
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource
Operations

Queens Bay celebrates FireSmart designation

QUEENS BAY – The small community of Queens Bay, located on the western shore of Kootenay Lake north of Balfour, has been recognized for its ongoing efforts to protect residents from harm by reducing wildfire threats.

FireSmart Canada acknowledged all that hard work on Feb. 10, 2016, by presenting residents with a Community Protection Achievement Award and a FireSmart Community sign.

The presentation took place at the 102-year-old St. Francis in the Woods community hall that had undergone FireSmart treatments, along with most of the 50 nearby residences. The event was attended by BC Wildfire Service staff, a provincial FireSmart Canada representative, Regional District of Central Kootenay staff, the fire chief for the Balfour and Harrop area, the fire chief for the Regional District of Central Kootenay, and members of the community's FireSmart board.

To earn the FireSmart Community recognition, the residents of Queens Bay were required to raise public awareness of FireSmart principles and teach private landowners how to help safeguard their homes from wildfire.

The B.C. government introduced the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative in 2004 to help local governments and First Nations reduce the risk of interface wildfires, where urban developments border on forests and grasslands. About \$78 million has been allocated to the program to date.

In September 2015, the B.C. government and the Union of B.C. Municipalities launched the \$500,000 FireSmart Community Grant Program to encourage even more communities to participate in the FireSmart program. Grants of up to \$10,000 each for up to 50 communities were offered to help communities receive a FireSmart designation.

More information about Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative funding is available online at: <http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/strategic-wildfire-prevention.html>

Quote:

Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson –

“Reducing wildfire risks in and around our communities is a shared responsibility of the B.C. government, industry stakeholders, local governments and private landowners. I’m pleased to see that the residents of Queens Bay have been recognized by FireSmart Canada for all of their hard work.”

Quick Facts:

- FireSmart Canada is part of the Partners in Protection Association and works closely with communities throughout the country to mitigate wildfire risks in interface areas, where urban development borders on forest or grassland areas.
- To reduce the risk of wildfire, homeowners can remove dead trees, increase the spacing between live trees, trim low-hanging tree branches and remove vegetation and wood debris.
- Homeowners can also reduce wildfire risks by using fire-resistant construction materials and fire-resistant plants and landscaping materials.
- As of Dec. 21, 2015, 288 Community Wildfire Protection Plans have been completed by local governments and First Nations. Another 50 are in progress.
- As of Dec. 21, 2015, completed fuel treatments and wildfire risk reduction measures covered 79,734 hectares in and around communities that face a significant wildfire risk.

Learn More:

The Homeowner's FireSmart Manual was developed to help people reduce the risk of personal property damage due to wildfires. The manual is available online at:

<http://bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/firesmart.htm>

Read more about FireSmart Canada at: <https://www.firesmartcanada.ca>

Media Contact:

Karlie Shaughnessy
Fire Information Officer
BC Wildfire Service
Southeast Fire Centre
250 365-4052

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