



Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative

President's Report for the 2020/2021 Year

October 17, 2021

Welcome everyone, to SIFCo's 15th Annual General Meeting.

Once again we are out of sync with our usual AGM rhythm. I imagine that your lives, like mine, are anchored by the urgency of the revolving seasons and their demands. This year, instead of prying ourselves out of our gardens in May, as is our habit, we are dragging ourselves from our unfinished firewood piles in October; and in broad daylight no less. So heart-felt thanks to all who have made their way here, to acknowledge another year of successes and challenges met, and to set the stage for the upcoming year. Who knows, it might actually be a relief to sit in reflection for an hour or so.

And there is much to reflect upon. After the summer that we have been through, I'll not even try to contain my report to our fiscal year which ended January 31st.

The "heat dome" that affected all of BC this spring, had its official beginning on June 25th. The province was blanketed by a high pressure zone that contained and amplified the hot air with some areas seeing temperatures reaching almost 50 degrees Celsius. Only days before the town of Lytton was destroyed by wildfire, they had registered a temperature of 49.6 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature ever recorded in Canada.

On July 3rd, Stephan Martineau, our manager, and his wife Miriam, responded to a wildfire up Popou Rd., the result of a significant wind event just prior. Unable to marshal support from official fire-fighting agencies, and after waiting hours for Fortis to disable the electrical supply line which started the fire, they doused the fire by hand; Miriam on truck and bucket relay duty up to the house and back down again, Stephan hauling into the site. Disaster narrowly averted. Vigilance became the name of the game.

Then, on July 7th, Stephan reported a wildfire above Graham Rd. to BCWS which was extinguished by BCWS within 24 hours; disaster averted once again.

Then on July 9th, a wildfire was reported above Trozzo Creek. This one was not extinguished within that magical 24-hour window. We live just north of Trozzo Creek and within days my family was in full wildfire mitigation mode. Even though the fire seemed far away at 4 km distance, we knew that we were just one wind event away from harm. By the time we received our evacuation order on July 21st, we were as ready as we would ever be. After waking my daughter and her family next door (two young grand-children included) we did the last of our packing, and watched the roof sprinklers with fingers crossed, as we drove away.

I count myself fortunate. The fire at its closest, was a bit less than 1 km from my house. We had a gracious friend who took us in. Others had more to deal with. Stephan and Miriam lived through 3 agonizing weeks when the fire was within 250 meters of their home. After years of leading the way to protect the community from wildfire, Stephan found himself playing a supporting role as BCWS led the response to the fire that was in his back-yard. Stephan developed a good relationship with

one of the incident commanders, Ryan Gow. Daily meetings with Ryan allowed Stephan to influence Ryan's decisions with his intimate knowledge of the land, and provided Stephan with the ability to provide more detailed updates for the community.

SIFCo's wildfire mitigation work and our work predicting wildfire on our land-base, did have an impact on how BCWS approached the fire. The prescribed burns on Ponderosa FSR to the north and Winlaw Creek to the south, were seen and used as strategic defendable zones. There was a type 1, thin from below area to the north, that was used as an anchor in the planning of the controlled burns in South Lemon. Our strategies work, they make a difference.

Tom Bradley, our Forest Manager, and Jesper Nielsen, RPF, played a significant role in determining where guard lines would be most effective; both spent long days in the heat and the smoke working tirelessly to help create an informed plan.

Rachael Bone, our communications person, added a function to our website with links to all fire-related web-sites to make it easier for stressed out folks to find the information that they needed. Rachael has just finished editing some footage taken during a fly-over of the fire after it was extinguished. This video was released on October 13th.

Michelle Griffiths, our Wildfire Resiliency Program Coordinator, was instrumental in procuring roof sprinkler systems for local house-holds.

As of September 13th, 868,619 hectares in BC burned this year in wildfires. In 2018, 1,354,284 hectares burned. By the time the Trozzo Creek fire was out, it had burned almost 6,000 hectares, 2,840 of them were part of SIFCo's land-base. (See map attached to this report.)

We are on the right track; preparing for, and working to prevent catastrophic wildfires, is an important and worthwhile focus. This summer has reinforced our commitment to these goals.

And now let's look at the projects undertaken in 2020.

Projects During 2020

Type 1: Wildland Urban Interface Management, thin from below

• Anderson	11 hectares	complete
• Anderson	23 hectares	complete
• Bannock prescription	14 hectares	complete
• Bannock	14 hectares	in progress
• Alwyn prescription	8 hectares	complete
• Alwyn	8 hectares	complete
• Trozzo prescription	18 hectares	complete
• Slocan	20 hectares	in progress

Type 2: Partial cut harvesting with post-harvest clean-up

• Hewitt fir beetle	17 hectares	complete
• Bannock East	21 hectares	complete

Type 4: Fuel Management for habitat restoration and ecosystem resiliency

• Trozzo Creek	106 hectares	in progress
• Winlaw Creek	512 hectares	in progress
• Ponderosa	150 hectares	complete (2021)

Type 5: Wildland Urban Interface Retreatment

- none

Other Projects:

- Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program.1 complete (2021)
- Winlaw Creek Restoration in progress
- Communication Platform in progress
- Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program.2 in progress
- Documentaries (complete list)
 - Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, Type 4 & Type 5 complete
 - How to Create a Strategic Landscape Level Plan complete
 - Wildfire Conference Interviews & Presentations complete
 - Slocan Lake Stewardship Society complete
 - Valhalla Wilderness School complete
 - Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program complete
 - Slocan River Streamkeepers complete
 - Ponderosa Prescribed Burn 2021 complete
 - Living with Fire complete
 - UBC Wildfire Efficacy in progress
 - Trozzo Burn Fly Over in progress

Leadership and Community Involvement in 2020

Back to the Trozzo fire. During the evacuation order this summer, the closest emergency accommodations available through the RDCK emergency response program were in Castlegar; there was no local location where stressed or displaced community members could receive support. In response to this, an ad-hoc group (Nicole Carare, Shauna Fidler & Damon Chouinard) organized the Winlaw Resiliency Centre. For a short while, Winlaw Hall became a drop in centre where a number of services were available; art therapists attended from Kutenai Art Therapy Institute, a commercial sized air purifier was rented so that folks could sit in a smoke free environment, a food bank was available, a play space was created and toys were available for children. SIFCo played a significant role in supporting the group.

We also organized a bulk purchase of roof sprinklers made by WASP Manufacturing. These sprinklers work on low water pressure and each head uses the equivalent of 20% of the water that a conventional sprinkler uses. We made them available to community members at cost.

Eight students from UBC came to study our approach to forestry. They laid out test plots in the Trozzo area, and will lay out more in other areas. They will return over time to monitor the effects of various treatment types. Kea Rutherford, who acted as crew boss, is applying to do her last year of PhD work with SIFCo. She has experience working on recent wildfires in California.

In Closing

Thank-you again for showing up.

I humbly submit this report,

Lisa Farr, President