



# the quarterly responder

Volume 3 Issue 2 | June 2023

## FNESS Indigenous Firefighter Competition

Let the games begin!

The FNESS Indigenous Firefighter Competition was held on the beautiful lands of the Penticton Indian Band on June 3, 2023. Thank you to Chief Greg Gabriel for inviting FNESS and all the teams, trainers, families and supporters to your territory.

An unprecedented TWELVE teams vied for the grand prize - a spot to compete at the Nationals. Prior to the competition, the Fire Services department coordinated two days of hands-on firefighter training with support from the Penticton Fire Department and the Penticton Indian Band. Fire departments went through 14 training stations including live fire, fire streams, forcible door entry, pumps and pumping, and more!

FNESS would like to thank all the teams and firefighters who participated in this year's events and represented their communities with pride: Saik'uz First Nation, Witset First Nation, Tl'azt'en Nation, Heiltsuk Nation, Hagwilget Village First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Gingolx Village Government, Takla Lake Nation, Gitanyow First Nation, and Tla'amin Nation.

Congratulations to the winners: First Place - Saik'uz; Second Place - Witset; Third Place - Heiltsuk; Most Sportsmanlike - Tla'amin.



***"Each fire department that attended had three great days together. They worked hard and represented their community with integrity and pride throughout the training and competition days. We know that each member left the three days with new friendships, knowledge, and more confidence as firefighters. These firefighters are vital to community safety, and we were honoured to assist in the training."***

**Nathan Combs, Fire Services Manager**

## Team Leader Updates

### FIRE SERVICES

Nathan Combs



Amma Sa'/Hello, Fire Services is grateful to have engaged with communities this past quarter and increase fire safety for our First Nation community members.

As of April 1st, our department members have supported nations through community first aid, exterior operations training, driver pump operator courses, fire safety assessments, fire extinguisher training, youth bootcamps, governance with Chief and Council around the province as well have hosted the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Indigenous Firefighter Competition alongside two days of hands on training. The Fire Services department is committed to building capacity to further assist our nations and protect communities.

### **2023 Indigenous Firefighter Competition** - (see cover story)

**Community First Aid** - The Fire Services department have been delivering first aid to communities around the province! The intent of this course is to train community members in basic first aid, CPR Level C, and the use of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). The program is for all community members, not exclusive to fire departments.

**Sechelt Youth Firefighter Bootcamp** - On April 5-6th of 2023, FNESS in partnership with Shishalh Nation, and the Sechelt Fire Department hosted a youth firefighter bootcamp to 20 First Nations youth. Students went over fire prevention, fire extinguisher training, forcible door entry, auto excavation, hose work, dumpster and vehicle fires, tower rides, search and rescue exercises, team relays, and more! The Youth Firefighter Bootcamps have been very successful in showing youth that firefighting is an option for our Indigenous youth, both as a career option and in a volunteer capacity. The youth are the future of the fire services, thank you future firefighters for attending!



Hamiyaa 'nii'y loosi'm/I thank you

## MITIGATION

Quentin Nelson, FIT



Weyt-k, Hello. The Mitigation department supports all BC First Nations in their journey to increase community resiliency, reduce wildfire risk and build capacity to carry out prevention and mitigation initiatives. Many First Nations are impacted by the threat and risk of loss to community structures, values, and assets because of wildfires. Mitigation supports community access to funding through planning, education, and implementation of wildfire risk reduction activities. Our team works with provincial and federal partners, as well as other agencies, to provide funding that enables this work to be accomplished and is in alignment with the phases of Emergency Management.

We strive to continue working together, building stronger relationships, and collaborating with our BC First Nation communities. The Mitigation

department has continued to support applications into the Community Resiliency Investment program and our ISC Operational Fuel Treatment, FireSmart™ and Cultural and Prescribed Fire programs. Our wildland firefighter training program and wildland fire equipment purchasing program continue to build traction and interest amongst our First Nation communities in BC. Our in-person community engagements have allowed us to hear what Nations needs are and how our programs can align with their goals in increasing community resiliency. As we continue to grow, building our internal capacity and expanding external instructor capacity, so will our services and the support we can provide to Nations.

### Current Program Funding Available

1. 2022-2023 FNESS-ISC On-Reserve Programs (ISC-Federal)  
<https://www.fness.bc.ca/resource/firesmart-and-fuels-isc/>  
Applications for these program streams are still being accepted – please feel free to contact us.
2. 2023 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports Program (UBCM-Provincial)  
<https://www.fness.bc.ca/resource/firesmart-and-fuels-cri/>  
The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire. Program materials are available, and the 2023 intake opened October 1, 2022.
3. \*NEW\* 2022-2023 Wildland Fire Equipment Purchasing Program (FNESS-ISC)  
<https://www.fness.bc.ca/resource/wildfire-division/>  
Although this program is currently oversubscribed, Expressions of Interest are still being accepted and we are working hard to ensure future intakes are available. Thank you to all the communities that participated to ensure your community is prepared. Stay tuned for future funding opportunities.
4. Wildland Firefighter Training  
<https://www.fness.bc.ca/resource/wildfire-division/>  
Training community members to the Type 2 Wildland Firefighter standard as designated by BC Wildfire Service. Training will be provided by a verified contractor in community and all trainer fees will be covered by FNESS directly.

We look forward to serving and being involved with our BC First Nation communities and welcome you to contact us at [mitigation@fness.bc.ca](mailto:mitigation@fness.bc.ca).

## PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY

Jim MacDonald



The first quarter has been a period of transition with some regional staff members moving from the Training department, and the Preparedness and Response department, to Preparedness. The Preparedness team will continue to offer both online and in-person emergency management training. In addition, the team will assist First Nation communities in conducting comprehensive hazard risk and vulnerability assessments which will then inform their own emergency response and recovery plans. Working alongside the other FNESS departments our team will contribute to public education campaigns and develop resources, with the result being a more prepared and resilient community.

As of May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Recovery team has become a separate department under this joint team lead. The team members continue to connect with and assist our First Nation communities in the development of their own unique Emergency Support Service team through training, either in person or via Zoom. Some of our regional staff members have been able to work alongside communities assisting evacuees through a period of uncertainty until they are able to return to their communities and begin to recover from emergency events. The emergency support community laptop program is nearing completion with mainly remote communities still to be scheduled.

As these new team's form, and collaborate, there may be challenges. That said, there will also be new programs and enhanced service delivery as a result. I am confident that our team members will rise to the occasion and work even more closely with First Nation communities.

Please continue to reach out to the FNESS staff members that you have always connected with and, in addition, please contact me directly at [jmacdonald@fness.bc.ca](mailto:jmacdonald@fness.bc.ca) with any questions regarding the above-mentioned services.

FNESS continues to offer free emergency management online training sessions (see schedule on page 6) as well as in-community sessions.



Emergency Management training in Katzie First Nation.

## RESPONSE

Jamie Svendsen



Hello from the FNESS Response Team. With the continued positive shifting of our FNESS family I am now honored to be managing our Response support team.

To say that May was a busy month for FNESS is an understatement, all our staff came to the plate and knocked it out of the park. We started in early May with our Tiger Dam trailers being deployed into the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB), Lower Nicola and Lower Similkameen. FNESS crews worked hand in hand with community members, contractors and the BC Wildfire Service setting up tubes to protect property and critical infrastructure.

As water levels started to recede in the Okanagan, Nicola and Similkameen, the northern parts of our province especially areas around Fort St. John were experiencing an early start to the fire season. During the demobilization of dams in the OKIB, requests started coming into our FNESS Kamloops office requesting Structure Protection, Mitigation and Tiger Dam Trailers to support efforts already started.

FNESS activated our EOC to a level 2 status and staff were brought in to support our teams and equipment heading north. It's the first time we have supported flooding and structure protection actions in the same area at the same time. Two FNESS structure protection trailers were positioned and used in Blueberry River, one structure protection trailer was placed in Ulkatcho, we also had requests for a Tiger Dam trailer in Kitsumkalum and Gitwangak. FNESS also sent two mitigation trailers into Ulkatcho and Blueberry River. All these units were supported by local community members and FNESS staff.

The end of May things started to wind down and crews, trailers and equipment started making its way back to the Kamloops office for inspection, fixing, cleaning, and restocking. Our FNESS casual staff have done an amazing job getting the trailers back in working order, hats off to them. Our current inventory consists of 1 Flood Response, 6 Tiger Dam, 6 Fuel Mitigation, and 7 Structure Protection trailers. Thanks to our Maintenance and Equipment Specialist, Brian Lauzon, for all his work supporting our trailers. FNESS staff also supported local Emergency Operation Centres, Emergency Support Services and Recovery activities to several communities including Rapid Damage Assessments in the Okanagan.

FNESS response team members continue to provide structure protection training, WSPP-115, to communities. We have received positive feedback from all the Nations that have participated in the training and we continue to receive training requests.

Our team has also started to assist communities with the development of structure defense plans, this is new to FNESS, and we are currently developing mapping and data to support these plans. If you require information on response, training or structure defense planning please contact [response@fness.bc.ca](mailto:response@fness.bc.ca)

# FREE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ONLINE TRAINING SESSIONS

## ON-LINE COURSE SCHEDULES

### Emergency Management and Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Series

Every Thursday from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm resuming July 13, 2023

- July 13: Introduction to Emergency Management
- July 20: Incident Command System
- July 27: EOC Director
- August 3: Liaison Officer
- August 10: Information Officer
- August 17: Safety/Risk Management Officer
- August 24: Operations Section
- August 31: Planning Section
- September 7: Logistics Section
- September 14: Finance Section
- September 21: Declarations and State of Local Emergency (SOLE)
- September 28: Evacuations

### Emergency Support Services (ESS) Series

Every Thursday from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm resuming August 3, 2023

- August 3: ESS Fundamentals
- August 10: ESS Reception Centre
- August 17: Supporting Evacuees
- August 24: ESS Resources
- August 31: ESS Documentation
- September 7: Worker Care
- September 14: Personal and Family Preparedness
- September 21: ESS Recovery

If you are interested in attending or require more information,  
please contact the FNESS Team at [training@fness.bc.ca](mailto:training@fness.bc.ca)

## Community Highlight - Skidegate

A big thank you to Fire Chief Kyle Marshall of the Skidegate Volunteer Fire Department for hosting FNESS as Fire Services Instructors Reo Jerome and Tim Mills provided training for the Driver Pump Operator Program and the Community First Aid Course to community members.

### Driver Pump Operator Program

The three day Driver Pump Operator Program took place June 25-27, 2023. Six volunteer firefighters participated. Skills learned were: Apparatus Maneuvering through a skills course, Safe Driving through the community, Water Supplies, Pumping Water from the booster tank and hydrant, Master Streams, producing Foam, Drafting water from a static source, Pump Operator Hydraulics, Fire Dynamics and Tactics.



### Community First Aid Course

The Community First Aid course took place on June 29-30, 2023. There were 10 participants in total from the Skidegate and Masset communities, including youth. On completion of the course, an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and first aid kit were presented to Fire Chief Kyle Marshall.



# HEAT EXHAUSTION



Skin rash



Muscle cramps



Dizziness or fainting



Nausea or vomiting



Heavy sweating



Headache



Rapid breathing and heartbeat



Extreme thirst



Dark urine and decreased urination



If you experience any of these symptoms during extreme heat, immediately **move to a cool place and drink liquids**; water is best.

What are the **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS** of heat illness?

# HEAT STROKE

High body temperature



Confusion and lack of coordination



Dizziness/ Fainting



No sweating, but very hot, red skin

Heat stroke is a medical emergency! **Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.** While waiting for help—cool the person right away by:

- moving them to a cool place, if you can;
- applying cold water to large areas of the skin; and
- fanning the person as much as possible.



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Wildfires are unpredictable and you never know when you or your community might be affected. However, we can all be proactive by taking the recommended steps before it happens.

## 5 STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR FAMILY FOR A WILDFIRE EMERGENCY

Being prepared for an emergency or evacuation not only reduces the risk of injury, loss, or damage— it also helps reduce stress and anxiety because you've already put a plan in place to protect everyone and everything important to you.

### Step 1: Make an emergency plan

Ensure your family knows what to do in an emergency by creating an emergency plan. Prepared BC has plenty of helpful tips and even created a fill-in-the-blanks [Home Emergency Plan](#) for anyone to use. It only takes 20-minutes to create a plan so setup a time for everyone in your household to get together and start planning! It's also recommended to let someone outside your home know your plan in case you are unreachable during the emergency.

### Step 2: Make Grab and Go Bags

In an emergency, it's important to have some supplies ready to grab and go in case you must quickly leave your home. The list below is a guideline to help you prepare and pack your bags. Most emergency organizations recommend that you prepare to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours so make sure to pack accordingly. If you have a vehicle, it's a good idea to have some of these items in there in case you're on the road during an emergency. Just make sure there's nothing in your vehicle kit that could melt or explode in the heat and ruin other items. And don't forget to make a grab and go bag for your pets too!

#### Basic Emergency Kit Checklist:

- Pen and notepad
- Phone charger and battery bank
- Flashlight – wind up or battery powered (and extra batteries)
- Radio – wind up or battery powered (and extra batteries)
- First Aid Kit
- Personal toiletries and medication
- Seasonal clothing
- Extra keys for house and vehicle
- Food – nonperishable such as energy bars, dried and canned food (and a manual can opener)
- Water – at least 2 litres of water per person per day
- Cash and change
- Important family documents – ID (passport, status card, health card, driver's license), insurance, papers bank records
- Whistle
- Emergency blanket
- Emergency plan and contact information

Visit Prepared BC for more information on [building an emergency kit and grab-and-go bag](#).

### Step 3: Protect your home

Firesmart™ your home by reading and following [FireSmart BC's Landscaping Guide](#).

### Step 4: Know your evacuation stages

Depending on the severity of the situation, an Evacuation Alert or Order may be issued. It's important to know the difference and to always follow the advice and direction of your local authorities.

- **Evacuation Alert:** Be ready to leave on short notice.
- **Evacuation Order:** Leave the area immediately. You are at risk. Make sure to check in at an Emergency Support Services (ESS) reception centre. Contact family and friends and let them know where you are and that you are safe.
- **Tactical Evacuation:** This happens when a sudden threat to life requires immediate action and there is no time to prepare or issue written warnings. These types of evacuations are often coordinated by the RCMP or local police, with assistance from other agencies.
- **Evacuation Rescind:** All is now safe and you can return home.

### Step 5: Download Prepared BC's Wildfire Preparedness Guide

The [Wildfire Preparedness Guide](#) will help you prepare for what to do before, during, and after a wildfire.

## 5 STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR COMMUNITY FOR A WILDFIRE EMERGENCY

Preparing your community for an emergency can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. Completing the tasks below can help your community be prepared in case of a wildfire emergency.

### Step 1: Create a Planning Committee

Creating a planning committee helps your community determine personnel, assign roles, and assign responsibilities. Key members of this committee may include representatives from:

- First Nations departments (e.g., health, finance, planning)
- Local law enforcement and first responders (e.g., fire, ambulance, emergency social services)
- Relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., health authority, school district)

### Step 2: Create a Community Emergency Management Plan

Create or locate an emergency plan for your community and ensure it is up to date. The [Emergency Management Planning Guide for Local Authorities and First Nations](#) is a great resource if you need help.

### Step 3: Create a community map

Creating a community map helps identify high hazard and high-risk areas such as:

- Wildland-urban interface zones
- Infrastructure (e.g., roads, communication systems, water, and power lines)
- Water sources
- Elder's homes
- Community centres
- Places of special interest (e.g., graveyard, sacred places)

### Step 4: Create contact lists

Contact lists help identify emergency resources and community contacts. In your community contact lists, we also recommend compiling a list of community members that may require extra assistance such as elders and people with disabilities.

### Step 5: Create relationships with partner/host communities

It's important to know who you can lean on for support during an emergency. Build relationships with your neighbours, both inside and outside of your nation. Reach out to other communities and develop mutual agreements to provide and receive assistance to one another during emergency situations.



# HOW TO CONSERVE WATER

## while BC is warned of drought conditions



### 10 WATER CONSERVATION TIPS FOR HOME

#### Tip #1 Limit outdoor watering

Water flower beds, gardens, and lawns sparingly. Don't know if you've watered enough? Put a clean, empty tuna can on your lawn while it's being watered and once it's full, it's had enough water.

#### Tip #2 Water in the morning or evening

Your plants and lawn will receive more water when the sun is low in the sky. This is because water evaporates quickly during the day when it's hot or windy.

#### Tip #3 Plant drought-tolerant vegetation

If you're planning a new garden, consider plants and flowers that survive and thrive with little water. They also require less care and you don't have to worry about them as much when you're away or on vacation!

#### Tip #4 Take shorter showers

Showers should be less than five minutes long when trying to conserve water. You can also shut it off when you're not using it like letting your shampoo or conditioner sit. Showers also use less water than baths so choose a shower over a bath when you can.

#### Tip #5 Fill it up

Run full loads of laundry and full loads in the dishwasher. Dishwashers are more water-efficient than washing by hand, but if you can't wait until the dishwasher is full and need a few dishes cleaned, it's best to wash them by hand.

#### Tip #6 Turn off the tap

It's not usually necessary to leave the tap on during many everyday tasks. Remember to not leave the water running when you're brushing your teeth, doing dishes, washing your face, or shaving.

#### Tip #7 Put it in the fridge

If you like cold water from the tap, fill up a jug and keep it in the fridge. You'll no longer need to waste water by running the tap until the water is cold and it will save time as well.

#### Tip #8 Check plumbing

Water can be wasted by leaky toilets, sinks, and taps both inside and outside the home. Regularly check your home for leaks and consider installing water-efficient shower heads, taps, and toilets.

#### Tip #9 Mindful cleaning

Clean your driveway or patios with a broom instead of a hose. If you have a vehicle and like to keep it clean, it might not be necessary to wash it as often. If you do need to clean it, consider bringing it to a car wash instead of washing it at home because some car washes recycle water and are more water-efficient.

#### Tip #10 Recycle water

Use buckets or rain barrels to collect rainwater for plants, animals, or crops. Depending on where you live, you might be surprised to see how much water you can gather during a rainfall!

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For information about water restrictions specific to your area, visit your First Nation's website or follow them on social media if that's where they share information. You can also find information on local government websites or on the interactive BC Drought Levels Map.

[BC Drought Levels Map](#) (Government of BC)  
[Drought Information](#) (Government of BC)  
[Water Conservation Tips](#) (Government of BC)

Report wildfires, unattended campfires or violations of regulations by calling \*5555 on a cell or 1-800-663-5555 toll-free.



## CONTACT US

**First Nations' Emergency Services Society**



## **FNESS After Hours Assistance Line**

**1.888.822.3388** or [dutymanager@fness.bc.ca](mailto:dutymanager@fness.bc.ca)

### **Kamloops Office**

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) Traditional Territory  
A274 Halston Road, Kamloops, BC V2H 1P7  
Tel: 250.377.7600 | Fax: 250.377.7610

### **Vancouver Office**

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