



April 26, 2021

TWO COMMUNITIES BECOME THE FIRST TO EARN FIRESMART RECOGNITION

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR) is celebrating the recognition of its first two FireSmart Communities located in Electoral Area C (South Shuswap).

Two strata communities, one located at Dieppe Road in Sorrento and the other at the Villas in Blind Bay, were recently confirmed as FireSmart Canada Recognized Neighbourhoods after fulfilling the criteria, which includes developing a plan to reduce risks in the area and investing time on an annual basis to clean up fuel sources.

“We want to extend our appreciation to these two communities on achieving FireSmart Community status,” says Len Youden, the CSR’s FireSmart Coordinator. “Both of these communities took action to reduce fire risks that go beyond the boundaries of their own property because we all know that wildfires don’t respect lines on a map. By working together, they are reducing the risk to everyone living there.”

Youden points out that FireSmart communities do not need to encompass large areas. In this case, Dieppe Road has 22 lots, while the Villas has 26 lots. In both cases, it took one concerned person taking the lead and contacting the CSR’s FireSmart program. From there, these two enthusiastic neighbourhoods quickly saw the value of protecting their property. They worked with Youden to identify hazards and began work cleaning up their highest-risk areas.

In the case of Dieppe Road, residents began a program to clean up a communal forested area by raking up surface fuel, trimming branches and picking up downed branches.

The Villas worked on removing and cleaning up cedar hedges and juniper bushes near their homes. These plants are extremely flammable and can be easily ignited by falling embers from a wildfire.

The FireSmart program supported these activities by supplying waste disposal bins and, in the case of Dieppe Road, a chipper to help remove the vegetation.

“It was great to have the backing of the local FireSmart program, giving us support and an incentive to do something,” says Steve Butchart, a resident of Dieppe Road.

“It was not hard to convince our neighbours to work together because we’ve all seen the sights from California or Australia or Fort McMurry where some houses are spared while others burn to the ground. We know that every little bit we can do to reduce our risk benefits us all.”



NEWS RELEASE

The two neighbourhoods will each receive a sign to post in their area, identifying them as FireSmart Communities.

The CSR D is looking to add more FireSmart Communities which will reduce fire risk across the region. For more information, please see the FireSmart page on the CSR D's website or email firesmart@csrd.bc.ca

For further information please contact Tracy Hughes, CSR D Communications Coordinator at 250.833.5963, toll free at 1.888.248.2773 or email Thughes@csrd.bc.ca.