

Protective Services ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Cover image:
Electoral Area D wildfire, April 2020
Credit: BC Wildfire Service



Executive Summary

2020 was an unprecedented year for Protective Services in a regional district where major emergencies are not uncommon. The SLRD first activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in 2020 on January 31st for a severe storm, and then on March 13, 2020 for COVID-19 response and the EOC currently remains active at Level 1. The EOC team, which draws staff from across the organization, collectively logged almost 2,500 hours in the EOC in 2020, which has operated virtually through the majority of this time.

In total the SLRD EOC was activated for four emergency events: the February storm that cut all road access to Seton Portage in Electoral Area B and the whole of Electoral Area A for over 48 hours, the pandemic response, an April wildland interface fire in the Upper Squamish Valley (Electoral Area D) that caused the sudden tactical evacuation of over 100 people, and an August debris flow risk that caused the evacuation of all people at Lillooet Lake Estates and Heather Jean Properties in Electoral Area C for two nights.

In all cases, people made the difference. “Be kind, be calm and be safe” is the common refrain that we have come to expect from Dr Bonnie Henry in her regular pandemic updates, and these words also summarize the spirit of the people of the SLRD who have been kind, calm and safe in helping each other through not only the long and wearying journey of the pandemic but also these other emergency events. Special thanks to the EOC staff and Emergency Support Services (ESS) volunteers of the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Canadian Red Cross who responded quickly, effectively and with compassion and grace to support those evacuated while the pandemic was adding new layers of complexity.

2020 was also a challenging year for the volunteer fire departments (VFDs) in the SLRD. The two SLRD-managed departments (Garibaldi and Britannia Beach) navigated the process of providing safe continuity of service for response and ongoing training for members in a radically altered environment due to the pandemic. Volunteer fire services simply do not exist without the members who donate hundreds of hours each year in the interests of keeping friends, neighbors and strangers safe. We see you, and deeply appreciate your service.

***“Be kind, be calm, be safe” – Dr Bonnie Henry, BC
Provincial Health Officer***

Spotlight: Volunteer Fire Services

Garibaldi Volunteer Fire Department

Garibaldi Fire Protection Area (including Pine Crest Estate and Black Tusk Village)

Fire Chief Dan Ross, 18 firefighter members

Recognizing that in the GVFD service area an ambulance is at least 20 minutes away, this department undertook the completion of the training needed to create and manage a medical response program to assist BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS). In early 2020, members Joe McDermid and Kevin Emde invested 40 hours in the training to become instructors and taught a class of eight further members (with safety protocols in place) in the summer. A service agreement is now in place with BCEHS and training is ongoing to keep these skills fresh and up to date. Chief Dan Ross stated, “Adding medical response is the single most beneficial thing we could have done for our community.”

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– Fire Chief Dan Ross

The department also got new turnout gear in 2020 with the assistance of a grant from Electoral Area D Director Tony Rainbow. Much of what is on a firefighter needs to be replaced every ten years at minimum to comply with national standards and this can be quite a financial investment for volunteer departments. The members have the gear they need for up-to-date safety, and are looking sharp too! Separate of the annual funding the department receives, active fundraising continues for other projects. With some regular fundraising options cancelled due to the pandemic, former Fire Chief Ed Jones cut and boxed over 200 boxes of cedar strip kindling which members sold within the community as well as thanksgiving long weekend outside Home Hardware, raising over \$3000!

Britannia Beach Volunteer Fire Department

Howe Sound East Fire Protection Area (including Britannia Beach and Furry Creek)

Fire Chief David Rittberg, 32 Firefighter members (12 female, 20 male)

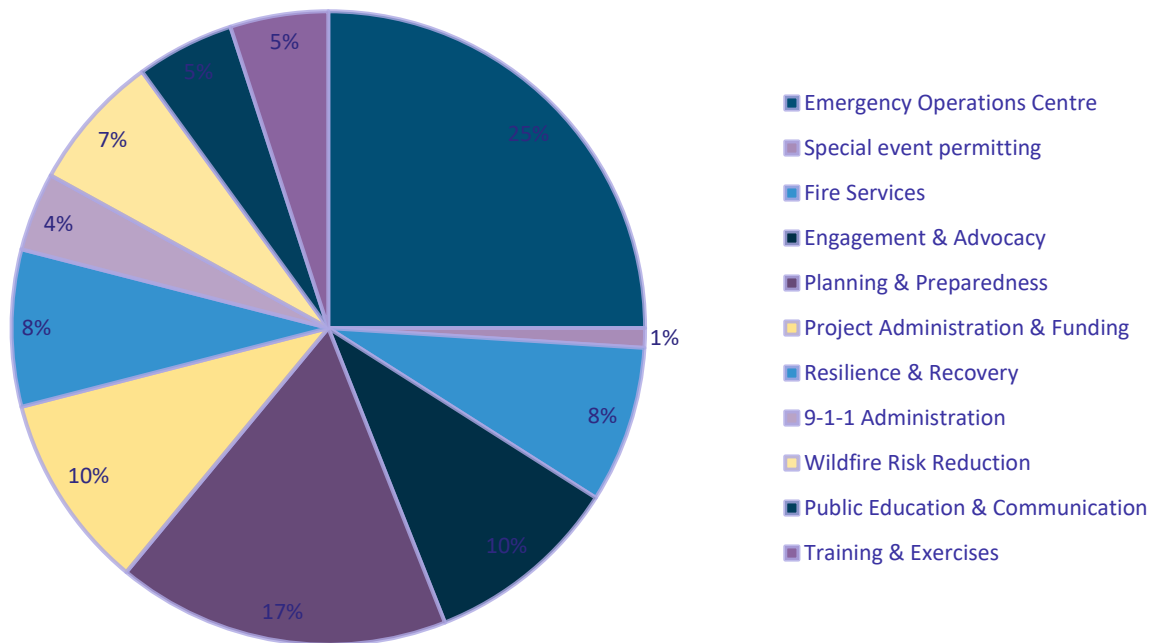
In 2020, the increasingly busy BBVFD responded to 61 calls including 28 fire and 14 motor vehicle accident responses. A significant motor vehicle accident response on Highway 99 involved auto extrication, first responder medical service and low angle rescue skills to successfully remove a patient from a crushed vehicle. Fire Chief David Rittberg commented, “The young daughter of the female patient deserves the 'hero' designation as she crawled up a steep bank to flag down passing motorists to get help.”

BBVFD firefighters completed a total of 3072 training hours in 2020 despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, moving to a mix of small group training with safety protocols and virtual platform training.

2020 also marked the retirement of member Lt. Dave Becker after nine years of active service and a significant contribution to the fire service. Lt. Becker, along with Lt Jorge Ocegüera, led the initial training initiatives which enabled the department to provide the road rescue and medical response services so often needed today. “Lt. Becker’s calm, focused approach at incidents and in delivering training has benefitted all our firefighters and his leadership, experience and skills will be greatly missed by the department”, said Chief Rittberg.

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– Fire Chief David Rittberg

Protective Services 2020: in brief



2020 external grants, funding and cost recovery

Lillooet River Sediment Removal	\$650,000
Mt Currie Landslide Monitoring	\$100,000
Geohazard Risk Assessment	\$113,000
EOC Equipment and Training	\$ 25,000
Upper Paradise Valley Floodplain Mapping and Risk Assessment	\$150,000
Wildfire Risk Reduction (FireSmart and forest fuels management)	\$ 99,735
Response Costs (recovered from EMBC)	\$130,000

Strategic Objectives & Achievements

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE ACHIEVED
<p>Ensure statutory compliance under the Emergency Program Act (2005) and all other applicable legislation.</p>	<p>Maintain statutory compliance and advocate for change where applicable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Response: EOC activated four times in 2020 for pandemic, wildfire, debris flow and severe storm events, three states of local emergency, two communities evacuated, nearly 2,500 hours worked by SLRD staff in the EOC and ~\$130,000 in costs claimed back from Emergency Management BC. • Evacuation Route Planning for the Pemberton Valley completed (with ISL Engineering).
<p>Disaster risk reduction for the communities of the SLRD through increased knowledge and community engagement.</p>	<p>Partner with at risk communities to reduce their wildland interface fire risk through the FireSmart initiative.</p> <p>Update hazard risk and vulnerability analysis (HRVA) for each electoral area and produce a SLRD-wide community risk assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held BC Wildfire Service S100/S185 basic fire suppression and safety training courses with three communities (pre-pandemic). • Conducted ~\$25,000 FireSmart projects with communities including providing green waste bins and holding community clean up and education days. • Completed SLRD-wide Community Risk Assessment (all hazards), and HRVA for each electoral area. Available on SLRD website. • SLRD-wide hazard and risk assessment of flood, steep creek and geohazard risk assessment completed, providing comprehensive data through reporting and mapping of these hazards, including an assessment of how climate change will impact these hazards in the coming decades (SLRD Geohazard Risk Assessment, BGC, 2020).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE ACHIEVED
	<p>Catastrophic landslide hazard monitoring (changes and to determine the precursor signs of a major event)</p> <p>Public education and outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year funded partnership with Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Natural Hazards Research to monitor major areas of landslide concern on Mt Currie, based on the BGC 2018 risk assessment report. • Key stakeholder in the ongoing monitoring of catastrophic landslide hazard from Mt Meager. • Initiated three year funded partnership with MFLNRORD and Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Natural Hazards Research to monitor mass flows from Mt Cayley in the Upper Squamish River area, based on the NHC 2019 flood hazard risk assessment report. • Communication: An interactive web map is now available on the SLRD website to enable fast and clear access to evacuation alert and order information, and notify of any major emergency in each electoral area. Link: https://www.slrd.bc.ca/emergency-program • Public education and communication: A significant communication initiative was the creation of the ‘Feed the Need’ foodbank campaign with Sea to Sky Community Services Society to encourage donations to foodbanks throughout the SLRD in response to the exponential increase in demand due to the consequential economic effects of the pandemic.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE ACHIEVED
Increase community based response capacity through community empowerment and relationship building	<p>Volunteer Fire Services Administration</p> <p>Increase public knowledge and engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Services: The SLRD continues to directly administer the Garibaldi and Britannia Beach VFDs, and to oversee service agreements with the Seton Lake VFD for the Seton Portage area, Pemberton Fire Rescue Services for the Pemberton Meadows and Fringe areas and new in 2020, a service agreement for response from Whistler Fire Rescue Services to the WedgeWoods community. • As significant development is proposed in the Howe Sound East fire service area, ongoing input to these proposals, to facilitate adequate fire protection services for the area to meet the needs of the future population and use. • Engagement: Fire services and community fire suppression continue to be an area of focus for communities both due to the direct risk of wildland interface fires and issues such as the rising cost of insurance, and engagement is ongoing.
Support economic resilience of communities	Use local contractors and suppliers where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted Forest Fuel Management activities for the Fountain Valley area with Xaxli'p Community Forest Corporation. • 60,000 m3 of sediment removed from the Lillooet River for flood hazard reduction with local contractors
Promote SLRD organizational readiness and business continuity	Provide opportunities for staff members to enhance their emergency management skillset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all staff involved in pandemic response. • Business Continuity Plan completed. • Pandemic Response Plan completed.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE	WHAT WE ACHIEVED
Build coordinated emergency response capacity across the SLRD	<p>Conduct flood tabletop exercise with Pemberton Valley response agencies and stakeholders.</p> <p>Build coordinated response through partnerships</p> <p>Build coordinated response through knowledge creation and sharing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises: Tabletop exercise conducted in October (with pandemic safety protocols in place) with representation from the RCMP, Village of Pemberton, Pemberton Search and Rescue, SLRD, Lil'wat Nation and Pemberton Valley Diking District. • Regional Coordination: The SLRD continues to chair the Sea-to-Sky Emergency Program Committee with municipalities, First Nations and key stakeholders, and to be an active member of the equivalent group in the Lillooet area for the northern SLRD, and the Pemberton Valley Emergency Management Committee for coordinated action towards risk reduction for the multiple and connected hazards of this area. • Mapping: Critical infrastructure mapped and inventoried across the SLRD



SQUAMISH - LILLOOET
REGIONAL DISTRICT

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

Squamish River erosion repairs
Photo: Keili Bartlett/the Squamish Chief

