



SQUAMISH - LILLOOET
REGIONAL DISTRICT



Emergency Program

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Fire near Lillooet 2017. Photo courtesy of BC Wildfire Service

Executive Summary

The SLRD Emergency Program has been engaged in many areas this year, but it was the tinder dry conditions throughout the regional district and wildfires active near our northern boundaries that dominated the summer. One community was evacuated, another was put on evacuation alert, and we were fortunate that the fires did not move closer to us. Recognition and appreciation is extended to all our volunteer firefighters, and to all those in the SLRD who contributed to a safe fire season with their vigilance in quickly reporting fire activity, and for complying with the fire bans that were in place.

Widespread and extended media coverage of the fires combined with smoky skies seems to have driven a substantial increase in the number of subscribers to the SLRD Alert emergency notification system. There are currently over 1,100 sign ups to SLRD Alert across the ~1,000 households plus commercial entities. We encourage all residents, business owners and employees to sign up to this free service, which delivers text, voice and email messaging directly in the event of an emergency. Over the summer we also trained our volunteer fire departments in evacuation notification procedures using new quick reference guides and public information materials. The goal is consistency in the way people are approached when they need to evacuate, and in the information they receive so that they can evacuate safely and readily connect with support resources.

There is a focus on increasing emergency preparedness and response capability within neighbourhoods, in recognition of the considerable geographic distance for some communities to emergency services, often combined with limited road access and variable telecommunications infrastructure. The objective is to support communities to become more disaster resilient through knowledge, training and relationship building between emergency program staff and neighbourhood contact people. Community Emergency Plans were finalised in January 2018, and are available on the SLRD website. These plans are tailored to the particular circumstances of each community and include information on the most prominent hazards, trigger points for evacuation, evacuation routes, and a community action plan.

Some hazards in the SLRD are changing, including those influenced by climate change. Understanding how the risks posed by these hazards may also be changing is increasingly important, especially in the context of notable growth in population, visitation and land development interest. In 2017 over \$500,000 of provincial funding was obtained for study and risk assessment of three areas: Mt Currie integrated landslide assessment, Seton Portage integrated landslide and flood assessment, and an integrated floodplain mapping and risk assessment for the Upper Squamish river area. A further funding application has been made to the National Disaster Mitigation Fund for a SLRD-wide integrated Identification and risk-based prioritization of flood hazards - decision is pending.

Looking ahead to 2018, the SLRD emergency program will continue to focus on improving disaster preparedness, response and recovery, explore options for mitigation, and also work directly with community groups on resident-led emergency response processes and disaster resilience.

2017 Emergency Program: in brief

- Activated the SLRD Emergency Operations Centre three times in 2017, for wildfires burning near the communities of Pavilion, Pear and Kelly Lakes, and Fountain Valley.
- Over 40 severe weather warnings, high stream flow advisories, air quality advisories and other emergency notices were issued in 2017, events that affected residents and travellers throughout the SLRD.
- Rolled out evacuation notification training and resources to the five volunteer fire service areas, and partnered with Lillooet Fire Service to deliver the training to a combined group of Lillooet firefighters, RCMP officers, Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police, First Nations emergency managers, BC Ambulance and BC Road Rescue personnel.
- As Fire Services Coordinator, the Emergency Program supported and provided input to the operations of the 6 SLRD volunteer fire services in Britannia Beach, Garibaldi, Bralorne, Birken, Gun Lake and Seton Portage.
- Successfully applied for provincial funding to initiate a detailed study and risk analysis of the Seton Portage landslide and flood hazards from multiple drainages. Results due in the first quarter of 2018.
- Received funding for, and initiated, updated floodplain mapping for the Upper Squamish river area. The existing floodplain mapping is 20 years old and interest in land development has increased substantially in recent years. Results due by August 2018.
- Submitted a detailed funding proposal to the National Disaster Mitigation Fund for a regional district-wide integrated Identification and risk-based prioritization of flood hazards. The funding proposal has moved forward through the provincial process to the federal level and we await further updates.
- Project managed the Mt Currie integrated landslide study and risk assessment on behalf of Emergency Management BC and in partnership with the Village of Pemberton and Lil'wat. Final report received in January 2018, and available on the websites of the SLRD, Village of Pemberton, and Lil'wat.
- SLRD Alert system used regularly to reach specific communities affected by natural hazard effects, road closures and utility system outages.
- Conducted Forest Fire Management (FFM) activities including Community Wildfire Protection Plan updates in Electoral Areas B, C, and D, development of forest fuel management (FFM) prescriptions in Electoral Area B, and completed funding applications for FFM prescriptions in Electoral Areas C and D (pending). Funding has also been received for the 2018 initiation of a Community Wildfire Protection

Areas of Emergency Management Focus



Strategic objectives & achievements

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE ACHIEVED
Ensure statutory compliance under the Emergency Program Act (2005) and all other applicable legislation	Maintain statutory compliance and advocate for change where applicable.	<p>Progressed a review of the SLRD Emergency Plan, to be completed in 2018.</p> <p>Presented the Evacuation Notification Quick Reference Guide, Evacuation Kit and resources at the Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Conference to promote consistent policy and process, increased public safety through greater efficiency when communicating between local authorities, between responding agencies and out to the media and public.</p>
Disaster risk reduction for the 31 communities of the SLRD through increased knowledge and community engagement.	Partner with targeted communities to reduce their interface and structural fire risk through the Fire Smart initiative.	<p>Emergency planning engagement with all communities on their highest ranked hazards through the community emergency plans, including interface fire.</p> <p>Conducted Forest Fire Management (FFM)</p> <p>The Emergency Program is awaiting the results of a number of grant applications for FFM work in 2018. Electoral Area Directors have set aside select funds for development of operational prescriptions in Areas C and D, and a CWPP update in Area A. Area B will continue with the development of prescriptions using funds set aside by the Area Director for that purpose.</p> <p>Funding will be available again in 2018 to support community initiated Fire Smart activities.</p>
Increase Community-based response capacity through community empowerment and relationship building.	Increased knowledge of the hazards, risks and vulnerabilities of each community to enable better risk reduction planning, and development of community specific operational emergency management plans	<p>Nearly 200 new subscribers added to the SLRD Alert emergency mass notification system as part of an ongoing campaign.</p> <p>Completed community emergency plans for each community, including hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, tailored hazard information, hazard specific evacuation trigger points, evacuation routes and community action plans.</p>

Strategic objectives & achievements

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Support economic resilience of communities	Support business and organizational stakeholders by assisting with emergency management planning advice in terms of public/private interface of response roles and responsibilities	<p>Produced the Commercial Livestock Emergency Relocation Guide which is available on the website and designed to assist evacuation in rural areas where animal welfare and business continuity concerns have been a source of evacuation refusal or delay.</p> <p>Member of the Roads Stakeholder group, which meets twice yearly to address any events that have the potential to impact, or have impacted, public safety and transport access.</p>
	Manage the permitting of Special Events in the SLRD to promote economic development alongside public safety for residents and visitors.	Coordinated the regulatory compliance of special major events with impacts in SLRD areas, including the Red Bull 400 and Tough Mudder sporting events (~30,000 attendees).
Promote SLRD organizational readiness and business continuity	Provide opportunities for staff members to enhance their emergency management skillset	Two half day EOC Essentials training courses were held by the emergency program for new staff and for those wanting a refresher in the area. The invitation to participate in this training was also extended to Village of Pemberton and Lil'wat staff.
Build coordinated emergency response capacity in the Sea to Sky Corridor	Support and enhance coordinated process and planning with Corridor Local Authorities included North Shore Emergency Management (Tri-Cities), District of Squamish, Village of Pemberton, Resort Municipality of Whistler, and First Nations.	Initiated discussions with Emergency Management BC regarding the Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management (IPREM) model. To be explored further in 2018.

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Increase your disaster resilience:

- **SIGN UP** for SLRD Alert at slrd.bc.ca
- **STOCK UP** your emergency kits for home and to go
- have an emergency **PLAN** for people and pets
- **CONNECT** with your neighbours.

