



ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT
REGIONAL DISTRICT

“Strengthening FireSmart within the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District”

Community Resiliency Investment Program 2023-25

Presented by Randy Thoen – FireSmart Coordinator
December 11, 2024



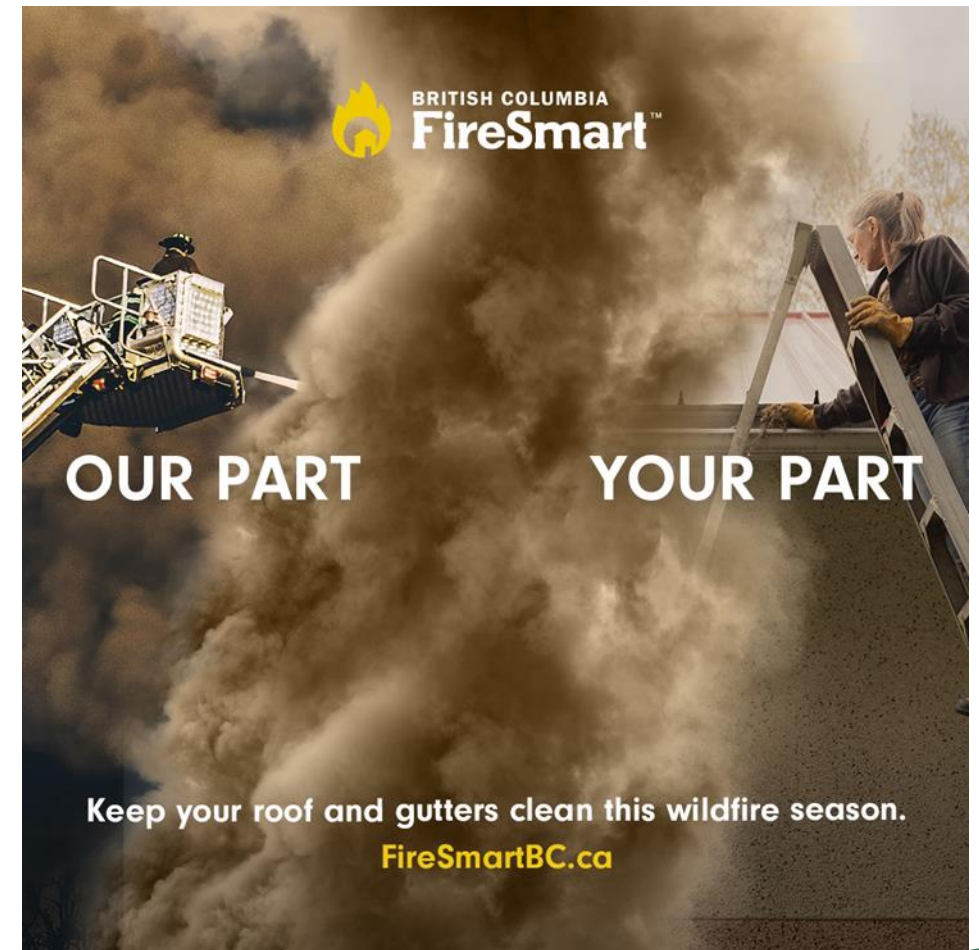
BRITISH COLUMBIA
FireSmart™

Presentation Purpose

Overview of FireSmart activities completed.

Outline remaining FireSmart objectives.

Next steps





FireSmart Grant Project Summary

The 2023-25 FireSmart Grant is a Regional Project hosted by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (including all 6 electoral areas) jointly with City of Port Alberni, Hupacasath First Nation and Tseshaht First Nation.

The Grant Project emphasizes activities that improve public awareness, education and encourage mitigation action. We continue to build capacity through training, cultivating inter-agency cooperation and fostering cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

Central to this grant project is the **FireSmart Coordinator position** responsible for the facilitation of FireSmart-related activities within our FireSmart Program and ensuring FireSmart activities are supported, developed, and implemented.



FireSmart Grant Priorities - Education



Public education and outreach play a critical role in helping communities prepare for wildfire by promoting a sense of empowerment and shared responsibility.



FireSmart Grant Priorities – Community Planning & Development Considerations

Community planning is a very effective tool for reducing wildfire risk for lands and buildings within the administrative boundaries of a local government or First Nation communities.

- Develop and amend **Community Wildfire Plans**.
- Complete FireSmart Critical Infrastructure Assessments for First Nations and/or publicly owned buildings.

Community land use and development in wildfire-prone areas affects the susceptibility of the community at different scales and in terms of where and how a community is, or will be, developed.

- Amend Official Community Plans and/or land use, engineering and public works bylaws.
- Establish Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Areas.
- Amend referral processes for new developments to include Fire & Emergency Mgt departments.



FireSmart Grant Priorities – Interagency Co-operation



It takes the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders working together to achieve a wildfire resilient community.

- Develop, coordinate and/or participate in a **Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC)**.
- Attend the Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit.
- A unique partnership – regional district, municipality and First Nations.



FireSmart Grant Priorities – Emergency Planning

Community preparations for a wildfire emergency require a multi-pronged approach in order for a community to respond effectively to the threat of wildfires as a whole.

- Develop and/or participate in cross-jurisdictional meetings and tabletop exercises specifically focused on wildfire preparedness and suppression, including seasonal wildfire readiness meetings



FireSmart Grant Priorities – Training & Cross Training

FireSmart requires many different professionals who may not typically work in a wildfire environment to understand other disciplines and wildfire management planning objectives. Cross-training firefighters, public works staff, utility workers, local government and First Nation administration staff, planning and logistics staff, and other key positions, supports local FireSmart activities, including a safe and effective wildfire response.

- Local FireSmart Representative training
- Wildfire Mitigation Specialist training
- Cross-train fire department members only to include structural fire and interface wildfire training.



FireSmart Grant Priorities – Critical Infrastructure

Implementing recommended FireSmart improvements to local critical infrastructure demonstrates wildfire prevention principles and best practices to community members and other stakeholders. Eligible projects must be First Nations owned buildings or publicly owned buildings that are currently designated as critical to support effective emergency response to a wildfire event.



Mitigation Work on Critical Infrastructure continues to be a high priority. Assessments were carried out on critical infrastructure in the Alberni Valley and Bamfield in 2021 & 2022.



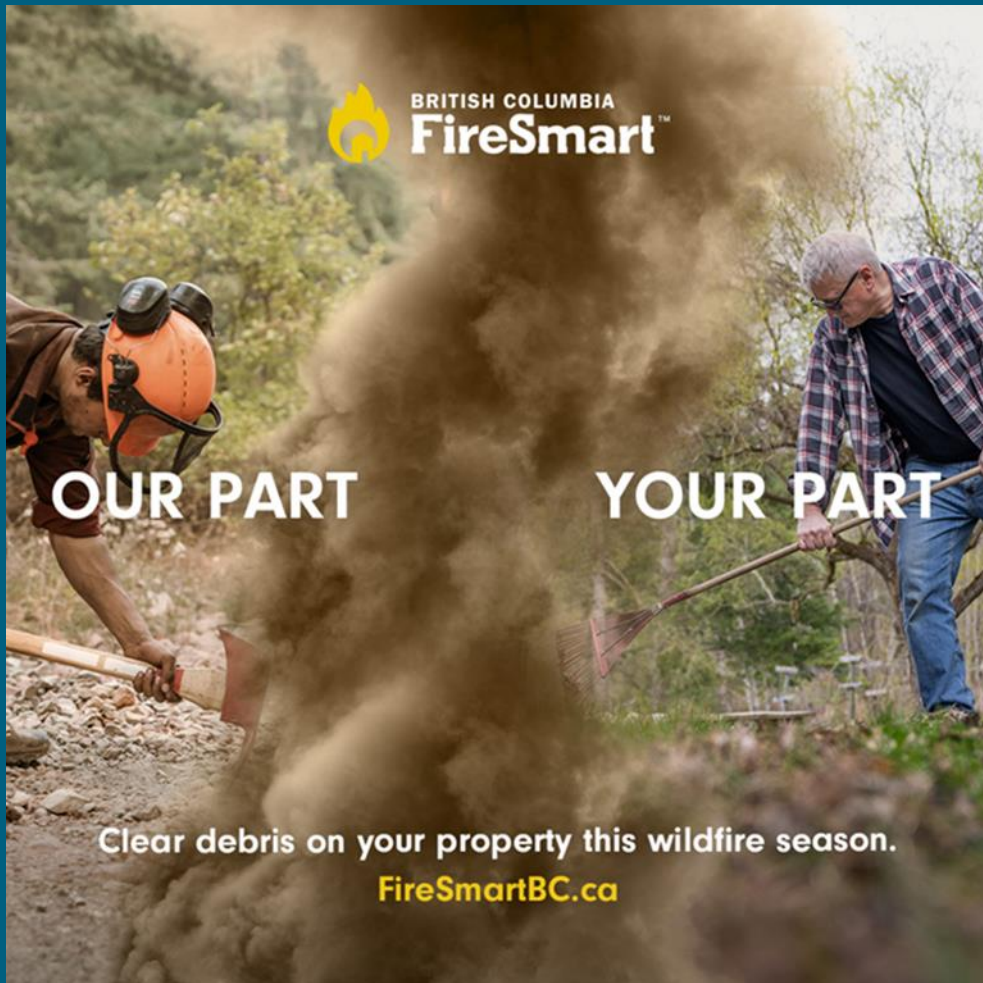
Recommendations on mitigation work from these critical infrastructure assessments were prioritized and 10 sites received funding under the current grant.



New assessments have been conducted on Critical Infrastructure and Community Asset sites during the current grant to inform mitigation work funding requests for 2025 intake application.



FireSmart Grant Priorities - Residential



Residential areas are a critical component of every community. First Nations and local governments have a key role to play in supporting residents and property owners to undertake FireSmart activities that demonstrate wildfire prevention principles and best practices.

Recognizing the importance of FireSmart to individual residential properties and understanding the collective impact this has to help reduce the risk of wildfire for our community, we are emphasizing educational tools, preparedness methods and mitigation activities through:

- Residential Home Assessments – free and confidential
- Residential Rebate Program – up to \$1,000.00 available
- Curbside Yard Waste Pickup – free, two piles

A high priority is to develop a FireSmart Canada Recognized Neighbourhood where a local neighbourhood committee, with the assistance of a FireSmart Representative, develops a neighbourhood plan and maintains it through annual neighbourhood events.



FireSmart Grant 2025-27 Next Steps

The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program provides funding to First Nations and local governments in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community-based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire.

Required for Funding:

- Have a FireSmart Position
- Participate in a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC)
- Have an acceptable Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP)

The 2025 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program intake is open now until September 30, 2025. Funding permitting, eligible applicants can submit one application.



Thank you

Questions?

