

State Emergency Operations Center



2023 Wrangell Landslide Incident Situation Report

December 8, 2023, at 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.

On December 7, 2023, Governor Dunleavy declared a state disaster for public assistance for the City of Diomedes in response to their collapsed city building.

Significant Operations Updates

Wrangell City and Borough:

On December 6, 2023, The City and Borough of Wrangell announced a suspension of the search for the last mission person from the landslide after 15 days of exhaustive effort by the Wrangell Volunteer Search and Rescue teams. The search 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.

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 1000, there will be a multi-agency informational meeting to discuss the Mile 11 event and other landslide information. Technical experts will be available to discuss public concerns. This event will be broadcast on KSTK and the Borough's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wrangellak>.

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. A basin and large culverts are being installed to handle the new drainage characteristics and to better handle the mobilization of debris. Installation of the culverts is scheduled to be completed today. The DOT&PF has decided to close the road at the slide area on December 9, 2023, as a precautionary measure for workers and the traveling public. The closure is scheduled for the entire day on Saturday, with plans to return to scheduled openings as conditions allow on Sunday.

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 have arrived in Wrangell. 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. All current applications are for the Wrangell area although other communities have damages.

Current registrations as of 0800, December 8, 2023.

IA Applications Received:	12
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.

Diomedes 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 Diomedes assessed the conditions of Diomedes'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.

One Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF) member, in Diomedes, is being activated to provide an on-the-ground presence for SEOC and to support the local community in their response and building demolition.

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, 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 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.

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 Monday, December 11, 2023, at 1600.

Please email the 2023 Wrangell Landslide conference at landslide@ready.alaska.gov


















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

The Last Day to Apply is January 27, 2024

Lifeline Status

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

	<p>Food, Hydration, and Shelter</p>	
	 <p>Shelter</p>	<p>Wrangell: DOT/PF has scheduled Zimovia Highway double-lane emergency access routes based on road repair operations.</p> <p>POW: The Division Supervisor visited the region 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>



Communications



Infrastructure

Southeast: 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.

Wrangell: 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.



Transportation



Roadways

Wrangell: Existing culverts are overwhelmed with rainfall and continued debris movement. The large culvert installation is scheduled for completion today.

POW: 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.

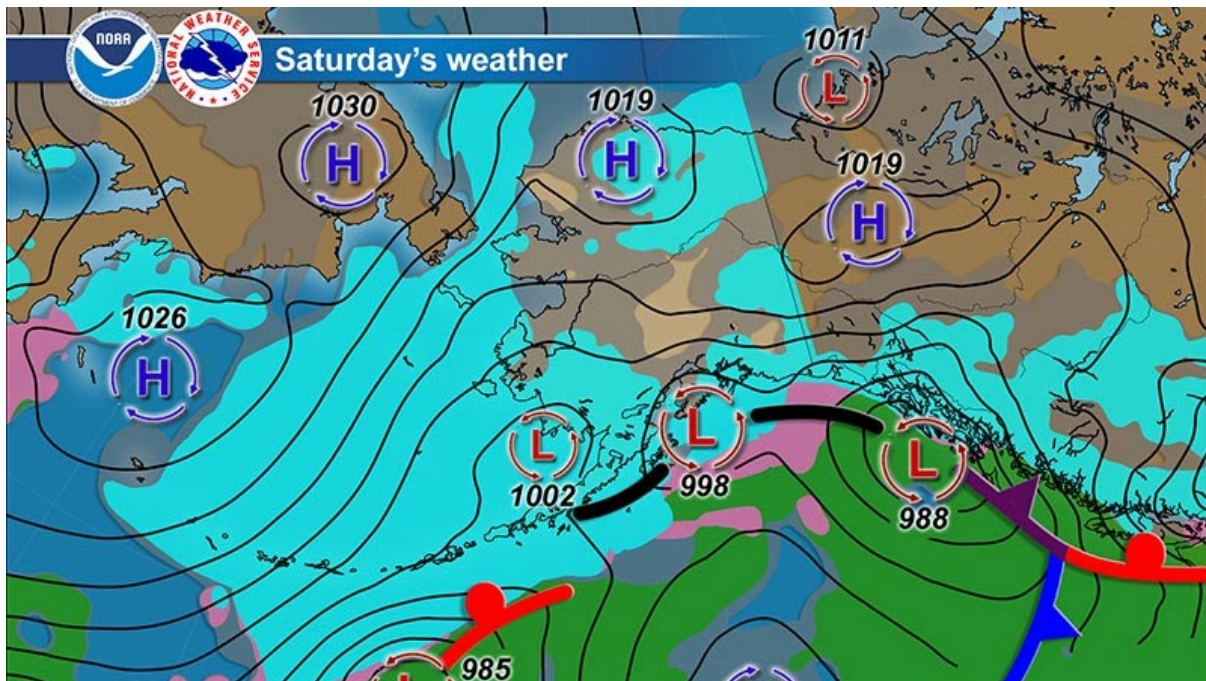
Weather Forecast

Southeast: A strong low in the North Pacific will move into Southeast Alaska this weekend and bring strong winds and heavy rain to Wrangell tonight through Saturday.

- A High Wind Watch is in effect for the Wrangell area tonight through Saturday afternoon for Southeast winds 20-30 mph with gusts to 60 mph.

Norton Sound: A different strong low near Norton Sound is bringing north winds gusting to 60 mph and periods of blizzard conditions to Diomedede and the Bering Strait region.

- A Winter Storm Warning remains in effect through Saturday afternoon.



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>