



February 28, 2025

Participants:

Joel Heath, Arctic Eider Society
Salamiva Weetaltuk, Kuujjuarapik
Micheal Cameron, Salluit
Victor Blackned, Cree Nation of Wemindji
Kevin Knapp, CCG
Steve Thompson, CCG
Jessica Cucinelli, CCG
Jasmine Lundie, CCG
Krista Ollafsson, TC
Oumelkheir Adda, TC
Daniel Kablutsiaq, Arviat
Lazarusie Tukai, Inukjuak
Craig Lingard, KRG
Verna Flett, Churchill
Melanie Erazola, ECCC
Lisa Tulen, ECCC
Alexandre Lamarre, ECCC
Alain Guimond, PS
Martin Tetrault, PS
Barnie Aggark, Chesterfield Inlet
Billy Nicoll, Secretariat
Jackie Kidd, Secretariat
Ryan Barry, Secretariat, Interim WG Chair

Community Environmental Emergency Priorities

- **Salamiva (Kuujjuarapik):**
 - Expressed concerns about hunters losing skidoos and sleds due to thinning sea ice.
 - Suggested the use of flags or buoys to mark dangerous waters, particularly in treeless northern areas.
 - Noted changes in travel routes and difficulties in seal hunting due to sinking carcasses.

- Raised concerns about waste disposal and water contamination in northern communities.
 - Highlighted the impact of reduced seal populations and delayed freeze-up on community activities.
 - Reported an increase in polar bears entering communities in search of food.
 - Requested training on the use of safety buoys.
 - Expressed concern about freshwater ice cracking and permafrost melting causing damage to houses.
 - Requested faster response times for boat emergencies.
- **Micheal Cameron (Salluit):**
 - Highlighted sea ice thinning and changes in water salinity, calling for further analysis.
 - Expressed concerns about the impact of melting glaciers on krill and other marine organisms.
 - Noted the difference in density between salt ice and freshwater ice.
 - Inquired about cataloging underwater contamination from DEW line sites.
 - Reported difficulties in observing ring seals.
 - Discussed dangerous currents in Ivujivik and potential links between contaminants and cancer.
 - Suggested mannequin testing for current analysis, to improve search and rescue.
- **Victor Blackned (Wemindji):**
 - Reported ice condition issues for the past 10-15 years, impacting traditional activities.
 - Discussed the use of temporary markers for ice trails and the need for permanent markers.
 - Expressed interest in collaborating with the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) to mark channels with buoys.
 - Requested information on ice monitoring training, particularly for river crossings.
 - Observed changes in snow conditions, leading to longer summers and increased forest fires.
- **Daniel Kablutsiak (Arviat):**
 - Raised concerns about panic attacks among first responders and the need for improved support.
 - Emphasized the importance of mental preparedness and healing for first responders.
 - Reported incidents of children being trapped by high tides.

- Called for the development of tools to manage the mental challenges faced by responders.
- Stressed the need for improved communication technology across large distances.

- **Lazarusie Tukai (Inukjuak):**
 - Requested scuba diving gear and training for body recovery.
 - Emphasized the need for increased ice monitoring due to late ice formation.

- **Verna Flett (Churchill):**
 - Expressed concerns about bear safety and garbage disposal.
 - Highlighted the need for increased access to land and land safety training.
 - Stressed the importance of traditional food sources.

- **Barnie Aggark (Chesterfield Inlet):**
 - Shared a personal experience of a failed search and rescue operation due to unknown currents.
 - Emphasized the importance of researching and monitoring currents.
 - Discussed the emotional toll on community members during rescue operations.
 - Highlighted the need for training and tools to cope with traumatic situations.
 - Stressed the importance of passing on traditional knowledge related to safety.
 - Reported unpredictable ice conditions and the challenges faced by local responders.
 - Discussed the lack of adequate search and rescue equipment and support from the CCG.
 - Reported the use of personal tracking devices for family safety.
 - Highlighted the importance of saving damaged equipment.

Action Items:

- Investigate potential partnerships for ice monitoring training.
- Explore options for providing mental health support to first responders.
- Research and develop strategies for marking dangerous waters with buoys or other markers.
- Investigate the feasibility of cataloging underwater contamination from DEW line sites.
- Explore opportunities for providing scuba diving gear and training to communities.
- Facilitate discussions on waste management and water contamination in northern communities.
- Advocate for improved search and rescue equipment and support for local responders.

- Explore research options for the changing currents.

**Note: CIRNAC might be able to help with the contaminants (in water) programs*

Presentations

SIKU

- There are big changes in the ice, and SIKU is working on situational awareness.
- Also working on drone training (aerial and underwater) and CTD casts.
- Information in Nunavik could be helpful, and SIKU is interested in creating tools that could help.
- Internet availability across the entire region will increase accessibility.
- Have received requests from the Coast Guard, and there is a pollution reporting tool available.
- Want to connect to EMSA and are looking for support to help interoperability.
- There are polar bear alerts and AIS data available, but it is a challenge to access; SIKU can provide a one-stop solution.

Canadian Coast Guard - Integrated Marine Response Plans: Enhanced Report

Organizational Structure and Mandate:

- In 2018, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) established the Arctic Region to enhance its presence and response capabilities in northern territories.
- The CCG employs a distinctions-based model, actively engaging with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis governments and organizations through public engagement processes.
- The CCG has focused on infrastructure development, including training, equipment acquisition, and building core response capabilities.
- As of 2021, the CCG is fully operational across all regions, providing 24/7 environmental response services.
- The CCG's Marine Environmental Hazards Response (MEHR) program ensures appropriate responses to:
 - Ship-source spills.
 - Mystery source spills.
 - Pollution incidents at oil handling facilities.
 - Spills in foreign waters that impact Canadian waters.
- The CCG is actively removing Vessels of Concern (VoC) to mitigate potential environmental risks.
- The CCG's Monitoring and Compliance department recovers costs from large companies for recovery efforts, with assurances that these costs are not passed on to individuals practicing traditional land-based activities.

- The CCG encourages all individuals, particularly hunters and those living off the land, to report any observed spills.

Community Engagement and Resource Deployment:

- The CCG has established 28 Community Environmental Response Caches and plans to expand this network in the Hudson Bay and James Bay regions.
- Concerns were raised regarding the inventory of spill kits at the Deception Bay mine and the need for improved communication about cache contents.
- Transport Canada (TC) is responsible for regulatory inspections and plans (Oil Pollution Prevention Plan (OPPP) and Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) reviews of Oil Handling Facilities (OHFs), not mining facilities.
- TC indicated that contact information could be provided for some facilities to enable information sharing.
- Requests were made for additional resources, such as fast rescue boats and community caches for specific locations like Sani.

Operational Readiness and Collaboration:

- The CCG is actively conducting exercises with industry and operators in complex areas like Deception Bay to enhance preparedness.
- The CCG is committed to strengthening its relationships with communities and other agencies to ensure effective integrated marine response plans.

Environment and Climate Change Canada - Environmental Recovery After Incidents

- Developing a national framework in collaboration with other federal departments, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Health Canada and Parks Canada.
- Working definition: The return of impacted areas to a healthy state within a well functioning environment, as informed by pre-existing conditions, through natural processes or human intervention, and in so doing, also contributing to the social and economic well-being that depend on a healthy environment.
- Proposed definition - could change following engagement and further work.
- Current lack of clarity on federal roles and responsibilities for environmental recovery after ship-source oil spills - which is why there is a national recovery framework coming
- One of the objectives of the framework is to promote coordination and collaboration between various recovery partners and be operationally sustainable.
- One of the key principles of the framework is the Polluter pays principle - the polluter will be responsible for the costs of damage recovery operations, in line with its responsibilities under the Marine Liability Act. This principle, which already applies to the response phase, is designed to shift the cost of managing a pollution incident onto the company or person who caused it, with the aim of reducing the burden on society of paying for the loss and damage caused by specific incidents. It is envisaged that this principle will continue to apply to recovery in line with existing legislation.

- Framework to be completed by 2027

Transport Canada - Emergency Response Considerations: Enhanced Report

Mandate and Responsibilities:

- Transport Canada (TC) is mandated to ensure marine safety and security through:
 - The safe operation of ships.
 - The protection of human life and the marine environment.
 - Oversight of oil handling facilities (OHFs) engaged in the transfer of petroleum-based products.
 - Maintenance of a state of readiness through plan reviews, compliance inspections, and exercise oversight.
 - Continuous assessment and updating of environmental regulations to ensure consistency and standardization.

Regional and Jurisdictional Clarifications:

- Concerns were raised regarding the delineation of TC's regional responsibilities, specifically the perceived discrepancy between TC's regional structure and that of the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG).
- The complex jurisdictional positioning of Nunavik, spanning multiple zones, was identified as a source of confusion.
- TC clarified that Oil handling facilities operations at Deception Bay, not mining operations, are regulated under the Canadian Shipping Act, regardless of whether they utilize floating barges or wharves, similar to other OHFs.
- It was suggested that TC consider participating in relevant governance platforms to enhance process streamlining.
- Transport Canada (TC) is responsible for regulatory inspections and plans (Oil Pollution Prevention Plan (OPPP) and Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) reviews of Oil Handling Facilities (OHFs), not mining facilities.
- TC indicated that contact information could be provided for some facilities to enable information sharing.

Community Concerns and Emergency Preparedness:

- Community representatives expressed concerns about the potential environmental impact of floating barges, particularly on vital food sources.
- TC indicated that joint operations and exercises are conducted with mining facilities to enhance emergency response capabilities.
- Community members highlighted concerns regarding CCG response times, emphasizing the crucial role of local communities as first responders.

- Requests were made for TC to provide contact information regarding ship-to-ship transfer regulations.
- The use of single-hulled barges in Kuujjuaq, particularly for transfers outside of designated OHFs, was questioned in relation to TC's regulatory framework.
- CCG is actively engaging in exercises within complex areas.
- Current vessel equipment requirements are largely based on voluntary compliance, highlighting the importance of collaborative relationships.
- Chesterfield Inlet, Baker Lake, and Deception Bay were identified as high-risk areas necessitating specialized emergency response strategies.

[Canadian Marine Advisory Council](#)

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Public Safety - TS Consortium SAR Update

- In November 2018, there was a report of the Standing Committee on National Defense, Honorable John McKay, Chair, that recommended that the Government of Canada, through the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, establish a permanent Arctic search and rescue roundtable.
- There was also a report from Nunavik in December 2022 and another report from Hudson Bay and beyond in May 2023.
- The pilot roundtable participants include those from the Federal government, Territorial and Regional governments, National SAR Volunteer Organizations, and Academia.
- There is a need for more SAR partners, including Federal departments and agencies, industry, and other supporting organizations.
- The pilot meeting format includes setting the context and objectives, building a common understanding among SAR partners, understanding the current state through communities' perspectives, and looking to the future: a framework and roadmap for collaboration.
- The Arctic and North are a distinct sub-component of the Canadian SAR system, and there are unique SAR challenges and opportunities in this region.

- The proposed alignment with the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework is Territories + Inuit Nunangat.
- The Arctic and Northern SAR "Area of Interest" is Territories + Inuit Nunangat, extending to Trenton and Halifax Search and Rescue Regions boundaries.
- The adjacent Areas of Interest (AOIs) have similar or interconnected challenges, such as the "North of 55" extension, inter-jurisdictional challenges along P/T borders, Labrador, and the Tasiujaquiaqmiut Sheewetaganapoi Consortium area of interest.
- The proposed framework includes engaging, assessing, and addressing through a whole-of-society framework.
- There is a need to enhance SAR capability and capacity by understanding and optimizing the current system.
- SAR is an enabler for Emergency Management, and there are various inputs, activities, outputs, and desired outcomes related to SAR.

****Note:** <https://www.pspnet.ca/> - Public Safety Personnel mental health website, free resource

Reporting Requirements

- CCG has someone going into the communities to speak to responders and community organizations to understand how many incidents there actually are
- What is humanitarian?

Next Steps

- Victor, Wemindji: resolution to bypass everything and give us the mandate to go out and do our search and rescues
 - Glad to be included now in these conversations
- Alexandre Lamarre, Public Safety: there is a notification system, and a streamlined phone line, but we don't do a great job of promoting that
 - Also provide technical advice on spills
 - Would like to continue discussions on services and expertise we can provide before and during spill response
- Circulate meeting minutes to the larger WG membership



Tasiujaquiaqmiut Sheewetaganapoi blends Inuktitut and Cree; *those living in the big bay and saltwater, or more inclusively the inland sea*, and reflects the interconnected ecosystem of flora, fauna, and people that call this marine region home.