

**For immediate release
April 19, 2020**

UPPER SQUAMISH VALLEY EVACUATION ORDER LIFTED

Evacuation Alert remains in place

Squamish, BC – Squamish Valley residents are returning home today, four days after being evacuated due to an immediate life safety threat from a wildfire burning in the vicinity of Magee Road. A reduced evacuation alert area remains in effect.

More than 120 residents of the Upper Squamish Valley, evacuated on Wednesday, April 15, 2020 are returning to the area today, as the evacuation order has now been lifted. An evacuation alert, for a reduced area, remains in effect, as does the state of local emergency, which remains in place as the fire is still active.

“Wildfires are unpredictable, and while crews made significant progress on this fire, we know that conditions can change quickly. BC Wildfire Service has recommended maintaining a reduced evacuation alert area and we are following this recommendation, while also pleased that residents will be able to return home,” said SLRD Board Chair, Tony Rainbow.

“We understand that this fire has caused tremendous stress and uncertainty for the residents in the area, in a time where we are all already dealing with the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Rainbow said. “First and foremost, our priority is to our residents – to make sure they are safe. My heart goes out especially to those who have lost their home.”

The fire was discovered on the afternoon of April 15, 2020 and grew rapidly in the first few hours in windy conditions, moving from the Valley floor and onto the slopes above the community.

The fire forced people and livestock from their properties for four days.

On Sunday, April 19, 2020, the SLRD confirmed that structures on three property titles had been lost to the fire, with more than one structure lost on some properties. “We know this is very hard news for people to hear,” said Rainbow. “This is devastating for those affected. We are extremely grateful that no one was injured,” he said.

The Squamish Valley Road remains closed to non-resident traffic, with a RCMP checkpoint in place. “We really need people to respect the privacy of the community at this time and not visit the area. People are returning home and seeing the effects of this fire on their community.” said Rainbow. “The area also remains an active BC Wildfire Service and BC Hydro work zone.”

Details of the new evacuation alert area and the notice lifting the evacuation order can be found on the SLRD's website at www.slrd.bc.ca

Bottled water has been supplied to residents and emergency services continues to provide support to eligible residents who have been displaced.

As of Sunday morning, the fire was reported to be at 203 HA in size and remained listed as out of control, 50% contained by the BC Wildfire Service.

- 30 -

About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 42,665 residents (2016 Census).

Media Contact:

Patricia Westerholm
Communications Coordinator
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 244
Email: pwesterholm@slrd.bc.ca