

Ashes to Action: Managing the Wolf Fire Disaster Response

Presented by: Michelle Tomaszewicz, P.Eng.

SWANA NLC Annual Conference

April 2026

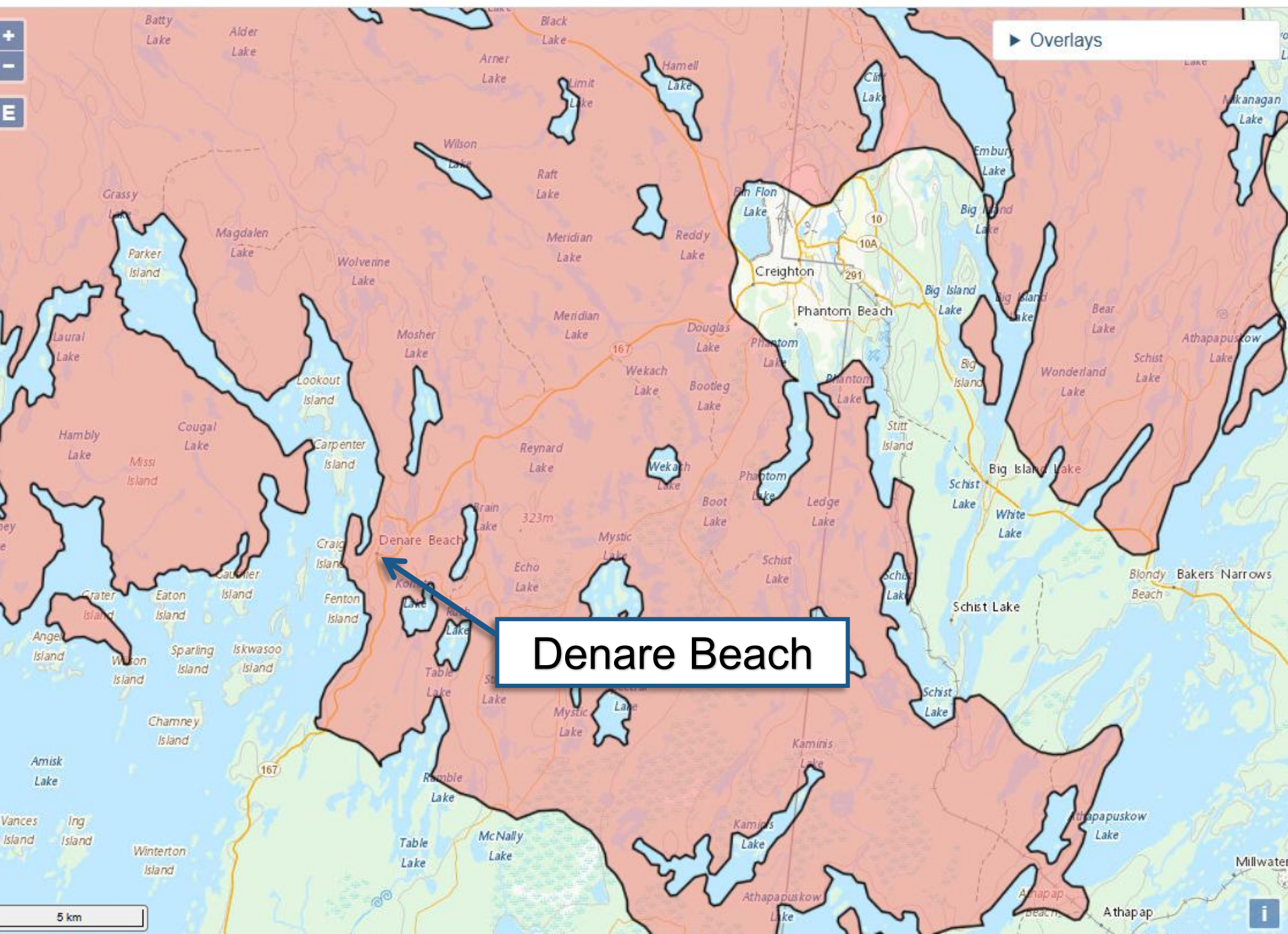
AECOM

Wildfire Background



Wolf Fire

- Ignited on May 19, 2025
- Burnt over 164,000 hectares across northern Saskatchewan
- Approximately 20,000 people were displaced during the 2025 Saskatchewan forest fire season
- Mandatory evacuation of Denare Beach, Creighton and Flin Flon
- No damage to key infrastructure such as water treatment plants or hospitals



Wildfire Background

By mid-June, 277 primary residences were confirmed to be lost in Saskatchewan.

218 of which were in the Northern Village of Denare Beach, SK including the neighboring community of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN).



Northern Village of Denare Beach – July 22, 2025



Northern Village of Denare Beach – October 22, 2025

AECOM's Scope of Work

Cleanup commenced on July 23, 2025



Oversee and track debris removal debris from within impacted properties



Support the NVDB with regulatory reporting requirements



Inspect and cap all sewer and water services



Design and oversee the landfill expansion to accommodate fire debris waste

Response Process



Wolf Fire Debris Management Plan

Debris Management Plan approved by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (SkMOE) outlined the initial steps to return the region to its pre-disaster state while providing safety for the community and surrounding environment.



Initial Property Assessments

Asbestos testing was completed and AECOM staff documented property condition and hazards.

Early July 2025

Mid July 2025

Late July 2025

July – November 2025



Community Engagement & Call to Action

Multiple stakeholders formed the Provincial Recovery Task Force including members of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, Ministry of Environment, Northern Village of Denare Beach and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.



Denare Beach Landfill Expansion Plan

Proposed landfill expansion approved by the SkMOE accommodated and managed the significant volume of disaster debris including soil, ash and rubble. The plan included safe asbestos handling procedures and a proposed final cover design.



Debris Removal & Waste Segregation

Establish temporary storage sites and systematically remove debris from the burn site on each property.

Initial Property Assessments



Asbestos Testing

- Sampled each structure to determine if asbestos was present.
- 42 properties tested positive for asbestos containing materials.

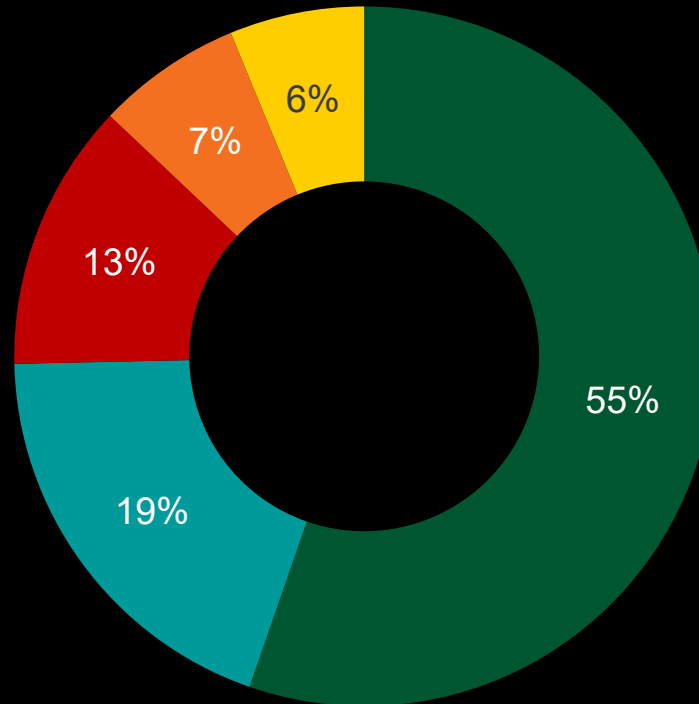
Pre-Assessments

- Documented pre-cleanup conditions of each property / parcel.
- Determined and marked hazards on each property (Acetylene tanks, propane tanks, etc.)
- Completed in teams of two – one painting and marking hazards / features, one completing a sketch of the property complete with pictures.

Debris Removal

- Felled trees that were a threat to the Debris Removal Crew.
- Removed vehicles for recycling and disposal.
- Collected, consolidated and removed metals for recycling.
- Collected, consolidated and removed concrete for recycling.
- Collected, consolidated and removed ash and debris for disposal.
- Scraped, collected, consolidated and removed the top 75mm to 150mm of contaminated soil from each property.

Debris Loads



- Ash & Debris
- Concrete
- Metal
- Hazard Trees
- Vegetation

55%

Ash & Debris delivered to the Denare Beach Landfill

19%

Concrete diverted to the temporary storage site for recycling

13%

Metal diverted to the temporary storage site for recycling

Temporary Storage Area – Historical Landfill



Northern Village of Denare Beach – October 2025

Denare Beach Landfill Expansion Area



Northern Village of Denare Beach – October 2025

Landfill Expansion



**8.5 years
of waste**

In 4 months

- Landfilled 25,600 m³ of ash and debris.
- Local contractors mobilized quickly to the landfill to construct the containment berm and compact the ash and debris.
- The containment berm and earthen final cover used 16,800 m³ of imported clay

Confirmatory Soil Sampling



- Completed after primary debris removal, and walkthrough of property.
- Taken to determine if contamination is still present.
- Tested for salinity, metals, and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH's).

Sewer and Water Service Terminations



- Completed after passing confirmatory soil sample.
- Purpose:
 - Protect town infrastructure.
 - Protect groundwater and surface water.
 - Reduce safety hazards to cleanup crews and public.
 - Locating and marking services.







Inspected sewer services to determine their condition.

Property Walkthrough and Final Signoff

Northern Village of Denare Beach
Individual Property Report
9 Birch Place

6. Debris Removal Final Signoff Form

AECOM		
DEBRIS REMOVAL FINAL SIGNOFF FORM		
Wolf Fire Incident		
SITE ADDRESS:	9 Birch Place	APN: 164265914
Northern Village of Denare Beach (NVDB):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN):	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Debris Removal Complete	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Confirmation Sampling Complete	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Backfilling Complete	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Debris Removal Project Approved	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
FINAL APPROVAL DATE:	Oct 22/25	
Debris Removal Project Approved Observations:		
ACKNOWLEDGED BY:	SIGNATURE	PRINT
Northern Village of Denare Beach		Jason Cassidy
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation		
AECOM Canada ULC		Neil Gohrke
Contractor:		Dave McCrete

AECOM
6



- Completed 223 Individual Property Reports
- Describe general debris removal and environmental activities conducted at each property

APEGS Recognition



In March 2026, the AECOM project team received the APEGS Exceptional Engineering/ Geoscience Project Award.

The Northern Village of Denare Beach administration team accepted the award alongside AECOM.

Thank you

AECOM DELIVERING
A BETTER
WORLD.