

Emergency Preparedness and Response

The fall weather in BC has been quite tame this year, but due to the extreme storms in other areas around the globe there has been a heightened level of awareness that has increased requests for training and information sharing this quarter. The more that communities are proactive in preparing for emergencies and creating internal capacity in their communities, the less they have to be reactive during an event, thus shortening recovery time.

This quarter, we have worked with communities in both BC and the Yukon to train personnel in the basic emergency preparedness courses and evacuation planning and to assist in developing or updating Community Emergency Plans. The communities of T'shesaht, Lower Kootenay, Nooaitch, Simpcw, White River, Ross River, Liard, Daylu Dena, Dease River and Taku River Tlingit have further strengthened their capacity through training and/or plan updates this quarter, and we congratulate them!

A successful emergency planning awareness session was also held in Williams Lake with representation from Lhoosk'uz Dene, Esk'etemc, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem, Williams Lake Band, Nazko, Tsilhqot'in National Government and Tsi Del Del, as well as the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council, Canadian Red Cross, Tl'etinqox-t'in Health Services, Emergency Management BC, Cariboo Regional District, Environment Canada and the RCMP.

FNESS participated in a comprehensive community planning workshop at Little Shuswap's Quaaout Lodge. Here, the concern was raised that there is a need for greater focus on safety planning in the community planning process. FNESS was invited to present at SARscene, the National Search and Rescue Annual Conference, where Marc D'Aquino



White River First Nation Emergency Personnel

spoke about integrating First Nations culture and traditions with modern search tactics. His presentation focused on engagement and consultation with the communities to create an integrated approach to emergency events.

With the ultimate goal of being prepared to respond to emergency events, FNESS assisted Gitga'at in their Emergency Operations Centre during a Coast Guard operation. In 1946, a freighter with 600 tonnes of bunker oil on board sank 20 kilometres from Hartley Bay, and recently the rusted hull had begun to leak. The Gitga'at community's involvement was imperative, as the operation risked impacting their traditional harvesting area. The resulting confidence for their Emergency Team will be invaluable in any future emergency event.

FNESS was requested by Yukon Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to work with a First Nation community recovering from a 2012 emergency. Recovery is a long, drawn-out process, and to ensure that a community can receive maximum reimbursement, it is essential that the guidelines for Disaster Financial Assistance be understood and followed. This means keeping comprehensive records from the day an emergency occurs to the very end of the recovery process. A lack of thorough record-keeping leaves the potential for a huge financial loss and burden for any community. Good planning that includes recovery planning will help to ensure this does not happen.

FireSmart Recognition

T'it'q'et First Nation began the FireSmart process in their community in April 2013. First, the Forest Fuel Management Department assisted T'it'q'et in completing the FireSmart assessment. The community then formed a board of directors, completed an action plan, and reviewed and approved the assessment plan. They held a FireSmart event day, which included FNESS staff and 13 volunteers who cleared and removed combustible materials including large trees. This fuel-free area generates protection for the community from an advancing wildfire. T'it'q'et is now one of the first communities in Canada to apply for FireSmart recognition. Congratulations to T'it'q'et First Nation for considerable progress and ongoing commitment!



T'it'q'et First Nation FireSmart event

Please check for your own "Home and Site Assessment Checklist" in the back of the FireSmart manual!

Forest Fuel Management

The Forest Fuel Management Department saw successes within the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative (SWPI), Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP) and FireSmart.

The SWPI October application intake represents \$107,250 in funding commitments to communities, with the potential of another \$500,385, pending staff reviews. All other ongoing projects saw \$39,380 released to communities.

The Provincial Fuels Management Working Group (PFMWG) coordinates the administration of the SWPI program, conducting monthly conference calls and two face-to-face meetings annually. The meeting was held in Richmond November 4–8, 2013.

Lillooet Tribal Council ATEP was completed October 31, 2013. Thirty-five courses were delivered to 50 participants from Lillooet Tribal



ATEP Lillooet Tribal Council Support Worker Leanne Michell of Bridge River Indian Band received a FNESS blanket at Seton Lake after completing her term.

Council Communities.

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council ATEP has delivered 28 courses to 20 participants. CSTC ATEP hosted a Community Resource Information Gathering Session at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre on October 16, 2013.

FireSmart program activities escalated last quarter, and a number of communities have moved forward with FireSmart Community Action Plans and conducting community event days. Partners in Protection (Canada), the driving force behind FireSmart, held their annual general

meeting on December 4, 2013.

On December 13, the Forest Fuel Management Department was pleased to present at the Informational Forestry Forum in Kamloops, which was organized by the Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations.

Fire Services

The Fire Services Department worked with 36 communities and fire departments on various projects throughout the third quarter. Ten First Nation fire departments completed capacity benchmark assessments in 2013, and the Fire Services team began fire fighter training and fire officer training. Once again, the department focused largely on fire prevention and school education in communities. During the winter months, there has been an increase of house fires on and off reserves, which has led to an increase



BC First Nations Youth Poster Contest Winners			
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
1st Place	Jamie Wesley Blackwater <i>Kispiox School</i>	Tiamara Jensen <i>OKIB Immersion School</i>	Max Hill <i>Hartley Bay School</i>
2nd Place	Ava Jules <i>Neqweyqwelsten School</i>	Alexa Bolton <i>Hartley Bay School</i>	Ayub Jack <i>OKIB Immersion School</i>
3rd Place	Shayla Russel <i>John Field Elementary</i>	Brieanne Clifton <i>Hartley Bay School</i>	Jon Fennell <i>Neqweyqwelsten School</i>

of fire-related deaths. These deaths could have been prevented if the homes had working smoke alarms.

In 2013, the Fire Services Department distributed more than 16,000 smoke alarms to First Nation communities throughout BC. Smoke alarms reduce fire death by 50 percent, so if you work in a community that has received a shipment, please make sure your installations are completed as soon as possible. The smoke alarms are equipped with a 10-year lithium battery and were manufactured specifi-

cally for easy installation. If you have any questions please call the Fire Services Department at 1-888-822-3388.

The Fire Services Department would also like to congratulate the winners of the BC First Nations Youth Poster Contest! Thank you to all of the parents and teachers who helped students submit posters this year. We look forward to your submissions for the 2014 contest!



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