



## Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department June News



### The Threat of Wildfire:

In 2015, Anmore and Belcarra faced three significant wildland interface fires. They were contained and extinguished by our crews, but each could have resulted in catastrophic and widespread damage. With drier weather approaching and tragic stories in the headlines, we thought it timely to speak to wildfire prevention and enforcement.



Each year, the SVFD is dispatched to reports of illegal burning. Typically, these originate through phone calls to 911 from *multiple* neighbours, visitors, or park officials. Surrounded by dry forest, Belcarra and Anmore residents cannot (and typically, do not) take the risk of wildfire lightly.

### The Bottom Line:

- *The Village of Belcarra* no longer authorizes campfires on road-access properties. Burning permits for water-access properties are limited to two short periods in the months of April and October.
- *The Village of Anmore* offers campfire permits throughout the year under set stipulations
- The municipalities provide the SVFD with lists of approved fire permits. If a fire is unauthorized or if someone is contravening the conditions of a permit, the fire is extinguished and fines may be levied.
- Non-compliance is dealt with by the RCMP. If a member of the public abuses our volunteers or illegally restricts access to their property, the police are called to intervene so that we can extinguish the fire.
- If a campfire does not follow mandated size restrictions, it is illegal and fines are applicable.
- The penalties for spreading wildfire are *significant* (up to \$1 million and jail-time). A Cariboo man was fined \$860,000 in 2013 for unintentionally allowing a campfire on his property to spread elsewhere.
- **BURNING BANS MEAN ALL EXISTING PERMITS ARE SUSPENDED. NO FLAMES ANYWHERE.**

### The Public's Help:

The SVFD will respond to all reports of fire. Our members, like **Greg Winterbottom** may be unpaid, but will do everything they can to protect their communities from wildfire. Trained to the provincial standard (Wildland Firefighter Level 1), he and the rest of our 42 volunteers are dedicated to the communities' well-being.

Nevertheless, fire prevention must be a community-wide effort. We ask every resident to remain vigilant this summer and to report all dangerous incidents to 911. It only takes one dropped cigarette or one careless act to cause a tragedy that devastates everyone. Good strategies for protecting and "fire-proofing" your home from wildfire can be found at <http://bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/>. We'd appreciate help with both efforts.

Have a wonderful and safe June!

Sincerely,

Jay Sharpe (*Fire Chief*)

Dave Gregory (*Dist. Chief Anmore*)

Jol Drake (*Dist. Chief Belcarra*)

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