

## Emergency Programs Update - Flood and Wildfire Season & Global Pandemic

April 17, 2020

While the majority of our efforts are focused on the global Pandemic, and planning various supports for the community, we are simultaneously entering flood and wildfire seasons. Thankfully the flood risk in the Skeena region is low to moderate this year due to lower than usual precipitation and slightly below-average snowpack. Of course that can change with a large rain event, so I will continue to monitor the risk and will have sandbags available if the need arises.

The wildfire risk this year, however, is predicted to be of a greater concern due to near-drought conditions last fall, and low precipitation this spring. In response to the environmental realities and the potential challenges that COVID-19 presents to the BC Wildfire Service's ability to mobilize, a Category 2 Fire Ban has been implemented. This prohibition applies to all fires other than campfires, which are still permitted for the time being.

Any person who sees an active fire is asked to report it to the City of Terrace or Thornhill Fire departments via their non-emergency lines:

CoT Fire Department: 250-638-4734

Thornhill Fire Department: 250-638-1466

If you see a wildfire, please call BC Wildfire Services: 1-800-663-5555 or \*5555 on your cell phone.

There is some encouraging news regarding COVID-19; the number of daily new cases in BC is leveling off. This is entirely due to the extraordinary and concerted efforts of all residents of BC, so thank you all for taking the threat seriously and trusting BC Public Health Officials. We do know that if we relax the measures and return to "normal life" we will see an abrupt rise in cases, as has happened in Hokkaido, Japan. Just 3 weeks after lifting their state of emergency, the entire island has had to go back on lockdown due to a second wave of infections. The take-away is this; what we are doing is working. For the sake of our communities, families, loved ones and health workers, we must continue to practice social distancing and refrain from gathering with members of other households. As the weather improves and invites us outside, we can enjoy the beautiful place we are so fortunate to call home but must continue to do so safely, and with our immediate families only.

For anyone feeling strained by the Pandemic, Kitsumkalum has developed Emergency Support Programs that will be utilized to get essential items to all members who live in the community and are in need. Food and supplies will be available shortly, and support will continue throughout the Pandemic. Stand by for announcements on when and how to receive assistance, we will communicate the details broadly as soon as they are available and endeavor to ensure nobody is missed.

A final note to please reach out if you are having trouble; the challenges of life in a state of emergency are very real and can cause fatigue and despair. If you need support, whether emotional, financial or other, there are options available. These are immensely taxing times and feeling overwhelmed is normal. We will get through this together but we need to recognize when we can help others and accept when we need help ourselves.

Thank you all, have a safe weekend.

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