

SOUTH NATION
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Crisis Communications Kit for Landslides

2025



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Overview

Emergencies, from Emergency Management Ontario

An emergency is defined under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* as 'situation or an impending situation that constitutes a danger of major proportions that could result in serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property and that is caused by the forces of nature, a disease or other health risk, an accident or an act whether intentional or otherwise'

Purpose

This Crisis Communications Kit outlines the principles, procedures, and tools South Nation Conservation (SNC) will use to guide an effective communications response to a landslide emergency. It complements, rather than replaces, existing operational and decision-making structures, and is intended to ensure accurate, timely, and coordinated communication with staff, partners, the media, and the public.

Scope

This kit applies to all landslide-related emergencies occurring within SNC's jurisdiction. It must be reviewed annually by all members of the Communications Response Team, ideally before high-risk seasons. Contact details should be confirmed during each review cycle.

Hard copies should be maintained at:

- SNC's main office,
- All designated alternate Emergency Command Centre (ECC) locations,
- The homes or personal files of all Communications Response Team members.

A copy should also be shared with each partner municipality, as local governments are formally responsible for leading emergency response efforts within their boundaries.

Objectives

- To quickly assess the need for a communications response during a landslide emergency.
- To provide accessible tools and templates for implementing a coordinated response.
- To support public safety and emergency operations through timely and accurate communications.
- To strengthen SNC's internal readiness and response capacity for crisis situations.



Step-by-Step Guide

Step One – Assemble and Identify

When a landslide emergency is reported to a member of the Communications Response Team, they must immediately notify the other team members and coordinate a meeting time and location. If direct contact is not possible, leave detailed messages and proceed with assembling the team.

SNC's Emergency Communications Centre (ECC), located at the main office, may be activated if safe to do so. Alternate ECC locations may include municipal offices or other public buildings. Confirm the safety of the meeting site before proceeding.

Once your team is notified and en route to the ECC:

- Begin collecting and organizing all available information related to the incident.
- Take detailed notes and maintain a log of key facts, timelines, and communications.
- Once assembled, brief the group and ensure that each member assumes their assigned roles and responsibilities as outlined in this kit and within SNC's operational structure.
- As a team, clearly identify the nature of the crisis and confirm a shared understanding of the event, based on all information available at that time.

A contact list for the Communications Response Team is included in this kit and should be used to initiate this process.

Communications Response Team	
Name	Contact Information
Carl Bickerdike Chief Administrative Officer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-360-9125
John Mesman Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-899-5341
Sandra Mancini, Managing Director, Natural Hazards and Infrastructure	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-3242
Ronda Boutz Secretary-Treasurer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-8940
Erin Thorne Communications Specialist	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-7158
Kenneth Omenogor, P.Eng. Site Lead 1	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 343-542-0707
Shahin Zand, P.Eng. Site Lead 2	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 343-302-5773
Brian Lambie President, Redbrick Communications (PR Agency Lead Contact, if required)	Office: 1-905-271-1669 Mobile: 1-416-729-5425



Step Two – Determine Response

Use your professional judgment, available information, and the guiding principles below to assess the situation and determine the scope of response required.

Guiding Principles

- **Safety:** Never compromise personal safety. All communications must be coordinated from secure locations.
- **Preparedness:** Materials should be pre-reviewed where possible, and tools should be ready for rapid deployment.
- **Timeliness:** Act swiftly, without sacrificing clarity or accuracy. Ensure that response times respect the public, stakeholders and the media.
- **Coordination:** Work closely with emergency services, municipalities, and other partners. Respect roles, jurisdictions, and established response plans while being supportive.

Assessment Questions

Identification

- What is the crisis? What are the known facts at this point?

Audience

- Who are our target audiences? What is their order of priority?
- What are the best ways and communication channels to reach audiences in this situation (e.g., website, social media, phone, radio, etc)?
- Is this a local, regional or national issue?
- Who is directly involved or affected?
- What governments, agencies and other groups might become involved?
- Who will we need to contact or coordinate with?



Timing

- When did this start, or when did the event occur?
- When do we need to respond? When do we need a full response?
- What are perceived deadlines? What are real deadlines?

Situation Analysis

- What do we know so far?
- What information do we need to develop an effective response?
- What resources, expertise, or approvals are needed?
(e.g. operational, financial, technical, medical, legal).

Response Considerations

- Does our response need to address multiple aspects?
(e.g. legal, media, scientific, public safety).
- Do we need to contact stakeholders, experts, or legal counsel before issuing a public statement?
- Which media outlets or communication platforms are most practical and accessible for this situation?
- What channels do we currently have available to get information out?
- When and how will we provide updates?
- Is our response consistent with SNC's mandate, values, and responsibilities?

Once the questions above have been discussed and documented, use the information gathered to determine the scale and scope of the response. Identify immediate communication priorities, confirm which resources and supports are required, and assign responsibility for initial actions. Begin outreach to any essential contacts, such as technical experts, legal advisors, public relations support, or municipal emergency staff. Early coordination and clear task assignments are critical to ensuring a consistent, effective, and timely response.



Step Three – Strategy and Contact

With the response team assembled and the initial assessment complete, the Communications Lead and Chief Administrative Officer should guide the development of the overall communications strategy.

Key Actions:

- **Designate a spokesperson who is best suited to speak to the situation.**
The selected spokesperson should have relevant subject knowledge and, if needed, receive media training. Review and practice material with the spokesperson before any live statements, if timing permits.
- **Develop key messages and identify the appropriate communications tactics.**
Reference the possible tactics, templates, and guidelines included in this kit. Customize as needed to reflect the current situation.
- **Contact internal stakeholders:**
 - Notify SNC's leadership team (outside of the response group), including executives and senior managers. Provide them with briefing notes or suggested messaging, if needed.
 - Inform remaining staff, based on the tactical approach chosen. Staff on site (at or near the landslide area) and off site should be instructed to redirect any media inquiries to the Communications Lead or designated spokesperson.
- **Centralize the flow of information to ensure messaging is accurate, timely, and consistent.**
- **Contact external stakeholders and media based on your response strategy.**
This may include municipal governments, emergency authorities, and local or regional media.
 - Keep in mind that the municipality in which the emergency occurs is the lead agency responsible for the formal emergency response. SNC's role is to support that effort.
 - Where appropriate, coordinate messaging with municipal officials, police, fire departments, and conservation partners to maintain public clarity and avoid duplication.
 - Offer to support municipal communications teams by sharing content, visuals, or speaking points.

This step ensures that internal alignment is established early and that external stakeholders are engaged in a timely, coordinated, and respectful way.



Step Four – Tactical Response

With your strategy and messaging confirmed, begin implementing the communications tactics required to support emergency operations and keep the public informed.

Key Actions:

- **Develop and distribute communications materials**, including:
 - Media advisories and news releases.
 - Public fact sheets and web updates.
 - Social media content.
 - On-site signage for safety and access control.
- **Ensure all messaging is clear, accurate, and up to date.**
Continue gathering new information and revise materials accordingly to reflect the evolving situation.
- **Coordinate with response partners and municipal staff.**
 - Share updates and messaging to ensure alignment across all involved organizations.
 - Support municipalities with template materials or communications assistance, as appropriate.
 - Avoid duplication or conflicting messages by working collaboratively with lead agencies.
- **Support site-level communication where necessary.**
 - Determine whether a safe, visible communications presence is needed near the incident site.
 - Equip the Site Lead or field staff with signage, printed notices, and safety messages as required.
- **Monitor the media and public response.**
 - Track questions, feedback, and coverage.
 - Respond promptly to correct misinformation and address emerging concerns.
 - Adjust tactics and messaging as needed.

All staff should be reminded not to speculate or speak to the media unless authorized. All inquiries must be directed to the Communications Lead or designated spokesperson.



Step Five – Evaluate

Evaluation should begin early and continue throughout the emergency response. Regular assessments ensure that communication efforts are effective, responsive, and aligned with the facts.

Key Actions:

- **Assess current communications efforts:**
 - Are messages reaching the intended audiences?
 - Are the media reporting accurately?
 - Are there information gaps or signs of confusion?
- **Review and integrate new information.**
 - Update all materials as the situation evolves.
 - Confirm that updates are consistent across platforms and stakeholders.
- **Determine communication needs going forward:**
 - Are additional updates required?
 - Are any key audiences not yet reached?
 - Should the frequency or tone of updates shift?
- **Document actions and outcomes.**
 - Keep an activity log to track messaging, decisions, and outreach.
 - Note lessons learned, successes, and areas for improvement.
 - Plan for a formal debrief once the situation stabilizes.

Ongoing evaluation supports effective crisis communication in the moment and helps build capacity for future responses.



Response Procedures Checklist	
Task	Completion Notes
Contact Communications Response Team	
Call crisis communications meeting. Notify and assemble the full response team.	
Confirm meeting location (Emergency Communications Centre or alternate site).	
Identify baseline information and determine response	
Lead review of response plan, guidelines and questions.	
Collect all available information about the landslide event.	
Ensure all team members are briefed and share a clear understanding of the incident.	
Assess and determine the scale of response required.	
Determine resources or expertise required to deliver appropriate response (e.g. IT, AV, PR, legal, technical).	
Develop strategy and messaging	
Lead discussion on communications strategy and tactics.	
Designate an appropriate spokesperson for the situation.	
Draft and finalize key messages.	
Select and prepare communication materials (advisories, releases, social posts, signage).	
Centralize communications and inform key audiences	
Notify SNC executives and management. Provide contact details for the response team.	
Share key messages with leadership as needed.	
Inform remaining staff as appropriate. Instruct them to redirect inquiries to the Communications Lead.	
Contact key stakeholders, including municipal officials, emergency services, and media.	
Coordinate messaging and provide updates/materials to partners.	
Implement additional communications tactics (e.g., signage, on-site support, website updates).	
Evaluate and determine next steps	
Review the effectiveness of communication efforts.	
Identify new or emerging information.	
Determine whether ongoing updates are needed.	
Begin documenting lessons learned for post-incident review.	



Communications Tactics

This section outlines recommended tactics for communicating with the public, stakeholders, and the media during a landslide emergency. Use these tools flexibly based on the nature and scale of the incident.

Public-Focused Tactics

- **Activate a public information phone line.** Make this number widely available through signage, social media, and the website.
- **Install signage on-site or nearby** to inform the public and restrict access to dangerous areas. Coordinate with emergency services and municipal partners.
- **Develop a plain-language fact sheet** explaining what happened, who is involved, how residents may be affected, and what actions they should take. Ensure it is mobile-accessible and easy to share.
- **Use social media** (Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram) to provide short, clear updates and direct users to official information sources.
- **Provide on-site or near-site communication support** if safe to do so — either mobile or stationary — to help manage public engagement near the affected area.
- **Door-to-door or mailbox outreach** may be appropriate in small rural areas. Targeted phone calls to residents may also be warranted.
- **Use radio communications** as a backup if other methods are unavailable. Coordinate with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), municipal services, or local radio stations.

Stakeholder-Focused Tactics

- **Use internal call chains or email lists** to alert employees during an emergency and provide initial instructions.
- **Hold in-person or virtual briefings** with departments, where possible, to share updates and clarify expectations.
- **Provide media redirection instructions** to all staff, including a clear protocol for sending inquiries to the Communications Lead.
- **Contact municipal communicators and elected officials.** Share official messaging and offer media materials and templates if helpful.
- **Align messaging with partners.** Work with emergency services, conservation partners, and other agencies to avoid conflicting messages.
- **Coordinate signage and public works communications.** Explore joint signage strategies with municipalities for maximum visibility and clarity.
- **In-person outreach** to government contacts or partner agencies may be more efficient in certain emergency scenarios where digital tools are unreliable.



Media-Focused Tactics

- **Post a dedicated media section** on the SNC website (or homepage) with advisories, releases, and downloadable resources.
- **Send timely updates to key media contacts.** Reference the media contact list in the appendix and follow up to ensure receipt.
- **Host a media briefing**, if appropriate, in a safe location near the Emergency Communications Centre. This helps centralize information sharing and reduces individual inquiries.
- **Coordinate media access carefully.** Work with municipal staff and emergency services to ensure safety while accommodating legitimate media needs.
- **Establish a media room** near the ECC if required. Provide regular updates and a safe space for reporters to operate.
- **Capture and distribute visuals.** If safe, SNC or partner staff may collect images or video of the landslide to share with media and stakeholders.

Media Engagement Tips:

- Be timely, accurate, and honest.
- Avoid speculation or unconfirmed information.
- Use plain language and emphasize public safety.
- Acknowledge and credit partner agencies and responders.
- Ensure consistent messaging across all platforms.



Key Messages

Develop concise, consistent key messages that inform the public and stakeholders during each phase of the response. Use these core statements in media advisories, news releases, website updates, fact sheets, and social media posts. Messages should be updated as new information becomes available.

English: Landslide Key Messages

A landslide at **[location]** occurred on **[date/time]**. The situation is dangerous, and South Nation Conservation is advising the public to stay away from the affected area.

[Action Statement: Residents should...]

Safety is the top priority. Please follow all directions provided by emergency responders, including police and fire departments.

A public information line has been activated. For more information, call **XXX-XXX-XXXX**. In case of emergency, call **911**.

South Nation Conservation is actively monitoring the situation and supporting response efforts led by the **[name]** municipality and emergency services.

Additional information and a downloadable fact sheet on landslides are available at **www.nation.on.ca**.

SNC will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.

Français : Glissement de terrain – Messages clés

Un glissement de terrain s'est produit à **[lieu]** le **[date/heure]**. La situation est dangereuse, et la Conservation de la Nation Sud recommande au public d'éviter la zone touchée.

[Mesure à prendre : Les résidents devraient...]

La sécurité est notre priorité absolue. Veuillez suivre les instructions des services d'urgence, y compris la police et les pompiers.

Une ligne d'information publique a été activée. Pour plus d'informations, composez le **XXX-XXX-XXXX**. En cas d'urgence, appelez le **911**.

La Conservation de la Nation Sud surveille activement la situation et appuie les efforts d'intervention dirigés par la municipalité de **[nom]** et les services d'urgence.

Une fiche d'information et d'autres ressources sur les glissements de terrain sont disponibles sur notre site Web à **www.nation.on.ca**.

La CNS fournira des mises à jour au fur et à mesure que de nouvelles informations seront disponibles.



Landslide events may involve injuries, fatalities, missing persons, or significant property loss. In these situations, South Nation Conservation's communications must be handled with increased care, coordination, and empathy.

General Communications Guidance

- Do not speculate on injuries, fatalities, or the number of people affected.
- Never release personal information or identities.
- Refer all media inquiries about medical or fatal outcomes to the appropriate emergency or medical authority (e.g., police, fire, EMS, coroner, or municipal spokesperson).
- Use a tone that is calm, respectful, and empathetic.
- Align messaging with the lead municipality and/or their Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Suggested Holding Statement (Media Response)

"We are deeply concerned about this situation and extend our thoughts to everyone affected. For accurate information related to injuries, fatalities, or missing persons, please contact the appropriate emergency or medical authorities. South Nation Conservation continues to support the response led by the municipality of [name] and its partners."

Visuals and Media Content

- Do not share images showing individuals in distress, destroyed homes, or unconfirmed damage.
- Only use visuals that have been approved by the Communications Lead and the Site Lead.
- Focus on images of safety signage, public information postings, or landscape-scale overviews.
- Obtain permission before using photos from residents, responders, or staff.

Mental Health and Community Support Messaging

If the situation is traumatic or emotionally distressing, consider including information about local support services:

"This incident may be distressing for residents. If you or someone you know needs support, please contact the [insert local mental health service or hotline] or speak with a healthcare provider."

Post-Incident Communications

- Reinforce SNC's supportive role in long-term response without overstepping its mandate:

"South Nation Conservation remains committed to supporting local municipalities and recovery partners throughout the response and recovery process. We will continue to provide updates as they become available."



Tools and Templates

Media Advisories

Used to quickly notify media and stakeholders of the event and provide key public instructions.

Use when: A landslide is confirmed and public awareness is needed immediately.

Distribute to:

- Local and regional media
- Municipal emergency contacts
- Partner agencies

Sample Media Advisory (English)

For Immediate Release

Date: [Insert Date]

Media Advisory

Attention Newsrooms and On-Air Staff:

A landslide has occurred at [location] at approximately [time]. The situation is dangerous, and South Nation Conservation is advising the public to stay away from the affected area.

[Action Item: Residents should...]

South Nation Conservation is working with emergency authorities and is supporting the [name] municipality in its response.

A public information line has been activated at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

In the event of an emergency, call 911.

We are monitoring the situation and will provide updates as new information becomes available.

Information will be posted at: www.nation.on.ca

Media inquiries should be directed to:

John Mesman

Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach

Office: 1-877-984-2948

Mobile: 613-899-5341



Exemple d'avis aux médias (Français)

Pour diffusion immédiate

Date : [Insérer la date]

Avis aux médias

À l'attention des journalistes et du personnel des médias :

Un glissement de terrain a eu lieu à [lieu] vers [heure]. La situation est dangereuse, et la Conservation de la Nation Sud recommande au public d'éviter la zone touchée.
[Mesure à prendre : Les résidents devraient...]

La CNS travaille avec les services d'urgence et appuie la municipalité de [nom] dans ses efforts d'intervention.

Une ligne d'information publique a été activée : XXX-XXX-XXXX.

En cas d'urgence, composez le 911.

Nous surveillons la situation et émettrons des mises à jour dès que possible.

Pour plus d'informations, visitez : www.nation.on.ca

Les demandes des médias doivent être adressées à :

John Mesman

Directeur générale, Propriété, terres protégées et sensibilisation communautaire

Bureau : 1-877-984-2948

Cellulaire : 613-899-5341



News Releases

A news release provides confirmed information and context following a landslide event. It is used to communicate with the media, public, and stakeholders and should be coordinated with the lead municipality.

Use when:

- You have verified details and key messages to share with the public.
- You need to clarify the response structure, safety risks, and next steps.
- You want to reinforce SNC's supporting role.

A good news release should include:

- A clear and descriptive headline
- The date, time, and location of the incident
- A description of what occurred and current impacts
- A quote from an SNC spokesperson
- Public safety messages and calls to action
- A thank-you or acknowledgment of emergency partners
- Contact information and links to more details

Distribute to:

- Local, regional, and provincial media
- Partner municipalities and emergency services
- Upload to SNC's website and promote via social media



Sample News Release

Date: [Insert Date]

Time: [Insert Time]

[LOCATION] – A landslide occurred at **[location]** at approximately **[time]**. The affected area remains hazardous, and South Nation Conservation (SNC) is urging the public to avoid the site for their safety and the safety of first responders.

Emergency personnel and municipal officials are actively managing the situation. Several roads in the area, including **[insert road/landmark if known]**, have been closed as a precaution. SNC is working closely with the **[name]** municipality and emergency services to provide geotechnical and communications support.

“This event highlights how quickly natural hazards like landslides can occur, especially in areas with sensitive soils. We continue to work with our municipal partners to monitor high-risk sites, and we encourage residents to stay alert and report early signs of slope movement. Public awareness and timely response are critical to protecting people and property,” said **[insert spokesperson name and title]**.

South Nation Conservation thanks the **[name]** municipality, police, fire services, and emergency responders for their leadership and quick action in responding to the event.

This region has a known history of landslide activity, and SNC continues to work with municipalities to monitor high-risk areas and provide public education on slope stability.

Residents are encouraged to report signs of potential slope movement, including:

- Slumping or tilting trees or fence posts
- Cracks in the ground or along foundations
- Sudden changes in stream water levels or cloudy runoff

To report suspected landslide activity or for more information, contact SNC at **XXX-XXX-XXXX**. In the event of an emergency, call **911**.

SNC continues to monitor the area and will provide public updates as new information becomes available. Additional resources and a downloadable fact sheet on landslides are available at www.nation.on.ca.

Media inquiries should be directed to:

John Mesman

Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach

Office: 1-877-984-2948

Mobile: 613-899-5341



Exemple de communiqué de presse

Date : [Insérer la date]

Heure : [Insérer l'heure]

[LIEU] – Un glissement de terrain s'est produit à **[lieu]** vers **[heure]**. La zone touchée demeure dangereuse, et la Conservation de la Nation Sud (CNS) invite le public à éviter le secteur pour assurer leur sécurité et celle des intervenants d'urgence.

Le personnel d'urgence et les représentants municipaux sont sur place et gèrent activement la situation. Plusieurs routes à proximité, y compris **[insérer route ou point de repère le cas échéant]**, ont été fermées par précaution. La CNS collabore étroitement avec la municipalité de **[nom]** et les services d'urgence pour fournir un soutien technique et en communication.

« Cet événement démontre à quel point les aléas naturels comme les glissements de terrain peuvent survenir rapidement, en particulier dans les zones à sols sensibles. Nous continuons à travailler avec nos partenaires municipaux pour surveiller les sites à risque élevé, et nous encourageons les résidents à rester vigilants et à signaler rapidement tout signe de mouvement de terrain. La sensibilisation du public et une intervention rapide sont essentielles pour protéger les personnes et les biens », a déclaré **[insérer nom et titre du porte-parole]**.

La Conservation de la Nation Sud remercie la municipalité de **[nom]**, les services policiers, les pompiers et les intervenants d'urgence pour leur leadership et leur intervention rapide.

Cette région a des antécédents connus d'instabilité des sols, et la CNS continue de collaborer avec les municipalités pour surveiller les zones vulnérables et sensibiliser le public à la stabilité des pentes.

Les résidents sont invités à signaler tout signe de mouvement de terrain, notamment :

- Des arbres ou des clôtures qui s'inclinent ou s'affaissent
- Des fissures dans le sol ou près des fondations
- Des changements soudains dans les niveaux d'eau ou un ruissellement trouble

Pour signaler une activité suspecte ou pour plus d'informations, communiquez avec la CNS au **XXX-XXX-XXXX**. En cas d'urgence, composez le **911**.

La CNS continue de surveiller la situation et publiera des mises à jour dès que de nouvelles informations seront disponibles. Des ressources supplémentaires et une fiche d'information téléchargeable sont disponibles à l'adresse : www.nation.on.ca.

Demandes des médias :

John Mesman

Directeur principal, Propriété, terres protégées et sensibilisation communautaire

Bureau : 1-877-984-2948

Cellulaire : 613-899-5341



News Wire Distribution of Media Advisories and Release Material

In high-profile or large-scale emergencies, South Nation Conservation (SNC) may choose to distribute media materials through a professional news wire service. This helps ensure rapid and widespread delivery to regional and provincial media outlets, particularly when a broader public alert is necessary.

When to Use a News Wire

- The event has provincial or regional implications (e.g., evacuations, major infrastructure risk)
- Traditional distribution methods are delayed or overloaded
- Wider public reach is needed beyond local or social channels
 - Coordination with the lead municipality or PR agency (e.g., Redbrick Communications) calls for formal distribution

How to Use a News Wire Service

1. Select a Provider

- Recommended options:
 - Canada Newswire (CNW): 1-877-269-7890
 - Marketwire: 1-888-299-0338
- Confirm whether SNC or a retained PR agency holds an account and preferred contacts.

2. Coordinate Internally

- The Communications Lead and CAO must approve all content.
- Ensure alignment with municipal messaging, especially in declared emergencies.

3. Submit the Material

- Send the release in plain text or Word format by email.
- Include in the email body:
 - Desired distribution region (e.g., Eastern Ontario, province-wide)
 - Target media (TV, print, digital)
 - Preferred release time
 - Media contact information

4. Confirm Delivery

- Request confirmation or follow up within 30 minutes.
- Document the release time, distribution list, and response activity.



Backup Option: Fax Distribution

If digital systems are down:

- Call the wire service and explain the situation.
- Fax the release and confirm receipt.
- Use USB or printed copies to share materials with municipalities, media, or first responders.

Social Media Considerations

Social media is a vital tool for sharing real-time updates during a landslide emergency. South Nation Conservation (SNC) uses its platforms to inform the public, reinforce safety messages, and direct users to trusted sources.

Primary Goals

- Share timely, accurate, and actionable information
- Direct the public to www.nation.on.ca and official partner updates
- Reinforce safety instructions and encourage early reporting
- Monitor public reaction and respond to emerging concerns or misinformation

Best Practices for Posting

- Keep posts **short, clear, and calm**
- Use **plain language** — avoid technical or speculative statements
- Always include a **call to action** (e.g., “Avoid the area,” “Report concerns to XXX-XXX-XXXX”)
- Post in **both English and French** where possible
- Use consistent hashtags (e.g., **#LandslideON**, **#StaySafeON**, or location-specific tags)
- Include **visuals** when appropriate — e.g., signage, maps, or fact sheets

Posting Authority and Access

- Only **authorized SNC staff** may post from official accounts
- Assign one person to manage outgoing posts; a second person can monitor replies and share partner content
- Ensure login access is available and up to date during an emergency
- Coordinate messaging with municipalities, emergency responders, and partners



Sample Posts

Initial Alert – English

⚠ A landslide has occurred at [location]. The area is unsafe. Please avoid the site while emergency crews respond.

📞 More info: www.nation.on.ca

☎ Public Info Line: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Alerte initiale – Français

⚠ Un glissement de terrain s'est produit à [lieu]. La zone est dangereuse. Veuillez éviter le secteur pendant l'intervention.

📞 Détails : www.nation.on.ca

☎ Info publique : XXX-XXX-XXXX

Safety Reminder – English

📢 Residents: Be alert for signs of slope movement:

🌲 Slumping trees

🌍 Ground cracks

💧 Cloudy water or stream changes

☎ Report concerns: XXX-XXX-XXXX | 🚒 Emergencies: 911

Rappel de sécurité – Français

📢 Résidents : soyez vigilants aux signes de mouvement de terrain :

🌲 Arbres inclinés

🌍 Fissures dans le sol

💧 Changements soudains dans les cours d'eau

☎ Signaler : XXX-XXX-XXXX | 🚒 Urgences : 911

Monitoring and Misinformation Response

- Regularly **check comments, tags, and local news posts** for questions or confusion
- Address misinformation **promptly and calmly**, using verified facts
- If SNC is not the lead agency, **share or repost official partner updates** to maintain clarity
- Use pinned posts or stories to highlight **latest updates, warnings, and contacts**
- Avoid engaging in speculation, blame, or unconfirmed reports



Question and Answer Considerations

Q: What caused the landslide?

A: “The site is still under investigation, but we know this region contains sensitive marine clay soils that can become unstable under certain natural conditions — including heavy rainfall, flooding, and erosion — as well as construction or excavation near slopes. We’re supporting the municipality and geotechnical experts in assessing the situation.”

Q: Is anyone hurt or missing?

A: “At this time, we don’t have that information. Details related to injuries or evacuations are handled by emergency services or the municipality. Our focus is on public safety and technical support.”

Q: What is South Nation Conservation’s role in this emergency?

A: “Our role is to support the lead municipality with technical knowledge, public communication tools, and hazard awareness. We work with municipal staff, emergency responders, and geotechnical engineers to monitor conditions and share information with the public.”

Q: Is this the same kind of soil that caused the Lemieux landslide?

A: “Yes. Like Lemieux, parts of our region are underlain by Leda clay — a sensitive marine clay that can fail suddenly when disturbed. This type of soil was responsible for two major landslides near Lemieux, Ontario: one in 1971 and a catastrophic event in 1993 that destroyed nearby farmland and infrastructure. While landslides of this scale are rare, they remain a real risk in certain areas. That’s why SNC continues to monitor high-risk zones and work with local partners to reduce public exposure and raise awareness.”

Q: Is my property at risk?

A: “If you live near a steep slope, riverbank, or previously mapped hazard zone, we recommend remaining alert and reporting any signs of instability. We also encourage residents to visit our website or contact our office for information on slope stability and mapping.”

Q: Why wasn’t this landslide predicted?

A: “Unfortunately, landslides are difficult to predict with certainty. However, SNC and its partners regularly monitor high-risk areas, update hazard maps, and provide guidance to municipalities and property owners to help reduce the risk of future events.”



Q: How do I report a landslide or signs of one?

A: “Residents should call SNC at **XXX-XXX-XXXX** to report concerns such as slumping trees, new cracks in the ground, or changes in water flow. In emergencies, always call **911**.”

Q: What’s being done to prevent future landslides?

A: “SNC works with municipalities to map hazard areas, conduct technical studies, and support development regulations that reduce slope instability. Public education and early reporting also play a key role in prevention.”

French Language Interviews and Public Engagement

If SNC is contacted by French-language media or public stakeholders, use the bilingual versions of:

- Key Messages
- Media Advisory and News Release
- Social Media Posts
- Q&A content (supporting translation provided as needed)

French-speaking staff or board members may act as spokespersons where possible, or SNC may prepare translated responses for the Communications Lead to deliver.



Response Guidelines

All communications made by South Nation Conservation (SNC) during a landslide emergency should be calm, clear, and respectful. Messaging should be based on verified facts and coordinated with municipal emergency responders and other partners.

1. Tone and Delivery

- Use a calm and factual tone; avoid alarmist or overly technical language.
- Speak clearly and professionally, especially during media interviews or press briefings.
- Emphasize SNC's support role and defer to the lead municipality for operational updates and formal emergency declarations.
- Do not speculate about causes, injuries, or future impacts — focus on what is known and confirmed.
- Always refer to up-to-date public safety messages and the contact information provided in media materials.

When engaging with the media or preparing public messages, remember that most news stories are built around three core elements:

- **Change** (e.g., road closures, slope movement, new rainfall)
- **Controversy** (e.g., who is responsible, was it preventable)
- **Human interest** (e.g., personal stories, property loss, community response)

Inject these elements into your communications when you want to raise the profile of an event to increase awareness or action. Remove or minimize these elements when the goal is to keep a lower profile, avoid panic, or protect privacy. Match the tone to your objective and the nature of the emergency.

2. When Speaking Publicly

- Be respectful and empathetic, particularly if loss of property, injuries, or fatalities are suspected.
- Stay within your area of knowledge or expertise; refer media or the public to the designated spokesperson or Communications Lead when needed.
- Reinforce messages shared in SNC's media releases, website, and fact sheets.
- Redirect legal or highly sensitive questions (e.g., cause of failure, liability) to the municipality or designated emergency officials.



3. Media Engagement

- Only designated spokespersons should speak to the media on behalf of SNC.
- All media inquiries must be directed to the Communications Lead or approved representative.
- Do not answer questions off the record — assume everything said may be quoted.
- Keep notes after each media interaction (see Media Log template in the Appendices).

4. Supporting the Municipality

- SNC's role is to support, not lead, the emergency response.
- Work closely with the municipality's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or communications team.
- Offer help with public messaging, signage, fact sheets, and mapping.
- Avoid duplicating messages or releasing conflicting information.

5. Public Engagement and On-Site Conduct

- If speaking to the public at or near a landslide site:
 - Follow all safety protocols and site restrictions
 - Share only confirmed, approved information
 - Direct residents to the SNC website, municipal updates, or the public information line
- Be mindful that residents may be under stress. Listen respectfully, document concerns, and report emerging issues to the Communications Lead.



News Conference Guidelines

During a significant or high-profile landslide emergency, South Nation Conservation (SNC) may participate in a news conference to provide coordinated updates with partner agencies. These briefings are typically organized by the lead municipality and used when formal, public communication is required.

When to Hold a News Conference

Hold or participate in a news conference when:

- The event has major public safety implications
- Media interest is high or misinformation is spreading
- Multiple agencies must deliver coordinated, on-record statements
- The municipality requests formal involvement
- Major decisions (e.g., evacuations, road closures) are being announced

Before the Conference

- Confirm the lead agency, spokesperson order, and key messages
- Coordinate with municipal and emergency partners to ensure consistency
- Assign an SNC spokesperson (CAO, Communications Lead, or Technical Lead)
- Prepare bilingual remarks or provide translation support if needed

Timing and Notification

- Provide at least 60–90 minutes' notice to allow media travel time
- Notify media via email, phone, social media, or wire service
- Include location, parking info, time, and a media contact
- If short notice is unavoidable, offer follow-up interviews

Venue and Setup Requirements

Select a safe, accessible location with enough space for media and responders. Prioritize proximity to the Emergency Communications Centre if feasible.

Minimum setup includes:

- Podium and microphones
- Tables and seating for speakers
- Lighting and camera space (~3x3 ft per camera)
- Audio feed for TV/radio



- Banners, maps, visuals, and fact sheets
- Safety signage and access control
- Printed media kits, if time allows
- Interpreters or bilingual staff, if required

If the event site is restricted for safety, explain why and provide visuals or maps instead.

Suggested Speaking Order

1. Municipal spokesperson (Mayor or CAO)
2. Emergency services (Fire, Police)
3. SNC representative
4. Other agencies as needed
5. Moderated Q&A (direct questions appropriately)

Keep remarks clear, brief, and aligned across agencies.

During the Conference

- Stick to confirmed facts and prepared messages
- Speak in plain, calm language
- Acknowledge public concerns respectfully
- If a question can't be answered:
"That information is still being confirmed. We'll follow up once details are available."

After the Conference

- Post a summary, recording, or media release to SNC's website and social channels
- Respond to media requests for interviews, visuals, or clarification
- Record any key questions or concerns for follow-up
- Ensure future messaging remains aligned with what was shared publicly

Room Layout Tips

- Speaker table or podium at front
- Cameras positioned at back
- Media seating in the middle
- Lighting pointed at speakers
- Tables for media kits and printed materials

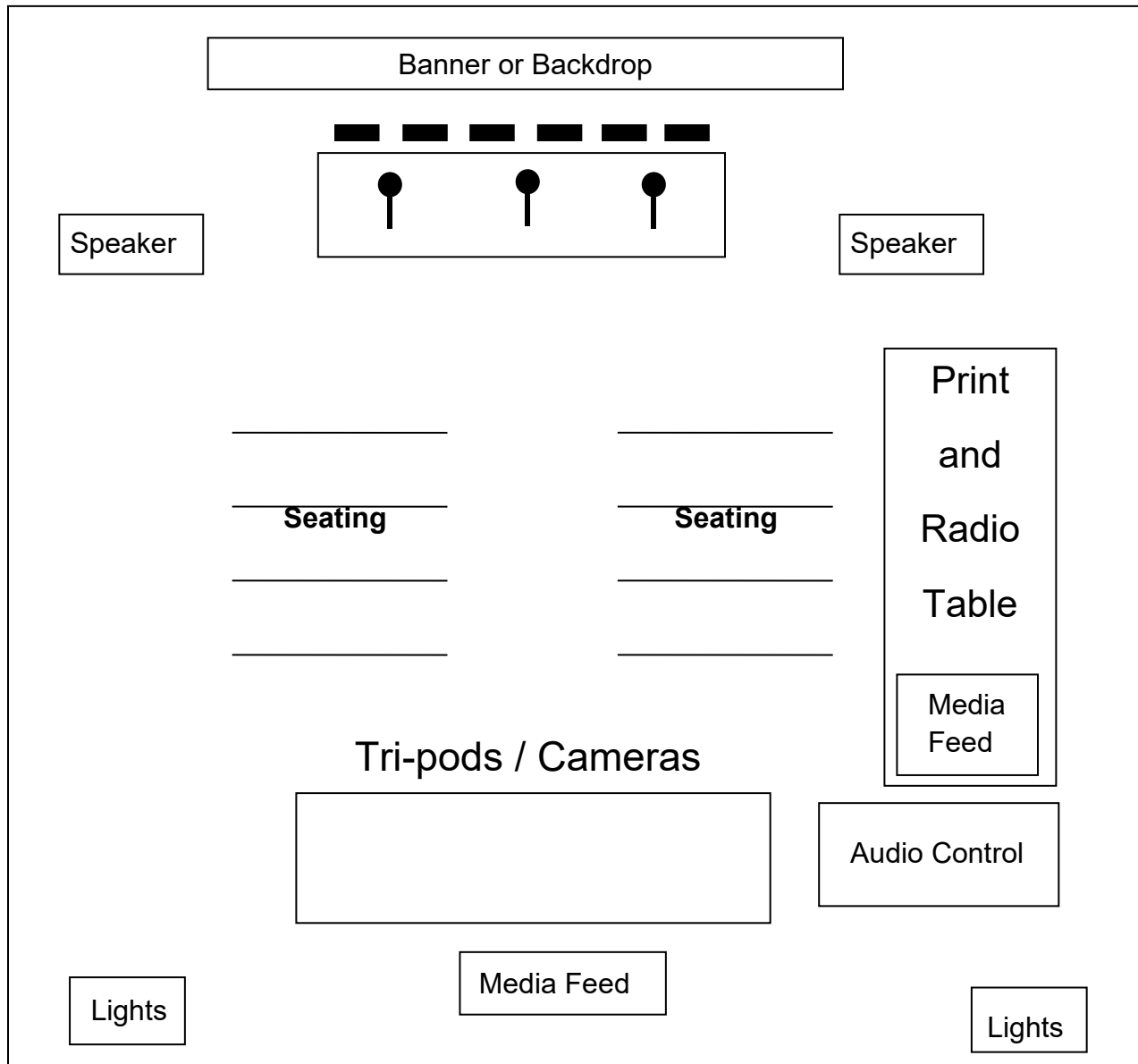


Scalability Note

This setup reflects a full-scale news briefing and may exceed what's needed for most events. For smaller incidents, a simple setup with one spokesperson and basic media presence may be more appropriate.

Scale the format to match the severity of the event, media interest, and available resources — always prioritizing clarity, consistency, and safety.

Sample Room Layout



- Place spokespersons at the front of the room behind tables;
- Cover tables with tablecloths;
- Place chairs for print reporters behind cameras; and,
- Leave standing room behind chair set-up.



Roles and Responsibilities

All South Nation Conservation (SNC) staff should have a general understanding of the roles they may play during a landslide emergency. Existing organizational structures remain in place, and team members will continue to work through their department leads. Each team member is responsible for coordinating or delegating tasks to their staff as needed.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) with Board of Directors

- Lead the crisis communications response and provide overall strategic direction
- Make large-scale decisions with input from the team
- May serve as spokesperson during severe or high-profile events
- May call on the Secretary-Treasurer or other senior staff for decision-making support
- Represent SNC internally and externally

Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands and Community Outreach

- Serve as SNC's Communications Lead during a landslide response
- Responsible for strategic communications direction in consultation with team.
- Support the Communications Specialist with strategy and content development
- May serve as spokesperson or help prepare the primary spokesperson
- Lead coordination with municipal communications staff and emergency partners
- Assist with internal updates to staff and the Board
- Provide property-related technical input or public-facing support as needed

Managing Director, Natural Hazards, and Infrastructure

- Provide expert advice and ongoing technical updates related to natural hazards
- Coordinate hazard-related staff (planning, engineering, property) to support the response
- Work with staff to monitor site conditions and report updates to the team
- May assist with geotechnical input or mapping resources for public communications
- May serve as an alternate spokesperson, particularly for technical briefings or media interviews involving hazard assessments



Secretary Treasurer

- Coordinate administrative staff to support the response
- Take notes and record decisions and action items during team meetings
- Assist with preparation and distribution of internal and external materials
- Coordinate support from departments not directly involved in the response
- Arrange logistics (e.g., IT support, A/V equipment, meeting space)

Communications Specialist

- Support the development and execution of the communications strategy
- Draft public messaging, media materials, social media content, and fact sheets
- Manage media inquiries and serve as the first point of contact for journalists
- Distribute internal communications in coordination with the Secretary-Treasurer
- Liaise with municipal communications teams and provide background material
- Coach spokespersons and manage relationships with public relations firms, if retained (e.g., Redbrick)
- Monitor traditional and social media for emerging issues and misinformation

Site Lead

- Work with the response team to determine whether a presence — mobile or stationary — is required at a safe location near the emergency site
- Coordinate with SNC staff and determine who should be deployed, if on-site presence is approved
- If on site (serve as SNC's on-site lead):
 - Liaise with municipal responders, agency staff, and other stakeholders on location
 - Oversee direct operations and support services from SNC if needed
- Make site-level decisions, while maintaining communication with the response team and aligning with the overall strategy
- If on-site presence is not required, remain available to:
 - Provide situational updates and advise on logistics, site access, and operational constraints
- Coordinate with the Communications team on signage, access notices, or other public-facing site materials
- Ensure site safety is maintained and liaise with any Incident Command Centre established by the municipality



Emergency Communications Centre

South Nation Conservation (SNC) will activate an Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) during a landslide event to coordinate internal and external communications. The ECC serves as the hub for the Communications Response Team and supports field operations and coordination with the lead municipality.

Location and Safety

- The ECC must be located in a safe area, away from the emergency site
- The primary ECC is typically set up at SNC's main office
- An alternate ECC location (e.g., municipal or public building) should be pre-identified and equipped similarly
- Only authorized staff may access the ECC during an event

Purpose

- Centralize communications activities during a crisis
- Support the Site Lead and provide messaging, updates, and logistics
- Draft and distribute media materials, key messages, and social posts
- Monitor public inquiries, news coverage, and social media activity
- Coordinate with municipal Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) if activated

Staffing

- The ECC should be staffed by 2–5 trained personnel, depending on the scale of the event
- Typical roles include: Communications Lead, Communications Specialist, Administrative Support, and Liaison staff as needed

Refer to Emergency Management Ontario's website for additional ECC guidance:
www.emergencymanagementontario.ca



Required Communications Tools (Operational and Ready)

- At least one phone line for calls
- One phone line for faxes
- One digital answering machine
- Two-way radios for communication with:
 - The municipal EOC
 - The Site Lead
- At least one cell phone for backup
- A computer with internet and email access
- A working printer
- A dry-erase board or flip chart with markers
- A television with cable or satellite access

Supplies to Have Available

- Pens, pencils, markers, and paper
- Bottled water and non-perishable snacks
- Flashlights and spare batteries
- First aid kit
- Candles, matches, lighter
- Current telephone directory and staff contact list
- Printed copies of:
 - This Crisis Communications Kit
 - Relevant municipal emergency response plans

Logging and Documentation

- All major communications decisions, media interactions, and situational updates should be logged in real time using the ECC whiteboard, digital log, or paper logbook

Virtual ECC Option

- If physical access to the ECC is limited, SNC may operate a virtual ECC using secure video conferencing, cloud-based files, and mobile communications
- Remote staff must have access to all templates, contact lists, monitoring tools, and login credentials



Incident Command

When appropriate, SNC may support an Incident Command (IC) post near the emergency site. This is separate from the ECC and typically used for on-the-ground coordination and liaison with the municipality.

About the IC

- The IC is usually a mobile or temporary location
- It may be set up in a municipal vehicle, garage, staging area, or nearby building
- Not all emergencies will require SNC to be physically present at the IC

Site Lead Role at the IC

- In consultation with the team, determine whether an SNC presence is needed
- If on site:
 - Act as SNC's on-site representative
 - Liaise with municipal responders, public works, and agency staff
 - Coordinate signage, logistics, and site-level public messaging
 - Make operational decisions on site while aligning with the ECC and overall strategy
- If not on site:
 - Remain available to provide updates and logistical input
 - Support communications and safety signage as needed

Minimum Equipment for IC/Site Lead

- A vehicle
- A mobile phone
- A two-way radio
- Site signage (or access to coordinated signage through municipal partners)

Having signage pre-prepared is ideal. If not available, coordinate with emergency partners to access hazard and road safety signs.



South Nation Conservation Contact Information

Communications Response Team	
Name	Contact Information
Carl Bickerdike Chief Administrative Officer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-360-9125
Sandra Mancini Managing Director, Natural Hazards and Infrastructure	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-3242
John Mesman Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands and Community Outreach	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-899-5341
Ronda Boutz Secretary-Treasurer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-8940
Erin Thorne Communications Specialist	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 613-551-7158
Kenneth Omenogor Geotechnical Engineer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 343-542-0707
Shahin Zand Water Resources Engineer	Office: 1-877-984-2948 Mobile: 343-302-5773
Brian Lambie President, Redbrick Communications (PR Agency Lead Contact)	Office: 1-905-271-1669 Mobile: 1-416-729-5425



Staff List from SNC Website

Carl Bickerdike, Chief Administrative Officer

Resource Management

Sandra Mancini, Managing Director, Natural Hazards and Infrastructure

Michelle Cavanagh, Team Lead, Special Projects

Water Resources

Katherine Watson, Coordinator – Early Warning Systems and Watershed Plans

Shahin Zand, Water Resources Engineer

Mariah Rajaie, Water Resources Specialist – Engineering

Henish Goswami, Water Resources Specialist – Engineering

Reza Fallah, Water Resources Specialist – Engineering

Phillip Dagenais, Water Resources Specialist – Monitoring

Sahib Chana, Engineering Assistant

Naomi Langlois-Anderson, Sr. Fish and Wildlife Technician

Arielle Noonan, Stewardship Assistant

Chesney McNeely, Water Resources Assistant

Andy Stefan, Stewardship and Outreach Assistant

Geographic Information Systems

Kenneth Omenogor, Geotechnical Engineer

Ben Colgan, GIS-Database Analyst

Conservation Lands Management

John Mesman, Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach

Pat Piitz, Team Lead, Property

Property

Michel Leger, Conservation Lands Superintendent

Todd Baker, Conservation Lands Technician

Ryan Robson, Conservation Lands Technician

Kyle Macrae, Conservation Lands Assistant

Forestry Services

Caroline Goulet, Forester

Chris Craig, Senior Forestry Technician

Alexandre Roy-Guay, Forestry Technician

Tavish MacLeod, Forestry Assistant

Communications, Stewardship, and Outreach



Erin Thorne, Communications Specialist
Kelsey Smith, Stewardship and Outreach Assistant

Approvals (Planning and Development)

Jennifer Boyer, Managing Director, Approvals

Planning

James Holland, Senior Planner
Claire Lemay, Senior Planner
Laura Crites, Environmental Planner
Brent Harbers, Watershed Biologist

Regulations

Eric McGill, Corporate Counsel
Gregory Payne, Regulations Officer

Septic Systems

Monique Sauve, Chief Building Official Part 8 - Septic Systems
Jacques Levert, Inspector, Septic Systems
Sylvie Fracassi, Inspector, Septic Systems

Administration

Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
Johanna Barkley, Director of Finance

Corporate Services

Annie Theoret, Administrative Assistant
Lorie Henderson, Administrative Assistant
Meaghen Wert, Administrative Assistant
Hannah Jackson, Accounting and Human Resources Specialist
Donna Ferguson, Accounting Technician
Deborah Edwards, Accounting Assistant



Activity Log

Name	Action	Date/Time



Notes:



Area Maps:

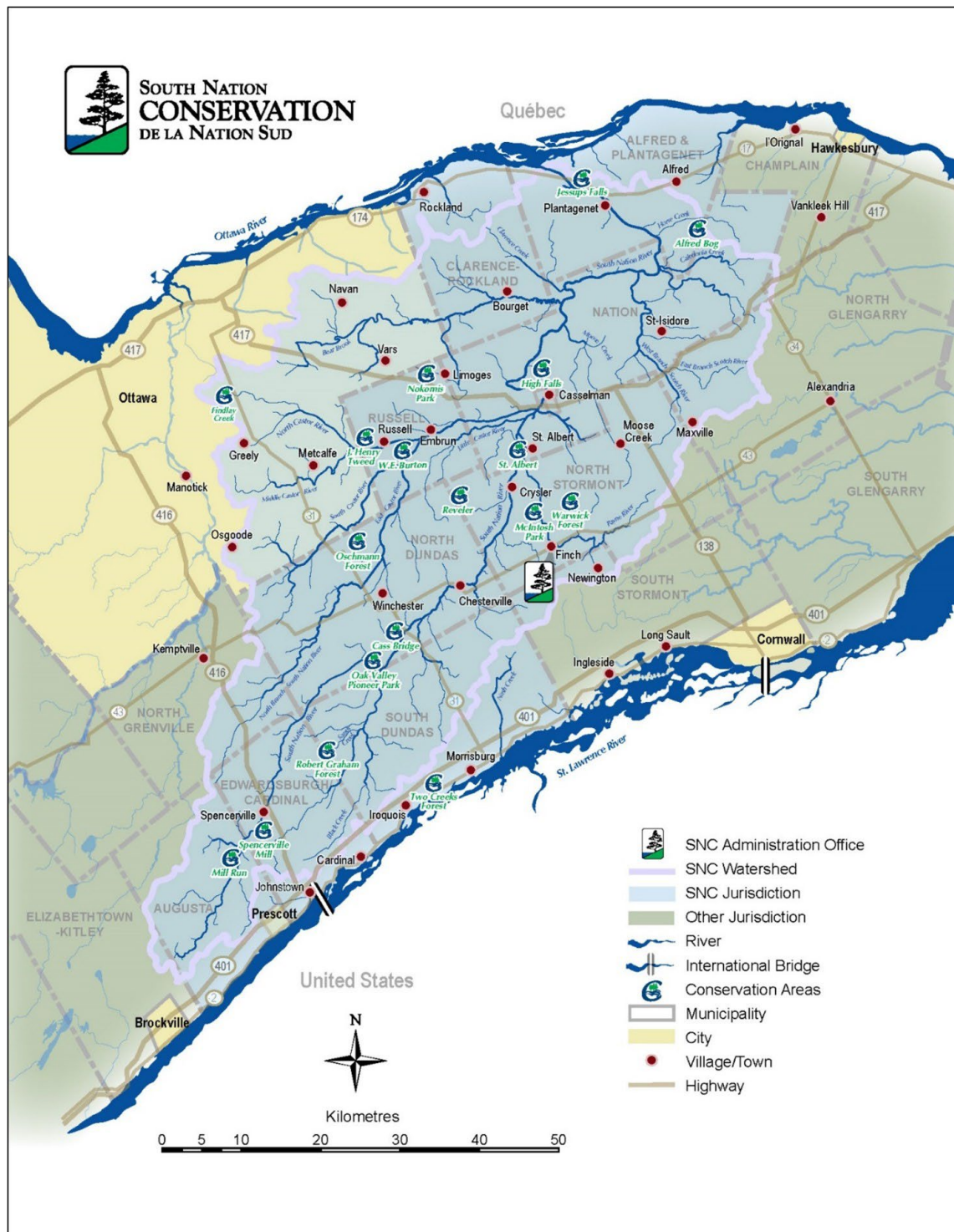


Figure 1 - Map displaying South Nation Conservation's jurisdiction, illustrating villages/towns and SNC's office.

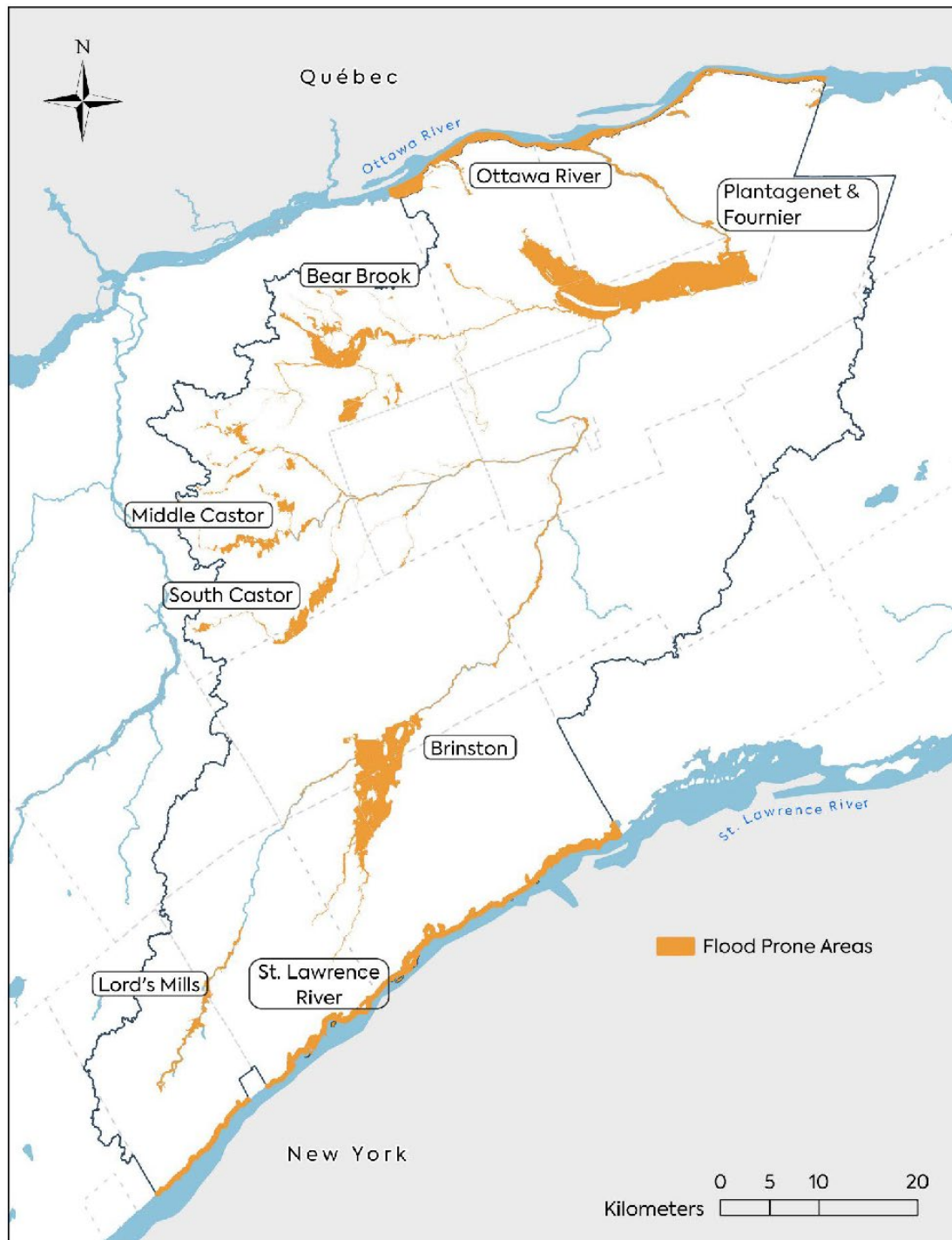


Figure 2 – Map displaying the flood-prone areas in South Nation Conservation's jurisdiction.

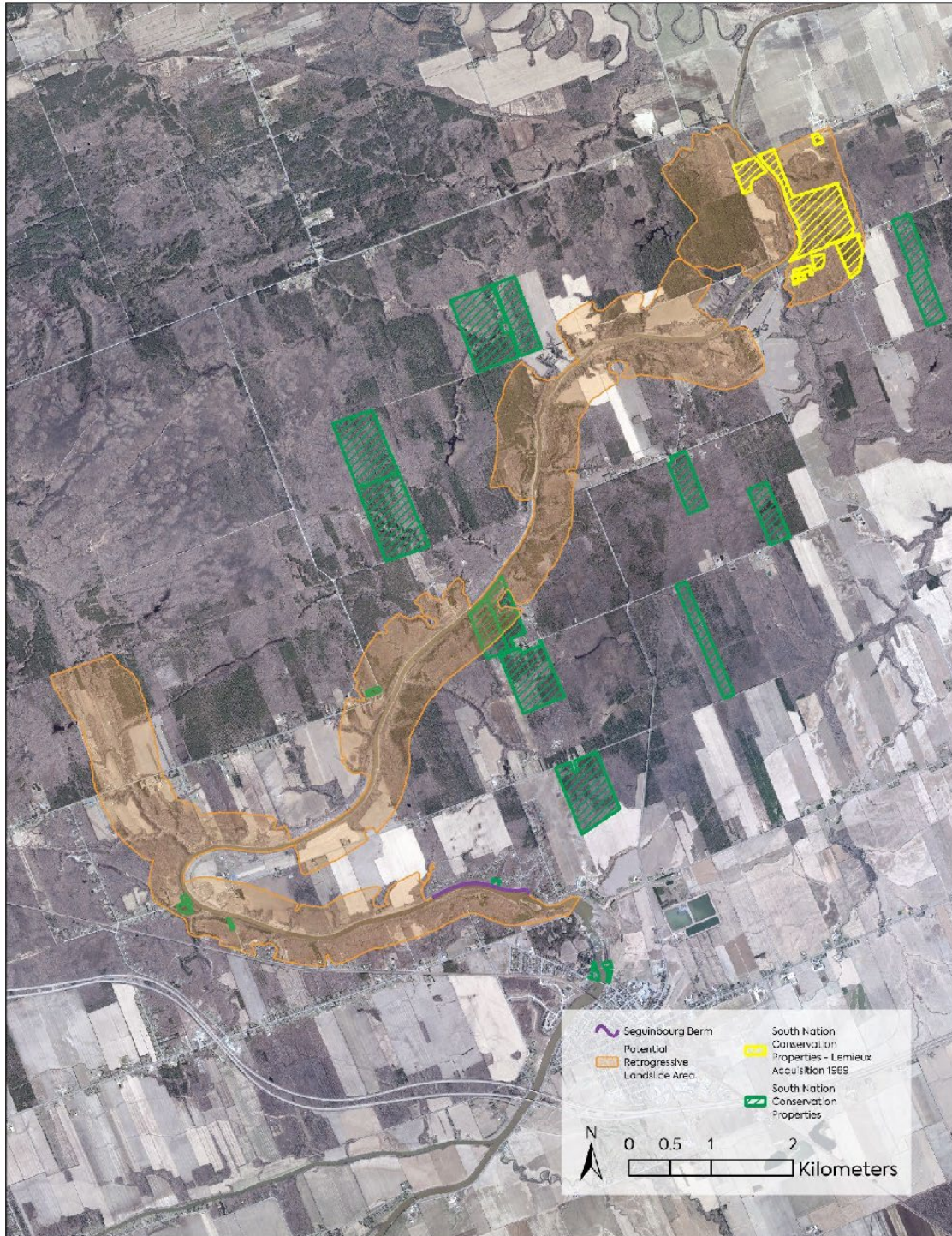


Figure 3 - Map of the Casselman to Lemieux Potential Retrogressive Landslide Area and South Nation Conservation properties.

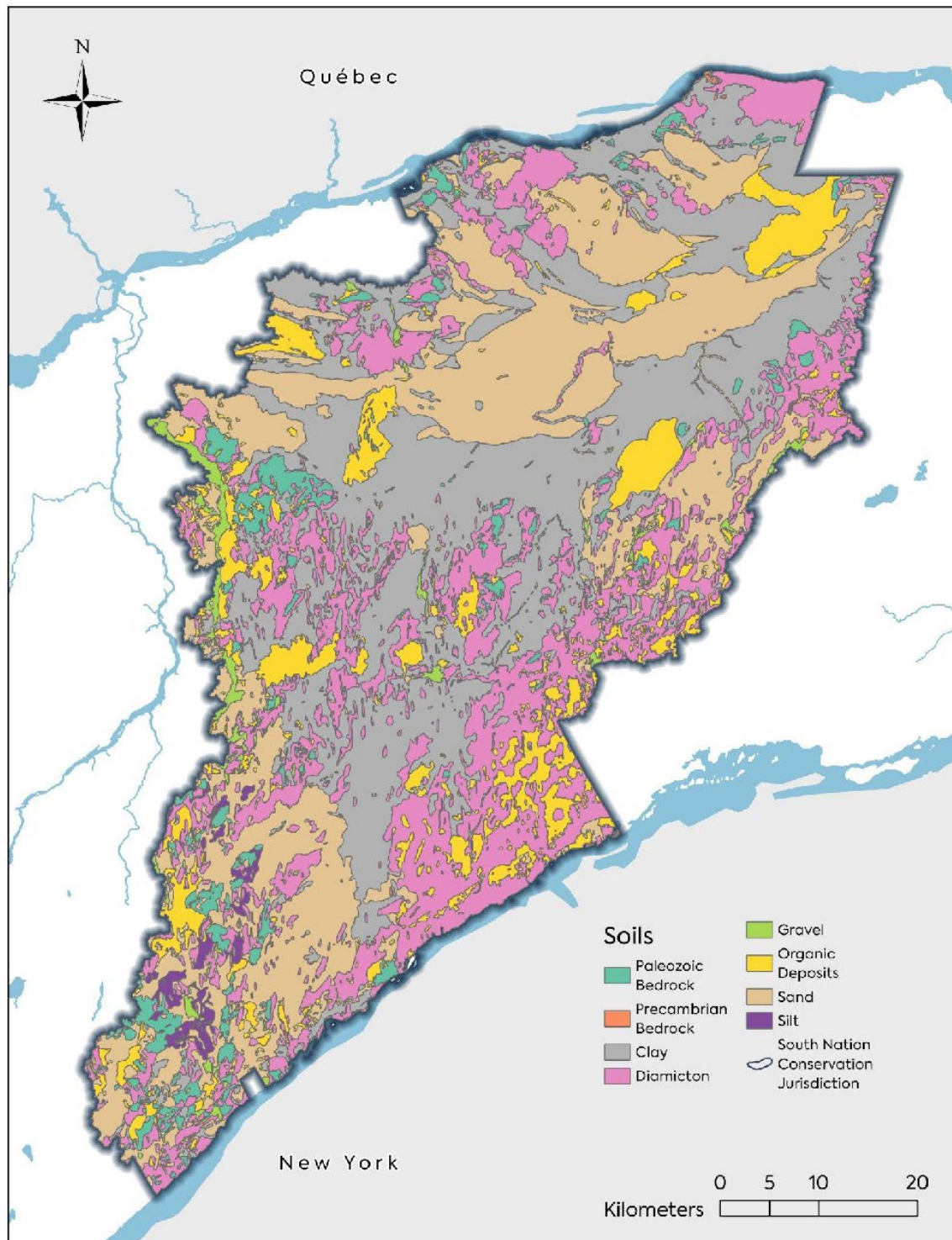


Figure 4 – Map displaying the soil types within South Nation Conservation's jurisdiction.



Appendices

(Confidential Contact Info held at the SNC Office)

Appendix A. Government Contacts

Ministry of Natural Resources
Conservation Authorities
Other Provincial Contacts
Stormont, Dundas Glengarry
Prescott Russell
Leeds Grenville
Ottawa

Appendix B. Media Contact List

Radio
Newspaper
Television

Appendix C. Audio Visual Suppliers

Ottawa
Cornwall

Appendix D. Emergency Services and Hospitals

Ontario Provincial Police
Ottawa Emergency Services and Hospitals
Regional Emergency Services and Hospitals