska. He described this meeting as a valuable opportunity for experts in

emergency planning to become aware of the commonalities between our two areas of responsibility. He stressed the importance of not only planning for emergencies – but the need to raise public awareness around emergency preparedness.

Emergency Measures Branch presenters provided updates on its activities, including:

- There were a total of seven search and rescue operations involving EMO. There appears to be a growing trend towards incidents arising from wilderness tourism.
- Two flooding events were reported, one in Carmacks and one in the Whitehorse area.
- There was a possible water contamination issue in Tagish last fall where a boil water advisory was issued.
- Revised Standard Operating Procedures for the Joint Emergency Operations Coordination Centre (J.E.O.C.C.) are being prepared
- Initial response flowcharts are being developed for a number of potential emergencies
- An Emergency Telecommunications Training Program is being developed and will hopefully be ready for delivery this fall.
- The JEOCC is currently undergoing seismic upgrades

A number of agencies also provided updates on various initiatives and issues related to emergency preparedness.

Flood potential and water levels
- **Glen Ford, Water Resources, DIAND**



Glen Ford (DIAND, Water Resources) provides water level and flood forecast presentation.

Forest fire management

- **David Milne, Fire Management, DIAND**

Firesmart Program

- **Glenn Hart, Economic Development, YTG**

Regional Emergency Telecommunications Committee

- **John Nosotti, Industry Can.**

Pandemic Outbreak Planning

- **Violet Van Hees, Health and Social Services, YTG**

Oil and Gas Planning

- **Sandi Birrell, Economic Development, YTG**

SARSCENE 2001

- **Debbie Brewster, Whitehorse Search and Rescue**

Exercise Northern Response

- **Terry Smith, Alaska Div. of Emergency Services**

Major Air Disaster (MAJAID)

- **Maj. Pat McSorley, Rescue Coordination Centre, Victoria, BC**

Div. of Emergency Services, Alaska Overview

- **Jim Butchard, Div. of Emergency Services, AK**

Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and
Emergency Preparedness Canada

- **Bill McMillan, BC/Yukon Region**

Canadian Coast Guard

- **Roger McKellar, Canadian Coast Guard**

From much of the feedback received, participants felt this was one of the best Yukon Disaster Committee meetings held, as topics were relevant, informative and useful. The Mt.

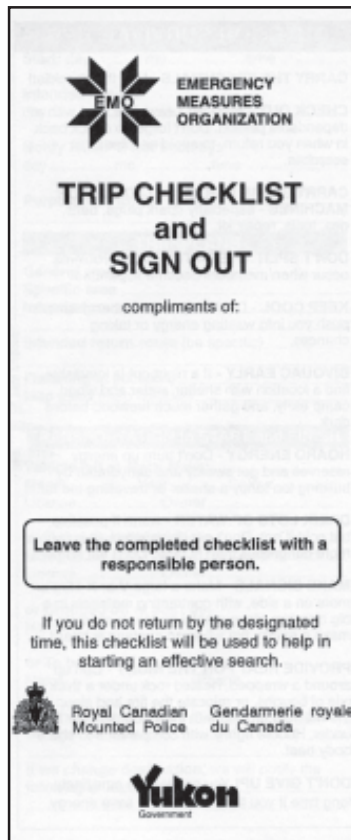


National Workshop on SAR Prevention

The *prevention of search and rescue incidents throughout Canada is quickly becoming a key priority. A project called “Building Prevention Information Capacity” (BPIC) was undertaken by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in April 2000 to enhance the level of information that is available to and shared within the SAR prevention community.*

BPIC involved a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial government SAR officials, as well as practitioners from relevant non-governmental organizations and academia to discuss prevention strategies and information requirements at a national level. The objectives of the meeting were to:

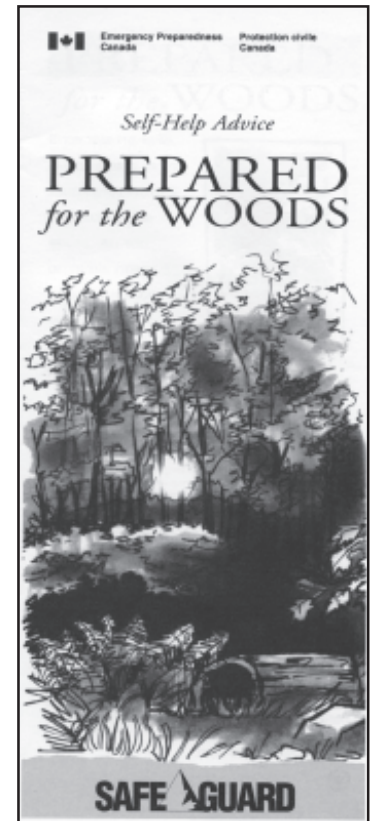
- share lessons learned and best practices on causality and surveillance systems strategies,
- raise awareness of federal SAR prevention strategies,
- raise awareness of Provincial/Territorial/ Non-Government Organizations’ (NGOs) SAR prevention programs and activities, and
- consider an action plan for all SAR prevention partners to undertake an ongoing systematic collection, analysis,



interpretation of causation data and evaluation of SAR prevention tactics.

The objectives were successfully accomplished and some “next steps” were discussed to advance SAR prevention initiatives, including:

- Establishing an implementation process for guidelines to develop and promote prevention activities both locally and nationally;
- The sharing of best practices related to prevention needs analysis;
- The confirmation of data collection tools – goals and objectives; and
- The confirmation of prevention goals and who will be involved.



A follow-up meeting will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon on September 13, 2001 in conjunction with the annual SARSCENE Workshop to confirm the progress made to date and the level of interest and support for future endeavours. This ongoing initiative is considered to be one part of a long-term strategy to enhance the overall information capacity of the SAR prevention community in Canada.



A Report on Interface Fires in British Columbia with Some Yukon Implications

Continued from page 3

- some high and moderate risk communities, but more work is required.
- Local governments have made only limited use of methods available to reduce the risk of interface fire.
 - The formal and informal response arrangements between structural and wildland firefighting agencies vary considerably across the province.
 - Many communities in high and moderate interface risk areas lack adequate emergency plans.
 - Evacuation planning needs attention.

- More testing of the ability to respond to major interface fires is needed.
- There is little consideration for recovery planning.

This is a well-written, highly detailed report that should be read by those of us in the “emergency response business”. I would highly recommend it.

The full report is available on the Internet at <http://bcauditor.com/AuditorGeneral.htm> Please note that there is an executive summary of the key findings for those that don't have time to read the full report.



Situation Report

- April 2 - An airplane was reported missing on a flight between Watson Lake and Whitehorse. The aircraft with the fatally injured pilot was found on the frozen surface of Teslin Lake.
- May 24 - Water levels near the community of Old Crow rose significantly during ice breakup on the Porcupine River. As the river level approached critical height, the ice moved out, and water began to return to normal levels.
- May 28 - Three placer miners were reported overdue near Dawson City. One of the group members reportedly had a medical condition that required prescription medication. All were found safe after making their way to a remote airstrip.
- June 5 - Carmacks SAR were called out to assist with the recovery of a stranded canoeist on the Yukon River.
- June 7 - Carmacks SAR were called out to assist with the recovery of an overturned and stranded canoeist.
- June 20 - Carmacks and Teslin SAR were called out to assist with the search and recovery of a drowning victim on the Big Salmon River after overturning their canoe.
- June 22 - Carmacks and Whitehorse SAR were called out to assist with the search for an overdue participant in the Yukon River Quest. A helicopter spotted the father and son team approximately half way between Lake Laberge and Carmacks. They were not in any danger, and withdrew from the race when they arrived in Carmacks.

Emergency Measures Launches New Website

On June 11, 2001 the Emergency Measures Branch launched its new website. Developed by Hyperborean Productions of Whitehorse, the site replaces the old site with a completely new look. The Department of Community and Transportation Services' website provides the basic layout and graphic design, while the EMO site continues to provide basic emergency planning, response and recovery information along with detailed search and rescue content.



The previous website contained a significant amount of information that required constant updating. The new site has been designed to limit the amount of "date sensitive" material, while allowing for display of current information such as the SARSCENE Workshop. In addition, current and archived editions of the MEMO Quarterly Newsletter is available on the site in downloadable .pdf format.

The website has been designed using a two phased approach. Phase 1 has trimmed the site down to the very basic information needed, while Phase 2 will include greater accessibility to specific hazard updates and current events. It is hoped that information on current forest fire conditions, flood forecasts, or seismic events can be incorporated into our site in future.

Coming Events

Fall/Winter

- Sept. 10 – 16 SARSCENE 2001
- Sept. 16 Air Spotter's Course

New Training Calendar available next edition.

The editors gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions made by numerous members of EMO to this issue of the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization Newsletter. Additional Copies can be obtained by writing to:

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Yukon

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