



JOINT INFORMATION RELEASE
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City & Borough of Juneau and Tlingit & Haida Issue Coordinated Disaster Declarations ahead of 2025 Glacial Lake Outburst

Juneau, Alaska - Today, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) and the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) issued coordinated emergency disaster declarations in anticipation of a potentially imminent and record level glacial lake outburst flood, or jökulhlaup, from Suicide Basin/K'óox K̄aadí Basin above the Mendenhall Glacier.

The decision to issue declarations prior to an actual flood event is a proactive measure aimed at protecting life, property, and critical infrastructure in the Mendenhall Valley. Hydrologic monitoring confirms the volume of water currently impounded in the Basin has the potential to meet or exceed thresholds associated with historic flooding. CBJ and Tlingit & Haida are confident in the HESCO barrier flood mitigation system recently installed along the Mendenhall River, officials are emphasizing that no chances will be taken when it comes to public safety and emergency preparedness.

"Tlingit & Haida's first priority is always the safety and well-being of our people and our community," said Tlingit & Haida 1st Vice President Jackie Pata. "We know the trauma and hardship last year's flood brought to Juneau. By taking this proactive step together under a unified command, we are making sure every tool is in place before the water rises. Our shared commitment is to protect lives, safeguard homes, and stand united in readiness for whatever comes."

The proactive emergency declarations enable the mobilization of resources ahead of time, rather than after flooding begins. Based on current monitoring data from the National Weather Service, the volume of water impounded in Suicide Basin/K'óox K̄aadí Basin has already reached historic thresholds known to cause major flooding along the Mendenhall River.

"This year is different. We're not just responding—we're ready," said CBJ City Manager Katie Koester. "The HESCO barriers are in place, and we believe they will perform as designed, but our job is to plan for every scenario—especially in the face of what could be another historic flood event. This proactive emergency declaration gives us the tools to act swiftly and decisively."

In August 2024, an unprecedented flood from Suicide Basin overwhelmed homes and infrastructure—some well outside mapped flood zones. It triggered hazardous spills, emergency evacuations, and a major state and federal disaster response. That experience, officials say, shaped this year's aggressive and coordinated preparation.

The coordinated declarations allow for:

- **Pre-positioning of emergency response equipment and personnel**
- **Activation of expedited permitting for emergency riverbank work**
- **Enhanced interagency coordination and public alerts**
- **Requests for continued state and federal assistance and funding**
- **Implementation of any necessary emergency protective orders**

The declarations are effective immediately and will remain in place for 180 days. The CBJ Assembly and Tlingit & Haida Executive Council will ratify each government's respective declarations.

The incident Unified Command from CBJ and Tlingit & Haida urges residents in vulnerable areas to stay informed through official channels and to prepare for possible evacuation orders. Updated flood risk maps are available at JuneauFlood.com and emergency preparedness resources are available on the CBJ website at bit.ly/JuneauFloodReady. For questions on how to prepare for a potential flood, please contact floodresponse@juneau.gov.

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For media inquiries, please contact

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