Government of Alberta
Flood Recovery Plan

FLOOD RECOVERY TASK FORCE
Foreword

In June 2013, Alberta was hit by the worst natural disaster in our history. Lives were lost. Thousands lost their homes and their belongings. We responded to the emergency and took decisive actions to protect lives. Once the immediate danger passed, our focus shifted from stabilizing flood-affected communities, to supporting families, businesses and other organizations impacted by the floods. Now, we focus on rebuilding Alberta.

Our goal is to ensure communities impacted by flooding can return to some level of normalcy as quickly as possible. Substantial support and resources will be needed to undertake the major recovery efforts. Immediately following the disaster, we created the Provincial Recovery Framework to not only articulate the lessons we’ve learned from past natural disasters at home and abroad, but build a vision for how the Government of Alberta will support local communities in recovery. Ultimately, this framework established, and puts in motion, the vision for our recovery and the building blocks we’d need to achieve it.

This Government of Alberta Recovery Plan is a result of a commitment we made in the Framework to provide a detailed, tactical guide for recovery. This strategic guide provides key recovery milestones for 2013 and beyond and will help coordinate efforts and provide the clarity required for long-term planning.

While we rebuild towards recovery and tackle the monumental tasks ahead of us, we can’t lose sight of those who still face the impacts this disaster has had on their lives. Thousands of Albertans are still unable to return home and many have years of extensive rebuilding ahead of them. The Government of Alberta is committed to supporting recovery and rebuilding in every impacted community. This plan is a tool to help ensure we are supporting those who need it, while using our resources wisely.

Honourable Doug Griffiths
Chair, Ministerial Flood Recovery Task Force

October 28, 2013
Introduction
The Government of Alberta (GoA) Recovery Plan recognizes the need to swiftly rebuild in flood-affected regions while continuing to pursue the Government’s strategic goals for all of Alberta. The Plan is intended to guide recovery efforts and to place resources where they will be most useful for the remainder of this fiscal year and beyond. In order to continue to match recovery goals with the ongoing vision for the province, this plan will also serve to influence the development of future strategic plans and government documents. Using the building blocks described in the Provincial Recovery Framework released in July 2013, the purpose of this Recovery Plan is to provide more detail for government ministries, municipalities, and other organizations to understand how the Government of Alberta intends to achieve the outcomes described in the Framework. This detail includes the key milestones to be achieved in this fiscal year (to March 31, 2014) and beyond. The strategic guidance is intended to both enable continued coordination of efforts and to provide the clarity required for long-term planning across GoA ministries.

Background / Current Situation
Impact
In June 2013, Fort McMurray, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, and the Fort McMurray First Nation, sustained significant flooding due to heavy rainfall. As a result, the Municipality and the First Nation declared a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) from June 11 to 17 and approximately 400 residents were evacuated. Keyano College, Clearwater Campus and a Hwy 881 bridge sustained damage.

In June 2013, large areas of Southern Alberta experienced extremely heavy rainfall causing disastrous flooding. The scale and impact of the flooding was unprecedented in Alberta, resulting in the first-ever State of Provincial Emergency to be declared. During the rainfall and for several days thereafter, 29 States of Local Emergency were declared.

The communities directly impacted encompass a 55,000 square kilometer region in Southern Alberta. The flooding affected tens of thousands of Albertans and caused significant damage to roadways and impacted vital infrastructure including water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities, hospitals, schools and recreation facilities.

At the onset of the floods, the immediate priority was the health and safety of people in the affected areas and the stabilization of critical infrastructure. Government river flow forecasters worked to assess weather and flood conditions so local municipalities could implement possible preventative measures.
In the days following the states of emergency, focus expanded to include immediate and longer-term recovery, reconstruction and revitalization planning.

**Climate Variability**

The weather and climate circumstances that cause natural disaster are likely to occur again. While efforts will focus on rebuilding and redevelopment, consideration must also be given to increasing the depth and capacity of all communities to mitigate and respond to all environmental emergencies including flood, drought, fire or any other challenges that impact community stability.

**Initial Response**

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) coordinated provincial support to emergency flood response operations throughout Southern Alberta. The actions of first responders, the Canadian Forces, emergency management officials, municipalities, and the public helped to minimize the loss of life in this unprecedented disaster.

Premier Redford, working with her Cabinet, quickly established four priority objectives to guide the disaster response and to build a post-recovery vision:

1. Ensure public safety and security in the affected areas.
2. Minimize further damage to communities and environment.
3. Timely and safe re-entry into communities and out of interim housing based on local conditions.
4. Resumption of economic and business activity including market access and tourism.

Post-recovery vision:

“**When the recovery effort is complete, Albertans will be proud of how they have not only preserved, but enhanced our reputation and heritage.**”

The AEMA took the lead on the first three priority objectives, while the Flood Recovery Task Force (FRTF) started planning ahead for the transition to the fourth objective. As recovery efforts have transitioned to intermediate recovery and long-term recovery, the FRTF assumed the lead coordination role for all Government of Alberta flood recovery efforts.
Alberta’s Strategic Plan will guide Alberta’s Recovery

The Government of Alberta’s 2013-16 Strategic Plan clearly articulates the vision required to meet current challenges while still achieving key priorities identified by Albertans. These priorities include investing in families and communities; securing Alberta’s economic future; and advancing world-leading stewardship of resources. The seven following provincial goals will guide the flood recovery plan.

GOAL 1: HONOUR ALBERTA’s COMMUNITIES

Alberta’s communities are safe, prosperous, welcoming, culturally diverse places to live and visit. The goal to honour Alberta’s communities remains the same for flood affected communities. This principle, along with provincial support, will guide local leaders in their recovery.
GOAL 2: SUPPORT VULNERABLE ALBERTANS

Our goal as a province is to ensure vulnerable Albertans are safe and have opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from, Alberta’s economic, social, and cultural life. The June 2013 flood placed thousands more Albertans in vulnerable circumstances, from which they are still struggling to recover. Our recovery efforts will continue to ensure flood-affected Albertans continue to be supported.

GOAL 3: HEALTHY ALBERTANS

Alberta’s health care system strives to give Albertans the support they need to lead healthy lives. The government is committed to ensuring Albertans in flood-affected communities have the same access to health care as all other Albertans. In addition, Albertans in flood-affected communities will have access to enhanced supports where needed to deal with the additional stress they face in recovering from disaster.

GOAL 4: INVEST IN LEARNING

Our education system strives to meet the lifelong learning needs of Albertans. Many K-12 and post-secondary institutions were damaged by flooding. Our goal is to ensure these institutions not only get the support they need to recover, but are given the tools to continue to prosperity.

GOAL 5: PRESERVE THE PROVINCE’S FINANCES

The scope of the disaster has been estimated between $5 and $6 billion but this estimation may continue to expand. Government spending decisions related to this disaster will be carefully reviewed and aligned to complement financial resources from the Federal Government, municipalities, the insurance sector, and charitable organizations.

GOAL 6: INNOVATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Alberta’s resources are developed using innovative and responsible solutions that strive to protect and preserve Alberta’s environment. Land-use and water management plans provide the strategic and regulatory framework that allows ongoing flood hazard mitigation so Albertans will be better prepared in the event of a future natural disaster.

GOAL 7: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND MARKETS

An effective recovery strategy is dependent on strong relationships between governments, communities, not-for-profit organizations and businesses. A key goal is to ensure Alberta has access to new markets and investment potential through relationship building and strong partnerships with the Federal Government and First Nations.
Flood Recovery Vision, Goals and Implementation Approach

The vision, goals, and implementation approach have all been developed in alignment with the Province’s strategic goals.

Vision:
Honour Albertans by supporting the social, environmental, and economic recovery of the province and its communities, industries and families to provide a healthy and resilient Alberta for current and future generations.

Goals

- Ensure affected communities have the information necessary to support their residents and local recovery efforts.
- Connect affected communities and individual residents with appropriate funding and recovery supports.
- Initiate necessary statutory and regulatory requirement processes to ensure effective flood hazard mitigation and response strategies are in place to lessen the impact on public and private infrastructure in the event of a future environmental disaster.
- Support the revitalization the economies of flood-impacted regions.
- Rebuild damaged or destroyed provincial infrastructure including transportation and recreation facilities.
- Capture lessons and opportunities for improvement so the province may be better prepared in the event of a future environmental disaster.

Approach

This approach describes how the Government of Alberta will work to achieve the flood recovery goals listed above. This approach builds on the recovery principles previously outlined in the Provincial Recovery Framework:

- Leadership and local autonomy
- Collaboration and coordination
- Partnerships and inclusiveness
- Communication
- Timeliness and flexibility
- Fairness across flood-affected communities
- Resilience
- Psychological and emotional wellness
• Individual and family empowerment
• Safety
• Capture lessons learned
• Plan for transition to normal services
• Accountability
• Building Alberta together

As part of its Recovery Implementation Approach, the Government of Alberta will:

• Integrate the principles of recovery into all recovery planning and activities.
• Empower municipalities with resources and support, so they can lead recovery in their communities.
• Consider and incorporate the resilience of communities and the environment into development plans; emphasizing effective risk management, mitigation strategies and the requirement for disaster readiness.
• Collaborate with and encourage coordination across all levels of governments: municipal, provincial, federal and First Nation.
• Encourage partnerships and inclusiveness between organizations in recovery efforts, particularly in the development of regional solutions that support multiple flood-affected communities.
• Provide the public with information in a timely and comprehensive manner, and coordinate with municipalities and First Nations involved in flood recovery efforts to do the same.
• Plan for timeliness and flexibility in the development of policies and recovery efforts.
• Apply consistent policies across flood-affected communities whenever possible, while recognizing some local or isolated situations will require unique solutions.
• Balance the need to repair and rebuild quickly with the opportunity to enhance infrastructure with mitigation strategies that may lessen impact in the event of a future disaster. Implement necessary programs to support affected individuals with their emotional wellness.
• Include individuals, families and community in the recovery process whenever possible.
• Continue to prioritize the safety of Albertans in individual flood recovery efforts by placing a significant emphasis on workplace safety and protection, long-term policy decisions and flood hazard mitigation planning.
• Use lessons-learned from previous disasters in Alberta and elsewhere to ensure best practices in recovery are implemented whenever possible. Continually improve the current disaster response by coordinating team efforts to ensure mistakes are not repeated.
• Ensure all recovery plans and efforts are developed within the recovery framework.
• Ensure flood recovery resources are innovative, efficient and effective.
Recovery efforts will integrate these principles to achieving objectives based on four recovery elements:

- People
- Economy
- Reconstruction
- Environment

These four elements provide a means to organize recovery efforts and monitor progress. Table 2 presents objectives and milestones for all ministries, municipalities and First Nations communities to consider when developing their recovery plans.
## Key Recovery Objectives, Outcomes, and Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Element</th>
<th>Overarching Objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate Milestones This Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Long Term Milestones Fiscal Years 14-15, 15-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| People           | • To ensure the right resources are available to support the overall physical, mental and social well-being of all Albertans impacted by the floods. | • Essential services can be accessed by all community members  
• Residents want to remain in their communities  
• People living in affected areas are as healthy (physical and mentally) as other Albertans  
• Albertans living in affected areas feel safe, supported and can experience community life | • Health services successfully restored  
• Students return to schools in September  
• People affected by floods have safe (interim) housing before winter  
• Flood affected persons have access to health and social services  
• Capacity support and revenue stabilization provided to impacted municipalities  
• Interim public services in place (recreation, permit offices, other local services, etc.) | • External and interim supports for health services transitioned to routine operations  
• All students are in their permanent K-12 and post-secondary facilities  
• Housing is repaired or replaced, and residents in interim housing return home  
• Interim housing solutions are removed from communities  
• Other services transitioned from interim (external assistance) to routine operations |
| Economy          | • To nurture an environment that supports the rehabilitation of and reinvestment in disrupted economies and businesses. | • Personal finances in affected communities are in line with the Alberta average  
• Businesses have access to recovery support tools and programs  
• Business activities resume  
• Employees are able to return to work in impacted businesses/organizations, and employers are able to find and retain employees  
• Industry sector, community and regional organizations provided with supports for economic capacity rebuilding and renewal  
• Flood affected communities attract new commercial and industrial investment | • Flood-related DRP payments to eligible Albertans and municipalities are issued  
• Business and not for profit\(^1\) support programs implemented  
• Interim opportunities established for businesses  
• Employees and employers have resumed roles in impacted businesses/organizations  
• Strategic recovery initiatives put in place for impacted industry sectors in communities and regions  
• Marketing and promotional campaigns are developed and delivered to revitalize markets | • DRP payments reconciled with the Federal Government  
• Businesses transition to routine operations in permanent locations  
• Business support programs reduced as business returns to pre-flood norms  
• Implementation of strategic recovery initiatives lead to economic renewal and growth in flood impacted industry sectors, communities and regions |

\(^1\) Not For Profit organizations include groups such as the Calgary Stampede, K-12 and post-secondary institutions, economic development associations, etc.
## Reconstruction

- To enable the safe and orderly restoration of flood damaged infrastructure within the affected areas.
- Basic government functions and services are open and operational.
- Residential and commercial units needed are available.
- Roads, bridges and other transportation services are safe and operational.
- Drinking water, waste water, power and other essential services are operational.
- Essential Transportation and public infrastructure are safe and operational, using interim solutions when required.
- Redevelopment/new development in compliance with new flood hazard mitigation policies.
- Moderately damaged residential and commercial units are repaired/restored.
- Heavily damaged residential and commercial units are repaired or replaced.
- Transportation and public infrastructure repaired or replaced.
  - Schools
  - Public buildings
  - Senior Housing
  - Water infrastructure.
- Heavily damaged residential and commercial units are repaired or replaced.
- Transportation and public infrastructure repaired or replaced.
- Redevelopment/new development in compliance with new flood hazard mitigation policies.
- Roads, bridges and other transportation services are safe and operational.
- Drinking water, waste water, power and other essential services are operational.
- Essential Transportation and public infrastructure are safe and operational, using interim solutions when required.
- Flood-based pollution that could affect public health and the environment is monitored, assessed and mitigated.
- Environmental well-being of damaged areas is restored.
- Risks from future flood events are mitigated.
- Repair of water infrastructure (dams).
- Flooding based pollution monitored, evaluated and prioritized for action.
- Remediation of flood contaminated sites underway.
- Continue Flood Mapping.
- GOA Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan developed.
- Prioritized prevention/mitigation projects under construction.

## Environment

- To protect and re-establish the environment to a healthy state and mitigate long term environmental impacts and risks.
- Flood-based pollution that could affect public health and the environment is monitored, assessed and mitigated.
- Environmental well-being of damaged areas is restored.
- Risks from future flood events are mitigated.
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Implementation Guidance

Government of Alberta Flood Recovery Organization

To lead the flood recovery efforts, Premier Redford established a Ministerial Flood Recovery Task Force (Ministerial Task Force) that includes a ministerial group chaired by the Honourable Doug Griffiths, Minister of Municipal Affairs, and an Assistant Deputy Minister’s Flood Recovery Task Force (ADM Task Force), chaired by Andre Corbould.

The Ministerial Task Force (Figure 3) will work to make timely decisions to support and coordinate the flood response. This group of ministers, which includes representation from the Ministries of Aboriginal Relations, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Health, Human Services, Transportation, Treasury Board and Finance, and Tourism, Parks and Recreation, operates with the authority to modify the necessary provincial policies, to ensure timely and meaningful action. Decisions made by the Ministerial Task Force are intended to enable and empower municipalities and First Nations to lead in their jurisdictions with unwavering support.

The Premier also appointed three Associate Ministers for Regional Recovery and Reconstruction for High River, Southeastern Alberta, and Southwestern Alberta. These Associate Ministers are responsible to coordinate the support and tools needed for recovery and reconstruction in their respective regions. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations leads the Government of Alberta’s work with First Nations on their flood recovery and reconstruction.

Figure 3: Ministerial Flood Recovery Task Force

The role of the ADM Flood Recovery Task Force (Figure 4) is to support the Ministerial Task Force and coordinate the intermediate and long-term recovery efforts. The Chief ADM of the ADM Task Force reports to the Deputy Minister of Executive Council, Peter Watson, and to the Honourable Doug Griffiths, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Chair of the Ministerial Task Force. It is made up of a core group of Assistant Deputy Ministers from across the Government of Alberta who lead divisions with mandates directly connected to flood recovery and who can mobilize the resources to implement the Ministerial Task Force’s decisions.
The ADM Task Force is also supported by the Flood Recovery Task Force Staff (Figure 5). Staff reports to the Chief ADM and supports the ADM Task Force to coordinate flood recovery across ministries from provincial-level policy development to the resolution of local issues in communities. Staff includes teams in recovery coordination, policy, planning, flood hazard mitigation, and communications.
Recovery Coordinators assigned to the ADM Task Force are the primary point of contact for communities seeking flood recovery support. Recovery Coordinators will assist communities in developing their specific recovery action plans and will coordinate with other government ministries to identify appropriate supports required for local recovery efforts and recovery plan implementation.

While Recovery Coordinators may not directly manage all recovery efforts in their assigned communities, they will be aware of issues and will coordinate connections with the appropriate local, provincial, and federal officials to resolve on the ground.

**Engagement across all levels of government**

Collaboration, communication, inclusiveness, timeliness and flexibility are important principles to guide recovery efforts across various levels of government and when engaging stakeholders. Jurisdictional issues should not delay recovery effort - engagement must employ existing relationships, mechanisms, and policies with a focus on applying and adapting them swiftly and effectively.

**Federal**

Government of Alberta and Government of Canada ministries have existing joint policies, understanding, and long-standing relationships that provide a foundation for effective and efficient recovery efforts. The above principles will serve as the basis for resolving issues. Additional support for Government of Alberta ministries is available through the ADM Task Force and the Department of Intergovernmental and International Relations.

**First Nations**

First Nations communities affected by the floods will be privy to the same recovery support as all Albertans, regardless of federal or provincial jurisdiction. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations, supported by the Flood Recovery Task Force, will work with flood-affected First Nation communities to ensure they are supported in their recovery. The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Recovery Coordinators assigned to First Nations communities will engage the federal government in flood recovery processes as needed.
**Municipalities**

Municipalities will identify and lead flood recovery and in their own communities with support from the Government of Alberta as coordinated through their recovery coordinators.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The Government of Alberta regularly interacts with a broad range of stakeholders including the non-profit sector, businesses and industry groups, education and training providers, social service providers, students and families. The Flood Recovery Task will engage with stakeholders to:

- **Encourage, support and coordinate contributions for the recovery efforts**
- **Gather, track and coordinate cross-ministry and cross-municipality issues**
- **Recommend possible responses**

Stakeholder engagement will strive to be collaborative and supportive with the end goal of individual communities having the capacity to take ownership of moving from emergency response to recovery.

**Financial Administration**

The provincial and federal government have programs that fund disasters and emergencies including:

**Disaster Recovery Program (DRP)**

- This provincial program provides financial assistance to individuals, small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and government departments for uninsurable loss and damage caused by emergencies and disasters.
- Financial assistance is limited to the actual costs required to restore an item or facility to its pre-disaster functional condition.
- Eligible items include only those uninsured items that are considered essential to everyday life.
- Disaster Recovery Program assistance is administered by Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) in Municipal Affairs.
- Normally, municipal applicants must apply for assistance within 90 days from the date the DRP is approved. Given the severity of the flooding in Southern Alberta, this requirement was waived.
- A municipality may request, in writing, an advance payment to address early requirements by providing necessary documentation. The total amount of the initial advance payment will not exceed 50 per cent of the total estimate of damages and emergency operations costs, as determined by AEMA.
Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA)

- The DFAA prescribes the federal/provincial cost sharing of DRPs.
- Federal assistance is available when Alberta’s eligible DRP expenses exceed $1 per capita of the province’s population.
- Eligible and ineligible expenses for DFAA are prescribed by the DFAA guidelines.
- Alberta requested financial assistance under the federal DFAA on June 27, 2013. The federal government approved the June 2013 flood as DFAA eligible July 4, 2013.
- The DFAA allows for advance payments up to 50 per cent of the projected eligible DFAA cost.

Funding/expenses required for flood recovery

Financial support for various flood recovery programs/initiatives will be coordinated and use complementary sources of funding. This coordination will be built into project planning and implemented through rigorous accounting processes to ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently. Flood recovery expenses will be classified and tracked using four categories:

- **Disaster Recovery Program:** See above.
- **Community Stabilization:** Expenses associated with the immediate stabilization of the community such as emergency accommodations and critical financial assistance for residents. These expenses include the business loss relief program, pre-loaded debit cards, and using modular classrooms while schools are being renovated or replaced.
- **Interim Housing:** Expenses associated with servicing sites, acquiring temporary accommodations and providing financial housing based assistance. Includes living allowances and rental rebates for displaced Albertans and other temporary housing costs.
- **Long-term Recovery:** Expenses associated with projects to support long term recovery. This may include new social housing infrastructure for seniors and those with special needs, repair or replacement of schools, highways and other provincial infrastructure, and funding for a variety of other programs.
- **Mitigation:** Contracts with engineers have been secured to look at mitigation efforts required to prevent the risk of similar damage in the event of a future flood. Communities will be individually responsible for planning and implementing mitigation projects locally.

Accountability Framework

Given the severity of the flooding, immediate decisions were needed to support Albertans in need. Initially, most decisions were made by the Ministerial Task Force; however, the scope of recovery has demanded additional measures to support the Ministerial Task Force and ensure resources continue to be used responsibly and efficiently. An Accountability Framework was developed to help the ADM Task Force ensure recovery projects will serve affected Albertans while remaining effective, efficient and
fiscally responsible. The Accountability Framework includes standards for regular public reporting on funding, spending and results.

**Communications**

The communications team supports the work of the Task Force and its partners by communicating the programs, services, outcomes and achievements linked to the four pillars of flood recovery – people, economy, reconstruction and environment.

Keeping Albertans informed on progress of recovery is a top priority for the Government of Alberta. The communications team works with a variety of stakeholders across the province to coordinate and share recovery and mitigation information through regular announcements, news releases, information sessions, advertisements, web pages and social media.

**Conclusion**

The Government of Alberta Flood Recovery Plan is based on the seven overarching goals contained in the province’s strategic plan. These goals guide the ongoing business of the government as it works to provide quality programs and services that contribute to Albertans’ high quality of life.

In addition to funding support, the province has a vision to honour Albertans in recovery while providing a healthy and resilient province for current and future generations. This vision is a result of a recovery plan that focuses on people, the economy, reconstruction and environment. Recovery coordinators stationed in each affected community will work closely with task force staff to make sure the vision and goals in this plan become a reality. Results of recovery efforts will be measured on an ongoing basis with immediate milestones to be reached by end of fiscal year 2013-14 and longer-term milestones projected for fiscal years 2014-15 and 2015-16. Throughout this process, the government is committed to keeping Albertans informed on progress, costs and results.

As we work closely with communities, stakeholders and all levels of government towards milestones in recovery, it is important to keep a desired end state in mind. When will we know we are “done?” A guiding vision to strive for as we progress towards recovery is:

“When the recovery is complete, Albertans will be proud of how they have not only preserved, but enhanced our reputation and heritage. We will be wiser, stronger, more nimble, and better prepared in the event of a future disaster.”
Appendices

- Recovery Synchronization Matrix – to be issued by mid-September with monthly updates
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (will be included)
- Performance Measurement – metrics and information collection to be issued
- Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan – to be issued
- Projects Accountability Framework (will be included)
- Flood Hazard Mapping Plan (will be included)