



News Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
3400 30th Street
Vernon BC
V1T 5E6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Dec. 7, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Nick Nilsen, Manager, Communications & Grants

TELEPHONE: 250-550-3539

Predator Ridge residents earn FireSmart Community Recognition for 3rd year

The FireSmart program has recognized the Predator Ridge community for its good work in reducing wildfire risks for the 3rd straight year.

The community has been actively involved in the FireSmart program since adopting it in 2016, the same year as the Fort McMurray wildfires. The program encourages communities to work together in reducing fire hazards. As part of their activities, the Predator Ridge FireSmart organizing committee held two fuel clean-up days where residents gathered fine fuel from their property and laddered trees (cutting off the lower tree branches to reduce the possibility that a fire will climb to the treetops).

“We held six FireSmart events in 2018,” said Kathy Pedersen, Chair of the Predator Ridge FireSmart Committee. “This included two education events, where we introduced—or re-introduced—homeowners to the FireSmart principles; a property clean up event; two Vegetation Management Clean-up events; and public outreach and education at the Era of Megafires movie presentation, so 2018 was a busy FireSmart year at Predator Ridge.”

The FireSmart program provides homeowners with the knowledge they need to take action to protect their property. Participants learn about fires and also get the satisfaction of taking direct action to protect themselves. It is a very empowering feeling, and people leave with a better understanding of wild fires.

“Predator Ridge is a model of how communities can come together to improve fire safety in the Wildland Urban Interface,” said Vernon Fire Rescue Services Chief David Lind. “This community understands what it means to live in an interface area and recognizes the importance of property owners taking steps to protect their property.”

The FireSmart organizing committee also hosted a local screening of the film *The Era of Megafires*, which was well attended and featured a Q&A session with Chief Lind.

A report from the Predator Ridge community on their FireSmart initiatives is attached.

-30-

Attachment: *Predator Ridge FireSmart Events for 2018* report (please download the PDF version of the news release to read the report).

Additional media inquiries:

Kathy Pedersen, Chair,
Predator Ridge FireSmart Committee

Kathy_Pedersen@shaw.ca

2018 Community Recognition Renewal for Predator Ridge - LIST "C"

PREDATOR RIDGE FIRESMART EVENTS FOR 2018

MAJOR ACTIVITIES, # OF PEOPLE ATTENDING AND LOCATIONS

May 5, 2018

Our first Education Event for 2018 was held outside Member Services at Predator Ridge Clubhouse and was organized to coincide with National FireSmart Day. Committee Members were present for approximately 3 hours to explain FireSmart principals, hand out FireSmart Manuals and encourage homeowners to sign up for a FireSmart assessment. The Members spoke to approximately 20 residents, most of whom had already had an assessment done or were familiar with the FireSmart guidelines from previous presentations. One resident signed up for an assessment. The Committee will need to review another location for a similar event next year, in particular look at the new neighbourhoods with new residents (i.e. Commonage neighbourhood, Whitetail, etc.).



May 9, 2018

The FireSmart Committee members attended the Predator Ridge Town Hall Meeting held by Wesbild and attended by approximately 200 residents of Predator Ridge. At the conclusion of the Town Hall, Kathy Pedersen, Chair of the FireSmart Committee, was invited to provide an update on FireSmart Activities for 2018. Kathy reminded attendees of the importance of FireSmarting their properties, the responsibilities of the homeowners and encouraged everyone to participate in the activities planned for 2018 in order for the Committee to re-apply to FireSmart Canada to retain the FireSmart Community Recognition for 2018, which will be the 3rd year for Predator Ridge.



May 14, 2018

The City of Vernon hosted a presentation of the video, The Era of Megafires. Luana Kaleikini, Emergency Support Services Coordinator for the City of Vernon, invited the Predator Ridge FireSmart Committee to attend as a partner in the community who has been recognized by the FireSmart Recognition program. The City asked the Committee to share the work done at Predator Ridge with the approximately 100 members of the Vernon community who attended this event. Committee Members were in attendance as well as some other Predator Ridge residents. Committee Members set up stands and poster boards they use for their Education Events and spoke to people in attendance about FireSmart.



May 26, 2018

FireSmart Canada provided the Predator Ridge FireSmart Committee with a grant of \$500.00 to be used toward offsetting the chipping costs associated with homeowners conducting clean-ups of their own properties. Nine residents participated with other homeowners participating after this date (*see note from the July 28th event with another 18 residents cleaning up debris). A total of 27 homeowners participated in the cost sharing for the grant funds. A testimonial and a picture from one homeowner who participated is shown below.

PREDATOR RIDGE COMMUNITY FIRESMART HOMEOWNER CLEANUP EVENT - MAY 26, 2018



7.5 hours yard work!

"I was introduced to FireSmart in 2017 and was blown away by the presentation of the Fort McMurray fires showing how quickly a neighbourhood can be destroyed by flying embers. The Predator Ridge FireSmart team assessed our property this spring, educating us and providing excellent and practical recommendations to increase fire safety around our house.

In May, I volunteered to participate in the yard clean up, implementing many of these recommendations. It felt good to get this done before the summer and to provide a new level of safety for our home and the properties around us. I definitely plan to continue with the program for years to come.

The Predator Ridge FireSmart team have been very helpful, informative, and professional, providing valuable advice and guidance. It is wonderful to have such a dedicated team in our own neighbourhood. Thank you to all the FireSmart volunteers for helping us make Predator Ridge safer."
Debbie Young

July 28, 2018

A Vegetation Management Clean-Up Event was held in the Longspoon neighbourhood with approximately 40 residents and the Committee Members participating. All volunteers cleaned debris off the ground, pruned and laddered trees and hauled debris down to the sidewalk. Some volunteers assisted with the debris to ensure piles were kept neat to save chipping costs. Volunteers were provided with coffee and cookies at a break and then served lunch at the end of the clean-up. Volunteers were provided with vests, gloves and safety glasses by the FireSmart Committee. The first picture below shows the group of volunteers and only about half of the debris collected. (*note: this event prompted 9 homeowners (18 in total) to gather the next day to clean-up their own yards as well as clean and ladder trees on the common property below their yards).



August 28, 2018

The FireSmart Committee organized a presentation of the video, *The Era of Megafire*, at Predator Ridge with the support of the City of Vernon. Luana Kaleikini, Emergency Support Services Coordinator for the City of Vernon, extended the invitation to neighbouring communities and emergency preparedness committees. Fire Chief David Lind was the guest speaker at this event. Approximately 40 people attended this presentation. Unfortunately no one attended from other Vernon communities although approximately 8 parties had indicated they would be attending. Education poster boards were displayed and FireSmart manuals provided to residents. After the video, there was a question and answer period with David Lind.



September 29, 2018

Continuing on from the very successful clean-up event in the Longspoon area on July 28th, the Fall Vegetation Management Clean-Up Event was held in the Longspoon/Dormie areas with 34 residents and the Committee Members participating. All volunteers cleaned debris off the ground, pruned and laddered trees and hauled debris out to piles near the roadway and cart path. Some volunteers supervised the orderly loading of material onto the debris piles to minimize chipping costs. The volume of debris collected was more than what was collected at the July 28th event. Volunteers were provided with coffee and cookies at a break and then served a pizza lunch at the end of the clean-up. Volunteers were provided with vests, gloves and safety glasses by the FireSmart Committee. This event concluded our 2018 activities.

