



State Emergency Operations Center

## **2023 Wrangell Landslide Incident Situation Report**

Date: December 6, 2023, Time: 1600

SEOC Preparedness Level 2



### **Contact**

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## State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Activated to Level 2

### Incident Overview

On Monday, November 20, 2023, at 2051 the City and Borough of Wrangell experienced a major landslide at Mile 11 of Zimovia Highway. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was notified of the landslide at 2130 on November 20, 2023, recalled staff, activated to Level-2, and is coordinating multiple requests for state-level resources in support of Wrangell's Incident Command.

On November 21, 2023, Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy declared a state disaster emergency for the City and Borough of Wrangell. On November 26, 2023, Governor Dunleavy also declared a state disaster for the City of Coffman Cove. On December 4, 2023, Governor Dunleavy amended his state declaration of disaster to add the entire Southeast Island School District Regional Education Attendance Area, including the City of Craig and Hydaburg for both Public and Individual Assistance.

### Significant Operations Updates

#### Wrangell City and Borough:

Over the last two days, the SEOC Wrangell Division Supervisor collected lists of survivor unmet needs for consideration by the state's Mass Care Group, coordinated the deployment of crisis canines for responder and school stress support, and worked with Wrangell Incident Command on ongoing search operations.

The City and Borough of Wrangell announced today a suspension of the search for the last mission person from the November 20<sup>th</sup> landslide, after 15 days of exhaustive effort by the Wrangell Volunteer Search and Rescue teams that included K9 scent detection dogs and local heavy equipment operators who combed through the complex landslide debris field. All accessible areas above and within the intertidal zone were searched. Search and Rescue personnel and a scent detection K9 team will be available in the community and available to reengage with active searching if new information is developed.

Crews from the City and Borough of Wrangell and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) continue to work on the Mile 11 slide. Ongoing precipitation is generating uphill debris movement which requires additional debris removal efforts. These conditions are expected to continue. Large culverts will be installed to handle the new drainage characteristics and to better handle the mobilization of debris. The downstream section of the highway embankment has been pioneered to the toe and is being built back up to restore the shoulder. The road may be reopened for overnight use once the shoulder is restored. Traffic barrels with lights are enroute via barge. Road construction concrete is coming from Seattle, extending road repair completion for an additional 12 days.

Division of Geologic and Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) continues to provide technical assessments and analysis while collecting LiDAR datasets across the affected southeast region. DGGS compiled and completed a factsheet about landslides to be disseminated to the public. DGGS will participate in a community radio public meeting this weekend in Wrangell.

A Red Cross 3-person Incident Care Condolence Team continues to work in the community to help those grieving. Two National Crisis Response Canines are expected to arrive in Wrangell tomorrow. Out of ongoing concern for slide risk, several residents have not returned to their homes and the Wrangell Division Supervisor is meeting with them to coordinate assistance.

**Recovery Branch:**

The State Individual Assistance registration telephone hotline and website opened on November 28, 2023, and applications are being accepted from the state-declared areas.

State Public Assistance is providing communities in the declared area with technical advice on the disaster reimbursement process.

Current Registrations as of 0800, December 6, 2023.

IA Applications Received:	11
PA Applications Received:	1
Total Disbursements:	Pending

A joint Preliminary Damage Assessment with the Federal Emergency Management Agency is scheduled for next week to assess the entire state declared area, including Wrangell and Prince of Wales Island, and develop information to support consideration of a Request for Federal Assistance.

**Diomed Division:**

On Sunday, November 26, 2023, the community reported that the city office building, constructed in 1978, had several wooden supports fail on one side of the structure. The following day, the remaining supports collapsed leaving the building on the ground, with the northwest corner resting on the community elementary school. Foundation damage resulted in the building being condemned, and demolition is planned.

On Sunday, a structural assessment by a team including a DOT/PF engineer, the Bering Strait School District's (BSSD) Director of Maintenance, and representatives from Kawerak and the City of Diomed assessed the conditions of Diomed's school and city office buildings.

The assessment reports the school is structurally sound with minor damage, exterior siding, trim, and interior drywall cracks. No mechanical or structural issues were found. Bering Straits School District has moved to online learning while the school is closed to in-person learning for safety until the collapsed office building is removed.

The City is working through plans for collapsed building demolition using contracted and local labor.

**Other Southeast Communities Group:**

**Prince of Wales Island (POW):** On Tuesday, November 28, 2023, the SEOC was notified of damage caused by flooding and landslides across Prince of Wales Island. The City of Craig reported their public works department did emergency route clearance work across the island. While no injuries were reported, several homes were damaged. Other damages were reported in Hydaburg and the Unorganized Borough area of the Island. The City of Craig declared a local disaster emergency on November 30, 2023.

SEOC Division Supervisor visited Prince of Wales Island on December 1-3, 2023, meeting with Craig and Hydaburg City officials, local residents, and the power operator. Initial reports were power line damage, 2 homes damaged near mile 4.25 of Port St. Nichols Road, and a community water line at risk due to flood

erosion. The Cities, DOT/PF and power operator were engaged in line repairs, debris clearance road repairs with new culvert installation.

DOT/PF is providing technical assistance today to the City of Coffman Cove at SEOC's request on community roadway repair and ongoing landslide risk. DGGs provided some local landslide risk information to the City over the weekend.

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### **SEOC Operations Brief**

SEOC Operations Briefings will be conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 0800 via Zoom.

The next Situation Report will be released on Friday, December 8, 2023, at 1600.

Please email the 2023 Wrangell Landslide conference at [landslide@ready.alaska.gov](mailto:landslide@ready.alaska.gov)

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### **Individual Assistance Applications Are Open, To Apply:**



Call 1-844-445-7131, Monday-Friday, 0800-1600





Or Apply Online at [ready.alaska.gov/Recovery/IA](https://ready.alaska.gov/Recovery/IA)

**The Last Day to Apply is January 27, 2024**

## Lifeline Status

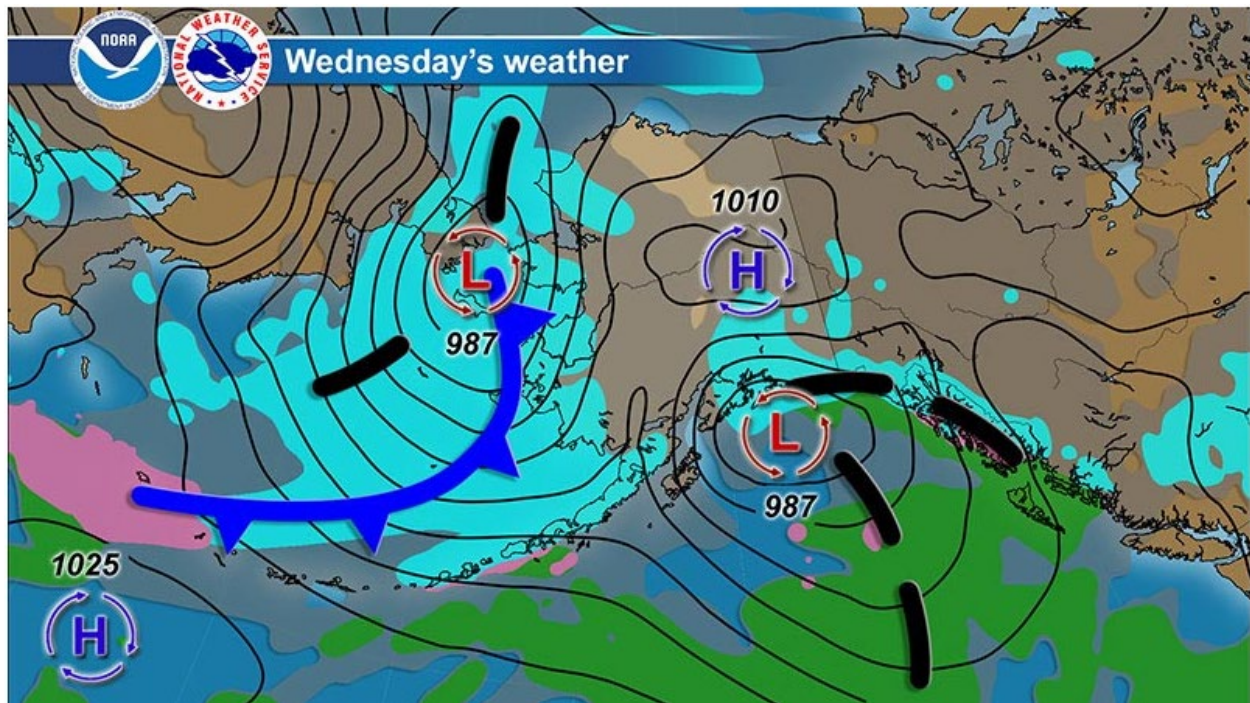
 <p><b>Alaska Overall</b></p>	       
<p><b>Impacted Areas</b></p>	       

	<p><b>Food, Hydration, and Shelter</b></p>	
	 <p><b>Shelter</b></p>	<p><b>Wrangell:</b> DOT/PF is scheduling Zimovia Highway public openings based on road repair operations.</p> <p><b>Craig:</b> The Division Supervisor visited the community and noted at least 2 homes were damaged near mile 4.25 of Port St. Nichols Road, and a community water line uncovered by flooding.</p> <p><b>Diomede:</b> Representatives from DOT&amp;PF, BSSD, and Kawerak visited the community over the weekend and completed assessments on the impacted structures. Planning is underway to demolish the office building and reopen the school with a preliminary estimate of 4 weeks, depending on weather.</p> <p><b>Recovery Br:</b> State Individual Assistance (IA) hotline and online IA registration remain open for the entire declared area. There have been 11 applications submitted.</p>

	<p><b>Communications</b></p>	
	 <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p>	<p><b>Southeast:</b> The Notice to Mariners regarding United States Coast Guard (USCG) Channel-16 VHF communications in the Southeast region remains in effect. USCG requests mariners relay all unanswered requests for assistance to the USCG including both radio and phone.</p> <p><b>Wrangell:</b> Residents continue to rely on deployed Starlink receivers for connectivity south of the slide area. Utilities are working to re-establish regular service, with an estimate of at least a week.</p>
	<p><b>Transportation</b></p>	
	 <p><b>Roadways</b></p>	<p><b>Wrangell:</b> Approximately 40 loads of debris have been removed from the roadway with 36 loads of shot rock hauled in for slide stabilization and drainage ditches. Existing culverts are overwhelmed with rainfall and continued debris movement. One or two large culverts are planned for installation.</p> <p><b>Craig/POW:</b> Cities and DOT/PF are actively engaged in debris clearance and road repairs with several new culverts installed. The City of Craig reported their public works department did emergency route clearance work across the island.</p>



## Weather Forecast



## Helpful Links

Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)

- <http://ready.alaska.gov/>

National Weather Service: Alaska Forecast Center

- <https://www.weather.gov/alaska/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>