

WILDFIRE



This report is produced by Bala Krishna and Michael Fisher, at the request of SVHI Board of Directors in May 2021.

This report is a **guideline only**. The information contained herein is from sources deemed to be reliable, however, in all circumstances, this plan may be overruled, by any local, municipal, provincial, or federal organisations

VENABLES VALLEY FIRE RESPONSE & SAFETY PLAN



Venables valley and the surrounding area, has been identified as a “wildfire high risk zone” by the ministry of forests. In the almost 40 years of our community, we have had numerous close calls; most recently we have had 3 fires in 5 days.

It has become obvious that we, as a community need to take steps to address this issue. It is arguably the biggest and most urgent issue that we are faced with.

The following is a draft and framework for us to follow. As a draft and framework it invites all residents of the valley, to have input. We have divided the issue into 3 timeframes.....

Short (immediate), medium (action this summer) and long term (next spring and beyond).

For the moment we are focusing mostly on the immediate issues, in anticipation of more fire episodes this summer. We need to be proactive in maximising the the effectiveness of our response to fires. Certainly we have demonstrated that we have committed and motivated membership.

While focussing on the immediate, we can still be thinking longer term and planning for next year and beyond.

This outline is to provide the Venables Valley residents with a plan to defend against, and attack wildfires in the valley.

The plan is designed for us to:

- **Be first responders to any fire, domestic or wildfire.**
- **To contain any fires, until professional BC government help arrives, at which time we hand over responsibility to them.**
- **Expect that Government response time may vary, and be prepared to attend fires for at least 2 hours or longer, and possibly overnight.**

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1). Fire chief

Upon detection of a fire, the fire chief will verify that it is a fire and not a false alarm. He / she will then remain at the bottom of the hill, and conduct all operations

1. Fire chief will assign first responders (scouts), who will equip themselves and head off to the fire immediately taking with them basic firefighting kit, and 2 radios with dedicated “firefighter” channels. (at least 2 radios in case they get separated). Direct contact with fire chief. No other access to these radios.
2. The scouts will locate the fire, and report all details to the Fire Chief below, with pictures , if possible, but also including what they need heavy lifters to bring up to the fire.
3. Fire chief to relay to BCWFS, his findings. (one call only from him, to BCWFS, not 20 from everyone else).
4. Fire chief determines who goes in second responder group (heavy lifters). They assemble in staging area, supervised by Fire Chief. Ready to go to fire with heavy items (chainsaws, water packs etc), when instructed to do so by the fire chief.
5. Staging area. Fire chief will assemble 3 teams at staging/control centre: Firefighting group, Community Liaison group, First aid group. No other valley residents, or “lookey-loos” !!
6. Fire chief will ensure all equipment is in staging area for firefighter support.
7. Fire chief will make all major decisions involved in fighting the fire, in a safe manner.

2). First responder firefighters

Also called scouts. Coordinate with Fire chief on dedicated independent Radios. No other access to these radios except through Fire chief. Fire chief will organize all support requests coming from the firefighters at the fire.

3). Community Liaison group

1. Group to choose Community Liaison supervisor
2. CL group representative remains at the staging area, and gets instruction from the Fire Chief only.
3. Communicate regular fire status updates to valley residents via Social media, telephone, phone tree etc.
4. Must not use the same radios or channel, as frontline firefighters. No communication allowed between Community liaison and firefighters – communication with firefighters must only be through fire chief.
5. CL group arranges for “honker” to drive the valley to let those who have not heard, that there is a fire.

4). First aid group

1. First Aid group sets up at the staging area.
2. Arrange for first aid equipment delivery to staging area, and set up.
3. Delegate any first aid, or medical tasks, as needed
4. Prepare station for possible injuries.
5. Prepare for possible ambulance transportation off the site in case of hospitalization. Identify available vehicles and drivers
6. Coordinate with fire chief to provide such help
7. Oversee the firefighter’s roll call - “who’s in” and “who’s out” of the fire area.



Venables Valley first responders at hillside night time fire July 2021

Back packs for firefighters

Must be prepacked and ready to go. Preferably frame packs if possible

- Whistle
- Flagging tape for trail marking
- Personal first aid kits
- Hard hats with strap
- Reflective visi clothing
- Proper footwear (Goretex etc)
- Tight weaved long sleeved cotton clothes
- Safety glasses
- Headlamps with spare batteries
- Leather gloves - 2
- Extra socks, extra clothing for warmth
- Water
- Snacks
- Knife
- Radios (Dedicated exclusively for communication with each other and fire chief only. Cell phones not to be used.
- Bug spray
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Masks



Fire types

1).HILLSIDE FIRE

Fire chief will assemble 3 teams at staging / control centre:

- Firefighting group
- Community Liaison group
- First aid group

First group up the hill

- Scouts with backpacks and basic tools
- Report back to Fire chief on status of fire (size, fuel, slope, access issues, GPS location if possible, nearest water, etc.)

Second group up the hill

- Support group bringing up the hill to the scouts, the equipment requested by Scouts (incl. heavier and bulky items like buckets, chain saws etc)

Ongoing support

Dedicated radio contact between firefighters at the fire, and Fire chief who will organize all support requests from the firefighters at the fire.

No others will provide support, unless requested to do so by the Fire Chief.

This will keep the response focused.

All support tools and equipment will be at the staging area, ready for use.



Venables Valley fire, at night. July 2021

2). VALLEY FIRE

First on scene

- Must allow Venables Valley Firefighting trucks access. Roads must be clear from other vehicles, to allow access.
- Truck crews go immediately to fire.
- Fire chief arrives and takes control of all activities

Ongoing support

Dedicated radio contact between firefighters at the fire, and Fire chief who will organize all support requests from the firefighters at the fire.

No others will provide support, unless requested to do so by the Fire Chief.

This will keep the response focused.

All support tools and equipment will be at the staging area, ready for use.



First responder truck

First responder equipped trucks

4 trucks are to be prepared for first response equipped as follows:

2 are presently ready to go.

******* We need 2 more 4 wheel drive short box pickups to equip.*******

Truck # 1 Mark Greenberg (Ready to go)

- 250 gallon water tank
- Pump
- Generator
- Hoses
- Shovels, picks and buckets
- Radio, dedicated for communication with Fire chief.
- Search lights mounted on truck for night firefighting
- Backpack ready to go.
- Binoculars
- Gloves
- Flashlight
- Water

Truck # 2 Jim McComb (Ready to go)

- 250 gallon water tank
- Pump
- Generator
- Hoses
- Shovels, picks and buckets
- Radio, dedicated for communication with Fire chief.
- Search lights mounted on truck for night firefighting
- Backpack ready to go.
- Binoculars
- Flashlight
- Gloves
- Water

Truck # 3 (Needed)

- 250 gallon water tank
- Pump
- Generator
- Hoses
- Shovels, picks and buckets
- Radio, dedicated for communication with Fire chief.
- Search lights mounted on truck for night firefighting
- Backpack ready to go.
- Binoculars
- Flashlight
- Gloves
- Water

Truck # 4 (Needed)

- 250 gallon water tank
- Pump
- Generator
- Hoses
- Shovels, picks and buckets
- Radio, dedicated for communication with Fire chief.
- Search lights mounted on truck for night firefighting
- Backpack ready to go.
- Binoculars
- Flashlight
- Gloves
- Water



3 x 250 gallon totes

Water refill access locations:

- Bhumi farms powerhouse
- East side of lake near “A” frame
- Dam at Hare Krishna Lane
- West side of school at Damen Creek lot 17 water tank
- School hydrant
- South end of home lake
- Gold mine tank
- No name lake . North end reservoir
- Anu and Sanjeev property hydrant
- Lilamitra new pump from lake
- Fisher’s water tank 4461
- Community pump

Other equipment

- Ropes
- First aid Burn bandages
- Collapsible buckets - 8
- Chain saws and fuel - 2
- Pulaskis - 6
- All tools sharpened
- Shovels - 6
- Drone Inexpensive to begin with. If successful then review more purposeful ones.
- Grub hoes – 3
- Rakes – 2
- Reflective tape on tools
- Other.....

Storage of equipment

- **Fire season – on trucks, and in fire safety shed – yet to be funded, and located**
- Out of season in lockable dedicated shed. Key to Fire chief.



Outside resources

- **Ashcroft Ranch** – Todd Widgeon has offered us immediate use of a 3,500 gallon water truck. He has previously helped us in recent fires.
- **Basque ranch** – offer to move our cows to their property for protection during a fire.
- **J. Levesque**, Sewage treatment operator and neighbour – has offered a 3,000 gallon water truck for immediate use.
- **Ashcroft fire department**. Will come here to help with their 5,000 gallon water truck.
- **Rick Passuto**. Professional forester has offered to loan us various firefighting equipment, including 500 ft of hose.

MEDIUM TERM GOALS

Meet with town of Ashcroft to firm up support plans and their offer of water truck

Clearing undergrowth of fire fuel. Large project for our valley. Funding ?

Look at idea for a 250 gallon water tote for each house

Individual house sprinkler protection

Community water pump at Dam

Create water access and filling station map

Formal Training

Build library of road and other maps, such as water refill locations.

Start preparation for lobbying for funds from Governments

Start fundraising

Go fund me

Governments

Create website for Firefighting

LONG TERM GOALS

Prevention. Continue firesafing our individual homes

Continue to work with government and first nations to reduce fuel loads, in the surrounding crown lands.

Resolve issues of equipment storage

One or 2 tote tanks at each house for immediate water supply in case of house fire, and fast refill of our own trucks.



Venables Valley hillside fire. July 2021

NOTES & SUGGESTIONS

E & O.E.

This plan is the opinions of the authors, professional firefighters, and government departments, and is subject to change, by future more informed sources. The information contained herein is from sources deemed to be reliable, however, in all circumstances, this plan may be overruled, or by intervention by any local, municipal, provincial or federal organisation.

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