



UPDATE
NEWCASTLE CREEK (SAYWARD)
WILDFIRE

STAY INFORMED - Sign up to receive updates & alerts by text message & voice calls to landlines/cell phones on SRD's Notification system Alertable.

WWW.SRD.CA/ALERTS

July 2023 - Newcastle Creek Wildfire Local Authority After Action Report



Thank you

BC Wildfire Service
for continuing to keep us safe!

Executive Summary



The purpose of this report is to provide a perspective of the local authorities, emergency services personnel and community members affected by the Newcastle Creek Wildfire (NCW). On Monday May 29th the Newcastle Creek Wildfire started approximately 5.6km west of Sayward. Smoke was visible from Sayward. The Village of Sayward and Strathcona Regional District activated a

regional Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) for this event that consisted primarily of public communication and advanced planning activities. The purpose of activating the EOC as a result of a disaster is to centralize response and recovery decisions, plans, and operational activities in order to maximize the efficiency, quality, and quantity of resources.

The BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) activated an Incident Command Post at the scene and was the lead agency for the response. BCWS had at least thirty firefighters tending to the out-of-control blaze. Air tankers and helicopters were also deployed. At no point in time was there a risk to critical infrastructure. No evacuation orders or area restrictions were put in place. Fire was believed to be human caused.



The NCW generated considerable community concern and requests for information. During this event 300 new subscribers signed up for SRD's Alertable mass notification service. Alertable was utilized to send at least one update per day to the community. The community messaging focused on BCWS service actions and protective actions against the health effects of wildfire smoke (Appendix A).

Once BCWS listed this wildfire as 'Being Held' several days later, personnel from local government (SRD and Village) along with emergency services personnel hosted an internal debrief. A summary of the internal debrief can be found in Appendix B. Volunteers from the Salvation Army were on site during both the internal debrief and community meeting to provide psychosocial support if required.

Following the internal debrief it was decided that in the spirit of best practice a Community Event should be hosted as well. It was assumed that this event would draw significant attendance due to the attention this wildfire received from the community. Flyers (Appendix E) were mailed to households and the event was promoted on social media. **Less than 30 community members were in attendance.** The presentation utilized at the Community Event is available in Appendix F.

The promotional poster also advised residents that between Monday June 12th and Friday June 23rd the SRD was inviting the community to record a video of them expressing their thanks to BC Wildfire Service. Community members were provided with an email and phone number they could send the video to. No community members chose to record this 'thank you' video.

Following the internal debrief it was decided that the EOC should aim to collect responses from community members affected by the Newcastle Creek Wildfire asking them to provide their observations on the emergency operation centre and communication activities. The survey (Appendix D) was mailed to households and promoted on social media.

The community was advised they could provide their feedback by completing the survey:

- **ONLINE** - www.srd.ca/newcastle-wildfire-feedback
- **Dropoff** your survey at the Village of Sayward's office.
- **BY MAIL** - Strathcona Regional District, 990 Cedar St. Campbell River BC V9W 7Z8
Attention: Protective Services.

Survey submissions were to be accepted until 4:00 pm on Friday June 23rd. Only 32 people responded to the survey, and some chose not to answer all the questions. To summarize the results from the 32 respondents of the Community Survey:

- Respondents were split down the middle regarding whether they felt they received enough information during this event. The majority who expressed they did not receive enough information during the event appear to have not downloaded the Alertable App or have an Alertable Account.
- Some respondents seemed to indicate they were unaware the Alertable App would work if connected to a Wi-Fi Network, even if that location did not have cellphone reception. Some also seemed unaware that Alertable could call their landlines.
- The majority of respondents have taken additional protective actions to be better prepared following this event.
- **Over 90%** of respondents had never viewed their community's Community Wildfire Protection Plan or Sayward Evacuation Plan. It can be assumed that this lack of knowledge correlated to the heightened anxiety some community members felt during the event.
- The majority of community respondents indicated they had no interest in volunteering for community emergency service organizations.

A tabulation of survey data is provided in Appendix C. Below are some responses from the EOC to specific feedback from survey respondents.

- **“that it would have been helpful within alertable to have been informed that local RCMP/Firefighters would go door to door in the middle of the night if there was an evacuation ordered.”**
 - that information would have been contained in an Evacuation Alert message, but this event never reached that stage.
 - It is the responsibility of community members to be educated in these protocols beforehand by reviewing community emergency plans and seeking this information.

- **“Go door to door helping or getting people to ensure they are set up on Alertable.”** – This is what neighbourhood emergency preparedness programs are all about. If everyone could ensure each neighbour on either side of them is signed up that would help.
- **“Living in the Sayward Valley with no cell service and totally relying on a land line or wi-fi calling and possibility of a power outage, how would we get updates?”** – Alertable reaches landlines.

- **Provincial jurisdiction in Sayward Valley (Electoral Area A)**
 - Fire bans and explicit restrictions on the types of activities allowed in the forest should be the new normal. Bring them in as soon as the fire threat level rises above moderate, and leave them in place until the fall rains.
 - Why logging operations were not halted

- **Call the Coastal Fire Centre Public Information Line**
 - “It has been impossible to get details on what is happening with the 20% of the fire that is not under control.”
 - “Fire bans and explicit restrictions on the types of activities allowed in the forest should be the new normal. Bring them in as soon as the fire threat level rises above moderate, and leave them in place until the fall rains.”

The final action taken regarding this event was the Regional District’s Chair Mark Baker bringing a Chair’s Report to the Board which is provided on the next page. The SRD and our communities will continue to advocate for better public information access from the BCWS.



CHAIR REPORT

DATE: July 14, 2023

TO: Directors
Regional Board

FROM: Mark Baker
Chair

RE: WILDFIRE STATUS NOTIFICATIONS

During both the Newcastle Creek and Browning Creek wildfires in Sayward, staff from the Village of Sayward and SRD, the Fire Chief etc. all found out about the fire through people seeing it live (on Facebook) and calling us asking for more information. When we received these calls from the public we were in the dark about what to tell people and had to scramble for information by calling the BC Wildfire Service public information line and then putting the information that was obtained on the SRD's Alertable system to let people know they were safe. Both these fires were very visible to the community, so it is understandable people were nervous and required reassurance that they were not in harm's way.

On a follow up call with BC Wildfire Service, a representative stated that their current notification system (which consists of putting information on their app/website) is acceptable. I do not believe this is acceptable when the general public requires better access to current information. BCWS service stated the only way to get this to change would be for SRD and other organizations to advocate for a change, which again is a request for local government and First Nations to receive current information about a wildfire close to or visible to their community even if assets aren't at risk.

I believe the current approach from BCWS is that it considers local government and First Nations as though they're the same as the general public, when they should be treated as partners to provide proper timely information to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report from the Chair be received.
2. THAT the BC Wildfire Service be requested to provide local authorities and First Nations with timely information regarding the status of wildfires that are close to a community, even when homes and other infrastructure are not at risk.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Baker", is written over a horizontal line.

Mark Baker
Chair

Appendix A – May 30, 2023 SRD Media Release



NEWS RELEASE

990 Cedar St. Campbell River, BC V9W 7Z8
250-830-6700 • 1-877-830-2990
info@srd.ca • www.srd.ca

May 30, 2023

Newcastle Creek Fire (Sayward) - UPDATE

BC Wildfire Service is responding to the Newcastle Creek Fire located 5.6 km West of Sayward on Northern Vancouver Island. This fire was reported in the early afternoon on May 29 and as of 8:40 am Tuesday, May 30th, it is currently estimated to be 90 ha in size.

Thirty firefighters are tending to the out-of-control blaze. Air tankers and helicopters were also deployed earlier yesterday afternoon. At the moment, there is no risk to critical infrastructure or homes and there are no evacuation orders or area restrictions. Fire is believed to be human-caused.

The Village of Sayward has activated an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and updates are being shared via SRD's Alertable notification system. All residents of the region are encouraged to sign up at srd.ca/alerts.

Communities in the Strathcona Regional District may be experiencing various levels of wildfire smoke from the Newcastle Creek wildfire in Sayward. It is an important health concern for our region as it is a complex mixture of air pollutants. Reducing exposure to wildfire smoke protects our health. Smoke levels differ from place to place and can change quickly. Up-to-date information about the Air Quality Health Index can be found on the provincial page at www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/aqhi-table.html or the WeatherCAN app.

Currently there are not any Air Quality Warnings issued, and if changes occur, residents will receive an alert via Alertable.

The Strathcona Regional District recommends:

- Monitoring friends, family, clients and students for signs of illness and ensuring everyone drinks plenty of water.
- Ensuring friends, family, clients and students with chronic health conditions (e.g. asthma) follow their care plan, have any necessary medications on hand and seek additional advice from their physician, if needed.
- Reducing activity during periods of poor air quality, especially outdoors.
- Considering keeping windows and doors closed during high smoke times.

The best way to protect your health from wildfire smoke is to seek cleaner air if possible. Use a portable air cleaner at home, find an indoor environment with filtered air, or relocate to an area with less smoke. If you cannot access cleaner air, some face masks can provide protection from wildfire smoke. However, it is important to be aware of the limitations and potential risks. A well-fitted mask is the most important thing for filtration as inhaled air must pass through the material of the mask, not around it. Well-fitted respirators offer the most effective protection from fine particulate matter. More information can be found at www.bccdc.ca/wildfire-smoke.

To receive notifications and updates from the SRD regarding the current Wildfire, please sign up for Alertable at srd.ca/alerts or by downloading the Alertable app.

Media contact: Shaun Koopman, SRD Protective Services Coordinator, 250-830-6702 | skoopman@srd.ca

The Strathcona Regional District respectfully acknowledges that our corporate office and the Strathcona Garden Recreational Complex are located on the traditional unceded territory of the Lig'idaɣ̓ people.

We also recognize that we operate within the traditional, treaty and unceded territories of the Ehattesaht, Homalco, Ka:'yu:'k't'h' / Che:k'tles7et'h', Klahoose, K'omoks, Mowachaht / Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tlowitsis, We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nations.

Appendix B – Internal Debrief Summary

Item	Response
EOC activation went smoothly.	The group expressed appreciation to local Emergency Program Coordinator Tom Tinsley.
The lack of direct communication and notification from the BCWS was the most prevalent theme during conversation.	BCWS has been made aware of this concern.
The BCWS App was sometimes out of date compared to the information available on the BCWS website.	BCWS has been made aware of this concern.
Public seem unaware of how evacuation alerts and orders are recommended by the incident commander.	The SRD is developing a 'Preparing for Wildfire Evacuations' guide.
Websites are time consuming to update but people still go there for information.	<p>The SRD is working with Alertable so that when specific alerts are sent via Alertable those alerts will automatically go to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRD Website • Village Website • SRD Facebook Pages • Village Facebook page.
Sayward Fire Department doesn't have the personnel or equipment to fight this fire if it did come down the hill.	Firefighter recruitment is adequately advertised, all we can hope is additional community members step up to become members.

Appendix C – Responses to Newcastle Creek Community Wildfire Survey

Did you get enough information?		
Number of responses	Yes	No
32	17	15
When was the last time you reviewed Sayward Evacuation Plan?		
Number of Responses	Never	Recently
30	24	6
When was the last time you reviewed the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for either the Village of Sayward or Sayward Valley?		
Number of Responses	Never	Recently
30	24	6

What actions could be taken to help Sayward be better prepared for a wildfire event?
Make property owners for removal of down trees under brush and debris. Do an area assessment. Daily updates.
Pay the volunteer fire department, so more people would be willing to serve in it. Although they do not fight wildfires, they could be the first responders and having more people would be a help.
Mow all the tall grass in areas such as Angles I've and Hemlock and clear all the danger trees that came down in the big wind of 2020.
A two-way bridge that is not made from wood
A water tower. A fire barrier (fire line?). Updates more than once every 24-36 hours. (I know the crew is busy fighting fires, and that's the priority, but some word would be better than NO word. Especially when you're freaking out about how close it is.
I appreciate all that was done, and is still being done, to keep us safe. I know you have a thankless job, but I thank you.
I guess a map of a way out of here depending on where the fire would happen to be.
Forest management. Eliminate underbrush. Log it. Remove debris away from homes. Restrict access to uneducated tourist.
Deadfall from the winter storms still needs to be removed on the property owned by the Nature Conservancy. To date there is no pumper truck for the SVFD. Absentee property owners need to remove trees and grass that present an increased fire hazard to nearby properties. Reading comments on Facebook from those unaware of the evacuation routes possibly have the Village post online on the Sayward sites the updated route maps once the wildfire event occurs just so people have one less worry while wondering if they'll be evacuated. As well, a way for tourists to be advised of the routes and event.
I believe the village of Sayward owns the land directly behind houses on MacMillan Drive and other Sayward village roads. Clearing out these trees could provide a fire

break and protect infrastructure in the village. If the village does not have the financial resources to do this, they should apply for provincial assistance or allow individual homeowners to clear the trees.

Haven't heard any helicopters the least few days although status is still "Being Held" This is going on for way too long, get some water bombers to attack the fire and get it over with so we all can get a normal life again! AND we will be able to renew our home insurances again... On top of the campfire ban, a ban on dirt bikes and ATV should be considered as well.

Clear trees close to homes (like forest behind houses on MacMillan)

Go door to door helping or getting people to ensure they are set up on Alertable.

To actually address some of the recommendations in the CWPP. Have outcome metrics attached to these plans and accountability from the levels of government responsible i.e. the village, SRD and province

Heli's were refueling in CR at first, it saved time refueling locally and that could happen sooner in the future. People don't know how evacuations work, how they would be notified when sleeping. Advertise the Alertable app. School District senior management was unaware at least into the second day of what was actually happening. I did not send my child to school Tuesday due to the lack of info by 8am when the bus comes. The fire updates always came after the bus pick up so I ended up driving her the first few days until I felt it was safer. I understand not everything can line up in a dynamic situation but that was just my experience as it unfolded. I was also highly concerned about my child on the bus for 1 hour a day without knowing the smoke situation, the valley and village were drastically different and ever changing. Last year I talked to the SRD, Mayor and SVFD about a purple air sensor but either nobody had funding, policies prevented it or they passed the buck. This year I contacted enviro Canada about the lack air quality data. We really need local air quality data.

Since this event what actions have you or your household personally taken to be better prepared next time.

Already have a fire pump set up. Got another fire hose so can reach all of property. Removed all debris. Was a firefighter when younger. Nobody wants to get involved anymore.

I have Alertable and the BC Wildfire apps on my phone.

I have a list for my go bag.

Have a go bag available.

We are already into prepping but are looking at what more we can do. I discovered the get FireSmart podcast and am listening. I would like to get an estimate on hardie board soon.

We have quick access emergency bag for us and our dog, plus one for the car packed and ready.

We have a go to emergency point of contact to keep our family updated.

We have lined up places to stay should we need to evacuate.

We know which flammable items around the home we need to move away in the case the fire nears, and have water buckets available to set out in order to create a moisture barrier.

We have removed/cut back most dead under brush.

We have taken videos and documented all our things within the home and property in the worse case we need to make an insurance claim

My bag is still packed and by the door.

We have everything ready - food, clothing, medications, pets and their supplies, etc. - packed in the trailer and ready to evacuate. Nothing has changed. We lived in a northern community where there were fires quite often, so this is something we are used to preparing for.

Knowing collectively, where all my important assets are

Nothing more than earthquake preparedness.

We were in Winnipeg when the fire started and realized we forgot to give a house key to the neighbours to be able to take our "valuables" with them in the event of an evacuation. They now have a key.

Gathered in a central location items that we would want to take if we had to evacuate in a hurry.-Personal items, medication and medical devices

This fire changed nothing, we just are ready to move out anytime it is necessary.

LOOKING INTO A WATER SUPPLY - how to assist our neighbours with livestock, animals, where to stay, to go suitcase i.e. medication etc., paperwork that's required, notification to our family, communicating with our mortgage holders and insurance agency

Purchased a fire pump

Check website

Having essential necessities (prescription drugs) packed in a bag to take. Non replaceable items (i.e. photo albums, jewelry etc. in totes in case of an evacuation

Get everything ready for an evacuation

We updated our go bags and filled extra water bottles.

Updated grab and go kits. Got extra cat carriers so we had one for each.

Updated my go bag. Bought roof sprinklers from the fire dept (not installed yet)

I am comfortable with my level of preparedness; however, when I first became aware of the fire I did put my pet carriers right by the chicken house in case there would be an evacuation alert or something.

Any other questions / concerns?

Why were logging operations were not halted?

Village should put out daily update and post it in post office and clinic. Not everyone has cellphone reception.

I appreciated the regular updates. I felt communication was clear and readily available.

This being the first wildfire 'close to home' that I have experienced, I feel on the first day when information was limited and the fire was growing in size and people didn't know what to expect, that it would have been helpful within Alertable to have been informed that local RCMP/Firefighters would go door to door in the middle of the night if there was an evacuation ordered. I think a lot of people were worried they would miss the updates if they went to sleep. I understand that door knocking is listed in the evacuation plan, but a number of folk do not have internet access (or skills) and rely on being updated by their phones regarding important information.

Maybe a FB page? phone #? info page of some kind, where a person can inquire about 'brown plumes of smoke blowing over my house' and is all okay? Someone monitors and says, 'nothing to worry about.'

It has been impossible to get details on what is happening with the 20% of the fire that is not under control. We have had two two-day rounds of extreme wind but we are still being told that the fire's perimeter has not changed, and that the total size is 208 hectares, even though the most recent update contained a bit of an admission that the fire was moving up the steep slopes where it cannot be fought by hand. Moving up the west face, or worse, around the south face to the east, both involve the fire moving towards the village and our water treatment plant is particularly vulnerable. There's no way it can be actively burning on the steep upper slopes of Newcastle without creeping towards us. All we want is the truth.

Fire bans and explicit restrictions on the types of activities allowed in the forest should be the new normal. Bring them in as soon as the fire threat level rises above moderate, and leave them in place until the fall rains. As for communications, more information is better. Fire Service website has had the same picture of the fire posted for over a week now. It has obviously changed. Give us an idea as to where things are at. Not knowing makes windy days hellish. You guys can do better at treating the people who live here with kindness. For a lot of the older people in the community, this is the worst stress they've experienced in their lives. Think about that, and keep everyone up to date.

Train forestry workers to do what they used to do. First on scene.

Thank you to the wildfire firefighters and all those assisting/supporting them as well as to all involved with the emergency planning and updating.

Is this event over? I don't feel there were sufficient updates. Some particularly windy days when the smoke was prevalent even an update to say things were still being managed would have alleviated some worry. Pictures posted on social media seemed to indicate the fire had in fact breached the boundaries. Other info indicated that more firefighters had been recalled to the fire.

Sayward is known as "Mother Nature's Playground" which features many trails - hiking, camping, 4X4s, dirt bikes etc., many watering holes for swimming, rivers, lake, ocean for exploring, kayaking, in other words a tourist attraction area. As the Sayward Mayor Mark said "if there is a problem tell someone before it become a Big problem"

PREVENTION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, FINES

Not being aware that there was documentation on evacuation plans. Living in the Sayward Valley with no cell service and totally relying on a land line or wi-fi calling and possibility of a power outage, how would we get updates?

Haven't heard any helicopters the least few days although status is still "Being Held" This is going on for way too long, get some water bombers to attack the fire and get it over with so we all can get a normal life again! AND we will be able to renew our home insurances again... On top of the campfire ban, a ban on dirt bikes and ATV should be considered as well.

When we finally learned about the fire, it was about eight kilometers away, and the wind was blowing the fire straight at us, back it miraculously progressed away from us.

When we arrived in Sayward, we submitted our phone number for contact in case of a community emergency. I would have thought that we would have received a phone call.

My right-handed wife has right side hemiplegia. It would take a long time for us to evacuate. Is there not a better notification system? Even a police car using a P/A would be very effective.

I think the public should be reminded to only seek info from reliable government type sources and not pass on info from unreliable sources. Just like BC health authorities reminded folks on that topic during COVID heavy times.

That the wildfires that have occurred since the Fort Mac fire have not been enough of a wake-up call to push or direct the private forestry sector to clean up their interface with communities. I don't need to look at the status of recommendation 36 of the 2011 CWPP to know that no action has been taken and since there are additional fuels sources created by the 2018 storm. Every day I see the dead fall, dead under story and dead limbs the extend in some cases to half the height of trees on the forestry land beside my house.

Appendix D – Community Survey



Newcastle Creek Wildfire – Community Survey



The Village of Sayward in conjunction with the Strathcona Regional District are asking Sayward community members affected by the Newcastle Creek Wildfire to provide your observations on emergency operation centre and communication activities. The information collected from this survey will be compiled and available to the public upon completion. All identifying information will be removed to ensure all participants remain anonymous.

Please help us by completing this survey and sharing your knowledge via:

- **Online** www.srd.ca/newcastle-wildfire-feedback
- **Dropoff** your survey at the Village of Sayward's office.
- **Mail** – Complete the attached survey and mail it to:

Shaun Koopman
Strathcona Regional District
990 Cedar St.
Campbell River BC
V9W 7Z8

*You can request pre-paid return postage to be sent to you by contacting Shaun Koopman at preparedness@srd.ca or 250-830-6702.

Please provide your feedback by 4pm on Friday June 23rd, 2023.

Sincerely,

Shaun Koopman - Protective Services Coordinator – Strathcona Regional District

This final report will be one of several topics discussed at our Newcastle Creek Wildfire Community Meeting taking place from 7:00pm – 8:30pm on Thursday June 29th at the Kelsey Recreation Centre, which you are invited to attend.

Contact Information (Optional)	
Name	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
If you answer "Yes" to Question 8 it would be helpful to have your contact information	



Newcastle Creek Wildfire – Community Survey



Goals

- Identify future areas for public education initiatives.
- Assess the preparedness of household and grassroots neighborhood emergency plans prior to emergency events.
- Recruit new leaders and members for local emergency response programs.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the local emergency plan.

Questions

1. Prior to this event, did you have the Alertable App downloaded on your cellphone?
2. If you answered "No" to Question #1 what was the barrier to you downloading the Alertable App?
3. Prior to this event, were you aware that the Coastal Fire Centre's Public Information phone number is 250-951-4209?
4. If you answered "No" to Question #2, what was the barrier to you being aware of this phone number?
5. Did you get enough information about what was happening during this event?
6. If not, what information did you need that you didn't get?



Newcastle Creek Wildfire – Community Survey



12. What actions could be taken to help Sayward be better prepared for a wildfire event?

13. Since this event, what actions have you and/or your household personally taken to be better prepared for next time?

14. When was the last time you reviewed the Sayward Evacuation Plan?

- a. Within the last month
- b. Within the last year
- c. Over a year ago
- d. Never

View the Sayward Evacuation plan at www.srd.ca/evacuations

15. When was the last time you reviewed the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for either the Village of Sayward or the Sayward Valley?

- a. Within the last month
- b. Within the last year
- c. Over a year ago
- d. Never

View Community Wildfire Protection Plans at www.srd.ca/wildfire-plans

Thank you for your feedback.

We hope to see you at our Newcastle Creek Wildfire Community Meeting Thursday June 29, 7:00pm – 8:30pm at the Kelsey Recreation Centre.

Appendix E – Invitation to Community Meeting



Invitation

Newcastle Creek Wildfire – Community Meeting



The Village of Sayward in conjunction with the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) are inviting community members to attend a Newcastle Creek Wildfire Community Meeting taking place from 7:00pm – 8:30pm on Thursday June 29th at the Kelsey Recreation Centre.

The purpose of this meeting is to debrief the events of the Newcastle Creek Wildfire with the community. Topics of discussion include:

- The opportunity to thank BC Wildfire Service personally;
- The results of the Community Feedback Survey;
- Information and communication during the event;
- How to become involved in Sayward's Emergency Planning Program;
- Questions and answers.

No need to preregister, just show up. These sessions will not be broadcasted or recorded. Child-minding services will be available.

Between Monday June 12th and Friday June 23rd the SRD is inviting the community to record a video of them expressing your thanks to the BC Wildfire Service personnel. You can record this video and email it to immanuel@realed.net or text it to 778-788-3459.

Appendix F – Presentation Utilized at Community Meeting

Role Strathcona Emergency Program

Protective Services

- Provides fire protection for portions of Electoral Area A (Sayward Valley), Electoral Area B (Cortes Island), and Electoral Area D (Oyster Bay/Buttle Lake).

Emergency Management

- Our goal is to ensure that communities in the region are safer and better prepared in the event of an emergency situation, by helping individuals and organizations become resilient and adaptive. We provide:
 - Leadership to all volunteer and staff teams in our region who will be called upon during an emergency event.
 - Coordination of regional emergency services for the City of Campbell River, four electoral areas and four Villages of Sayward, Gold River, Tahsis and Zeballos, through training and exercises so teams can share skills and better anticipate challenges prior to an actual event.
 - Support for preparedness initiatives throughout the Regional District. Our goal is to build capacity within our region by educating people, neighbourhoods and businesses to ensure they are better prepared to help themselves and others impacted by disaster.

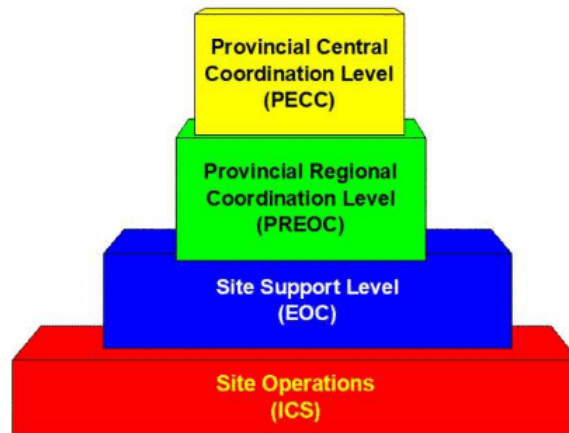
Tonight's Agenda

- Introductions
- BC Wildfire Service
- Results of Community Feedback Survey
- Information/communications during the event
- How to become involved in Sayward's Emergency Planning Program

Definitions

"emergency" means a present or imminent event or circumstance that

- (a) is caused by accident, fire, explosion, technical failure or the forces of nature, and
- (b) requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare of a person or to limit damage to property;



Wildfire Risk Reduction Efforts Thus Far

For wildfire-specific education we have offered annual Wildfire Risk Reduction public education sessions through the FireSmart grant (example attached) but have never had more than 10 people attend. We have also been providing a curbside wood debris chipping service (attached) the last two years and intend to do so again this fall (our 2023 FireSmart grant hasn't been approved yet).

Tuesday June 14th

**Sayward Community Wildfire
Risk Reduction Sessions**

We encourage you to drop by and contribute to this important conversation. Wildfire Management Specialist Henry Grierson will be facilitating these sessions.

When?

Tuesday June 14th from 1:00pm – 2:00pm at the Kelsey Recreation Centre 652-A H'Kusam Way

OR

Tuesday June 14th from 7:00pm – 8:00pm at the Heritage Hall 1257 Sayward Road

Both sessions will be the same. No preregistration is necessary.



On the horizon

- . Additional structural protection for the fire department (to be stored in trailer)
- . Curbside wood debris chipping service
- . A regional staff position titled the Wildfire Risk Reduction Coordinator.
- . New siding for Firehall #2.
- . Wildfire training for the fire department.
- . New outdoor stairs for Firehall #1.

Additionally

On June 28th 2023 the Regional Board approved the installation of a dual potable water / firefighting cistern at Firehall #2



Free Yard Wood Debris Pickup

The SRD is encouraging community members to FireSmart their properties by bringing excess yard wood debris to the end of driveways on the following dates:

• Sun. June 19 by 9:00 am	Road accessible Electoral Areas A, B, C & D properties and Village of Sayward
• Mon. June 27 by 9:00 am	Gold River and Tsa'xana
• Wed. June 29 by 10:00 am	Tahsis



View wood chipping rules & more information at srd.ca/woodchipping-2022

250-830-6702 | preparedness@srd.ca

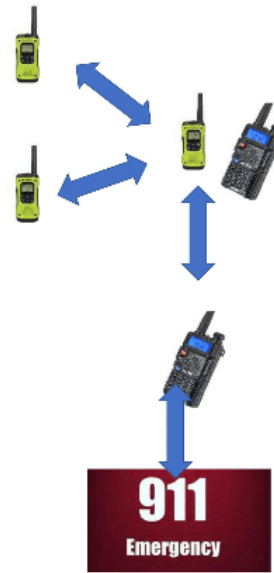
Structure of Sayward Emergency Program

- Sayward Fire Department – 20
- Emergency Support Services - 5
- Emergency Communications – 1 (also the EPC)
- Animal Disaster Response Team – 0
- Drone Program - 2

Emergency Program Information

- What each volunteer group does, how to volunteer, ect.

Neighbourhood Specific Communication Methods with FSR (Walkie Talkies)



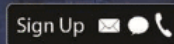
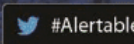
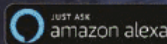
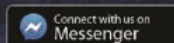
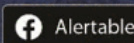
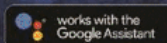
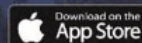
ALERTABLE – NOTIFICATIONS TO CELL PHONES & LANDLINES



SIGN UP NOW

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

Stay Aware & Plan Ahead



srd.ca/alerts-notifications



SRD ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS



SRD Website - www.srd.ca
E-subscribe for News/Events updates



facebook.com/StrathconaRegionalDistrict
facebook.com/StrathconaEP (Strathcona Emergency Program)
facebook.com/AroundSayward



twitter.com/StrathconaRD



instagram.com/strathconard



YouTube



- **“that it would have been helpful within alertable to have been informed that local RCMP/Firefighters would go door to door in the middle of the night if there was an evacuation ordered.”**
 - that information would have been contained in an Evacuation Alert message, but this event never reached that stage.
 - It is the responsibility of community members to be educated in these protocols beforehand by reviewing community emergency plans and seeking this information.
- **“Go door to door helping or getting people to ensure they are set up on Alertable.”** – This is what neighbourhood emergency preparedness programs are all about. If everyone could ensure each neighbour on either side of them is signed up that would help.
- **“Living in the Sayward Valley with no cell service and totally relying on a land line or wi-fi calling and possibility of a power outage, how would we get updates?”** – Alertable reaches landlines.

Information Communication During the Event

- We can commit to (at minimum) a daily update on the event while the wildfire is 'Out of Control'
- We disseminate information to the public as it is received by the Emergency Operation Centre by the Incident Command Post.
- We can not commit to regular internal updates even if there is 'no new information'.
- The Sayward emergency plans are public documents, it is imperative the community is proactive and reads these documents prior to the emergency.
- It is the role of RCMP to door knock and deliver evacuation alerts or evacuation orders. RCMP can task Search and Rescue to Support this endeavour

Plans Publicly Available

- Sayward Valley Wildfire Protection Plan
- Village of Sayward Wildfire Protection Plan
 - Both the wildfire plans also contain evacuation maps
- Sayward Evacuation Plan

- **Provincial jurisdiction in Sayward Valley (Electoral Area A)**
 - Fire bans and explicit restrictions on the types of activities allowed in the forest should be the new normal. Bring them in as soon as the fire threat level rises above moderate, and leave them in place until the fall rains.
 - Why logging operations were not halted

- **Call the Coastal Fire Centre Public Information Line**
 - “It has been impossible to get details on what is happening with the 20% of the fire that is not under control.”
 - “Fire bans and explicit restrictions on the types of activities allowed in the forest should be the new normal. Bring them in as soon as the fire threat level rises above moderate, and leave them in place until the fall rains.”

29 Respondents Total

- Did you get enough information during the event?
 - Yes = 16
 - No = 13
- 26/29 respondents were NOT interested in becoming part of Sayward’s Emergency Program.
- When was the last time you review the Sayward Evacuation Plan
 - Never = 21
 - Recently = 6
- When was the last time you reviewed the Community Wildfire Protection Plans?
 - Never = 20
 - Recently = 7

Community Survey Feedback Results

- **Costal Fire Centre Public Information Line 250-951-4209**