



Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative

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SIFCo

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Winlaw Prescribed Burn Meeting planned for March 14

WINLAW – The Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFCo), the community forest based out of the Slocan Valley, is working with the BC Wildfire Services to plan a 61-hectare low-intensity prescribed burn this spring in the Winlaw area.

"The area is a steep south-west facing slope with hot and dry growing conditions, and is very susceptible to wildfires. It is also located in one of our identified major wildfire corridors in the valley", says Stephan Martineau, Manager of SIFCo.

Historically, frequent low intensity fires maintained open forests of large trees with grass and shrubs in this area. The low intensity fires reduced fuel loads and generally did not harm the large trees. Decades of fire suppression, however, have allowed dense patches of highly flammable small trees to grow on the site. These additional fuels increase the risk of fire intensity and fire impacts, especially in the summer months.

In 2017 SIFCo carried out an initial ecosystem restoration treatment to prepare the site for a prescribed burn. "The restoration work reduced the small tree density and fuel accumulations in strategic locations. This improved the ecological health and resiliency of the site, and prepared it for the prescribed burn", says Tom Bradley, Forestry Supervisor of SIFCo.

The burn will improve ecological resiliency, wildlife habitat and forage values. Community safety will be improved as wildfires in the treated area will burn with less intensity and be less likely to transition to large-scale fires.

A public information session will be held by SIFCo at the **Winlaw Hall on Wednesday, March 14, at 7:00 pm** to provide more information on the prescribed burn plans and protocols, and also to provide an opportunity for discussion. Jonathan Fox, Fire Protection Technician for the Arrow Fire Zone, will be in attendance.

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