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HELPING BASIN COMMUNITIES PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE

Trust supports nine communities with Community Wildfire Education Grants

(Columbia Basin) – 2017 and 2018 saw extreme wildfire activity with a record number of fires across BC and in the Basin. Through its [Community Wildfire Education Grants](#) the Trust is supporting the efforts of Basin communities and residents to prepare for and reduce the impacts of wildfires occurring within or adjacent to Basin communities.

“The Basin is experiencing increased risk of wildfire as our summers grow hotter and drier,” says Tim Hicks, Delivery of Benefits Senior Manager for the Trust. “We are working closely with Basin communities this year to address this reality, address challenges, and help build community resiliency in the face of wildfire.”

These grants are helping Basin communities deliver public education about wildfire risks and raising awareness about actions property owners and communities can take to mitigate the impacts of community wildfires. [Nine communities](#), including Rossland and Kimberley, have recently received support for a total of \$154,952 in funding.

Like many communities in the Basin, Rossland is a mountain town that has developed along treed slopes with some sections more at risk than others when it comes to wildfire. The City of Rossland is undertaking outreach and education activities to assist residents to reduce wildfire risks on their properties, especially in those neighbourhoods that face a higher level of interface fire risk.

“By prioritizing wildfire risk management and education by neighbourhood, we are helping to better prepare the community as a whole to mitigate against the impacts of wildfire,” says Bryan Teasdale, Chief Administrative Officer with the City of Rossland.

Last August, Kimberley residents were placed on evacuation alert when wildfire threatened the community. The City of Kimberley has completed extensive fuel management over the last several years and will now be increasing its education and training to better equip the community to mitigate against future interface fires.

“We want to ensure our residents have extensive opportunities to learn how to make their properties FireSmart,” says Scott Sommerville, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Kimberley. “This means coming at the idea of preparedness from several angles. We’ll be delivering more FireSmart assessments to homeowners, working with local vendors to help them better understand FireSmart principals so they can recommend fire resistant vegetation and building materials to homeowners, and providing educational opportunities to residents.”

Since 2012, the Trust has provided more than \$1.5 million in funding to support communities to prepare for and mitigate the risks of wildfires. The Trust is also supporting communities to enhance their efforts at reducing the risk of wildfires by supporting municipalities, First Nations communities and regional districts to:

- implement innovative approaches for reducing interface wildfire risks;
- increase public awareness about wildfire risk mitigation measures; and
- access expert input from a Wildfire Advisor, who can help communities develop, seek funding for and implement interface wildfire risk mitigation projects.

Columbia Basin Trust supports the ideas and efforts of the people in the Columbia Basin. To learn more about the Trust’s programs and initiatives, and how it helps deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to the Basin, visit ourtrust.org or call 1.800.505.8998.

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PHOTO 1: BC Wildfire Service personnel at work near Kimberley last summer.

PHOTO 2: Rossland residents are getting involved in wildfire education and mitigation activities such as thinning.

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