



**WATCH LAKE – NORTH GREEN LAKE
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**



5771 Green Lake North Road
70 Mile House, BC, V0K 2K1

www.wlglfiredept.org

Spring Newsletter 2024

Board of Directors and Firefighter Officials (to contact please email your request via wlglvfd@gmail.com)

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| Andy Palaniak, Fire Chief | Ron Thurston, Fire Fighter Liaison | |

Fire Chief’s Message

This last year has been quite busy, fortunately for us mostly with training, rather than call outs.

We currently have a roster of **36 active members**, 16 of whom have been on the department for less than 2 years. As such, a lot of time has gone into getting all the new members trained to the minimum standards set out by the Office of the Fire Commissioner. We’re also doing refreshers for everyone else. Since quite a few members are only here part time it is a challenge to put on a course and capture everyone at once, and then also provide additional sessions for those that weren’t able to attend.

Fortunately, by having several very competent and dedicated officers who spend countless additional hours outside of regular scheduled training sessions doing the practical training and exams, as well as members working remotely from home doing the theory and written tests online and using USB sticks and the internet, we are making great headway. It looks as though we’ll have almost everyone fully trained by this summer.

We were fortunate to receive a special \$30,000 grant last fall through the hard work of Roy Allan dealing with the endless amount of paperwork. The officers put together a list of items we needed that fit the specific criteria of the grant and we’ve almost completed purchasing these.

Finally a quick note about the below average precipitation last winter. All of us hope everyone is especially cautious this summer and takes FireSmarting their properties seriously.



Andy Palaniak, Fire-Chief

Drought and Wildfire Concerns



Effective as of 12 p.m. (noon) Pacific Daylight Time on March 28 2024, Category 2 and 3 open fires along with fireworks and sky lanterns will be prohibited across the entire Cariboo Fire Centre, Prince George Fire Centre and parts of the Northwest Fire Centre including the Nadina and Bulkley zones.

This prohibition does not ban campfires that are half-metre high by half-metre wide or smaller and does not apply to cooking stoves that use gas, propane or briquettes.

The Category 2 and 3 open fire prohibition applies to all BC Parks, Crown lands and private lands, but does not apply within the boundaries of a local government that has forest fire prevention bylaws in place and is serviced by a fire department.

Check with local government authorities for any other fire use restrictions.

For more information, visit: <https://blog.gov.bc.ca/bcwildfire/tag/prevention/>



conditions, embers can spring back into an active fire very quickly! Please be careful!

For any fire ban updates or more information for our area, please visit the BC Wildfire Service page: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/fire-bans-and-restrictions/cariboo-fire-centre-bans#current>

You can also call the Cariboo Fire Centre and speak to the Information Officer at 778 799-2100

Equipment, Gear and Training Updates

Throughout the winter, our 36 members undertook their classroom training as outlined in the Minimum Training Standards Book (previously referred to as the “Playbook”) and now, over half of our members have completed the knowledge section. Our officers joined the South Green Lake VFD for some of their officer training and will join the Lone Butte VFD later this month for more modules. At the end of April, our fire fighters will complete their Wildland Fire Training Certification.



Thanks to a successful grant application, new turn-out gear, flashlights, generator and other critical equipment has been ordered and either received or on its way. It is reassuring to know we have a huge roster of trained fire fighters and a growing equipment inventory as we approach the wild fire season!

As spring approaches, we look forward to another season of the great summer activities our area has to offer. Get out the summer gear and prepare for the warmer weather, but **don't forget to FireSmart your property (see page 4).**

Provincial Wildfire staff are warning, “Low snowpack and seasonal runoff forecasts combined with warm seasonal weather forecasts and lingering impacts from on-going drought are creating significantly elevated drought hazards for this upcoming spring and summer.”

As of March 1st, **the average snowpack across the province was at a low of 66% of normal**, and as a foreshadowing of the pending drought conditions, *on April 1st the South Thompson River measured just 12% of its normal level.*

Campfires are permitted, at least for the time being, but larger fires are prohibited – this means you are not allowed to burn brush piles. Please note that fireworks are also prohibited.

If you do plan on enjoying a campfire, please ensure that your fire is completely extinguished when you're done. With the recent windy

Bottle and Can Sorting

This fund-raiser has been essential as it provides the only funding outside of our fire protection fees and grants. We have a very steady supply of cans and bottles getting dropped off at the VFD kiosk at the Watch Lake Dump. Thank you very much for your thoughtful donations of cans and bottles.

What we have been missing, however, are community members coming out to help on bottle sorting day. We had an absolutely dismal turnout (as in **ZERO** people showing up) when we switched to Saturday to accommodate people who work weekdays. Thankfully, after a desperate plea on Facebook, we had an excellent turnout on the following Monday, April 8th. We owe a huge thank you to the Lone Butte VFD chief and fire fighters who also came out to assist.



If you have some spare time and/or want to meet more of your neighbours and your fire fighters, please do plan to attend future bottle sorting events. Regular updates are posted on our [Facebook](#) page. Sorting is normally held every Monday, 10:00 a.m., at Hall #1 (Shorty Horn Memorial Hall) on Pioneer Road as we are approaching the busy season on the lakes. Stay posted online or you can contact Alan Watrich at 250-456-7642 for more information.



Please Consider A Donation to the Fire Department

Running a fire department costs a lot more than people expect. Annual fire dues do not cover the entire cost of its operation. Fire trucks are very expensive. Training and equipping firefighters is not cheap either. For example, we must periodically upgrade our uniforms and fire equipment based on national fire regulations. Turn out gear and fire uniforms cost \$10,000 each and getting our 36 firefighters new work clothes every few years is costly and not covered by the operating budget. We do apply for grants annually, but only receive partial funding for training and equipment. None of this funding would be possible if it weren't for the generosity of those who have contributed in the past and those who contribute in the future.

Our annual fire protection fees are the lowest cost in the CRD for a 24-hour volunteer force and are not based on a percentage basis of your property value. Also, we need to provide a legacy of future fire coverage by the fire department, so that the next generation of area residents can depend upon us to be there for them.

A small donation goes a long way, but please be as generous as possible during these economic times. Please either:

- mail your donation cheque to the Watch Lake-North Green Lake Fire Department at 5771 Green Lake North Road, 70 Mile House, B.C. V0K 2K1
- donate online at our website fire dues page https://www.wlnlfiredept.org/?page_id=2159 and scroll down until you see the "Donation" box.
- contact myself (Laura Dewar 250-395-0020 or pandldewar@outlook.com) to arrange e-transfer

Every dollar counts. Help us continue the tradition of protecting our area through volunteerism. Thank you very much, Bob Nathane.

Bob Nathane is a longtime director for the VFD. He maintains our website and Facebook page. If you have any questions or comments or wish to send him photographs of our area, please contact him at bob.nathane@gmail.com. Website address: <https://www.wlmgfiredept.org/>

Are You FireSmart?

As the wildfire season approaches, the Province of BC's Emergency Management and Climate Readiness web page (<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024EMCR0015-000376>) recommends the following actions for homeowners increase their fire emergency preparedness:

- create an evacuation plan;
- update home-insurance policies;
- know where to find trusted emergency information;
- stay informed about weather alerts;
- create an online profile if you'll need support during an emergency at <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>;
- make your home more resistant to wildfire damage, including planting fire-resistant plants, trees and shrubs; and
- build an emergency kit that includes water, non-perishable food, medication, and a first-aid kit.

During the Elephant Hill Wildfire evacuation order for our area in 2017, a crew of 20 fire fighters remained in the area to assist in maintaining the security of our properties. In addition to setting up pumping stations and conducting 24/7 patrols to extinguish spot fires, they attempted to ensure that all properties were FireSmart compliant. They spent many hours removing flammable materials from close proximity to homes and outbuildings, such as moving woodpiles away from the sides and porches of homes and removing lawn furniture and propane tanks from decks and patios. Since then, we have encouraged all residents to review the FireSmart manuals and to do everything possible to make their properties as fire safe as possible. All of the FireSmart resource material is available online at <https://firesmartbc.ca/resources/>. A quick summary of the FireSmart procedures is contained in an information poster available at: https://firesmartbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/05.08.21_FiresmartBC_TipsToFireSmartYourHome_Poster-compressed.pdf

If you don't have access to the internet, or prefer a paper FireSmart manual, please contact Laura at 250-395-0020.

We need a local FireSmart Representative (LFR)!

Our previous LFR has stepped down, so we are now looking for another community member, ideally 2 more people, for the LFR. LFRs help to mitigate the damages caused by wildfires to our neighbourhoods and communities. They're community leaders, fire professionals, and other individuals that are all helping foster FireSmart at a grassroots level. [Contact Laura](#) if interested.

Training is available [online](#) including 2 upcoming LFR workshops, May 7/8 and June 18/19.