

Lillooet and Area Community Wildfire Preparedness Roundtable Meeting Summary as of July 6, 2022

Meeting date: Monday June 27, 2022 10:00AM to 2:45PM

Location: Lillooet REC Centre gymnasium

Welcome, Agenda, Objectives, Introductions

Mike Simpson, a facilitator and professional forester on contract to Fraser Basin Council, welcomed everyone and acknowledged unceded St'at'imc territory. Jason Jacob, councillor at Xaxli'p did an opening prayer. Darryl Adrian and Robin Strong presented Jason a gift in thanks for doing the opening prayer. Vivian Birch-Jones also welcomed everyone and provided some history about how this meeting came about. Mike acknowledged Vivian as well as Darren Oike, Darryl Adrian, Cheyanne Watkinson, Mike Fusca, Tawnya Collins, Robin Strong, Verne Rasmussen for helping organize today's meeting.

The [agenda](#) was reviewed and accepted as presented. The objectives were reviewed as follows:

- Understand what is underway for inter-agency cooperation, cross-training and emergency planning and make recommendations for improvements
- Provide update on development of Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans for SLRD Areas A and B
- Explore the concept of a creating a long-term, inclusive Lillooet & Area Community Wildfire Preparedness roundtable for Lillooet and surrounding area
- Develop relationships, improve communication, share information
- Identify synergies on various initiatives

Introductions were made around the room. See Appendix 1 for list of participants present

Squamish Lillooet Regional District Work Underway

Mike Fusca, Emergency Program Coordinator for Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) gave a [presentation](#) on recent work that SLRD has done on FireSmart initiatives and community wildfire resiliency plans in the SLRD. Community FireSmart Resiliency Committees (CFRCs, or also known as Community Wildfire Resiliency Committees) and 5 subcommittees are currently being struck in the Northern St'at'imc territory of SLRD Electoral Areas A and B. Landscape Consulting Corporation has been retained to support this work as well as prepare community wildfire resiliency plans (CWRPs) for each of Areas A and B.

FireSmart Disciplines in the Lillooet/St'at'imc/SLRD Areas A and B

Mike Fusca described three of the seven [FireSmart disciplines](#) which will be included in the CWRPs:

- *Interagency cooperation* – “FireSmart is a shared responsibility, which means it relies on strong and lasting partnerships. Promoting collaboration between agencies and across different levels of government will better support community wildfire preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery”
- *Cross-training* – “There are two kinds of firefighters: wildfire and structural. Many other local resources may also be involved in managing a wildfire incident. When firefighters are cross-trained, response capabilities are improved, and communities are safer.”

- *Emergency Planning* – “It takes everyone from firefighters to government representatives to homeowners to have the best laid plans in a worst-case scenario. Encouraging emergency planning by combining local knowledge with expertise in wildfire management helps communities become better prepared in responding to and recovering from wildfires.”

Mike Simpson facilitated discussion of all participants on the three FireSmart disciplines above by asking: *What’s working? Where are the gaps? How do we fix it?*

Detailed notes were captured by others, but the themes were as follows:

- Working well together across different governments, but there’s always room for improvement
- Communication is improving – liaisons with Indigenous communities, more technology that benefits some areas but much of SLRD Areas A and B/Northern St’at’imc territory doesn’t have cellular coverage or high speed internet (often by choice). Misinformation over social media is a challenge. Could use communication liaisons in rural neighbourhoods.
- Communication challenges at edges of Regional Districts is challenging as Indigenous communities have to coordinate with both
- Adapt communication to what the communities/neighbourhoods have available
- A lot of dead trees or forest fuels on the landscape. Need to enable cultural burning.
- Challenge with interagency cooperation is Open Burning Smoke Control Regulations and restrictions on doing prescribed or cultural burning.
- Emergency response in rural, remote areas has to address egress and various risks to access such as landslides, debris flows and flooding in addition to wildfire
- Need more coordination between MOF, BC Wildfire Service and SLRD regarding priorities for fuel management and the specific vulnerabilities each community or neighbourhood has
- Some government agencies or organizations need to be at the table such as Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD), BC Hydro
- Training and equipment are needed for rural communities/neighbourhoods – they know no one is coming for hours and they want to be self-sufficient to protect their communities

Existing Resources and Programs

Darren Oike, Fire Chief and Director of Protective Services, District of Lillooet gave a [presentation](#) on their capacity, services, equipment and recent accomplishments.

Darrick Andrew, Mitigation Liaison with [First Nations Emergency Services Society](#), gave a verbal overview of what they do: helping First Nations with funding for emergency planning; provide Service Canada funding for emergency planning; help communities do cultural burning; and coordinate the First Nations Adapt Programs from federal government to help bands with cultural burns.

Cheryl Rogers, Coordinator with [Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team](#) (CDART) gave an overview of their volunteer organization. They can help with mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery of animals on request (they do not self-deploy). Can provide animal intake facilities in times of need, can go in and help care/feed for animals in times of evacuation. In times of recovery, they do go in and remove any animal mortalities. They usually focus on hobby farms, large operational farms fall under Ministry of Agriculture.

Community Wildfire Preparedness Roundtables

Alex de Chantal, Regional Manager, Thompson-Okanagan gave an overview of the [Fraser Basin Council](#) as a sustainability non-profit organization that often works impartially to convene multi-party discussions and actions on complex issues.

Mike Simpson gave a [presentation](#) on the history, purpose and status of [community wildfire preparedness roundtables](#) that FBC has supported since 2019 in Williams Lake, Clearwater and Clinton and their surrounding areas. Fraser Basin Council is funded by BC Wildfire Service to support this work.

It was agreed by consensus, having heard from everyone in the room, to form a community wildfire preparedness roundtable for Lillooet and its surrounding area.

Considerations and next steps noted include the following:

- Include all of SLRD Areas A and B geographically
- Consider expanding the geographic area to the east to include a portion of TNRD and Marble Canyon, in addition to adding TNRD to the contact list
- Terms of reference to be developed, a template exists for the other three existing roundtables
- The 5 CFRC subcommittees are more local and would be part of this larger community wildfire roundtable, which could possibly meet twice per year (spring and fall)
- Next meeting would be in fall 2022, likely in conjunction with presentation of the draft CWRPs that Landscape Consulting Corporation is developing.

Action Items:

Task	Responsibility	Timing
Convene Community Wildfire Roundtable in fall. Draft agenda to include terms of reference development, presentation of CWRPs for Areas A, B	All	Fall, partly dependent on status of CWRPs
Add cultural burning into Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans being developed.	Tawnya, Robyn	Ongoing
Add TNRD Area I, CN to contact list	Mike S.	ASAP
Create landing page on FBC website, add presentations, and meeting summary.	Mike S./Alex	July 15
Follow up with Jen for contact at CN	Mike S.	ASAP
Mike Simpson will provide TFN with connections to TNRD	Mike S.	ASAP
Investigate funding sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Enhancement Society of BC • UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Program 	Everyone	Ongoing

Appendix 1 – Participants

Organization	Name	Position
District of Lillooet	Barb Wiebe	Councillor
District of Lillooet	Jennifer Leach	Councillor
District of Lillooet	Darren Oike	Fire Chief, Director of Protective Services
District of Lillooet	Brandie Galliazzo	Manager of Public Works
Squamish Lillooet Regional District	Vivian Birch-Jones	Electoral Area Director, Area B
Squamish Lillooet Regional District	Sal Demare	Electoral Area Director, Area A
Squamish Lillooet Regional District	Mike Fusca	Emergency Program Coordinator
Tskwaylaxw EOC	Arlen Ferguson	Emergency Operations, IT/systems
Sekw'el'was	Leo Porter	Director of Operations
T'it'q'et	Susan Napoleon	EOC Director
Xaxli'p development corp.	Jason Jacob	Assistant
Cayoose Creek Band	Denise Bob	EPC
Lillooet Tribal Council	Darryl Adrian	Emergency Management Coordinator
Xaxli'p	Lia Wilson	Emergency Coordination
Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nations	Delaney Adolph	Administration Assistance
Xwisten	Gerald Michel	Lands and Resources Liaison
BC Wildfire Service	Verne Rasmussen	Wildfire Officer
BC Wildfire Service	Justin Rommel	Wildfire Technician, Lillooet Fire Zone
BC Wildfire Service	Justin Waito	Wildfire Prevention Officer
MoF - Cascades	Ryan de Visser	Stewardship Forester
MoF - Cascades	Martin Ponsioen	Senior Advisor
MoF - Cascades	Steffyn Hunt	
Gun Lake Fire Protection	Al Leighton	Fire Chief
Multiple	Geoff Playfair	
First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC	Darrick Andrew	Mitigation Liaison
Yalakom Community	Robin Andruss	Member
Fraser Basin Council	Alex de Chantal	Regional Manager
Consultant to Fraser Basin Council	Mike Simpson	Forester, facilitator
Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team	Cheryl Rogers	MST Coordinator
None	Deborah van der Horst	private citizen
None	Michael Heimann	private citizen
Landscape Consulting Corporation	Sharon French	Local FireSmart Representative
Landscape Consulting Corporation	Tawnya Collins	RPF
Landscape Consulting Corporation	Robin Strong	RFT
Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society	Emily Jones	Executive Director
BC Timber Sales	Lee Williams	Planning Forester
BC Timber Sales	Jenn Gibson	Planning Officer