

**For immediate release
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SLRD'S FireSmart Program™ wraps up a record year for participation

More than 200 FireSmart home assessments for 2024 represent a 185 per cent increase in participation

Pemberton, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is celebrating a record-breaking year for its FireSmart program, which saw historic levels of community participation and engagement across all four Electoral Areas. The 2024 season included a substantial increase in residential FireSmart assessments, the expansion of the FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition program, and a range of community-focused events that supported wildfire risk reduction throughout the region.

Through funding from the Union of BC Municipalities' Community Resiliency Investment Program, SLRD's FireSmart initiatives remained accessible at no cost to residents. The program, now closed for the season, reached more than 200 residential properties—representing a nearly 185 per cent increase in home assessments compared to the previous year.

"We are thrilled with the momentum the FireSmart program has gained this year," said Jen Ford, SLRD Board Chair. "No area of the SLRD is without wildfire risk, so it's encouraging to see more residents actively participating in FireSmart. From legislation to public education, land use planning and emergency management, strengthening the resilience of our communities facing climate-related challenges is embedded in many aspects of the work done at the SLRD. This level of involvement from our residents makes us stronger."

In 2024, 10 communities across the SLRD received a wildfire neighbourhood assessment. They developed mitigation plans specific to their community with the assistance of two Local FireSmart Representatives and a registered forester. Many of these communities are well on their way to achieving their FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition, and the SLRD FireSmart Program looks forward to supporting them as they work toward certification.

"FireSmart principles are most effective when they're adopted community-wide," said Ford. "The FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition program has been an excellent framework for organizing this work, and the progress these communities have made is inspiring. We aim to see every neighbourhood in the region equipped with a clear, actionable FireSmart plan."

Throughout the season, the FireSmart team hosted 11 successful in-community events, including education days, BBQs, and chipping days, to spread awareness and mobilize residents. These gatherings have been instrumental in building a strong network of FireSmart champions, and the program is still looking for more champions in neighbourhoods across all areas. Training is available for interested residents who want to take on a leadership role in their communities' wildfire preparedness.

“Protecting our communities from wildfire is a shared responsibility, and this year’s FireSmart program showed just how much we can accomplish together,” said Russell Mack, Chair of the Electoral Area Directors’ Committee. “Preparing and protecting our homes and communities must be an ongoing effort. Programs like FireSmart give us the tools and framework we need to make a difference.”

With the 2024 program complete, the SLRD is already planning new initiatives for next year, including introducing the FireSmart BC Wildfire Mitigation Program™. This successful national program, already in place in Squamish, Pemberton, and Whistler, will help guide residents through further property-specific mitigation actions. More information will be available in the new year.

For more information about the SLRD’s FireSmart initiatives and next year’s programs, visit the [FireSmart information page](#) on the SLRD’s website or email firesmart@slrd.bc.ca.

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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 50,496 residents (2021 Census as certified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs).

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District is found within the traditional territories of several First Nations, including the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), St’át’imc and Líl’wat. Small parts of the SLRD also overlap with the traditional territories of the Stó:lō, Tsleil-Waututh, Nlaka’pamux, Tsilhqot’in, and Secwepemc Nations. While the SLRD does not provide direct services to the residents of the First Nations communities located within the region, the organization is committed to enhancing relations with the Indigenous communities and First Nations within whose territories the SLRD operates.

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