

FireSmart Committee Presentation for AMCS 2020 AGM

Introduction:

For those new to our community in 2013 Anarchist Mountain was one of the six original communities in BC to be awarded FireSmart Community Recognition Program and we are the only one that has maintained that recognition each year since. The FireSmart Committee has no source of funding but we have been able to achieve this recognition because our residents understand the wildfire risks in our community and we all work hard to reduce these risks.

The goal of this program and our committee is first and foremost to educate and encourage FireSmarting on our individual properties. To that end a FireSmart day is held the first Saturday in May where we've had presentations and demonstrations on a wide range of FireSmart topics. (Residents can also educate themselves by doing the online "FireSmart 101" course on the FireSmart Canada website.) The FireSmart Committee also manages the Wapiti pit for yard waste disposal and does FireSmart property inspections at the request of residents. More information about the FireSmart Committee; including our meeting minutes; can be found on our web page located on the AMCS website. There is also contact information for members of the FireSmart Committee should you have any questions

Long time Anarchist Mountain residents will tell you " It's not if there will be a wildfire it's when there will be a wildfire". Although we can all be proud how we've reduced the wildfire risks on our own properties we can't stop there knowing at some point a serious wildfire will enter our community.

With that in mind the FireSmart Committee has been discussing the need for Community Wildfire Prevention and this year we've taking the first steps in that direction; working together with the RDOS; in developing a Community Assessment Report (CAR). This CAR will summarize and prioritize the wildfire risks and recommend mitigations. The FireSmart Committee plans to utilize this CAR to raise wildfire awareness in our community; to (hopefully) raise funds for FireSmart projects and in general make our community safer from wildfires.

Volunteer Hours:

- To maintain the Anarchist Mountain FireSmart Community Recognition program we need to meet a minimum number of volunteer hours each year with our application for renewal.
- This includes FireSmart Committee volunteer hours together with resident volunteer hours from community events such as from FireSmart day and Jamie Soule park cleanup day.
- So far this year we have approximately 800 hours compared to 468 last year. All well in excess of what's required.

Wapiti Pit:

- Osoyoos Mountain Estates generously allows our community to utilize Wapiti pit for dumping FireSmarting yard waste with the understanding that the FireSmart Committee is responsible for managing the pit safely and insuring grazing cattle do not escape. Thank-you OME.
- We had a very successful year with almost 500 loads compared to 176 last year.

- There is no way the FireSmart Committee could have done this without Chris Kayes keeping the pit clear as we do not have the funds to pay contractors to do this. A big shoutout for Chris and his tractor.
- Chris's tractor gets very unhappy when residents include rocks and big stumps in their loads and we ask residents to take more care. If you have stumps that are covered by a pile of yard waste make Chris aware before you drive away.
- We try to accommodate all residents so this year we also opened several Sundays for those that can't come on Saturdays. We're considering alternating days (Friday/Saturday/Sunday) next year.
- We maintained a list this year to track loads numbers and origin that will be useful for our FireSmart community recognition program. We'll continue this in future years.
- We discouraged drop-offs outside scheduled days (except in special cases) as this was adding too many extra volunteer hours. We'll continue this going forward.

Property Assessments:

- We did 10 property assessments this year compared to only 2 last year.
- In general the property owners have done more to FireSmart their properties prior to the assessment which indicates our community is becoming more FireSmart aware.
- In an attempt to insure all members of our FS committee complete assessments the same way we worked together on one assessment and may do this going forward. Our apologies to the resident who had the whole committee completing his assessment :->).

Upcoming Changes for Property Assessments:

- FireSmart Canada is planning changes to the property assessment program. Our committee is awaiting instructions from BC FireSmart before we implement these changes:
 - Assessments will need to be done by a structural firefighter who also has additional FireSmart training.
 - FireSmart Canada will fully administer these assessments; they will dispatch the firefighter who will record the assessment using a FireSmart Canada app and there may be a cost involved.
 - FireSmart Canada will issue the assessment report together with "mitigation suggestions".
 - Residents may make suggested changes and request a follow-up inspection to obtain a "Mitigation Certificate" that you may "share" with your insurance company to obtain better coverage or lower rates.
 - FireSmart Canada is recommending this assessment be completed every two years.
 - Once we actually see this FireSmart Canada app we'll be recommending that residents get reassessed if there are significant changes.

Community Assessment Report (CAR):

- The RDOS has set aside Provincial funding to complete our CAR next year.
- We suggest residents review CAR's for other communities to understand what a CAR is. There are available on RDOS Fire Services web page.
- The RDOS consultants will host 1 or 2 open houses to seek input from residents.

- The FS committee will assist the consultants by providing some local history; provide a list of wildfire hazards as we see them and voice our expectations as to what we expect from the report. (In short more than we've seen in previous reports).
- At completion of CAR the next step is to develop a FireSmart Community Plan to implement the recommendations of the CAR. This will likely fall upon the shoulders of the FS committee.
- In future years the FS committee hopes to receive Provincial funding distributed by the RDOS to implement this FireSmart Community Plan.

Meeting with OMEI:

- The committee meet with Ron and Helen Palmer/OMEI on Sept 17 to discuss the upcoming CAR and how the committee and OMEI can work together and support each other.
- Ron made committee aware of RDOS plans to implement a Wildfire Development Permit program and his thoughts on the potential implications.
- OMEI not optimistic that the road system will be interconnected as originally planned due to multi developers being involved.

Meeting with RDOS FireSmart Coordinator:

- The committee meet with Dave Bodak (the current part-time FS coordinator) on Oct 27 to discuss the upcoming CAR and future funding for FireSmart activities.
- Dave has been very helpful to our FireSmart Committee; was instrumental in organizing the upcoming CAR and has committed to assist us throughout the CAR process.
- This year the RDOS received a substantial increase in grants from the BC government for FireSmart programs however Dave advised these funds will be used for education and training and only a small portion of these funds will be utilized for wildfire fuel reduction projects.
- Each Area in the RDOS is eligible for \$50,000/year and for Area A these funds will be used for the CAR.
- Dave advised of a number of upcoming changes from the RDOS:
 - The RDOS is planning to hire a full time FireSmart coordinator and Dave will continue on a part-time basis.
 - The RDOS is in the process of setting up a FireSmart page.
 - The RDOS hopes to release phase 1 of the Wildfire Development Permit program in March 2021 (Phase 1 is mapping wildfire hazards in all 9 electoral areas)
 - Dave will continue to develop the South Okanagan Similkameen Wildfire Advisory Board as a round table for all stakeholders.

FireSmart Committee 2021:

- Our FireSmart committee is in discussions with our Fire Chief/Urs Grob about becoming a sub-committee of the fire department due to FireSmart Canada and FireSmart BC requiring trained firefighters for property assessments and Local FireSmart Representatives.
- The FireSmart committee is actively seeking new members to help us out with upcoming initiatives. We'll need at least two new members just as replacements for Denis if he leaves us.