

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



July 10, 2019

### **New regional fire suppression equipment will better protect Cowichan communities**

**Duncan, BC** – The addition of a new Structural Protection Unit to the region’s emergency response toolkit will enable volunteer fire departments to lessen the damage of interface fires in the future.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District’s Type 2 SPU is the first regional asset of its kind, designed to be deployed during an interface fire to dampen roofs, buildings and areas around structures to help prevent sparks and embers from igniting. Through the CVRD’s Public Safety Division, the new SPU can support firefighting efforts locally and possibly be deployed to outside areas where it could assist in wildfire suppression efforts.

“This is a critical emergency management asset that directors and staff have worked towards acquiring for some time,” said Ian Morrison, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “While it’s not designed to extinguish fires, it provides an additional layer of proactive prevention and protection when we see wildfires approaching communities and threatening our homes, businesses and public infrastructure.”

Following the 2003 wildfires that devastated the interior of the province, the Auditor General of British Columbia conducted a review, with a strong recommendation that local governments and their residents take actions to prevent interface fires and mitigate their risks. Historical data shows that the proportion of human-caused fires within the CVRD is substantially greater than that of the province as a whole, accounting for roughly 90% of ignitions since 1919 versus just 40% province-wide.

The Type 2 SPU is capable of protecting 30 to 35 homes simultaneously, and includes four high pressure pumps, over 130 assorted sprinklers, over 4 kilometres of hoses of varying sizes, and personal protective clothing, among many other pieces of equipment. Also equipped with a modest workspace and bunk, responders could foreseeably keep the SPU on the scene of a fire for multiple days if required. The SPU also has the potential to generate revenue for the CVRD, as it can be rented for deployment in other regions of the province when not required at home.

For more information about emergency management and preparedness in the CVRD, including emergency alert registration and volunteer opportunities, please visit the CVRD website at <https://www.cvrld.bc.ca/86/Emergency-Management>

- 30 -

*For more information, please contact:*

Jason deJong  
Fire Rescue Services Coordinator, Public Safety Division  
250.746.2564  
[jason.dejong@cvrd.bc.ca](mailto:jason.dejong@cvrd.bc.ca)