

Presidents report for 2020 Partners in Protection AGM

October 27, 2020

Good morning everyone. Thanks for joining the Partners in Protection/FireSmart Canada AGM.

Lynn Orstad was elected President after the fall AGM in Ottawa. Unfortunately, Lynn stepped down for family reasons.

I became President on March 4, 2020.

For the first time in several years we held a face to face directors meeting in March in Edmonton. It was a 2-day strategy and team building session. It was a valuable meeting and helped clarify the FireSmart mission.

The last day of the session Mike Norton, Co-chair of the Wildland Fire Management Working Group presented an outline of the proposal to expand the role of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre to include wildfire prevention and mitigation. The proposal has been referred to as CIFFC 2.0.

Mike asked the board to consider including FireSmart Canada as part of the new CIFFC 2.0.

On March 18, the Partners in Protection board met and agreed a willingness to consider a move of FireSmart to CIFFC. Winning conditions for an agreement were identified. The main concern of the Partners in Protection board has been CIFFC adopting a mechanism to include the voices of the many different organizations involved in FireSmart beyond the traditional wildland fire provincial and territorial agencies.

During the summer there was not a lot of activity on the CIFFC transition on the part of FireSmart.

On September 16, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers approved CIFFC 2.0 and the expansion of CIFFC to include prevention and mitigation.

Over the last month, there have been several conversations including developing a transition plan with CIFFC to ensure the current projects are completed and programs maintained. We have consulted with our lawyers and accountants.

The simplest, straight forward approach to transferring the FireSmart brand, programs and assets is for a special resolution approved by the members to transfer all of the assets of Partners in Protection to CIFFC and then begin the process of dissolving the Partners in Protection Association.

CIFFC has provided an assurance that the existing projects will continue. The transition plan shared with members outlines what will be done by whom and where the funding would come from.

The transition plan calls for our current Executive Director and Business Administrator to move to CIFFC to continue coordinating projects and programs. This move will allow for a seamless transition and help maintain program consistency.

A transition to CIFFC will increase the sustainability of FireSmart Canada, make the program truly national and attract collaboration and support from larger national organizations like the Red Cross and Canadian Home Builders Association.

A move to having FireSmart as part of CIFFC is exciting development and one I fully support.

Jeff Erwin

President

Partners in Protection/FireSmart Canada