

**For immediate release
September 13, 2023**

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Confirms Structure Losses due to Downton Lake wildfire

Evacuation Order Downgraded to Alert

Pemberton, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) has confirmed multiple structure losses in the Gun Lake and Gun Creek areas of Electoral Area A, as a result of the Downton Lake wildfire.

The SLRD's Chief Building Official, with support from BC Wildfire Service, conducted initial assessments called Rapid Damage Assessments (RDA) of the affected area. Due to the scope of loss, and the ongoing dangerous conditions in the area, this work was completed over multiple days, when it was deemed safe to do so. Following the completion of the assessments, individual RDA reports and photographs were compiled for each property. The SLRD then began the process of connecting directly with each property owner, by telephone, to provide the status of their property and to provide owners with the opportunity to ask questions. Following those initial phone calls, the RDA reports and photographs were emailed to each property owner.

The SLRD can confirm that the Downton Lake wildfire resulted in extensive structure loss in the Gun Lake and Gun Creek communities, with the loss of primary structures and outbuildings. A summary of the impact is as follows:

- **43 properties experienced total structure loss**
- **11 properties experienced partial structure loss**

“Our thoughts are with residents who have been impacted by this wildfire,” said SLRD Board Chair, Jen Ford. “This has been a very distressing time and these property owners who have suffered such great loss and still have many challenges ahead,” she said. “We know residents have been anxiously awaiting news about the status of their properties, and updates on when they can re-enter the area.”

The Evacuation Order in relation to the Downton Lake wildfire has been downgraded to an alert, meaning residents are able to re-enter the area. However, the SLRD urges caution for those re-entering, and asks that non-residents avoid the area for the time being. “Even though the threat of wildfire may have subsided, there are still hazards in the area,” warned Ford. “And out of respect for the people who have been so greatly affected by this wildfire, we ask non-residents to please avoid the area, as we give space to those who need time and support to process the damage caused by this fire.”

Information regarding evacuation alerts and orders, as well as access to various resources, including the SLRD's [re-entry guide](#) is available on the [SLRD website](#).

“We thank all SLRD residents for their patience during these challenging times,” added Ford. “The safety of our residents and first responders is always our primary concern,” she said.

“The SLRD remains committed to supporting property owners throughout this challenging period and will continue to provide updates and resources as they become available.”

-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 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 Sḵw̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), St'át'imc and Lil'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.