

# JASPER WILDFIRE

CASE STUDY

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2024





# How Alberta SAR teams helped Jasper to safety

**25,000 people evacuated, 16 hikers rescued and 80 horses saved – all within 24 hours**

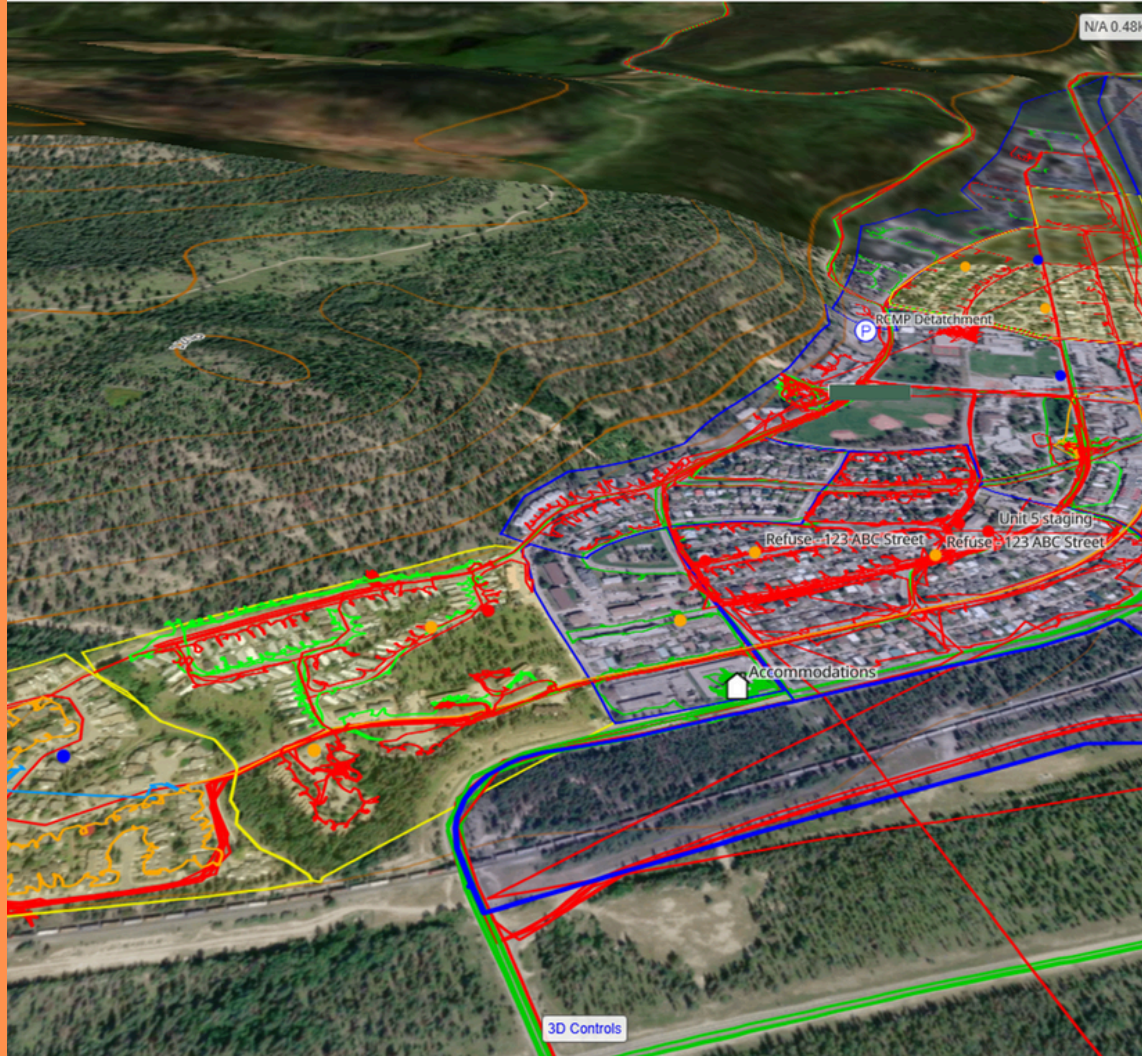
During the 2024 Jasper wildfire, volunteer search and rescue (SAR) members from 13 teams across the province worked seamlessly with the RCMP to deliver evacuation orders to residents and visitors within the townsite.



These highly trained volunteers knocked on every single home and business in Jasper...not once but twice.

Members moved safely, quickly and with great accuracy and, in all, more than 25,000 people evacuated successfully and with no major injuries. This important effort was completed in half the time the RCMP had allotted for it.





## TECHNOLOGY HELPED ENSURE SAFETY

During the Jasper civil emergency and using newly purchased CalTopo real-time mapping, the POG overhead team was able to remotely monitor and track SAR members (for their safety), ensure 100% coverage of door-to-door evacuation orders and share real-time information with the command post to support informed decision making.

CalTopo software had been provided earlier in the year to all SAR teams across the province, courtesy of SAR Alberta and thanks to Government of Alberta funding, as an initiative to help unify operations.





## A RESCUE THAT ALMOST DIDN'T HAPPEN

As part of SAR Alberta's POG, nearby Hinton Search and Rescue (HSAR) played a critical role in the Jasper response and, within 24 hours, had completed two significant mutual aid taskings. During the active evacuation order, HSAR volunteers safely guided 16 stranded hikers out of the backcountry while the fire burned directly behind them.

HSAR was also contacted by two local outfitting companies, based in Jasper, when it became evident that the town was under imminent threat. After being evacuated, citizens are not allowed to return for their own safety which now meant that the outfitters had no way of getting their stabled horses out of harm's way.





## A COMMUNITY BANDS TOGETHER

HSAR stepped in to help but, after the first horse rescue trip, the team realized that, due to the risk, there would only be one more trip possible and not enough trailers.

HSAR reached out to the local agricultural society, multiple government agencies and other local ranchers in the area and was able to organize a convoy of 12 trucks and trailers which were then used to successfully rescue and relocate 80 horses to Hinton.

The horses remained at the local rodeo grounds for the next two days until being dispersed to volunteer stables who were happy to take them in.

### **Safe, sound, fed and watered**

During this time, HSAR volunteers took on the added responsibility of ensuring the horses had food and water, reaching out to the horse community for assistance with supplies which was quickly answered.

The teamwork of numerous agencies and individuals had single-handedly saved 80 horses.



## POP-UP STORE HELPS BEGIN THE RECOVERY PROCESS

Following the devastation of the Jasper wildfire, HSAR along with two other community agencies organized a donation store for evacuees. This store ran for more than a month and helped numerous Jasperites start the process of getting back on their feet.

Many individuals who came to the store repeatedly expressed what it meant for them to have a welcoming place when they felt like they had nowhere to go. During that month, a community was built within that store which continues on to this day.

For comments or questions, please email:  
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