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Evacuation Planning and Stakeholder Engagement for a Remote Coastal Canadian Indigenous Community

Many remote communities in British Columbia (BC) do not have sufficient all-hazard evacuation preparedness as compared to urban centres in the province. The community of Wuikinuxv, on the coast of BC, only has access and egress via water or air, and no formal agreements or access to the resources required for effective evacuation. In the inevitable event of a local hazard, safe evacuation currently poses a dangerous problem to the community.

It must be acknowledged that due to this community's isolation and self-reliance they are unusually resilient to adversity, but this attribute alone will not be sufficient to address responses to all hazards. This lack of response access and capital is of particular concern as there are increased demands on communal resources locally and provincially. With measurable increases in the frequency of natural and anthropogenic disasters both provincially and globally, it is imperative that remote communities like Wuikinuxv have established local plans in place.

A community empowerment approach is used in order to instill in the community a sense of confidence, control, decision-making authority, autonomy, and self-trust. This approach is ideal as evidence has shown that significant community development only occurs when the community members themselves are invested and participating. Ideally, an evacuation plan will save all lives. Due to the isolation and a total lack of resources to support this community, there will need to be discussions about evacuation dilemmas including the requirement for a priority list to be created and used in the event of a time-sensitive evacuation.

This report will outline the specifics of the issues surrounding evacuation plans including any assumptions and ethical concerns, provide an analysis of stakeholders and rightsholders, offer an engagement strategy to support the development of an evacuation preparedness plan, and lastly acknowledge limitations and conclusions regarding recommendations made.

Presentation Theme: All-hazard evacuation preparedness for isolated, remote communities

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Dr. Jean Slick, Royal Roads University (professor); Helen Nielson (contributor/student); Joshua Pound (contributor/student); Jonathan Heinz (contributor/student)