



2022 FireSmart BC Conference

Building Collaboration & Community





Donna Aljam

Nicomen Band member

Donna Aljam is a Nicomen Band member and was the past chief for three terms. Donna began her volunteer journey at the Coldwater Fire Hall and brought her knowledge with her when she moved to Nicomen. Donna is passionate about training and encourages others to train along with her as well. Working with First Nation Emergency Services Society, Donna has been able to secure grants, training and development for the community and she believes that being prepared is about learning and being aware of different situations.

Presentation:

FireSmarting Nicomen First Nation



Michael Benson

FPIInnovations

Michael's career in the wildfire sector spans nearly thirty years. Having had the opportunity to work for wildfire management agencies throughout the world, Mike has seen firsthand the challenges and impacts of unwanted wildfire. Much of Mike's career has been dedicated to wildfire response including his leadership of the best-in-class airtanker program within the British Columbia Wildfire Service. Mike now works for FPIInnovations, a private not-for-profit research organization within the Canadian forest sector. Michael leads a national wildfire research program focused on providing the wildfire community with innovative and practical solutions for living well with wildfire. This wildfire operations research team continues to undertake applied research within the community resilience space, supported by provincial and territorial governments, and the BC FireSmart Committee.

Presentation:

FireSmart WUI Research



Gregory Baxter

FPIInnovations Wildfire Operations group

Greg has been involved in wildfire operations since 1984. He started in Alberta's provincial Helitack Program and stayed with the program for 7 years. Greg completed his B.Sc. in Geography at the University of Victoria and his M.Sc. at the University of Alberta. Greg's master thesis focused on climate change and fire danger. Prior to joining the fire group in 2001, Greg worked on numerous wildfire projects with the Canadian Forest Service; the British Columbia Forest Service; the British Columbia Parks Service; and the New Zealand Forest Research Institute. For FPIInnovations Wildfire Operations group, Greg applies his wildfire knowledge and research skills on projects involving wildfire behaviour and ignition potential in grass and debris fuels, and on projects contributing to community protection and wildfire safety.

Presentation:

FireSmart WUI Research



Jennifer Beverly

Assistant Professor in the Department of Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta

Dr. Jen Beverly is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta. She has over 12 years' experience working professionally in wildland fire science, both in academia and as a former Research Scientist with the Canadian Forest Service. Prior to that, she spent six summers as an Ontario Fire Ranger. Jen's overall goal is to contribute new insights about wildfires that improve interactions between fires, people and ecosystems.

Presentation:

Climate Change and the Future



Rebecca Bishop

Program Officer with UBCM

Rebecca Bishop is a Program Officer with UBCM, where she started in 2017 to administer the then-new Community Emergency Preparedness Fund grant program. She joined the Community Resiliency Investment program's team in October 2021. Her prior background was in grant administration in heritage conservation, and product support management in the print technology sector.

Presentation:

FireSmart Funding Opportunities



Willow Bloomquist

Lieutenant at the Dashwood Volunteer Fire Department

Willow joined the Dashwood Volunteer Fire Department 5 years ago as a recruit trainee, and she is now a Lieutenant with the department. Joining the Fire Service full time became her goal about six months into her training and becoming a Local FireSmart Representative last year meant that when the opportunity arose to be hired as a FireSmart Coordinator she was the perfect candidate. Willow has been working in this role for 8 months now and loving it! When Willow is not at the fire department, she is hanging out with her two kids, trying to figure out why her garden never thrives, or adventuring with her team.

Presentation:

FireSmart Coordinator and Volunteer Firefighter Experiences



Lindsay Vandesteeg

Professional Forester and the Provincial Land and Resource Section Head

Lindsay is a Professional Forester and the Provincial Land and Resource Section Head with BC Parks in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Lindsay has been strategically leading BC Parks in wildfire prevention, planning, response, and recovery since 2018. Lindsay is a member of the BC FireSmart Committee and an inaugural member of the Provincial Cultural and Prescribed Fire Steering Committee. Personally, Lindsay lives in interior BC within the WUI risk class 1. Lindsay and her family built their rural home based on the FireSmart principles. Those principles were tested during the 2021 wildfire season from the Embleton Mountain Fire. Thank you Golden SPU!

Presentation:

Fire on the Landscape



John Cathro

Independent consultant

John and his family live in the heart of Ktunaxa ?Amak?is in Kaslo, BC, where they enjoy the mountains, grow food, and celebrate being part of a rich community. John has 25 years' experience working within complex, multi-party resource use situations and his approach is based on collaboration and capacity building while being grounded in technical expertise. John is an independent consultant whose clients include First Nations, communities, companies, organizations and governments across BC and around the world. His work focusses on community wildfire risk reduction, strategic land use planning and conservation area design. With regards to community wildfire risk reduction, John's work over the past 15 years spans community wildfire protection plans, fuel management prescriptions, operational fuel treatments and collaborative planning including convening FireSmart committees. John has graduate degrees in Forestry and Land Use from Oxford University and Conflict Analysis and Management from Royal Roads University.

Presentation:

Links Between FireSmart in the Community and FireSmart on the Homeowner and Landscape Scale



Jennifer Gunter

Co-founders of the BCCFA and long-time Executive Director

With over 20 years of experience working in community forestry and community economic development in BC, Jennifer is a passionate advocate for community-based resource management that supports sustainable local economies and benefits local people while creating more resilient ecosystems. One of the co-founders of the BCCFA and long-time Executive Director, she has had the pleasure of working with the Board of Directors, staff and membership to help it grow from an organization of just 10 member communities, to one of over 50.

Presentation:

Community Forests: Innovation and Collaboration in Wildfire Management



Jack Cohen

Wildland Fire Research and Operations

Dr. Jack Cohen has been involved in wildland fire research and operations since 1972. As a US Forest Service research scientist, he co-developed the U.S. 1978 National Fire Danger Rating System and contributed to U.S. fire behavior prediction systems (1976-1981). As a firefighter he supported wildfire suppression and prescribed fire operations (1972-1974) and as a nationally certified fire behavior analyst he served on wildfire suppression and prescribed fire teams (1981-1987). He initiated fire fundamentals research in southern California chaparral (1982-1986) and returned to fundamental fire research (2007-2016) with internationally published theoretical and experimental results that has revised thinking about the heat transfer governing wildland fire spread. Dr. Cohen has been interested in understanding the wildland-urban (WU) fire problem since the 1970's, but in 1989 he formally started his research on how structures ignite during extreme wildfires. Using computational modeling, laboratory and field experiments, and WU fire disaster investigations, he found that a home and its immediate surroundings within 30 meters principally determine home ignitions during extreme wildfires; he called this area the home ignition zone (HIZ). His home ignition research has been internationally recognized and applied to his development of the (US) National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) "Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire" (ASIP, 2017) training and his co-development of the Firewise USA program (NFPA, 2003). Dr. Cohen retired from the US Forest Service in 2016.

Presentation:

Lytton Wildfire Disaster: A Structure Ignition Problem



Joel Hamilton

FireSmart Home Partners Program (HPP) Provincial Coordinator with FireSmart BC and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC (FCABC)

Joel Hamilton is the FireSmart Home Partners Program (HPP) Provincial Coordinator with FireSmart BC and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC (FCABC). Joel's background in emergency management and response includes working for Parks Canada within the Fire Management/Resource Conservation branch as a Resource Management Officer, Initial attack Crew Leader, Wildfire Technician and in operational positions on a type-1 National Incident Management Team (NIMT). He has served on volunteer fire departments, search and rescue teams and most recently oversaw the Regional District of Central Kootenay's (RDCK) wildfire mitigation program, which included a robust FireSmart program, a landscape level fuel treatment portfolio and support for the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) during times of emergency response. In his role with FireSmart BC and the FCABC, Joel provides project management and coordination to the FireSmart HPP, supporting local government and First Nations implement FireSmart programs and practices within their regions. He provides local authorities with the appropriate training, strategies and customizable engagement assets to help foster long-term behavioural changes in homeowners, measurably reducing their risk posed by wildfire. Joel's interest and experience in wildfire science and wildfire response has given rise to his passion for working with communities to become more resilient to wildfire.

Presentation:

Home Partners Program 2022



Dana Hicks

Wildfire Threat Specialist

Dana is currently the Wildfire Threat Specialist working for the Prevention program and the Predictive Service Unit of BC Wildfire Service. Dana is responsible for determining wildfire threat and risk matrices for the province of BC. Dana also spends time on a Wildfire Incident Management Team where he serves as a Fire Behaviour Analyst. He has been actively performing this role for the past 20 years where he has observed many large wildfire events. He also chairs and instructs on several national fire behaviour courses in Canada. Dana is a Registered Forest Professional in British Columbia.

Presentation:

Climate Change and the Future



Diena Jules

Secwépemc Museum Administrator

Diena comes from a long line of chiefs and medicine people from Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc. Her paternal grandparents are a former band councilor and Acting chief Joe Jules, and her grandmother is Agnes Jules, nee Duncan. On her mother's side former band councilor, Tommy Casimir, and her grandma was Sadie Leonard. Diena's late father, Clarence Jules, was a band councilor and Chief and Diena's mom is Mary Delores Jules, nee Casimir, and Mary started the Kamloops PowWow in 1980. Diena has 2 daughters and 5 grandchildren and she passes on her family values of love, respect and integrity to them.

Diena was traditionally educated by her extended family in the mountains. She is a day scholar and a residential school survivor. Diena has earned her B.Ed. and M.A. from UBC. She began to work for her community in 1976 and has worked as a librarian, Educator, Social Worker, Indigenous Researcher, Health Care worker and so on. Diena is currently employed as the Secwépemc Museum Administrator.

Presentation:

Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc Welcome



Cheryl Evans

Professor of Forest Ecology in the Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences

Cheryl leads the program development, oversight and continuous improvement of a variety of initiatives whose primary objective is to mobilize on-the-ground action to improve the resilience of Canadian homes, businesses and communities to flooding and wildland urban interface wildfires. Cheryl has over 20 years of community engagement and program management experience in the fields of stormwater management, flood risk mitigation, home energy conservation and youth environmental education. Cheryl is a member of FireSmart Canada's Wildfire Resilience Checklist Education Committee and collaborates with FireSmart Canada to support the development of flood and wildfire resilience volunteer training programs for the Canadian Red Cross. Cheryl's team is the recipient of Canada's Clean50 Top Project Award for 2020. Cheryl holds a B.E.S. in Environment & Resource Studies from the University of Waterloo.

Presentation:

Wildfire Resilience Home Construction - Renovation and Landscaping Checklist



Karla Hoffman

Horticulturist

Karla Hoffman has been a Horticulturist since 1997. She has designed, installed, and maintained landscapes - from small residential sites to commercial, university, and municipal grounds. She has also taught Soil Science and Landscape Design for the horticulture program at Thompson Rivers University. For over a decade, Karla led a public education campaign about plant health, integrated pest management, and how to conserve landscape water in a semi-arid climate. During this time, she was tasked with taking two seemingly opposing objectives and making them compatible with each other, namely, xeriscaping and being FireSmart. She originally worked on the FireSmart Canada Guide to Landscaping and more recently contributed to the FireSmart BC Landscaping Guide.

Presentation:

FireSmart Landscaping



Robert Mitchell

Forest Fuel Management as a Contractor, Consultant and advisor to First Nations

Rob has participated in Forest Fuel Management as a Contractor, Consultant and advisor to First Nations. He has helped First Nation's with planning, prescribing and implementing Fuel Management treatments

For the last seven years he has worked closely with BC Wildfire Service and Union of BC Municipalities wildfire mitigation and prevention partners. Over this time, he has seen the focus shift from Operational Fuel Treatments on the broader landscape to FireSmart™ related mitigation works in the near-WUI. He is a big fan of this shift and is a strong supporter of FireSmart and Community Resiliency Initiative Program.

Rob believes that a combination of pre-planning and treatments on the WUI and timely FireSmarting by BCWS crews saved Nicomen Indian Band. Many factors and players contributed to this community's resiliency.

Presentation:

FireSmarting Nicomen First Nation



Kelly Osbourne

Fire and Fuel Management Officer for the BC Wildfire Service in Victoria

Kelly Osbourne, RPF is a Fire and Fuel Management Officer for the BC Wildfire Service in Victoria. Her primary role is to develop and implement wildfire risk reduction initiatives for the Province of BC as well as provide expertise into WRR policy and legislation. She has worked for the BC Wildfire Service for almost ten years.

Presentation:

Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR)



Tom Hansen

Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) for the Shuswap Emergency Program

Tom lives in Salmon Arm with his wife and two teenage boys. He is a former Canadian National Biathlon Team member and Olympian (1992) that enjoys cross-country skiing, mountain biking, hiking, paddling, and camping. Tom volunteers as a cross-country ski coach at Larch Hills Nordic. He has his BSc in Forest Management from the University of Alberta. He worked for 29 years with the BC Wildfire Service from 1988 – 2016 starting out as a Forest Fire Fighter and working up to Supervisor Provincial Rapid Attack Operations and Forest Protection Officer. Tom has significant experience coordinating resources and responding to floods and fires across BC and other provinces. He has been the Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC) since 2018 for the Shuswap Emergency Program (SEP) that encompasses the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Electoral Areas C, D, E and F, the City of Salmon Arm, and the District of Sicamous. His responsibilities include disaster mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Tom collaborates with other emergency response agencies, neighbouring local governments, and many other partners including volunteers. He actively promotes FireSmart and Neighbourhood Emergency Programs (NEPs) to build disaster resilience and Tom believes in sharing experiences and working together to spread the wildfire risk reduction message.

Presentation:

Regional District Success



Erik Leslie

Forest Manager for the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative

Erik is a forestry consultant and the Forest Manager for the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative near Nelson, BC. He has 25 years of experience working with the forest industry, First Nations, community organizations, and regional and provincial governments on projects from Haida Gwaii to Labrador. He has extensive experience in forestry planning and operations, community engagement, small business management, and forest certification. For the past decade, Erik's work has focussed on community-based strategies to address climate change and reduce wildfire risks. In 2018 Erik was the first recipient of the Association of BC Forest Professionals' Forest Innovation Award for his work developing and implementing collaborative ecosystem-based practices in the wildland-urban interface. Erik has developed and is currently implementing an applied climate change adaptation pilot project in the Harrop-Procter community forest. The project is designed to demonstrate how managers can integrate climate science and risk assessment into practical forestry decision-making in the Columbia Basin.

Presentation:

Community Forests: Innovation and Collaboration in Wildfire Management, Climate Change and the Future



Tony Pesklevits

Deputy Director with the BC Wildfire Service

Tony Pesklevits is Anneke's dad and Lisa's partner. When he goes to work he is a Deputy Director with the BC Wildfire Service, and is currently leading the implementation of the BC government's commitments to expand the use of cultural and prescribed fire in partnership with Indigenous Nations. A forest ecologist and complex systems aficionado by training, most of Tony's work in the public service has been focused on conflict transformation and building innovative solutions to messy natural resource management and policy problems at the intersection of reconciliation, climate change, and ecological resilience. He has been a strategic land use planner, front-line reconciliation negotiator, and from 2013 to 2017 was the regional director overseeing the provincial fish, wildlife, habitat, cumulative effects, GIS and research programs for northwest BC. He has also held strategic policy and governance roles supporting BC's natural resource sector ministries. Tony joined the BC Wildfire Service in 2019 where he has contributed to the evolution of the organization as it tackles the challenges of wildfire management in the 21st century through an expanded partnership-based mandate. He has the privilege of raising a family on the Wet'suwet'en yintah in Smithers, BC, where in his free time you'll find him knee deep in snow, sawdust, or the river.

Presentation:

Prescribed Fire



Kevin Skrepnek

Emergency Program Coordinator for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District

Kevin Skrepnek is the Emergency Program Coordinator for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, a glorious stretch of BC's southern interior that spans from desert to rainforest. Kevin spent most of the last decade as an Information Officer with the BC Wildfire Service, working on complex incidents ranging from fires to floods to salmon-impeding landslides around the province. Since 2018 he has been a sessional instructor with the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), teaching for the Emergency Management Division throughout western Canada. He sits on the Board of Directors for the BC Association of Emergency Managers (BCAEM) and volunteers with the Kamloops Emergency Support Services team and emergency amateur radio group. Born in Yellowknife, NWT, Kevin grew up in southern Ontario and moved to British Columbia in late 2006. He holds a Diploma in Public Relations from Kwantlen Polytechnic University (2012) and a Certificate in Emergency Management from the JIBC (2019). Kevin lives in Kamloops, in the very much unceded territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc people.

Presentation:

Operating a Successful EOC



Steve Robinson

Fire Chief of Kamloops Fire Rescue

Steve has been in the Fire Service for almost 30 years and began his career in the City of Surrey in 1992. Steve moved to the City of Kamloops in 2016 and in 2021 was appointed the Fire Chief of Kamloops Fire Rescue.

Presentation:

Kamloops Fire Rescue and the Kamloops Fires



Quentin Nelson

Mitigation Manager for First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC

Quentin Nelson is the new Mitigation Department Manager for FNESS. He has been working with the organization since 2019, where he started out as a Forest Fuel Management Liaison, then a Specialist before transitioning into a management role in April 2022. He started his wildfire career in 2009 and eventually worked his way onto unit crews with BCWS in 2012.

Quentin has a Forestry Diploma and a bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Science. He is working to become a Registered Professional Forester for FNESS and is a BC FireSmart Committee member. He lives in Kamloops, BC.

As of April 1st, FNESS realigned its organizational structure to better reflect the 4 pillars of Emergency Management. He is honored to be in this position and continues to look forward to serving all First Nations communities throughout the province to increase community resiliency, reduce risk from wildfire, and build Indigenous capacity to support these initiatives. He wholeheartedly believes that the foundation to protecting values at risk is through FireSmart initiatives.

Presentation:

FireSmart Funding Opportunities



Jonas Woodrow

Program Officer with UBCM

Jonas Woodrow is a Program Officer with UBCM and has worked with Community Resiliency Investment Program's team since joining the organization in October, 2020. He has a background in emergency operations, transportation security, and business continuity management.

Presentation:

FireSmart Funding Opportunities



Lori Daniels

Professor of Forest Ecology in the Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences

Dr. Lori Daniels is a Professor of Forest Ecology in the Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences, where she directs the Tree-Ring Lab at UBC. Lori investigates the impacts of natural and human disturbances and climate change on forests. With her research team, she has on-going projects on wildfires, forest dynamics, and social-ecological resilience to climate change across British Columbia. Her enduring partnerships with local, provincial, and national governments, environmental organizations, forest management companies, community forests, and First Nations ensure her scientific advances are translated to active conservation, restoration and management. She contributed to the Blueprint for Wildland Fire Science in Canada and served as a member of the Canadian Wildfire Strategy Implementation Team and the NSERC-Canada Wildfire Research Network. Since 2015, she has given more than 200 media interviews on wildfires and their impacts on forests and communities. She is among the 150 Canadian Scientists recognized in 2017 for research shaping new frontiers and making our world a better place (#150Scientists). She was acknowledged as a Women Leader in international fire science research in 2018, received the 2019 Canadian Institute of Forestry Scientific Achievement Award and 2022 James J. Parsons Distinguished Career in Biogeography Award from the American Association of Geographers.

Presentation:

Climate Change and the Future



Harry Spahan

Harry Spahan is Nlaka'pamx of the Nlaka'pamux Nation. Harry is a Coldwater Indian Band Member and he has 25 years of political experience as an elected Councillor for my community. Today, he is currently on council.

Harry's Nation recognizes him as a Fire Keeper, as he has strong cultural teachings and over 40 years' experience with BC Wildfire Service, combined with a technical diploma in Forest Resource Management. Harry also co-teaches a first-year environmental resources technician program class about fire ecology (with a significant cultural burning framework) at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) in the Nicola Valley. He also works with First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) as a Cultural burning instructor for First Nation communities, and Harry has built his own company, RTS Consulting Inc., to provide cultural and prescribed burning services to those interested.

Harry's education and progressive technical experience have equipped him with the skills to lead staff and successfully manage a multi-faceted program. He processes considerable comprehensive knowledge of wildfire and emergency management, which includes prevention, preparedness, response, recovery. He also processes skills in emergency program management that includes planning, developing operating frameworks, ensuring staff and equipment resources, setting goals/ targets and monitoring achievements.

Harry is a committed team player, leader, a recognized problem solver and proactive relationship builder inside and outside the organization. As a strategic and results focused individual, he strives to improve operations and contribute to the program for continued improvement in sustaining safer and healthier communities. If we look after the land, the land and water will look after us.

Presentation:

Cultural Burning



Larry Watkinson, ECFO C.Mgr

Fire Chief for the City of Penticton

Larry Watkinson is the Fire Chief for the City of Penticton, located in the south-central region of the province known as the Okanagan Valley. The region enjoys a semi-arid climate providing more than 2,000 hours of sunshine and a landscape surrounded by mountains. With a population of approximately 40,000, Penticton is just one of two cities in the world that sits between two lakes, Okanagan and Skaha lakes. Larry has held a Chief Officer rank in the fire service for over 18 years. Currently a Board member and Director for the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC, Career Chief Sector, Larry is also a member of the Provincial Command Staff for Emergency Management BC and Structure Protection Specialist for BC Wildfire Service, and has been deployed to a number of large provincial events. As a Fire Service Leader, he has earned professional designations of Professional Manager (P.Mgr), and Chartered Manager (C.Mgr) from the Canadian Institute of Management, and Executive Chief Fire Officer (ECFO) designation from the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs. In 2020 Larry led the development of a FireSmart team for Penticton, where the Home Partners Program has been a huge success. Larry, along with his K9 companion "Sam" is a volunteer K9-Disaster Dog handler for Burnaby Firefighters Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team and has deployed to events both domestically and internationally for search and rescue efforts.

Presentation:

A Reflection on Logan Lake and Structural Protection



Robin Smith

Mayor for the District of Logan Lake Robin

Robin Smith was raised in the small community of Logan Lake from before she was school age. She has since continued to reside in the community and built her family and career there with her husband and three children. As the current Mayor for the District of Logan Lake Robin has served on Council for nearly 14 years while also working full time as the Managing Broker for a family Real Estate business. When she's spending time away from the office, you might find her in the garden, exploring the vast trail systems around the community or kayaking one of the local lakes, but most times she's not alone in enjoying the outdoors because time with family is precious to her and her dogs often lead the way. Logan Lake has faced many challenges along the way and as they celebrate 50 years as an established community, they've become very well known for their safety practices in relation to Wildfire and their FireSmart program, where they were recognized by Federal Government in 2013 as the first "FireSmart" Community in Canada. In the firestorm of 2021, Logan Lake had their first very real opportunity to test a culmination of nearly 20 years of focussed work supported by multi-levels of government and championed by leaders who saw the vision and got behind the cause. Logan Lake's story is one of cautious triumph, because there's still a lot more work to do out there and FireSmart activities don't come with an expiry date.

Presentation:

A Reflection on Logan Lake and Structural Protection



Doug Wilson

Fire Chief at the District of Logan Lake Fire

Chief Doug Wilson started his career in Langley City as a P.O.C. member. He then moved to the District of Logan Lake in 2015 and joined Logan Lake Fire as a P.O.C. firefighter. He was promoted to Captain in 2018 and then to Assistant Fire Chief in 2020. At the end of 2020, Doug was promoted to Fire Chief at the District of Logan Lake Fire.

Presentation:

A Reflection on Logan Lake and Structural Protection



Kelsey Winter

FireSmart Program Lead for the BC Wildfire Service and the Chair of the BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC)

Kelsey Winter is the FireSmart Program Lead for the BC Wildfire Service and the Chair of the BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC). She has worked in wildfire for twelve years and has experience on the fireline, in operational and strategic communications and is now leading the development and implementation of FireSmart across British Columbia.

Kelsey has a Masters in Fire Ecology and a Masters in Natural Resources and is starting her PhD in Public Administration at UVIC this year focusing on barriers to wildfire preparedness for Indigenous communities. Kelsey has been involved with FireSmart since 2014 when she became a FireSmart Provincial Liaison for BC and her three daughters are Ember's biggest fans.

Presentation:

Welcome Address



Len Youden

FireSmart Coordinator for the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD)

Len is the FireSmart Coordinator for the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). He is also a structural fire fighter, fire officer and a fire and life safety educator. Len was one of the resources who was involved in the initial development of the CSRD FireSmart Program. In 2019 the CSRD FireSmart Program was started from concept and has since become a highly successful regional district wide program. His approach to developing and executing on the FireSmart initiative is by having a structured plan that is focused on achieving short term and long-term objectives. Len holds a Master of Business Administration from Simon Fraser University and is a term professor at the Okanagan College School of Business. His presentation will focus on providing a framework, template and potential improvement considerations for new or existing FireSmart programs.

Presentation:

Regional District Successes



Alan Westhaver

Consultant/Researcher

Alan's 35-year involvement in wildland-urban (WU) fire issues began in 1987 as an early member of Partners in Protection Association, now FireSmart Canada. As a Director/Executive of that organization, he co-chaired many initiatives including production of the 1996 manual "FireSmart: Protecting Your Community from Wildfire" and the 2013 FireSmart Canada Community (now Neighbourhood) Recognition Program. He was a senior wildland fire manager, a certified Wildfire Behavior Analyst and championed many initiatives involving community wildfire risk mitigation during his 34-year career with Parks Canada. As a WU practitioner of 17 years, he partnered with the Fire Chief at Jasper, AB to implement FireSmart - ForestWise fuel treatments on 1,000+ hectares within and around the town and nearby developments. This work specialized in merging goals for community fire protection, ecological restoration and citizen values in ways that actively engaged local residents. His work in WU research expanded in retirement. He has conducted studies for the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) examining home losses, reconstruction and risk reduction following WU fire disasters at Kelowna, Slave Lake and Fort McMurray. His recent focus has been on developing new research methods to better understand ignition vulnerabilities and exposures resulting in home destruction during WU fires. In 2020-21 he teamed with Steve Taylor (CFS), Dr. Jack Cohen (USFS) and others on three projects under sponsorship of the Institute of Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), the Standards Council of Canada and the BC FireSmart Committee, including the Lytton examination.

Presentation:

Lytton Wildfire Disaster: A Structure Ignition Problem



David Tavernini

Fire Management Officer for Parks Canada

David currently serves as the Fire Management Officer for Parks Canada in the Banff Field Unit. Since 2020, he has worked in this role, planning and coordinating fire restoration and wildfire risk reduction projects that build community and ecosystem resilience. David first started working in wildfire operations eight years ago and developed an academic background, studying the relationships of habitat connectivity and ecosystem function in rivers. This background drove an interest in developing a more nuanced understanding of fire management practices to achieve the multi-faceted goals of land managers. Being in his current role, he gets to experience first-hand the interface between ecosystem specialists, stakeholders, neighbouring agencies and the operational implementation of fire management activities within Banff National Park. In addition to this work, he is also a Division Supervisor on one of the five Parks Canada national incident management teams.

Presentation:

One size does not fit all: use of a multi-scale, diverse toolkit for building community wildfire resilience.