
NEWS RELEASE

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Province increases funding for community forest wildfire risk reduction

British Columbia –

The BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) and the Ministry of Forests have deepened their partnership to support the efforts of community forests in long-term wildfire resiliency activities and expansion of cultural and prescribed fire. New funding in the amount of \$300,000 will leverage the work of the BCCFA and the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) accomplished in the 2021 BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative. Through the initiative, 15 community forests received funding for various wildfire risk reduction focused projects and activities throughout the province.

“Over the past several years we have seen the disastrous effects wildfires had in our province,” said Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests. “BC Wildfire Service is doing incredible work collaborating with organizations across BC to increase our wildfire resilience. Now with this new partnership with the BCCFA, we are strengthening the defences of our communities against future wildfires.”

The new funding will be directed at activities focused on the community forests’ engagement in wildfire mitigation and climate change adaptation. The initiative is designed to identify ways to increase our communities’ and forests’ resiliency to wildfire, capacity to adapt to climate change, and provide opportunities for training and capacity building in intentional use of fire on the land.

“Community forests have played an important role as proponents of fuel management treatments, advocating for communities, and providing expertise and implementation capacity for fuel management in BC. As long-term, area-based tenures, community forests are well positioned to serve as research and testing grounds and as incubators of innovation,” said Jennifer Gunter, Executive Director of the BCCFA.

An initial step undertaken by the BCCFA/BCWS partnership is the development of a governance structure and a plan that will guide their work moving forward. Also this year, an assessment will be conducted of the resources and capacity development needs of community forests over the next 5 years, coupled with the identification of the barriers and challenges community forests face when planning and implementing fuel management projects. Networks will be established that emphasize peer to peer knowledge exchange, mentorship, and capacity building.

“With this new funding, the BCCFA partnership with BCWS will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of rural communities. As climate change brings more unpredictable weather and wildfire risks in the forests next to communities are increasing, collaborative efforts like these partnerships are even more important,” said Randy Spyksma, BCCFA President.

Community forests, represented by the BCCFA, are key partners in the management of forested land near communities. As community-based organizations, community forests are directly connected to local communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. They are places that are managed for multiple values on the land, with benefits that stay in the community.

Learn More:

BC Community Forest Association:

<https://bccfa.ca/>

Media contact:

Susan Mulkey

BC Community Forest Association

Senior Manager and Governance Specialist

250-353-1477

smulkey@bccfa.ca