



***First Nations'
Emergency Services Society***

O F B R I T I S H C O L U M B I A

2017—2020 Strategic Plan

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Background:

The First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) is a charitable not-for-profit society that provides emergency, safety and health training for First Nations communities. FNESS was originally founded as a not-for-profit society in 1986 under the name *Society of Native Indian Fire Fighters of BC* (SNIFF). SNIFF's initial mandate was to help reduce the number of fire-related deaths on First Nation reserves in British Columbia (BC). In 1994, SNIFF changed its name to FNESS, reflecting its diverse and expanded community protection services. These services include, but are not limited to, emergency and safety training, and related support services for First Nations communities in BC and most recently, the Yukon. To date, FNESS has earned a reputation for responding to the changing fire service, forest fuel management and emergency management needs of First Nations communities and has established a solid track record at the local, regional and provincial levels. This is reflected in both the growing demand of service requests from First Nations communities and the development of more government-sponsored programs with FNESS.

As a charitable not-for-profit organization (Charities Number: 89488 4246 RR0001), FNESS ensures objectivity in the programs and services that they deliver. Therefore, they work in advancing initiatives that recognize the cultural protocols and practices of First Nations communities alongside wise practices based on leading research and development. FNESS has a unique niche in the domain of emergency services, focusing on the recognition and strategic integration of Indigenous and Western ways of knowing in the facilitation of the coordinated delivery of structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management in First Nations communities. FNESS' collegial, informal, and nimble work environment allows them to utilize their collective knowledge base and experiences to develop culturally congruent, timely and accessible programs and services for First Nations communities.

FNESS is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of First Nations individuals who reside in communities from throughout BC and who are elected by the Society's members. The FNESS Board of Directors has a diverse array of experience, knowledge, skills and abilities that enrich the planning and implementing of First Nations community protection activities. As a policy board, the FNESS Board of Directors governs through guiding principles and policies that establish organizational aims (aka. strategic objectives), governance approaches and management limitations. These policies define the relationship of the FNESS Board of Directors with the FNESS Executive Director. As such, the FNESS Board of Directors monitors compliance with those guiding principles and policies; and ensures that the FNESS Executive Director (as the board's single employee) and board alike are held accountable for their organizational performance.

FNESS offers core services in the following areas:

- ◇ The **Fire Services Department** assists First Nations communities to generate a holistic practice of structural and coastal/marine fire prevention and protection in their communities. Notable programs include, but are not limited to, *Community Fire Prevention Program* - FNESS works with Chief and Councils, community champions and band administrators to identify fire risks facing a community; *Smoke Alarm Program* - FNESS provides communities with early warning devices that will alert occupants in the event of a residential fire; and *Benchmark Capacity Program* - FNESS works with First Nations fire departments to ensure that they receive firefighter and fire officer training tailored to each department's specific needs. This includes completing an initial assessment and training plan with FNESS;
- ◇ The **Forest Fuel Management Department** carries out program delivery, outreach and support to enhance First Nations communities' understanding of fuel management in the wildland urban interface (WUI), FireSmart and landscape fire management; delivers skills development and training programs in First Nations communities to plan, implement and maintain effective forest fuel management capacity in their communities to reduce interface fire threats; provides awareness and related forest fuel management support to First Nations communities (includes facilitating the adoption of FireSmart standards); and engages in data collection, analysis and extension about wildland fire management in First Nations communities. This Department is to ensure First Nations communities are introduced to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) program and receive the necessary assistance to guide them through the process of completing CWPPs; and

- ◇ **The Emergency Management Department** currently provides community-based critical incident stress management (CISM). CISM is carried out by FNESS when they are invited into BC First Nations communities to provide short-term psychological and cultural/traditional support based on a specific, immediate and identifiable event (e.g., suicide, homicide). CISM is an adaptive, short-term psychological helping process. FNESS is also engaging in initiatives with strategic partners (e.g., Indian Residential School Survivor Society and First Nations Health Authority) to provide training and related support services in the areas of First Nations-specific crisis response. Furthermore, based on the location of various First Nations communities in BC, all hazards planning and capacity building (training and skills development) in transportation safety is becoming increasingly important.

Previously, this Department provided assistance to BC First Nations communities to develop all hazard plans and coordinate emergency preparedness and response training and skills development for rural, remote, urban, and northern First Nations communities in coastal and interior regions of BC. This department helped BC First Nations communities to identify possible hazards, assigns responsibilities for various aspects of an emergency response and outlines procedures for the community to follow before and during an emergency event. Notable programs previously provided by this Department included the *Awareness/Preparedness Sessions* – developing and maintaining relationships between First Nations communities and other relevant emergency agencies; *tsunami evacuation exercise* – participating in a large scale evacuation; and *advisory services for communities* – helping to maintain emergency plans and developing emergency committees.

Each of the above departments are supported by FNESS Corporate Administration and Finance which is responsible for financial and performance reporting, budget management, fund development, strategic planning, information technology and human resource management.



From left to right: Brent Langlois (FNESS Executive Director), Micheal Kelly (FNESS Appointed Director), Edwin Mountain (FNESS President), Sonny Hunt (FNESS Vice President), Barbara Morin (FNESS Secretary/Treasurer), Anthony Moore (FNESS Director).

Vision, Mission and Values

The vision, mission and values of FNESS are the driving forces of this three year strategic plan. The accompanying objectives are the achievements expected to move FNESS (as a charitable not-for-profit organization) towards its vision. The plan is strategic in nature and provides a focus regarding programs, services and initiatives to achieve the objectives and ultimately the vision.

Our Vision

FNESS is a leading Indigenous organization for facilitating capacity development and planning in fire, fuel management and emergency management for current and future generations based on the strategic integration of First Nations and Western practices and ways of knowing.

Our Mission

As a professional community-minded, highly skilled and committed team, FNESS works with First Nations in promoting, developing and sustaining safer and healthier communities by

- providing assistance to develop emergency planning, training, response and recovery;
- providing structural and coastal/marine fire skills training, education and prevention;
- providing forest fuel and wildland fire management programs (both on and off reserve); and
- fostering leadership and collaborative partnerships to advance structural and coastal/ marine fire services, emergency management, and forest fuel and wildland fire management priorities.

Our Values

We support approaches that integrate First Nations and Western values in carrying out various First Nations-specific structural and coastal/marine fire services, emergency management, and forest fuel and wildland fire management programs on behalf of our FNESS membership, clients, strategic partners and funders:

- Collaborative**—working with First Nations communities, strategic partners and funders to consider proactively engaging and responding to threats and risks by utilizing an all hazards approach;
- Communication and honesty**—interacting with First Nations communities and strategic partners in a manner that is open and transparent in all actions related to advancing FNESS' mandate;
- Courage and passion**—believing in what we are doing and who we are serving by demonstrating strength and curiosity while determining the most beneficial actions with First Nations communities;
- Engaged**—having committed and professional employees who bring competence and enthusiasm to all of their work on behalf of First Nations communities;
- Integrative**—promoting First Nations community health, safety and well-being while protecting, recognizing and utilizing Indigenous knowledge, customs, protocols and Western practices at the community and landscape levels;

Integrity and empathy—being consistent and accountable for all organizational actions, assessing and adapting (as needed) which includes recognizing and caring about the challenges, concerns and related structural and coastal/marine fire, emergency, and forest fuel and wildland fire management issues facing First Nations communities;

Innovation—providing credible and leading edge structural and coastal/marine fire, emergency, and forest fuel and wildland fire management programs and services that are a model for other Indigenous communities at the provincial, national and international levels;

Mutual respect—acknowledging and understanding how we take care of one another, the land, the First Nations communities that we work with and other resources in our environment. This includes respect for First Nations' histories, land use rights and decision-making authorities and related cultural protocols; and

Sustainability—continuing to utilize the land and its resources in a healthy and respectful manner which is both adaptable and responsive to the protection of First Nations communities and corresponding social and cultural customs and practices.

Strategic Planning Approach

The *Balanced Scorecard* methodology was utilized for the FNESS strategic planning process. This particular strategic planning methodology has been successfully applied in planning efforts at local, regional, provincial and national levels. The *Scorecard* methodology provides a common terminology that is widely accepted and understood, particularly with organizations that are engaging in cross-jurisdictional issues where involvement of Indigenous communities was paramount for effective program and service delivery.

The FNESS strategic planning approach involved three phases:

Phase #1. Developing the strategy—Strategy mapping sessions (April 26, 2017 and April 28, 2017) were held at the FNESS regional offices in North Vancouver, BC and Kamloops, BC where we developed an organizational strategy map¹;

Phase #2. Refining the strategy—The FNESS Board of Directors and staff refined the draft plan and its components by providing their guidance and advice on how FNESS might improve the likelihood of success (May and June 2017); and

Phase #3. Finalizing the strategy—Based on the strategic planning sessions and supplementary guidance that were received from the FNESS Board of Directors and staff, the organization-wide strategic plan was finalized. Implementation plans were subsequently developed by each of the FNESS departments—in consultation with the FNESS Executive Director and Board of Directors (post June 2017) as a means of setting specific actions and performance targets to achieve FNESS' organizational objectives.

As a starting point for the FNESS strategic planning process, the following organizational documents were reviewed:

- Caverley, N., Langlois, B., Cunningham, B., & MacGregor, J. (in press). *Final report – Indigenous leadership in structural firefighting: Developing tomorrow's leaders in British Columbia*. Kamloops, BC: First Nations' Emergency Services Society;
- FireSmart Canada website materials (includes web pages on British Columbia and the Community Recognition Program);
- FNESS *Constitution and By-Laws*;
- FNESS strategic planning notes;
- FNESS website materials (includes web pages on organizational departments, Board of Directors and staff composition, annual reports and previous strategic plan);
- Langlois, B., Caverley, N., Krishnaswamy, A., MacGregor, J.N., Cunningham, J.B., Carlson, M., Eustache, J., & Strobl, K. (2012). *Final report – Safeguarding our Indigenous communities: Measuring the health and safety culture of Aboriginal fire crews and emergency service personnel in British Columbia*. Kamloops, BC: First Nations' Emergency Services Society; and
- Union of BC Municipalities website materials (includes Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative).

¹ The April 2017 strategic planning session was facilitated and coordinated externally by an organizational development/management consulting firm retained by the FNESS.

In considering the vision and objectives that were required for the FNESS organizational strategic plan, four perspectives were considered:

Community: What value must we deliver to our communities?

Finance: If our strategy is to succeed, how must we operate financially?

Process/Program: What processes and programs will we need to deliver those community values?

Learning and Growth: How do we leverage and sustain FNESS' human, technical and other resources?

Please refer to Figure 1 for an outline of FNESS' organization-wide strategic planning framework.



Figure 1. FNESS organizational strategic planning framework

Priorities, Goals and Objectives

Priorities

Over the next three years, FNESS identified four organizational priorities to focus on:

Organizational and business development. As a high performing team, the FNESS Board of Directors and staff are effective and engaged in program development, implementation and associated service delivery to First Nations communities in the areas of structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management. Adding value to the overall organization includes, but is not limited to, managing and administering funds entrusted by donors/funders and the Governments of BC and Canada to advance FNESS' organizational mandate, diversifying funding sources (including the charitable tax status designation), expanding strategic partnerships and engaging in grant and proposal development seeking funds at the local, provincial and national levels. The FNESS Board and staff collectively foster an environment and workplace culture that encourages innovation, professionalism and commitment to the organization as a whole—including the FNESS membership;

Risk mitigation. It is paramount for First Nations communities to actively engage in risk mitigation as it pertains to structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management in concert with adjoining jurisdictions. Structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management risk mitigation assistance via FNESS includes, but is not limited to, assessing hazards and recommending mitigation activities to improve community health, safety and protection in rural, urban, remote, northern and isolated First Nations communities throughout BC;

Capacity development (includes training and skills development). The ability to manage, implement and sustain various dimensions of structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management in First Nations communities requires access to human, financial and technical resources through the recruitment, retention and development of a professional and experienced group of individuals. An effective practice is to engage multidisciplinary team members with diverse competencies that can provide comprehensive structural and coastal/ marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management programs to First Nations communities. Partnerships aid in leveraging resources, increasing the opportunities for success through relationship building, facilitation, and knowledge sharing amongst and between First Nations communities; and

Research development. Research development aids in increasing awareness and acceptance of structural and coastal/ marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management program delivery, and encouraging the design and subsequent implementation of integrated First Nations emergency services, approaches, tools and resources. Therefore, there is a need to collect, analyze and share data and related information about structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management with First Nations communities and identified strategic partners.

Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: FNESS provides timely, accessible and culturally congruent member services

Objectives:

C1. Communities are engaged as partners with FNESS to design and implement effective regional all-hazard emergency plans and skills development (includes training) that reduce threats and respect community values.

C2. Communities support and work with FNESS to develop and sustain effective response capability that operates in a regional framework.

C2a. Structural and coastal/marine fire services

C2b. Forest fuel and wildland fire management

C2c. Emergency management

C3. We increase our membership communications and outreach.

C4. We strengthen communities' capacity to lead and collaborate on regional initiatives.

C4a. Structural and coastal/marine fire services

C4b. Forest fuel and wildland fire management

C4c. Emergency management

Goal #2: FNESS engages in strategic financial and business development

Objectives:

F1. We are accountable for our results and deliver good value for dollar.

F2. Our funding is based on sound planning and effective use of resources and partnerships.

F3. We diversify our funding streams to support our services and community outreach endeavours.

F3a. Structural and coastal/marine fire services capacity and skills development

F3b. Forest fuel and wildland fire management capacity and skills development

F3c. Emergency management capacity and skills development

Goal #3: FNESS manages and coordinates programs in the delivery of risk mitigation, planning, response and recovery

Objectives:

P1. We regularly communicate with communities to identify all-hazard threats, needs and priorities.

P2. We utilize innovative research, decision support tools and access data to inform policy and program decision-making (includes evaluating and monitoring our programs and services).

P3. We integrate communities' participation (includes cultural traditions and practices) into our service planning, program delivery and related approaches.

Goal #4: FNESS enhances staff and organizational capacity development and sustainability which supports learning and growth

Objectives:

L1. We leverage our experience across departments and jurisdictions to improve access and delivery of programs and services to communities.

L1a. Structural and coastal/marine fire services capacity and skills development

L1b. Forest fuel and wildland fire management capacity and skills development

L1c. Emergency management capacity and skills development

L2. We recruit, develop and retain skilled staff while maintaining cultural diversity.

L2a. Recruitment and selection

L2b. Training and development

L2c. Rewards and recognition

FNESS 2017—2020 Balanced Scorecard Strategy Map



Monitoring

In general, we will review, on an biannual basis, the *2017—2020 FNESS Strategic Plan* and measure our progress in achieving the vision and delivering on the mission and associated objectives.

In early 2019, FNESS will formally review the *2017—2020 FNESS Strategic Plan* to re-assess our vision, mission, values and objectives. When necessary, this strategic roadmap for our charitable not-for-profit organization will be modified to ensure that it remains applicable to the current needs, risks and priorities of First Nations communities.

Also, the implementation of our corresponding departmental plans will be monitored through quarterly updates and related progress reports for the FNESS Executive Director, FNESS Board of Directors and funders (as requested). The overall operations of FNESS will be overseen by the respective FNESS department managers with leadership guidance and support from the FNESS Executive Director.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The actions needed to achieve our FNESS organization-wide objectives require partnerships and collaborations. Our FNESS Board of Directors and staff continue to build relationships amongst a diverse network of organizations and communities collaborating on strategic initiatives within and across all FNESS departments.

Our organization-wide objectives pertaining to partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborations are as follows:

Community

- Build collaborative agreements with organizations that support/align with key FNESS priorities and values;
- Strengthen our personal and professional relationships with First Nations communities—a unique aspect to our organizational projects, programs and service delivery; and
- Develop positive working relationships with various levels of government (municipal/ regional/provincial/federal—includes tri-party and interagency committees), related industries and third parties (e.g., academia, non-governmental organizations—NGOs, professional associations, philanthropic organizations, media).

Finance

- Obtain adequate resources (human, financial and technical) and related contributions for us to implement our organization-wide strategic plan and annual departmental work plans.

Process

- Continue to be a direct participant, catalyst or partner to advance FNESS' vision, mission and objectives; and
- Utilize our organizational networks to advance our priorities in organizational and business development, risk mitigation, capacity development (includes training and skills development) and research development.

Learning and growth

- Identify champion (s) for each of FNESS' priority areas; and
- Provide proactive education (training and skills development) to First Nations communities about structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel management, and emergency management—integrating Indigenous and Western practices and related approaches.

Conclusion

Overall, the *2017—2020 FNESS Strategic Plan* serves as a roadmap for the next three years. The organization-wide strategic plan emphasizes our priorities and objectives that we intend to achieve. Our vision highlights the importance of facilitating the coordinated delivery of culturally congruent, timely and accessible structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management programs that build capacity and ensure First Nations communities are healthy and safe.

As a leader and collaborator in First Nations-specific structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management initiatives, we continue to partner with First Nations communities, Government (municipal/regional/provincial/ federal—includes tri-party and interagency committees), related industries and third parties (e.g., academia, non-governmental organizations—NGOs, professional associations, philanthropic organizations and media) to advance our mandate².

FNESS strives to be a recognized organizational and service delivery model for Indigenous communities in BC.

² Any industries and related organizations that have an investment in First Nations structural and coastal/marine fire services, forest fuel and wildland fire management, and emergency management.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

All hazards approach. In relation to emergency management, this approach calls for an organization to work toward hazard prevention while simultaneously preparing for the unexpected emergencies and unforeseen situations that can occur in communities.

Capacity development. The process of developing knowledge, skills and abilities to empower First Nations communities and our People to participate in any or all aspects of decision-making at the local, regional, provincial and national levels.

FireSmart. FireSmart uses preventative measures to reduce wildfire threat to communities while balancing the benefits of wildfire on the landscape. FireSmart helps protect homes and communities from the threat of wildfire. For more information about FireSmart Canada, visit www.firesmartcanada.ca.

First Nations. Indigenous people of Canada, both Status and Non-Status who reside on or off reserve (aka. First Peoples of Canada). This term is also used in reference to Indigenous communities.

Fuel management. The process of changing forest fuels to reduce aggressive fire behaviour. This may include treatments such as thinning, spacing and pruning trees, and removal of needles and woody debris from the forest floor. The intent is to reduce fuel load in the forest and reduce the potential for devastating wildfires.

Hazard. Hazard can be loosely thought of as the product of risk, vulnerability, exposure and the capacity of humans to respond to extreme conditions. Typically, hazard refers to an unplanned or unwanted natural, a human-caused fire or a prescribed fire that threatens to escape. Hazards include, but are not limited to, chemical emergency, drought, earthquake, structural and marine fires, flood, influenza, landslides, wildfires and winter storms.

Indigenous knowledge. Local and culturally-specific knowledge Indigenous people gain through generations of social, physical and spiritual understanding of the world and associated practical experience. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is unique to a given culture, location or society.

Mission statement. A brief overview of FNESS' fundamental purpose as a charitable not-for-profit society.

Priorities. Specific themes that represent major components of the strategy.

Risk. A measure of the probability of occurrence and consequences of a wildfire event. Probability includes factors such as ignition potential, fire behaviour and suppression capability while consequence includes factors such as air quality, urban interface, biodiversity and recreation use. The risk of a given area is often used as criteria for determining priority for operational fuel treatments. It is important to note that risk is not the same as threat.

Threat. A threat focuses only on fire behaviour and the fuel, weather, topography and (if applicable) structural components of the threat assessment. Threat does not account for any consequences of a wildfire event.

Transportation safety. This includes, but is not limited to, safety pertaining to marine, pipeline, rail, aviation and related modes of transportation.

Values. Guiding principles, ideals, aspirations and beliefs that serve as a foundation in how FNESS carries out work with First Nations communities.

Vision. A summary statement of FNESS' aspirations and how we want to be viewed by First Nations communities and the broader public.



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We acknowledge that we are located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Squamish Nation.

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We would like to acknowledge that we are located on the traditional territory of Tk'emlups te Secwepemc.

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