MEET THE TEAM

Robin Cox
is Associate Professor and Program Head of Disaster and Emergency Management at Royal Roads University.

Lori Peek
is Associate Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Center for Disaster and Risk Analysis at Colorado State University.

Jennifer Tobin-Gurley
is a doctoral student at Colorado State University and a research coordinator at the Center for Disaster and Risk Analysis.

Cheryl Heykoop
is a doctoral student at Royal Roads University and a Child and Youth Participation and Protection Adviser with the International Institute for Child Rights and Development.

Sarah Michaud
is a master’s student and research assistant at Royal Roads University.

Matthew Godsoe
is a doctoral student and research assistant at Royal Roads University.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our team is currently working in three communities: 1.) Joplin, Missouri—In May of 2011 Joplin was struck by a devastating tornado that resulted in over 160 deaths, 1,150 injuries, and the complete destruction of over 2,000 buildings; 2.) Slave Lake, Alberta—In May 2011 Slave Lake was affected by a wildfire that resulted in the evacuation of 7,000 residents and the loss of 374 properties; and most recently 3.) Southern Alberta—In June 2013 Southern Alberta experienced the worst flooding in Alberta history. Over 100,000 people were displaced, four people lost their lives, and multiple communities are just starting to estimate the overall devastation. This study, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, will contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which social, economic, and personal factors influence disaster vulnerability and resilience among youth and the ways in which youth are contributing to the recovery of their peers, families, and communities.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.) What are the stories of recovery for youth in disaster affected communities?
2.) How do youth contribute to helping their communities, and each other, move forward after a disaster?
3.) What people, places, spaces, and activities are most important for youth in recovery?
4.) How were the needs of youth met and unmet in the recovery process?
5.) What are the most important changes after a disaster for youth, families, schools, and communities?
**NEW BEGINNINGS IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA**

Our first trip to Calgary and High River was a great success! We met with some amazing community leaders – people whose commitment, enthusiasm, and generosity will certainly help shape our project as we move forward in Southern Alberta.

**DURING THIS TRIP WE...**

- Met with disaster managers as well as youth-centered and community-based organizations to introduce YCDR and explore possibilities for working together in the coming year.

- Conducted formal and informal interviews with over 40 people in Calgary and High River focusing on the disaster and the early stages of the recovery process.

- Met with officials from the City of Calgary Emergency Services, the University of Calgary, and Mount Royal University College.

- Drove to High River and visited the temporary community in Saddlebrook where over 500 residents were still living at the time.

- Explored the High River downtown core and some of the recovering residential areas. We witnessed how far recovery has come and yet we also recognized the long road still ahead for many residents and businesses.
LOOK WHAT WE FOUND!

One of the highlights of our trip was getting to learn about some inspiring youth-led programs in Southern Alberta. We are so grateful for the connections we made with the following organizations:

A note on Antyx...

We met with a community arts program called Antyx. Antyx is a Calgary based company that uses the arts alongside community development processes to create opportunities for youth to become more engaged in their community and to experience increased community connection. Their projects are creative, largely youth led, and often exude powerful messages that pertain to the surrounding culture. Visit their website to learn more about their dynamic projects:

http://www.anthyx.org/home/

A note on Youth Central...

Youth Central is a Calgary-based organization that acts as a hub to connect youth to volunteer opportunities within the city. They believe that youth in modern society are often undervalued, that they should be challenged to do more, and that they should be included in all aspects of community life. Through Youth Central, youth are given the opportunity to volunteer, sit on steering committees, voice their opinions to leaders and politicians, write for blogs, and use their individual skills in a variety of ways. For more information on Youth Central visit:

http://youthcentral.com/

When the River Starts to Rise

We would also like to draw attention to this inspiring video about the flood recovery experience from the perspective of Hannah Shields who was in grade 10 during the floods. She wrote and performed the featured song “When the River Starts to Rise” and made the video with the help of her friends. We feel Hannah demonstrates the creative power and potential of the youth in High River and disaster affected communities elsewhere.

You can enjoy this creative piece here: https://vimeo.com/77836875

MOVING FORWARD

The YCDR team is actively discussing project ideas with several community partners in High River and Calgary. We hope to connect with youth in both communities to hear their ideas and work with them to shape the creative projects that reflect their unique insights on recovery. Some ideas thus far include mural projects, digital-story-booths, a youth-centered disaster recovery video jam, and other creative workshop ideas. We know we’ll hear more great ideas from interested youth and can’t wait to see what emerges.
It has now been over two and a half years since wildfires devastated Slave Lake, Alberta. YCDR believes that Slave Lake youth still have important insights to share about the longer term recovery and what works or doesn't work to help youth recover from disasters.

WHERE WE ARE NOW...

Leading our continued work in Slave Lake is Sarah Michaud, a graduate student in the Environmental Education and Communications program at Royal Roads University and a resident of Edmonton.

During the spring of 2013, Sarah led an Alberta RiverWatch raft trip on the Athabasca River where she worked with a group of Slave Lake high school students. The students spoke at length about their recovery experiences. Inspired by their stories, Sarah soon after decided to join the YCDR research team and focus her master's thesis research in Slave Lake. An artist and environmentalist, she hopes to work with youth affected by the 2011 fires to learn more about their perspectives on disaster recovery, and the impact the fires had on young people's connection to place, community, and their futures.

WHERE WE ARE GOING...

After a successful research trip this past December, Sarah plans to return to Slave Lake in February to partner with Amanda Keats and the Engaging Partnerships in the Community (EPIC) Program. They will conduct a focus group with interested youth to hear more about the long-term recovery from the fires and explore options for telling those stories through art, video, and other creative media. Sarah is also working closely with a group of former Slave Lake high school students who are now pursuing post-secondary education in Edmonton. Sarah and this core student team hope to kick start a similar creative research workshop process with students from Roland Michener High School. Stay tuned!