

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY MEDIA RELEASE

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FireSmart assessments can help your home survive a wildfire

View on the RDCK website: <http://www.rdck.ca/EN/meta/news/news-archives/2018-news-archive/firesmart-assessments-can-help-your-home-survive-a-wildfire.html>

Nelson, BC: The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is encouraging residents and property owners to participate in a free, professional FireSmart assessment of their home exterior and property. The FireSmart Home Partners program provides participants with specific actions they can take to help protect their homes from wildfire.

The program is available to residents across the RDCK and in Creston, Salmo, Kaslo, Nakusp, Nelson, Silvertown and Slocan. New this year, the program is also available to residents in Castlegar.

“Wildfires in the interior of BC and the Kootenays are a fact of life, and fires can spread from forested areas into urban areas—that’s when your home is at risk,” said Nora Hannon, the RDCK Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator and Balfour-Harrop Fire Chief. “A FireSmart assessment will provide a homeowner with mitigation actions to help reduce that risk and a work plan to help them get started.”

During a FireSmart Home Partners Program assessment, a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist will come to your home, and make a detailed report including specific mitigation actions to help protect your home from wildfire. The RDCK’s eight Wildfire Mitigation Specialists are all fire and forestry professionals. They are industry experts, knowledgeable of wildfire behaviour and science, and are trained to recognize wildfire risks to homes and property.

In addition to an in-depth assessment of your property, participants will also receive a detailed report with customized mitigation actions designed to measurably reduce the wildfire risk to the property. A FireSmart Certificate is provided to the participant upon successful completion of mitigation actions and following an on-site follow-up inspection.

Homeowners may choose to share their FireSmart Certificate with their insurance provider to potentially reduce rates or maintain coverage, or with a Realtor to assist in selling their home. The RDCK and FireSmart Canada only share details of the assessment with the participant.

To schedule your free FireSmart assessment, visit www.rdck.ca/firesmart or call the RDCK Wildfire Mitigation team at 250-352-1539. Nelson residents can call the Nelson Fire Hall at (250) 352-3103 to schedule their assessment.

FireSmart Canada is an initiative of Partners in Protection (PiP), a multidisciplinary non-profit association made up of members representing national, provincial and municipal associations, government departments responsible for emergency services, forest and parks management, land use planning and private business and industry. Their mandate is to facilitate interagency cooperation in the promotion of

awareness and education aimed at reducing risk of loss of life and property from fire in the wildland/urban interface. Learn more at www.firesmartcanada.ca.

There are three ways that you and your community can become FireSmart in the RDCK:

- **FireSmart Home Partners Program.** This is the program described above, which allows the homeowner to request a follow-up inspection and eligibility for a certificate that is recognized by some insurance providers.
- **FireSmart assessments conducted by some fire departments.** These assessments are provided by firefighting professionals to support homeowners with identifying mitigation efforts as required in the FireSmart guide.
- **FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program.** This program helps neighbours and local champions organize and reduce the risk of wildfire for entire communities.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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