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Haines group helps neighbors find resources for disaster recovery

June 4, 2021 by Mike Swasey, KHNS - Haines (<https://www.ktoo.org/author/khns/>)



Jessica Killeen and Katie Bard and another volunteer work to push water out of a flooded home on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020, in Haines, Alaska. (Rashah McChesney/KTOO)

For many in Haines, recovering from last December's devastating storms in the Upper Lynn Canal may take years. The Haines Long Term Recovery Group formed in December to help piece together recovery strategies across the Haines Borough.

Spring in northern Southeast Alaska has stretched into what would normally be summer. With snow finally gone at lower elevations, some of the damage from last December's storms can finally be assessed.

"The honest truth is, the needs of Haines [residents] are astronomically higher than the resources we have available. There's not enough money to meet the needs of our survivors," said Sylvia Heinz, coordinator of the Haines Long Term Recovery Group.

According to Heinz, the group is actively assisting 58 households with disaster-related needs. It's not a nonprofit or a government agency. It is a group of professionals helping their neighbors navigate disaster recovery. They help victims find assistance from various government agencies, nonprofits, church organizations and the private sector.

Residents are still facing problems like compromised fuel tanks that threaten to pollute soil and waterways, washed out driveways and at least 9 homes that were completely destroyed. Another 28 homes can't be lived in currently, and most of the residents of those households are still displaced.

One of the more onerous problems is debris removal. Haines has a privately run landfill, and the Borough cannot offer debris removal at a reduced cost. Removing destroyed homes, barns and garages can be exceptionally expensive.

The Haines Borough is assisting the recovery effort through municipal road and infrastructure repair but isn't set up to help individuals find the resources they need. That's where the recovery group comes in.



Heinz says recovery from disasters like these does not happen overnight.

“One of the fires up north that happened in 2015 is just getting resolved, they just finished that disaster recovery response. So that’s six years later. Recovery takes years,” she said.

The Recovery Group is still fielding calls as people return to town and as snowmelt allows for proper damage assessment. People who need help recovering from the storms can reach the Long Term Recovery Group at HainesLTRG@gmail.com (<mailto:HainesLTRG@gmail.com>) on their [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/HainesLTRG) (<https://www.facebook.com/HainesLTRG>).

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January 31, 2024

City offices and facilities will be opening at 11:00 a.m. Thursday due to the weather. Juneau schools and UAS are shifting to remote learning.



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The story behind the transfer of Klukwan Presbyterian Church to Chilkat Indian Village (<https://www.ktoo.org/2023/12/01/the-story-behind-the-transfer-of-klukwan-presbyterian-church-to-chilkat-indian-village/>)

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Storm update: Snow tapering off through the night, slick conditions likely Tuesday (<https://www.ktoo.org/2023/11/19/up-to-14-inches-of-snow-forecast-for-juneau-on-monday/>)

November 19, 2023

The storm could bring 14 inches of snow and gusts of up to 60 mph downtown.

