

Partners in Protection Annual General Meeting

Executive Director's report for October 27, 2020

Since the November 2019 AGM held in Ottawa, we have concentrated on program renewals and updates, continuing several projects initiated by Laura Stewart, past president and the previous board of directors.

The Local FireSmart Representative workshop has been revised and update. A technical team consisting of Amanda Reynolds from BC, Laura Stewart from Alberta and Larry Fremont from Saskatchewan helped guide the update by our consultant, Don Mortimer from Fireline Consulting. The result is a streamlined, one day course. In December the first workshop to familiarize LFR Facilitators in BC. Based on results of the first workshop, revisions will be made and then the program will be rolled out.

The Community Recognition Program has received a name change to Neighbourhood Recognition Program. The application and renewal processes for the recognition program are now streamlined and an online web portal supporting the program is being implemented. The portal went through an initial testing 2 weeks ago and is close to completion. This online portal will be increasingly important as additional neighborhoods are added to the program and numbers grow.

Indigenous booklet – Blazing the Trail, Celebrating Indigenous Fire Stewardship is ready for print and will be ready for distribution mid-November. A task team of Jeff Eustache and Amber Simpson helped deliver a final product. This is a multi-year project with significant contributions from the Indigenous Community. When folks see the final product – the result will have been worth the wait.

Community Wildfire Preparedness day continues to grow. In 2020 160 awards were granted. Due to COVID -19, several of the events have been postponed to 2021. Prep Day is a big program which increases FireSmart awareness. The grants of \$500 each added up to \$80,000 in funding in 2020. The program is support by the Cooperators, ICLR, NFPA, AAF and NRCAN. Planning for the 2021 Prep Day applications is already underway. I expect Prep Day applications to grow considerably in 2021 due to increased communications and promotions.

Home Partners Program which is our full wildfire home assessment had an external review in the spring and several improvements have been identified. In September, a phase 2 pilot was launched in BC which included a train the trainer and mitigation specialist training session. The pilot is funded by a grant from Intact Centre. We are putting a lot of work behind the home assessments because we want to grow these programs.

Currently working with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to develop a intermediate home assessment including online training modules to reduce the class room time and focus on field assessments. We hope to have an agreement in place in the next week. We will deliver this initiative before March 31.

Neighbourhood Recognition program video series. BC is leading an initiative to video successful Recognized Neighbourhoods. Video was shot in September in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Other

provinces have been asked to add video. The videos will build national awareness of the neighbourhood recognition program. Short clips are ready for release in the next month.

Checklist for new home construction. We are Working with Intact Centre for Climate Change and CHBA to develop a checklist for new home construction that is aligned with the proposed National Research Council WUI recommendations. This is funded by the Intact Centre.

In September 2020, the board approved two standing committees.

FireSmart Provincial and Territorial Liaisons – Chaired by Wally Born. Intention is to involve the wildfire agencies in helping to develop the standards that all the parties using the FireSmart brand will adhere to.

Technical Review Team – to provide technical guidance to the board related to new research and guidelines. Chaired by Kelly Johnston

Task team – how better to engage volunteer fire service in FireSmart. Myself and Troy Mutch.

A priority of the board identified during our March session in Edmonton was communications. In June a media company was contracted to coordinate social media and increase the profile of FireSmart Canada.

In September we contracted a Communications Advisor to manage and lead our marketing / communications across the FireSmart programs. This initiative is funded by the Cooperators.

Funding for FireSmart Program is primarily from two organizations. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and Natural Resources Canada. Both of these organizations have generously supported FireSmart. These funding agreements are expected to end March 31, 2021. So, to be clear, after April 1, NRCAN will pivot their support to the national prevention and mitigation program at CIFFC and no longer fund Partners in Protection. We also anticipate Alberta will want to focus funding away from Partners in Protection to support the new prevention and mitigation initiative.

In closing,

The board of directors have accomplished a great deal this year. Because of increased capacity and funding, we have been able to move projects along. Also, the commitment of the board to help out and guide the processes as needed has been a significant contributor to getting things done.

This year we hired three advisors plus two contracted project coordinators. This of course has made a huge difference.

CIFFC has committed to continuing work on these programs and projects and I would expect with added capacity and funding, much more can be accomplished faster, reaching more Canadians and helping reduce wildfire impacts on homes and communities.

Presented by Ray Ault October 27, 2020.