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SIFCo

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Slocan Valley Wildfire Protection Plan gets support from the Province

WINLAW – The Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFCo) continues to work hard toward wildfire protection for the Slocan Valley, an issue that is becoming increasingly urgent with climate change. After helping to secure \$430,000 earlier this fall for forest fuel management around New Denver, SIFCo just received confirmation that the Province of British-Columbia is supporting their Slocan Valley Landscape Level Wildfire Protection Plan with a commitment of \$425,000.

The funding was received from the newly formed [Forest Enhancement Society of B.C.](#) (FESBC). FESBC aims to advance environmental and resource stewardship of British Columbia's forests. In their first round of project approvals, the Society has allocated over \$2.74 million to 23 projects out of 60 proposals received from around the province.

As Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, points out in a recent press release, "The projects the Society is funding complement projects under the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative and Forests for Tomorrow. I congratulate the society in getting up and running so quickly and delivering the first projects this fall. I look forward to seeing the results on the ground."

This FESBC funding is for the first year of a five-year plan released by SIFCo in June of this year. "Over the last eight years we have focused on protecting Villages, homes and infrastructure, but all these investments are still at risk if we do not implement a landscape-level wildfire protection plan", says Stephan Martineau, manager of SIFCo. "The Province and FESBC recognize the need to manage forest fuels at a landscape level, because this type of work will reduce the chances of a catastrophic event such as the Fort McMurray fire of spring 2016," continues Martineau.

The Strategic Wildfire protection plan for the Slocan Valley is the first of its kind done by a tenure holder in BC. "We hope that lessons learned with this pilot project will help others in the Province, and that working together we will continue to make BC more prepared when it come to wildfires", concludes Martineau.

Funds will go toward fuel management on over 100 hectares of land as well as ecosystem restoration in selected areas. Two public meetings are planned for mid-December 2016 to share the overall plan with residents: December 13, 2016 at the Winlaw Hall and December 14, 2016 at the Knox Hall in New Denver, both meeting will start at 7pm.

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