



BRITISH COLUMBIA
FireSmart[™]

Annual Report

2022

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Message From Committee Chair

FireSmart BC has been operating under the direction of the BC FireSmart Committee since 2018. With the continuous growth and increase in program offerings, it is time that the great work accomplished each year is captured in a comprehensive and publicly published report.

The purpose of this annual report is to provide to users, shareholders, partners, and investors with a high-level overview of what FireSmart BC accomplishes each year. The report will provide transparency and open communication regarding FireSmart BC's work and will quantify what the agencies that make up the committee have accomplished through this partnership.

This annual report will focus on the growth of the team that runs FireSmart BC and the fantastic successes that we had in 2022 through the Plant Program, FireSmart BC Conference, Home Partners Program, and research advancements. The finalization of the BCFSC Strategic Plan in Q4 of 2021 allowed us to reformulate our work plan to align with FireSmart BC's new strategic themes. This alignment will facilitate the strategic growth of the program and enable FireSmart BC to continue to better meet the needs of the people that call BC home.

It is my hope that these glimpses into our past year, along with the additional information found within this report, demonstrate our ongoing commitment to community wildfire resiliency. Thank you for being part of creating a province that works, plays, and lives FireSmart. We couldn't do it without you!



Kelsey Winter,
Chair

Program Vision, Mission, and Strategy

In spring 2022, the BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) completed work on the FireSmart BC Strategic Plan 2022-2025. This document, which was the result of over a year of planning, consultation, research, and collaborative work, will be a foundational piece to guide the committee and program's activities in the years ahead. Among its contents are the program's vision, mission, and strategic goal. These key statements, which can be found below, are critical in contextualizing the overall direction of the BCFSC.

OUR MISSION

Build wildfire resiliency and reduce the negative impacts of fire for everyone in the province through FireSmart.

OUR VISION

A wildfire resilient province, where everyone works, plays and lives FireSmart.

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

Everyone in the province is aware of FireSmart, understands their role, accepts responsibility and takes action to increase wildfire resiliency.

In addition to these guiding statements, the BCFSC's activities are framed within a set of themes that give direction to the strategy and allow us to identify priorities, build work plans, and set goals and objectives.

Our Strategic Themes



EVIDENCE

Integrate research and information management to support evidence-based decision making.



ACCESS

Recognize unique needs and capacities to facilitate equitable access and outcomes.



EDUCATION

Targeted education, training and communication that empowers and mobilizes.



COLLABORATION

Collaborate with partners to build capacity, trust, and public confidence.



STRUCTURE

Build an aligned, sustainable and inclusive organizational structure.



ENGAGEMENT

Engage with all levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to support and implement policy, planning and funding.

BC FireSmart Committee Update

The BCFSC in 2022 consists of eleven voting agencies and one advisory agency. There are four standing committees that support the work of the larger committee. These standing committees operate under separate terms of references and, while they are not decision-making authorities, they guide significant FireSmart program areas and provide recommendations to the BCFSC on future actions and growth opportunities.

The 2022 standing committees are:

- Standing Committee on Research
 - » Chairs Helena Marken (BCWS) and Dean Colthorp (Langley FD)
- Standing Committee on First Nations Outreach
 - » Chair Amanda Reynolds (FNESS)
- Standing Committee on Strategic Direction
 - » Chair Gord Pratt (FESBC)
- Standing Committee on Wildfire Resilience Funding
 - » Chairs Danyta Welch (UBCM) and Quentin Nelson (FNESS)

In 2022, an external party will be conducting a full review of the organization's structure and membership, and will be providing recommendations for new members and any shifts in structure to accommodate consistent and sustainable growth.

2022 Program Highlights

It was an extremely successful and exciting year for FireSmart BC, marked by rapid growth, new partnerships, and increased public awareness and reach. Below are just a few highlights to note:

- 1. Successful launch of the FireSmart Plant Program**

Building off a successful pilot program in 2021, the FireSmart Plant Program was formally branded and rolled out to over thirty garden centres across the province. This coincided with multiple local events and considerable media coverage, along with the launch of the Online Landscaping Hub, a tool that makes FireSmart gardening and landscaping easier for homeowners across BC (and beyond).

- 2. Planned, produced, and executed our biggest spring campaign yet**

Our annual campaign, backed by illuminating consumer research, focused on the core idea that individual homeowners have the ability and responsibility to affect their own wildfire risk level. This province-wide integrated mass-media campaign featured a fresh message and broadcast-quality creative work to make an impact.

- 3. Held the inaugural FireSmart BC Conference**

The first in-person FireSmart BC conference was an incredible success. This two-day event, held in Kamloops, BC, welcomed delegates from throughout BC who represent different facets of wildfire prevention. The inaugural event sold out, ran smoothly, and featured a strong list of keynote speakers, panellists, and presenters.

4. **Exponential Growth of the Home Partners Program**

[The Home Partners Program](#) in 2022 saw widespread adoption by Local Governments and First Nations as well as continued increases in trained Wildfire Mitigation Specialists. Most importantly, there have been several key partnerships and relationships built with the insurance industry, which will serve to incentivize homeowners and propel the program to new heights in 2023.

5. **Continued expansion of the FireSmart research program**

The FireSmart research program continued to expand in 2022. One of its notable achievements was the publication and presentation of the Lytton, BC Report, authored by Jack D. Cohen, PhD. and Alan Westhaver, M.Sc. Additionally, the second year of the public perception survey was rolled out in December to track the perception of FireSmart BC using key questions for year-to-year comparison, as well as testing new ideas and concepts. To gain a better understanding of the factors leading to the ignition and loss of homes and other structures in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas, and to support the development of a post-fire examination framework, the program carried out two case-study research deployments to active fires. The program also collaborated with the Canadian Forest Service, FP Innovations, and Alberta to identify FireSmart plots and experiment design for 2023 during a research visit to the Northwest Territories.

Major Program Update

FireSmart Plant Program

The FireSmart Plant Program built considerably on its 2021 pilot program with a full scale launch in 2022. This included the development of a formal program brand and point of sale/marketing materials, the creation of the online Landscaping Hub, and a full program roll out in over thirty garden centres across the province. The program received considerable media attention as well as positive feedback from retailers and customers alike.

In 2023, the program will build upon this strong foundation, with a growing roster of both retailers and wholesalers who will be supported with expanded training and point of sale materials. Additionally, the program will receive an increased promotional budget to further drive awareness and consumer demand.

HomePartners Program

The Home Partners Program (HPP) also saw impressive growth and successful implementation across BC in 2022. There was a high degree of pickup from local governments and First Nations, as well as interest from homeowners. Additionally, solid progress was made on engaging with the insurance industry. In 2023, the program will build upon this growth and place an increasing emphasis on consumer marketing.

Local FireSmart Representatives

In 2022, the Local FireSmart Representatives (LFR) Program was another success, with additional representatives trained across BC to help support local and regional FireSmart programs. Seven virtual workshops were delivered from November 2021 to November 2022. A “LFR of the Month” section was also created on the FireSmart BC website, highlighting a representative each month and sharing learnings to support other representatives in the province. The LFR Den, a hub of resources to support representatives, was continuously updated.

FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program

The FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program also saw a shift in 2021, from a community-based program to a neighbourhood program. This change is reflective of the work being done in concentrated areas of the communities. Participation declined in 2020 and 2021 due to restrictions on social gatherings, but there was a large intake of new and renewed applications in 2022.

In 2023, we plan to evolve FireSmart BC's participation in the National program. The program will be broadened to enable inclusivity to all communities in British Columbia, recognizing that one size does not fit all.

FireSmart Coordinators

Through CRI, the FireSmart Coordinator position was created. This position has been instrumental in raising awareness of the FireSmart BC program. Coordinators have been able to create and support regional and local FireSmart programs. To date, over 100 FireSmart Coordinators are working for First Nations and local governments. Due to the growth of the program, the coordinator position has been able to fill a gap between provincial and local staff involved with the program.

In 2023, we anticipate continued growth of the FireSmart Coordinator position to more First Nations and local governments, as it will be a requirement for 2024. The Coordinator will now have the capacity to do more work with the other FireSmart positions added to CRI. This will create more opportunities and even better engagement between all three levels of support (provincial, regional, and local).

Work Plan Review

This past year also saw the creation of a newly structured [FireSmart BC work plan](#), which served to guide the day-to-day activities of the FireSmart BC team as well as its agency partner. In addition to the major programs above, the work plan included some other notable key initiatives, which also experienced significant growth in 2022.

FireSmart Education (and library) Program

In 2022, we embarked on the mission to improve the current educational resources to enable higher uptake in BC classrooms. Through a focus group of educators, and research into content creators, FireSmart BC determined the necessary improvements and contracted TC2 to develop new lessons for K-12 that correspond directly with the BC curriculum. TC2 made great headway in 2022 and is working to complete the K-6 materials by spring of 2023, then the 7-12 materials for the 2023/24 school year.

The goal of these new and improved educational resources is to increase integration in a diverse group of schools across the province and for children to be excited to share the FireSmart principles they learn with their family at home.

During the summer of 2022, the Library Program and its accompanying resources—reading lists, colouring contests, read with Ember videos, and more—was launched in the Thompson River Nicola Regional District. The program is now able to be implemented in libraries across the province as it is eligible for CRI funding. The FireSmart team will be shifting their focus toward promoting the program to local communities in the hopes that more libraries implement it in the Summer of 2023.

Internal Partner Education

Internal partners are an important part of the FireSmart BC community, and that's why the team distributed a survey to gather information on how they prefer to be educated about all things FireSmart. After analyzing the responses, a quarterly webinar was implemented. Each webinar includes a provincial update, focuses on specific topics of interest with guest speakers, and includes a question and answer period.

The webinars have been an effective communication method, with over 100 registrants for each one and active participation from partners across the province, including FireSmart Coordinators and Local FireSmart Representatives. Each session is recorded and made available on the FireSmart BC website for easy access.

Looking ahead to 2023, the webinars will continue on a quarterly basis and relevant topics and speakers will be incorporated. The goal is to maintain active participation and reach a diverse audience.

The FireSmart Conference

The 2022 FireSmart Conference was the first annual in-person conference of its kind in the province and was held in Kamloops, BC. It was a great success, selling out to over 300 registrants and featuring a distinguished roster of presenters from across Canada. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, with multiple remarks about the unique opportunity to network and share ideas with others in the FireSmart space.

For 2023, the conference will be combined with the Wildland-Urban Interface Symposium under a new name—The Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit. The summit will be hosted in Vancouver, BC, in partnership with the BCWS Coastal Fire Centre. The capacity of this conference will be increased due to demand and will also include international speakers. Due to high demand, the capacity of the conference will be increased and will also include international speakers. The promotion of the summit will be widespread across the province, partnering with a number of agencies, and aims to sell out once again.

Major Annual Campaigns

In May 2022, FireSmart BC launched its annual awareness campaign targeted at homeowners throughout the province. The campaign was informed by consumer research conducted in the fall of 2021, which revealed that while FireSmart brand awareness was low, people felt that wildfire preparedness was critically important but that they couldn't make a difference.

The campaign used a mass-media approach, leveraging TV advertising, billboards, social and digital ads, to raise brand awareness and communicate the key message: **Your house is a wildfire risk within your control.**

All online messaging directed users to a [campaign landing page](#) that featured the campaign video assets and drove traffic to engage with our interactive homeowner's guide and other key resources. The campaign was designed to reach all of BC, but specifically targeting high-risk class communities with varying levels of past program interaction.

The campaign was a major success, garnering positive feedback amongst our internal stakeholders and considerable reach and engagement with over 28 Million impressions across the province.

Communications Tools

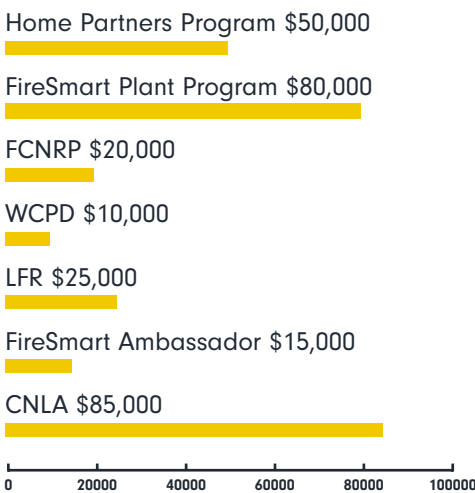
FireSmart BC's various online communication tools saw a continued increase in quality of execution and growth in 2022. Our social media accounts grew an average of 110%, while the FireSmart Podcast, Newsletter, and Magazine all hit record highs in user engagement.

The FireSmart BC website saw a slight increase in traffic over last year, which can be taken as a very encouraging sign due to a major decrease in public interest in wildfire information (as evidenced by Google Search Trends reports).

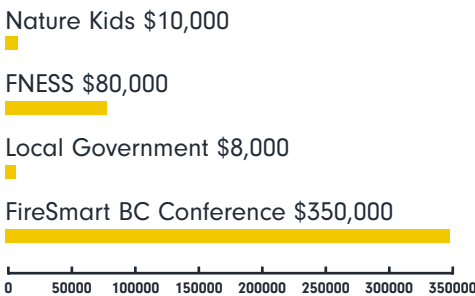
Financials Highlights & Key Metrics

The below numbers represent estimated expenditures for key program areas for the 2022-2023 fiscal year (April 1 2022 - March 31, 2023)

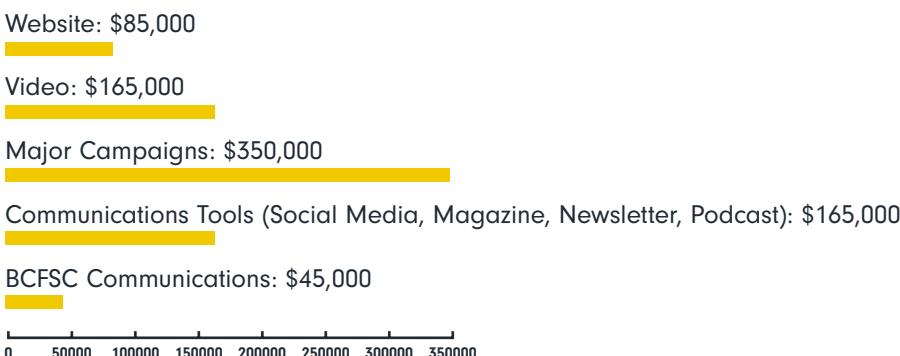
Programs



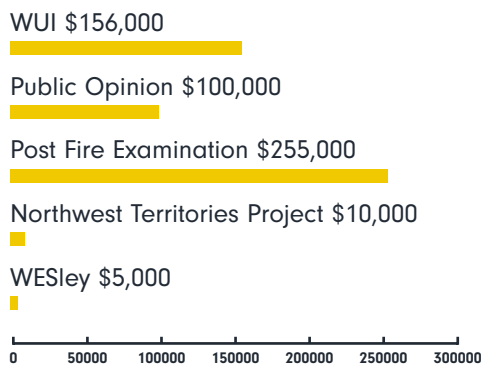
Partnerships & Events



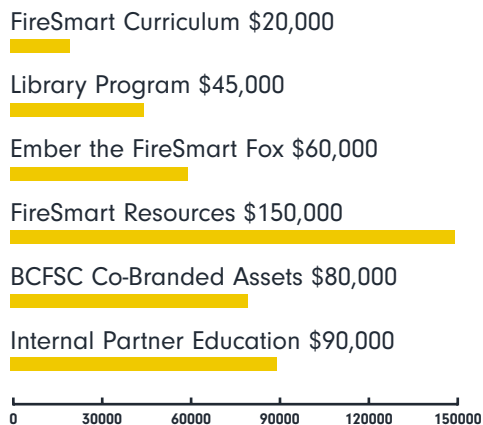
Communications



Research



Education



2022 Key Metrics

The below numbers represent key tracked metrics for the 2022 calendar year.

BRAND AWARENESS (As Per Jan 2023 Public Perceptions Survey)			
	Results	Yearly % Change	Absolute Change
Baseline Brand Awareness	47%	-2.1%	N/A
Aware, not familiar	25%	0.0%	N/A
Aware, somewhat familiar	19%	5.6%	N/A
Aware, very familiar	3%	-40.0%	N/A

FIRESMART PROGRAMS (as of December 31, 2022)			
	Results	Yearly % Change	Absolute Change
Recognized Neighbourhoods	205	9%	17
FireSmart Coordinators (Total Number)	197	23.1%	37
HPP - Communities and First Nations	47	571.4%	40
CFRCs	8	100%	4
Plant Program Partners	34	1600.0%	32
HPP - WMS Trained	63	50.0%	21
Partnerships (Organizations and Brands)	6	50.0%	2
LFRTs Trained	205	19.9%	34

2022 Key Metrics

The below numbers represent key tracked metrics for the 2022 calendar year.

SOCIAL MEDIA (as of December 31, 2022)			
	Results	Yearly % Change	Absolute Change
Twitter Followers	2315	122.8%	1,276
Instagram Followers	1207	20.6%	206
Facebook Followers	4767	N/A	N/A
Facebook Fans	2303	113.0%	1,222
Total organic impressions	1,200,460	15.9%	164,460
Total organic engagements	21,542	14.0%	2,642

WEBSITE (as of December 31, 2022)			
	Results	Yearly % Change	Absolute Change
Total Sessions (hits)	124,403	9.4%	10,693
Unique Pageviews	209,634	12.3%	22,999
Magazine Articles	15	0.0%	0
Email subscribers	2872	29.8%	659

PODCAST (as of December 31, 2022)			
	Results	Yearly % Change	Absolute Change
Total Downloads	2,392	82.9%	1,084
Downloads/Episode	137	-5.5%	-8
Number of episodes released	13	44.4%	4

Looking Ahead

In summary, 2022 was an important and exciting year for the FireSmart BC program. Foundational strategic work was completed and will provide a roadmap for the years ahead, while a unified and effective BC FireSmart committee will ensure effective implementation. Additionally, ongoing growth of the FireSmart BC team through various internal hires and partners positions will ensure capacity to execute the work.

A number of important new initiatives were successfully launched last year such as the FireSmart Plant Program, Post Fire Research, and FireSmart Conference, which should continue to grow and evolve in 2023 and beyond. Programs like Home Partners also provide an exciting glimpse into how the program could continue to evolve and proliferate in the future.

The year ahead will build on this momentum with the evolution of the FireSmart Conference into the Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit, and continued expansion of our various programs and campaigns. We will also focus on establishing and solidifying our various partnerships, both internal and external, to ensure we continue to expand our footprint across the province. We will also place an increased emphasis on ensuring our program and communications are accessible and equitable for all individuals in the province.

This year won't be without its challenges, though. The realities of our climate emergency will bring with it increasingly severe wildfire seasons, but the program focuses outlined above will highlight the need for effective prioritization and execution. We will continue to work on FireSmart education and awareness, empowering homeowners and communities so that they can take action to improve their wildfire resiliency.

Thank you again for playing your part in building a FireSmart BC. We look forward to continuing to serve you.