



Resort Village of Candle Lake
Wildfire Emergency Response – Shoe/Camp Fires
May 13, 2025 to August 13, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In early May 2025 the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) reported two fires burning to the east of Candle Lake. Over subsequent weeks, these fires, named the Camp and Shoe Fires, grew, and on May 27 the fires merged. Combined, the size of the fire (named the Shoe Fire) exceeded 470,000 hectares. The Shoe Fire came to within 9 kms of the Resort Village of Candle Lake (RVCL) and at its peak was more than 500,00 hectares in size.

The extreme behaviour of the fire, including shifting winds, and limited containment, meant the community was advised to remain in various states of alert for much of the period. The Resort Village was also sensitive to situations unfolding in the northern parts of the province where fires moved at an alarming rate to breach the communities of Denare Beach, East Trout Lake, La Ronge and other communities. In total about 500 properties were destroyed in the wildfires.

This report provides a summary of the RVCL response to the wildfires. It includes a timeline of events, overview of strategies used to communicate with the public and visitors, and the financial cost of the emergency. The report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement and recommends actionable steps to enhance preparedness and resilience for future wildfire or large-scale emergencies. Finally, it includes the results of a survey conducted by the Resort Village to request feedback from the public on all aspects of the management of the emergency.

The wildfire emergency tested every aspect of the municipality's preparedness, response capability, and interagency coordination. Despite operational challenges and prolonged wildfire threat conditions, Resort Village leadership and staff, along with the support of incredible volunteers, worked diligently each day for five consecutive weeks to coordinate fire response and protective measures, communicate information to the public, all while continuing to provide the day-to-day core services of the Resort Village. At all times throughout the emergency, decisions were made with the following in mind: Safeguard the lives of community members at all costs, and ensure the protection of property as much as possible.

The SPSA declared the fire officially contained on August 13, 2025.

Report Highlights

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Activation

The Village activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) early in the event. The EOC coordinated with SPSA Incident Command, reallocated municipal resources, managed public communications, and directed volunteer and staff response efforts.

Leadership transitioned smoothly from initial emergency stabilization by the Fire Chief to the CAO serving as EOC Director. Despite limited staffing and training, the EOC functioned effectively, supported by strong interpersonal trust and a shared mission focus. Cross-trained personnel and integration of Public Works assets into fire suppression proved valuable.

Role of Responding Organizations

- **Resort Village of Candle Lake:** Activated Emergency Operations Centre with members focused on:

- Fire response – fire suppression, FireSmart, and support to professional firefighters provided through the SPSA
 - Communication
 - Volunteer Coordination & Management
 - Logistics
 - Public Works
 - Finance
 - Administrative Support
 - Continued to operate core RVCL services as much as possible
- **Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency:** Responsible for enhancing public safety across the province including safeguarding people, property, and resources through various functions including education, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. The SPSA works collaboratively with municipalities, First Nations, and other stakeholders to achieve its goals.
 - **Resort Village Fire Department:** Responsible for fire protection of all structures, the Fire Chief played a key role in fire operations and liaising with the SPSA. Volunteer members of the Department provided support for fire suppression activities, FireSmarting properties, and other activities as needed throughout the emergency.
 - **RVCL Community Safety Officers (CSOs) and the Candle Lake COPPs:** Provided community protection.
 - **RVCL Business Community:** Local businesses were a source for goods and services to support the activities of the Village and SPSA. Many businesses also contributed donations of goods and work in kind.
 - **Wildfire Defense Systems:** Contracted by TD Bank to conduct values protection work on insured properties. Residents are advised this group is working in the community.

Operational Achievements

Over the course of the emergency, several activities were conducted by SPSA and the RVCL to protect the community:

- Construction of large-scale multi-layer fire guards, notably along Highway 120, to slow fire advance.
- Deployment of values protection systems (sprinklers, pumps, hoses) in high-risk subdivisions.
- Integration of donated firefighting skids from GlobalMedic, expanding suppression capability.
- Reassignment of municipal equipment and staff to support suppression and FireSmart activities.
- Early voluntary evacuation notices enabling safe removal of residents, property, and recreational assets.
- Proactive FireSmart vegetation removal.

Communication Strategy

Public information was managed through a structured, multi-channel strategy which included:

- Public Notices (posted on the RVCL website)
- RVCL website emergency page
- Facebook posts
- ENews (email messages) sent directly to members of the public who were signed up to receive notifications from the Resort Village
- Media releases issued to Prince Albert and Saskatoon media outlets
- Direct volunteer outreach (as part of the volunteer management program).

Over the course of the emergency, the RVCL Facebook page was viewed by over 2.2 million Facebook users. At the peak of the emergency, the RVCL website received more than 4,100 website visits each day. Communication with the media also occurred daily. Media relations were proactive and two major press events (May 27 and June 2) secured coverage and political engagement that directly supported operational needs, including provincial approval for a major firebreak project.

Volunteers also went door-to-door to ensure everyone in the Resort Village was aware of the situation.

While overall communication performance was rated highly by the public (88% satisfaction), opportunities were identified for clearer terminology, consistent use of distance references, and more synchronized messaging with SPSA.

Community and Volunteer Involvement

Volunteerism was a defining strength in the emergency response. Residents and seasonal visitors contributed to FireSmarting, door-to-door notifications, feeding work crews, and logistical support. Housing was arranged for Search and Rescue teams, and local businesses provided meals and supplies.

Over 86% of surveyed volunteers reported satisfaction with their experience, and nearly half expressed interest in future emergency volunteering. Survey feedback suggested improvements in task coordination, communication of needs, and creating roles for proactive preparedness work outside active fire conditions.

Financial Cost of the Emergency Response

The cost to the Resort Village to respond to the wildfire threat totaled just under \$200,000. In addition, residents contributed over 1,300 hours in unpaid volunteer time to support the response. Expense claims have been submitted to the SPSA under *The Wildfire Act* for eligible wildfire prevention, preparedness, and mitigation costs. These include invoices for equipment acquisition, facility readiness for potential Unified Command, and FireSmart work directed by Incident Command.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite several successes, the response highlighted several areas for improvement:

- Leadership Clarity: Initial uncertainty over EMO Director and Mayor/Council roles.
- Volunteer Management: Need for a pre-developed, skill-based volunteer database and check-in system.

- **Communication Consistency:** Alignment of terminology and evacuation processes with SPSA, and more concise messaging to reduce confusion.
- **Resource Gaps:** Vehicle shortages, limited manpower, and dependency on SPSA for specialized equipment and crews.
- **Staff Fatigue:** Prolonged high-intensity operations strained personnel capacity.

Public Feedback and Future Planning

Post-event survey results confirmed high public confidence in the Village's ability to manage future wildfire threats (88% expressed confidence). Support was strong for continued and expanded FireSmart programs, annual funding for community fire prevention measures, and development of interagency resilience plans with neighbouring municipalities. Key public recommendations included enhancing communication consistency, enforcing yard cleanliness bylaws, securing emergency funding sources, and increasing fire break infrastructure.

See the complete Public Survey Report on Page 30.

Conclusion

The 2025 Shoe/Camp Fire crisis demonstrated the resilience, adaptability, and dedication of the Resort Village of Candle Lake's leadership, staff, volunteers, and residents. While the community avoided loss of life and major structural damage, the experience underscored the urgency of formalizing emergency plans, strengthening interagency agreements, expanding community preparedness programs, and investing in sustainable resource capacity.

The lessons captured in this report will guide strategic enhancements to ensure that Candle Lake remains ready to meet future wildfire and emergency challenges with confidence and cohesion.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS (Operational)

The following is a timeline of daily reports collected by the Fire Chief in consultation with SPSA. The information in these reports guided the actions of the Emergency Operations Centre in determining both the operational response, as well as communication to the public.

May 14th:

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) reports the Camp Fire transition to a crown fire and ran 14 km towards Candle Lake yesterday. The arrows indicate the wind direction for the next five days.

The arrows also indicate the possible direction of travel for the Camp Fire to proceed.

May 16th

SPSA reports things have again improved; the crews are feeling more competent that this fire may become under control. The true test will come on Sunday with the wind shift to the Northwest.

May 17th

Update Shoe Fire has 70 assets on the fire line Shoe Fire is moving towards White Swan Lake. The Camp Fire has 70 assets on the fire line which consists of bulldozers, aircraft of various types, and land-based fire suppression teams. Tomorrow, SPSA has advised they will be doing ignition operations. The fire is rapidly moving through the swamp area to the Southeast of Candle Lake. Three more crews have arrived today and five more will be arriving tomorrow. Candle Lake will remain on a pre-alert for evacuation until further notice. SPSA feel they are gaining on the Camp Fire. Unfortunately, some individuals have left their pets behind after an evacuation order; SPSA would like to remind all citizens if they evacuate an area to take their pets with them. The Shoe Fire is about 20,000 ha. Camp Fire is about 32,000 ha. The Boot Fire is 33 ha. Winds will be out of the Southeast tomorrow gusting to 35 km.

May 18th

SPSA reports the Shoe Fire is 50% contained. There continues to be 70 assets fighting this fire. SPSA reports the Camp Fire is 45% contained and SPSA is hoping to reach 70% containment on Monday, May 19th if operations go well. It is expected that a heavy smoke column will be seen Monday due to continuing operations. SPSA also states they have 70 assets on this fire. These assets include Aircrafts, 11 Helicopters, 3-315 Tankers, 2-415 Tankers, 2-580 Aircraft, and 1-Q-400 Aircraft from Alaska divided between the two main wildfires. Candle Lake will remain on pre-alert at this time.

May 19th

SPSA stated the Shoe Fire is 50% contained they have 90 assets working on this fire. These assets include 16 Type 1, 8 Type 2, 14 Heavy Equipment, 3 Helicopters, and Air Tankers as required. SPSA stated the Camp Fire is 80% contained they have 80 assets on this fire. These assets include 22 Type 1, 9 Type 2, 5 Type 3, 8 Helicopters, 32 Heavy Equipment and Air Tankers as required. SPSA is optimistic on the Camp Fire; however, winds will be 45 km out of the east to the west. We should see more smoke on Highway 120. More crews will be arriving tomorrow,

May 20th.

The number and type of crews is not for public release. SPSA states the Shoe Fire had sustained the run today as it was pushed by strong winds. Piprell Lake has Values Protection in place and pumps are

running. The fire is reported to be approximately 2km away from Piprell Lake. East Trout Lake has values protection set up. SPSA states the Shoe Fire is now 20% contained there are 90 assets on the Shoe Fire. There were two fires that started at Montreal Lake today, but they are now out and being assessed to ensure they are out. SPSA states on Camp Fire all containment lines held the fire but tried to break out with the high winds from the East. It was helpful with water drops from various aircraft and hand crews. The winds are expected to be from the east switching over from the Southeast over the next few days. There are around 95 assets on the Camp Fire. The Camp Fire is said to be 70% contained. Ash was falling on Candle Lake area this afternoon and was of no danger for ignition of fires. Candle Lake Emergency Services will continue to update the community if we get any further information.

May 21st

SPSA Incident Commander for the Camp and Shoe Fire believes we can lift the pre-evacuation alert because the Camp Fire is somewhat contained, and the winds are not expected to create more danger towards Candle Lake. SPSA reported the Shoe Fire has had volatile behaviour today. No structures lost at Piprell Lake. SPSA reports the Shoe Fire has crossed Highway 912. Highway 106 is now open; Highways 912 and 913 are closed. They are now saying the Shoe Fire is 20% contained. SPSA reports on the Camp Fire that they have had great success. They will continue to have drones scan the perimeter at night. SPSA is expecting 70% plus containment tomorrow. Highway 106 is now open. As most are aware, the pre-evacuation has been lifted.

May 22nd

SPSA issues an evacuation for White Swan Lake values protection will be set up. SPSA reports no structures have been lost at Piprell Lake. Fire is now within 10 km of East Trout Lake. SPSA reports Highways 912 and 913 are closed hopefully able to keep the Highway 106 open. SPSA states Camp Fire has 60 resources on-scene; no concerns at this time fire lines are holding hopefully in a few days they can announce containment depending on temperature increase coming in a few days. SPSA 's concern is in their words is a huge amount of fuel between the fire and Candle Lake.

May 23rd

SPSA reports the Shoe Fire update that the fire took off today. Values were lost in the Trailer Park in Piprell Lake, but the Rainbow Lodge is still intact. The fire is now 8 km from Little Bear Lake and an evacuation has been issued. No entry will be allowed by morning. SPSA states they have created a fire break which is four dozer blades wide. SPSA states four or five people will be staying in Little Bear Lake to keep pumps running. Delta Fire is setting up Values Protection Sprinkler Systems. SPSA has 87 assets on the Shoe Fire including 7 Helicopters. SPSA states the Camp Fire crews are working the western flank report 20 Ha gain to the West. They now report fire is 50% contained, hopefully improving by late Monday or Tuesday. SPSA states they report 61 assets on this fire including 6 Helicopters.

May 24th

SPSA reports that the Camp Fire "not a good day significant growth." Cabin on the Torch River threatened four buildings lost. Only 30% - 40% contained. Fire size is now over 45,000 Ha. SPSA states they have 54 assets on this fire today. Winds are out of the South to Southeast for the next few days. The fire grew by

1,500 Ha today along the Torch River lots of trees to burn along the Torch River. The Shoe Fire is very hot a volatile attempting to contain the South end. The fire crossed Highway 913; a power outage has occurred. Crews fighting fire around Rainbow Lodge in Piprell Lake. Fire has crossed Summit Lake – near Gem Lakes in Narrow Hills, Saskatchewan. SPSA states 80% of the sprinklers are set up at Little Bear Lake. 17 kilometres of full-frontal flame burning out of control on the Westside of the Shoe Fire. Possible evacuation of White Swan tomorrow. SPSA stated the resources are now limited. The Shoe Fire is now over 25,000 Ha. The Camp Fire advanced towards Candle Lake by 1,500 Ha. The fire is approximately 24 km away; we will continue to monitor the situation. SPSA states we can say Little Bear Lake, Piprell Lake, and East Trout Lake evacuated. The person who lives down Torch River has been asked to leave.

May 25th

Call from ESO, Kelly Sawchuk, and he said with this wind the Camp Fire is now making a big advance along Highway 106. His concern is the wind shift over the next couple of days. He said we should consider putting the pre-alert for evacuation back on today or tomorrow morning. The fire front on the Westside of the Camp Fire is growing much larger. The Shoe Fire has made major advances northward towards Little Bear Lake and East Trout Lake. It has also made advances towards Whelan Bay. In addition, it has also made advances towards Lower Fishing Lake Base Camp. The Fire Base Camp personnel including the Incident Command Team are now evacuating to Candle Lake. SPSA crew will be at Minowukaw Camp area. The Camp Fire has also made a major advance northward and as stated by SPSA, the two fires may converge. SPSA cannot state how many assets were on each fire today or how much they have grown. The fire has grown exponentially by the map we were shown during the meeting. With the high winds and high temperatures expected this week, we can only expect the fires to grow.

May 27th

The Shoe Fire and Camp Fire have officially merged. It is now called the Shoe Fire which is now 220,000 Ha. The Shoe Fire is now slightly over 20 km from Candle Lake at the closest point. The wind tomorrow will be coming out of the Northwest 14 to 21 kph. The next day the wind will be coming out of the South 13 to 20 kph. Friday the wind will be coming out of the Northwest 27 to 41 kph. SPSA has stated we need to consider evacuating children and people with medical conditions who may become compromised due to smoke. SPSA is also recommending that people consider installing their own sprinklers systems. SPSA is concerned that this fire may come over top of White Swan Lake and come at Candle Lake from two directions, the North and the East. SPSA with government pressure has approved fire guard. We requested fellers and bunchers work ahead of bull dozers. I have serious concerns about time and lack of equipment. This fire has already jumped fire guards. This fire is a Category 6 which is the highest on the scale.

May 28th

RVCL Issued a Voluntary Evacuation Advisory. SPSA reports the Shoe Fire is 0% contained. The fire is reported to be 300,000 Ha. The fire is 250 kilometres around. There was no flank movement towards Candle Lake and the distance remains the same, slightly under 20 kilometres. The fire guards are reported to be in place at Minowukaw, and they will continue to join the top and bottom of the fire guard. SPSA has begun mop up at Lower Fishing and will have sprinklers relocated to Whelan Bay. Currently, SPSA is playing a defensive approach to this fire as it is too big to contain. The approach SPSA is using is to attempt to use fire guards to direct to fire in a contained direction by connecting anchor points

such as between two lakes or a lake and burned-out area or two burned out areas. Fire at Little Bear Lake reports no values lost at this time. Dropping water from helicopters has no effect on a wind driven fire of this size.

May 29th

SPSA requested Candle Lake Firefighters to assist with fire suppression of hot spot at East Trout Lake and Piprell Lake today. The fire is now 305,000 Ha as of today's report. The fire guard have been completed behind Minowukaw. SPSA has been working on fire guards above Candle Lake, but I have not confirmed this. I have a meeting at 7:00 with the division supervisor dedicated to Candle Lake to confirm. The fire is now 305,000 Ha. To put into contrast, it is 17-18 times the size of Saskatoon. Today I was informed the fire was 20 kilometres from Minowukaw. Three days ago, SPSA reported the fire was 28 kilometres away from Minowukaw and today they are reporting it is 20 kilometres away. SPSA has an additional 40 Type 1 Firefighters set to arrive tomorrow. Fire breaks have been established between Lorenz Lake and White Swan to attempt from allowing the fire to go in a Southerly direction. There has been a provincial ban on ATVs in any Crown land, or anywhere within 4.5 kilometers of provincial forest. East Trout Lake

May 30th

SPSA reports that the Shoe Fire is now 315,000 Ha. The direction of the wind today slowed down the fire advance towards Minowukaw. Hannin Creek Camp area fire break set to be completed tomorrow. This area has three layers of fire breaks. The guard behind Minowukaw is complete. The dozers are working to protect the Ponderosa then will continue towards the junction down Highway 120. SPSA advises that anything on wheels should be taken out of Candle Lake as SPSA states they will not set up Values Protection on trailers. SPSA feels they are about a week ahead of the fire in the NW of Candle Lake. Tomorrow SPSA states they should have 10 plus dozers working along Highway 120. SPSA now feels they are ahead of the fire's possibly approach. SPSA requests Firefighters from Candle Lake to go back to East Trout Lake today. Fire has jumped the narrows at Little Bear Lake. Whelan Bay, the sprinkler system is set up using 6" lines reduced to 4" for distribution lines. The guard at White Swan Lake partially blew out today. Reminder ATVs cannot be used to deliver anything in the village.

May 31st

Global Medic is flying in from Toronto to donate 4 Fire Fighting Skids. Lakeland Fire and Buckland Fire will be in attendance as they are each receiving one as well. This has been arranged by Chief Russ Austin from Warman Fire through the Saskatchewan Fire Chiefs Association. Monday morning Firefighters will be available to assist with putting these in trucks. Shoe Fire, Candle Lake now has 13 dozers working on the fire guard along Highway 120. They report it is slower going than they thought. A report the Values Protection personnel were delayed in setting up Values Protection in Minowukaw. SPSA also advised us that they are responsible for regeneration of tree growth in any area they create a fire guard. There were some issues reported at Little Bear Lake and the RCMP were called in.

SPSA reported fire rollover occurred at Moose Horn Lodge. However, no structures have been lost. As was expected the dozer is taking longer than it was expected. SPSA states we are getting closer to being out of danger.

June 1st

Shoe Fire updates the fire is now 335,000 Ha. SPSA confirmed 14 km from Minowukaw.

Acadia Values Protection has been working on an assessment of Minowukaw and are expected to start deploying Values Protection tomorrow. The fire guard now has 13 bulldozers working on it. They are hoping to complete the guard on the 120 in four days. Major fire growth to the North of White Swan Lake. The fire break line from Lorenz Lake to White Swan is being held. A British Columbia Type 1 Incident Command Team will assume command tomorrow. Candle Lake Firefighters were sent to East Trout Lake for spot fire suppression. We will be accepting four new Firefighting Skids from Global Medic. This will give us six firefighting platforms. If the fire approaches Candle Lake; I, Jim Arnold will be assuming command and Deputy Chief, Grant Carrier will be Operations Section Chief. Deputy Chief Wes Harker will assume duties on the EOC. Request put into SPSA for approval for Candle Lake to bring in Type 3 Firefighters.

June 2nd

The fire behavior specialist is projecting the fire to move 40 km to the East by the 5th of June. They have also projected the fire to move 2km towards Minowukaw. They brought a fire behaviour specialist and will be able to project more accurate as days go by. SPSA's standard evacuation notice is 24 hours I have requested 48 hours notice. I want the council to have comfort in the final decision. The fire is now more than 406,000 Ha.

June 3rd

RVCL declared a Local Emergency. So, after hearing that Values Protection has been set up at Minowukaw I went to check myself today. There is nothing even started at Minowukaw. The Shoe Fire continues to back slowly towards against the wind approximately 400 meters per day. Most possible growth towards Candle Lake is expected Thursday. A line has been drawn on the map for evacuation I will inform show graphics tomorrow for the EOC. There is no containment on this fire at all as stated this will take a weather event. I have informed command that we require 48 hours for evacuation. No update on fire size today.

June 4th

The Shoe Fire is currently 13 km from Minowukaw. The fire is now 471,000 Ha in size. No fire has occurred on the East flank of the fire. The information office has been sent to La Ronge we have a new guy. We have been requested to check on the pump at Ponderosa. Completed. We practiced bump and run techniques this evening with our Firefighters. The fire continues to move towards Minowukaw at about 400 meters per day. With current condition, the current fire behaviour specialist has stated the 48-hour line is about 6 km away.

June 7th

SPSA reports the fire is not out even with the rain we are receiving. There were no heat signatures today; however, the fire will wake back up in a few days. Weather is predicted to be overcast for two days. They are expecting the fire to pop up Wednesday. Fire suppression efforts continue in the Southwest corner of the fire. Sprinkler systems will be pulled out of areas that no longer require them. The effort will continue along the Torch River putting out hot spots. When they think we may need protection they will arrive and

start setting sprinkler systems up. Candle Lake is being monitored by SaskEnergy and SaskPower. Mark Symons was informed this situation is about the fact that Candle Lake EOC has Candle Lake's best interest at heart. SPSA's focus is on the big picture. SPSA's narrative is that they are supporting Candle Lake when in fact they have given Candle Lake a task of Fire Smarting the community and have denied manpower. We know they are not supporting our needs for equipment and manpower. We at Candle Lake EOC need to keep Candle Lake's needs at the forefront. I am concerned that if we do not continue to advocate for our community, then who will? If SPSA wants to be apart of our EOC they would take a chair like everyone else, their job is not to control the EOC but be of assistance. At no time should a outside group take over your EOC. It has an organizational system that works. SPSA should not be controlling the EOC. Their objectives are different than ours. Ours are local while theirs is provincial and unfortunately political.

June 8th

Shoe Fire update, unfortunately, I did not receive the link for the update meeting until 5 minutes into the meeting; however, the Incident Commander did call me with an update. Candle Lake received approximately 25 mm of rainfall yesterday. The I/C is not expecting any fire growth over the next few days. The fire is now 9 km away from Candle Lake. The I/C wants Candle Lake Emergency Services to continue with FireSmart light for our community. The I/C is feeling good about moving along the Torch River with manpower and equipment. The I/C ask our team to send the map of fire guards and mulching areas as recommended by Larry Freemont in order of priority. Candle Lake Emergency Services will continue with Fire Smarting light tomorrow at 9:30. SPSA has stood down the personnel we have request to help with Fire Smarting our community.

June 9th

Shoe Fire update, Dozers bunchers and crew worked 4-5 km down the Torch River and up from below 4-5 km. They had helicopters with Bambi buckets working along the entire fire line suppressing fire. There were lots of helicopters in the air today because of little smoke conditions and favourable wind conditions.

June 10th

Shoe Fire update, the fire is starting to come back to life on the East Side of the fire do to drying conditions. Smoke covers the West Side of the Shoe Fire making it somewhat difficult to detect heat signatures. Winds tomorrow are out of the Northwest. Thursday the fire is expected to wake up on the West Side closest to Candle Lake due to winds coming out of the East. Feller bunchers worked the Torch River from the North Side working along the fires edge to remove fuel. Washington State Firefighters worked up the Torch River from the South. Heat scanning drones are going to be deployed this evening to map heat signatures on the west side of the fire. The I/C feels they have made good progress on the West Side of the fire. The I/C thinks there is a reduced threat to Candle Lake and the decision has been made to pull values protection units from Minowukaw and Glendale.

June 11th

Shoe Fire update, with an East wind the Shoe Fire has the potential to move 4-5 km West without suppression. Today, there were fellers and bunchers working there way South on Torch River Road to remove fuel from in front of the fire. Crews were also working up from the South along the Torch River.

Fellers and bunchers are also working South on Highway 120 near Highway 913 junction. Tomorrow with the wind from the East there is a potential for the fire to advance. The same can be said for the 13th and 14th with the winds out of the Southeast. Skimmers were seen today on Candle Lake pulling water to suppress the fires that popped up.

June 13th

RVCL lifted voluntary evacuation advisory and Local Emergency. Shoe Fire update, good news the fire did not move today, the high RH today contributed limited spread. The team is expected drying to occur and possibly pop up on Thursday. Rain is expected and this will contribute to higher RH which will also slow progress of the fire. Crews continue to work up from the South on the West Flank of the fire as well as crews working their way down the West Flank from Highway 120. They hope to meet in the middle at some point soon. A new Incident Management team has replaced the British Columbia team as they timed out. The BC teams communications have been excellent, and this is what Saskatchewan should expect from the Alaskan team. The Alaskan team takes over tomorrow.

June 14th

Shoe Fire update, Jason Devcich from the Alaskan Incident Management team has taken over the fire. Candle Lake has received rain more than 20 mm. The precipitation will slow down the fires progress. The objectives will remain the same as hot spots pop up suppression will continue.

June 15th

Shoe Fire update, rain as of 1300 today 30 mm. 5-7 days of drying for the duff to dry out and increase fire behaviour with no precipitation. Continued precipitation will of course increase that drying time. The fire is now 554,000 Ha. Little to no growth occurred along the fire line today. The crews are still working the fires edge to tighten up the flank that threatened Candle Lake. A drone scan tonight will occur to determine the true fire boarder and that information will be passed on to planning to determine tomorrow objectives. The rain we have received has only slowed the fires growth and the fire will come back to life without continued sustained rain over several days. As always have your emergency plan for 72 hours. We will look at lifting the fire ban in conjunction with the provincial ban on Monday.

June 16th

Shoe Fire update, Fire Behaviour Specialist indicates tomorrow will be a drying day with RH dropping and winds 10-20 kph. In Candle Lake area, there were hotspots found during drone flight and crews were sent in. Smoke will continue to pop up. There has been no fire advance towards Candle Lake equipment and crews will continue to work hot spots. A 23-person hotshot crew from New Mexico is working the fires edge between Highways 106 and 120. A second hotshot crew from Idaho is to arrive tomorrow and work the area between Highways 106 and 120. Candle Lake Helicopter Base will be shutting down tomorrow.

June 17th

Shoe Fire update, smoke still appearing on the interior of the fire boundary and will continue for some time. Operations reports no new growth. Candle Lake Airstrip now opens for public use as No Tam area reduced. Fire size remains at 554,484 Ha. Hotshots worked putting out hot spots between Highways 106 and 120. Drone scans will be done again this evening to find hot spots so crews can remain on the direct fire attack. The Ditch Fire was scanned last night as very little hot spots were found. Feller bunchers

continue to remove fuel in front of the fire's edge. Temperatures are going to be reduced over the next few days with rain in the forecast for Thursday and again on the weekend. The Incident Commander feels good progress is being made on the fire edge.

June 18th

Shoe Fire update, not as much precipitation RH was in between 50 and 60 drying will occur tomorrow and Friday. As smoke will be appearing in the area. Fire is creeping in the muskeg and is burning as deep as two to three foot deep. The Incident Command is stating the fire is approximately 40% contained. Crews were flown in to do a direct attack on the fire between Highways 106 and 120. Drone scans were performed last night, and no heat signatures were detected. As stated, this fire is not out and will continue until snow fall. Fire burning in the muskeg is tough to fight and it will take a tremendous amount of rain. Crews from New Mexico and Idaho continue to work the West edge of the fire.

June 19th

Shoe Fire update, drying weather continues RH will be in the 30% tomorrow. Precipitation is lower than expected this weekend. Smoke is starting to appear in the interior of the fire. There will be poor recovery in the RH overnight on Friday into Saturday. Winds will pick up over night into Saturday. Potential for fire behaviour to increase as RH will drop into the 20% and increase of wind speed on Friday into Saturday. I/C reports containment is 40% overall. Still heat signatures on the fire line between Highways 913 and 120. Crews flew into the area between Highways 120 and 106 to eliminate heat spots. Fire continues to burn in the muskeg areas more than two feet deep. This fire will continue to burn all summer long. The I/C has stated this is a massive fire and we need lots of precipitation to put this fire

June 20th

Shoe Fire update, the fire remains the same size. Minimal growth is occurring with the Shoe Fire being 45% contained. Crews are working between Highways 120 and 106.

200 Firefighters on the entire fire. The meeting will be moved to every second day. Poor recovery of RH overnight.

June 22nd

Shoe Fire update, no change in fire size with containment of 50%. Fire is not contained towards Candle Lake. Crews will focus efforts between Highways 913 and 120 along with between Highways 120 and 106.

July 4th

Update on Shoe Fire is SPSA reports the Shoe Fire has grown slightly now at 554,667 Ha which is 68% contained. Some hot spots have been noted in the interior of the fire. The focus will remain from Candle Lake to Choiceland to ensure the fire is out and to put out any remaining ash pits. Drone scans will be done almost every night. The camp is planning a move from Choiceland back to Lower Fishing Lake base on the July 8th, so that people and equipment will be centralized. They have 70 assets on the fire including 3 helicopters and a couple of dozers. They continue to work on some hot spots North of White Swan.

August 13, 2025

SPSA declares the Shoe Fire officially contained on August 13, 2025.

COMMUNICATION REPORT

Communication Channels:

Public Notices: About 40 Public Notices were issued (once or twice per day depending on the situation). These included all information residents and visitors needed to know (Fire Updates, Fire Bans, Pre-Alert Evacuation Notice, FireSmart, Registration, etc.). These Notices are posted on the RVCL website and emailed to anyone who has subscribed to receive Public Notices via email.

Facebook: 54 messages issued; one per day or twice per day depending on the situation. These messages were repeats of the Public Notices; additional Facebook book messages were created with messages of thank you.

RVCL website: Created to provide static information (information that would not change) such as how to register, contacts and links for more information, registration instructions, etc.

ENews: Public Notices were shared as ENews messages (emailed directly to ENews subscribers), starting May 31, 2025. This provided another communication channel to ensure messages were being received. (Distribution through RVCL Office)

Media Events: Media events were held May 27 to provide an update on the fire and publicly voice the need for provincial resources to build a large firebreak, and June 2 to publicly thank GlobalMedic for the gift of Skid Units and provide a fire update. For both of these events Media Advisory's (invitations specific to media) were distributed to news organizations.

News Releases: Two news releases were issued providing more detail on the two media event topics above. Media were provided with a link to the RVCL Public Notice page, and the Facebook page to stay up to date. Email messages to sent to news outlets regularly reminding them to check for daily updates.

Daily Messages

Messages included details on the following:

- Fire Update – size of the fire; distance of the fire from Candle Lake
- Protective Actions Underway – proactive work being done to prevent the fire from spreading to Candle Lake, and protect the community should fire reach the village
- Voluntary Evacuation reminders (after the Pre-Alert Evacuation Notice was issued)
- How to Register (when the Voluntary Evacuation Advisory was shared)
- How to Stay Informed – channels to follow; links to websites and apps

What Worked Well

Communications Resource at the EOC Table: Being at the EOC table made daily message development efficient and effective.

Streamlined Message Approval Process: The approval process was effective and efficient. Drafted messages shared with Brent, who made comments and shared with Council/EOC. This resulted in timely and consistent communication.

Diverse Messaging Channels: The public had various ways to access to information about the RVCL fire emergency:

Facebook – In total, Facebook messages posted over the course of the emergency were viewed about 2.2 million times and about 3,000 new people began following the RVCL on Facebook. People were tuned in, and the page grew by about 4,500 people over the course of the emergency. The top viewed posts over the course of the emergency were the following:

- May 15 Pre-Alert Evacuation Notice – viewed 294,961 times
- June 6 Update – 3–10-day timeline for fire reaching the Village given – viewed 162,116 times
- May 28 Update – the day the Shoe and Shoe Fires merged – viewed 132,019 times
- June 2 – GlobalMedic Media Event – viewed 102,478 times
- June 8 – Volunteer Pizza Night – viewed 80,266 times

Website – at the height of the emergency, over 4,100 people were visiting the RVCL website daily; the Wildfire Emergency and Public Notices were the most visited pages once users were on the website.

News Releases – rather than issue daily news releases to media, media were provided with the link to the RVCL Public Notices and Facebook page for daily updates. Media voiced appreciation for the Resort Village’s daily messaging.

Media Coverage: Candle Lake and the Resort Village are mentioned in over 80 local (Saskatchewan) news stories over the course of the emergency. Many of the stories are also re-played or re-purposed for national and international news channels. Media reported being satisfied with the amount of detailed communication being provided to them each day.

Media Events - Events were well covered by reporters

- May 27 – Fire Update and Need for Provincial Support for Firebreak – media attended and/or reported extensively. The next day, the province announced approval of this project.
- June 2 – GlobalMedic Gift of Skid Units - Media attended and/or reported on the gift of four Skid Units

Enews – Enews was added as a communication channel beginning on May 31, as another way people could receive the daily Public Notices and Facebook messages.

Media Spokespersons: The Candle Lake fires was reported locally, nationally and internationally. Fire Chief Jim Arnold, Mayor Colleen Lavoie, and CAO Brent Lutz were each interviewed several times by media. Spokespersons did their best to provide clear messaging in a calm manner in very stressful situations. News stories were informative. NOTE: Had the fire breached the community, an extensive media relations plan would have been implemented. This would have included: on-site staff to coordinate

media relations activities, extensive proactive outreach to the public, and on-site communication support to the evacuation center.

What Could Have Worked Better

Communication with SPSA/Province – No SPSA communication contact provided for the first half of the emergency meant the EOC was relying on the Fire Chief to communicate SPSA messaging second-hand.

Coordinating Message with SPSA/Province – Candle Lake EOC initially met daily at 9:00 am and later at 8:30. At these meetings the Fire Chief was reporting on information he had obtained from SPSA the night before. The Fire Chief also attended meetings with SPSA each morning at 9:30, which meant at times, RVCL messaging was dated or incomplete. A more coordinated timeline for meetings and messaging would have resulted in people hearing consistent messaging from both RVCL and the province.

Confusion in Terminology – Terminology for ‘Pre-Alert for Evacuation’ Notice. At times we used the term ‘Pre-Evacuation Alert’ which is incorrect and might have caused more anxiety as it implies an evacuation is imminent. Also, on June 3, the RVCL declared a ‘state of emergency’ and used that wording for several days afterwards. Later, the SPSA advised communities cannot declare a state of emergency, rather they can declare a ‘local emergency’.

Message Distribution: Might be more efficient to have communications resource send Enews messages rather than send to Office to send out.

Public Confusion Points: Based on questions asked on Facebook, and reported by members of the EOC, messaging on the following topics were sometimes confusing to the public.

1. Distance of the fire from Candle Lake: Initially, RVCL was not reporting the distance of the fire from the community. When it began sharing this information, the RVCL used Minowakau as the distance measure but did not report that fact. The SPSA measures were often not the same as RVCL was providing. Later, the RVCL began using Highway 120 as the reference point which helped residents better visualize the distance.
2. When a Mandatory Evacuation Notice would be issued: The distance of 15 km was not shared with the public until Mayor Lavoie shared it during a media event. From there on, the public became more interested in the distance, asking more questions about the reference points, which as noted above, caused some confusion.
3. Process for issuing a Mandatory Evacuation: Who calls for a mandatory evacuation was a topic of confusion, at times even in the EOC. The Resort Village will issue the order, but only on the advice of the SPSA. However, the village could suggest to the SPSA that an order should be issued. This is confusing and should be reviewed for future.
4. Propane tanks: A Facebook post made solely on the topic of propane tanks caused some confusion. Property owners who had left were unclear on whether they should return to remove their propane tanks. A message about propane tanks should have been included in the initial Pre-Alert for Evacuation messaging.

5. SK Evacuation App versus SK Alert: These provincial tools and their uses seemed confusing to the public, and at times the SK Evacuation App was not working properly. RVCL's role was to share information that the app/alert were available; a communications contact with SPSA earlier on could have clarified messaging about these tools, their uses, and how to access them.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Wildfire Response Debrief – Comprehensive SOAR Analysis

Resort Village of Candle Lake

Event: Shoe Fire 2025

Date of Debrief: July 9, 2025

Participants

Fire Chief Jim Arnold, Mayor Colleen Lavoie, Chief Administrative Officer Brent Lutz (EOC Director), Emergency Plan Consultant Sheryl Spence(EMO Director), Public Works Manager Jason Campbell, Planning and Development Manager Mark Peters (Planning Sections and CSO Liaison) , Executive Assistant Theresa Hicks, Finance Manager Sheri Carson(Finance Section Director), Communications Consultant Leanne Nyirfa (Communications Director), and Recreation & Community Engagement Manager Erin Maloy(Emergency Social Services Director).

Purpose of the Debrief

This report summarizes the debriefing session on Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) performance during the Shoe Fire incident. It captures feedback and insights from EOC participants to support continuous improvement of emergency response capacity. The SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) framework provides the structure for this reflection and planning document.

STRENGTHS

Team Commitment and Adaptability: Team members demonstrated flexibility and commitment in stepping into unclear roles. The Emergency Services Manager/Fire Chief was able to initially take charge of meetings, which helped stabilize early coordination until the CAO took over the role of EOC Director. All members of the EOC worked effectively as a team, mutual trust and support for each other resulted in effective and efficient problem solving.

Leadership: Fire Chief Jim Arnold's proactive leadership, knowledge of the ICS structure, and communication with SPSA helped establish consistency in strategy. Mayor Coleen Lavoie provided an important link to the public, speaking to the media and meeting with individuals throughout the Village. EOC Director ensured the EOC's voice was unified and provided a calm leadership style which was reassuring for team members. Team confidence ultimately resulted in garnering confidence in the EOC from the community. EMO Director was able to provide the EOC team with current details from the recently drafted Emergency Plan.

Integrated Communication: Leanne Nyirfa directed our public communication planning and media releases. Her experience and guidance were an indispensable resource resulting in our successful communication strategy.

- Daily update from Fire Chief to EOC and daily messaging from EOC to the public. Streamlined approval process.

- Diverse messaging channels (social media, website, TV, Radio and Print media, Website, Enews and direct flyers).
- Significant interest and support from media partners.
- Initial media conference resulted in direct contact from MLA and Premier throughout the incident.

Public Support: Residents, seasonal property owners, regular visitors and the general public were engaged in our messaging, reacting positively on social media and even with direct financial support.

Volunteer Engagement: Local volunteer response demonstrated strong community support and contributed to our successful response.

- Food Services were provided to SPSA Incident Command.
- Direct door to door distribution of evacuation information was conducted by volunteers.
- FireSmart response was undertaken by the Fire Chief and volunteers in advance of the Structural Protection Specialists.
- Housing was arranged for and provided to Search and Rescue volunteers.
- Operational Support: Public Works Manager provided significant resources to support the response.
- Reassigning public works staff
- Vehicles and equipment including trucks to use as platforms for skids, dump trucks to assist with FireSmart, pumps, generators and miscellaneous equipment.
- The Fire Chief was able to arrange for back up generators for the Fire Hall, Incident Command Centre in RVCL Community Hall and food services at Emma's Restaurant.

OPPORTUNITIES

Clarification of EOC Leadership: At the onset of the incident, there was confusion over who was designated EMO Director. A formal appointment should be completed in advance of any emergency.

Volunteer Management System: A database of volunteers with skills and availability would enable quicker mobilization and utilization. Participants noted this gap repeatedly.

Formal ICS Access Protocols: There was inconsistency in access to full vs. summary IAPs. A pre-agreement with SPSA on ICS access and participation would improve integration.

Communication from SPSA: Communication between SPSA and the Village could have been enhanced. Information was sometimes unavailable and at time differences in terminology that resulted in confusion. When SPSA did bring in a communication specialist, there was a greater focus on controlling the Village's message than on providing better messaging from SPSA.

Internal Communication: Enhance our direct messaging to the public but ensure that our front-line staff are better informed to answer enquiries from the public. Better communication with RM of Paddockwood during incidents to align our actions and messaging would build public confidence.

Technology: Technology could improve the response by assuring that the EvacApp is designed with all stakeholders in mind and that the SaskAlert is more user friendly and accessible.

Resource Management: Vehicles dedicated to emergency response would reduce the need to commandeer public works vehicles and allow for operation to continue in the Village.

Pre-Planning for Special Needs: Discussions indicated the need for a list of vulnerable residents requiring priority assistance during evacuations.

Resource Documentation: Some operational costs and volunteer hours were not tracked in real time. Templates or tracking tools should be implemented. Having sign in sheets for volunteers would provide us with necessary after the fact data and also ensure that volunteers are identified and registered properly in the event of incidents that may involve insurance and liability.

Meeting Coordination Tools: Formal summaries from the daily EOC meetings would be helpful. A designated recorder and EOC meeting template would aid continuity.

ASPIRATIONS

Formalize and Finalize our RVCL Emergency Plan: The incident highlighted the value of a completed and practiced emergency plan. Final adoption should be prioritized.

Enhance FireSmart Culture: Village engaged in an annual Firesmart program on public lands and provide opportunities for the public to be engaged year-round in preparedness practices and education, especially in high-risk zones. Construction of fire breaks in and around the municipality.

Development of a Crisis Communication Plan: Communication plan for the Village ensuring that Council, Staff and the Community are all properly informed.

Conduct Annual Joint Exercises: Training with SPSA and other partners would reinforce familiarity with roles, enhance ICS understanding, test response and improve technological support.

Establish Community Resilience Framework: Build an interagency and community plan in cooperation with our neighboring communities focused on resilience, including evacuation plans, mutual aid, and business continuity.

Develop Role-Based EOC Manuals: Create quick-reference guides for EOC team roles, responsibilities, and key actions during activation and having backup personnel available to support or replace key individuals during extended incidents.

RESULTS (Desired Outcomes)

Rapid and Confident EOC Activation: With clarified leadership and pre-developed materials, the EOC can be activated swiftly with minimal delay.

Streamlined Reimbursement Process: Accurate, real-time tracking of resources will allow smooth and timely submission of claims under The Wildfire Act.

Empowered Community Response: Volunteers and residents feel informed, equipped, and valued as contributors to community safety.

Trust in Local Governance: Consistent and transparent communication fosters long-term trust in RVCL's emergency management capacity.

Continuous Improvement Culture: Post-incident evaluations are integrated into planning to ensure ongoing improvement and readiness.

Post Event Public Survey Report: RVCL 2025 Wildfire Emergency Response

DATE: August 19, 2025

In July and August 2025, the Resort Village conducted an anonymous online survey to seek feedback from Resort Village property owners on the RVCL Emergency Operations Centre response to the wildfire emergency that affected the community in May and June 2025. In particular, the survey asked community members to evaluate the following:

- The RVCL response to the emergency including the actions of the Emergency Operations Centre.
- The effectiveness and clarity of RVCL emergency communications; and
- The RVCL Fire Department's FireSmart program, and how we can continue to implement FireSmart throughout our community.

The survey was open from July 18 to August 8, 2025. The results of the survey will be used to help the RVCL learn and enhance its emergency response in the future.

Summary of Results

Emergency Preparedness & Response

1. Over half of those who completed the survey (56.30%) felt the Resort Village was prepared to deal with the wildfire emergency before it occurred; almost 20% said they felt Village was very prepared before the emergency occurred.
2. Most survey respondents (85.38%) said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the efforts of the RVCL Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) throughout the wildfire emergency.
3. Of those survey respondents who said they registered with the Resort Village to advise they had property, were still physically in the Village, or leaving the Village, 86.46% indicated they were satisfied with the registration process; over 48% said they were very satisfied.
4. Almost 30% of survey respondents said they downloaded both the Sask Alert App, and the Sask Evacuation App. Almost half downloaded only the Sask Alert App only, and about 30% downloaded both Apps. Few (just over 1%) downloaded only the Sask Evacuation App.
5. 121 people provided comments on how the EOC could have improved the registration or notification process. 52 of these comments were complimentary of the EOC's work in general and said the process worked well for them. The remaining 69 comments have been collated into the following themes, in order of the themes mentioned most often.
 - Improve on the technical issues they experienced with the registration process.
 - Provide more clarity as to who should register.
 - Confirm registrations by sending an email confirmation.
 - Re-consider the need to register – people came and went.
 - Create an RVCL App to communicate better.

6. With this experience behind the community, most survey respondents (88.23%) feel confident about the community's ability to manage another wildfire emergency if one were to arise in the future; over 51% say they are very confident.

Volunteer Experience

7. Over 86% of survey respondents who volunteered to help during the emergency (going door to door to deliver information, helping with FireSmart activities, feeding work crews, etc.) said they were satisfied with their volunteer experience, over 47% said they were very satisfied.
8. Volunteers were asked if there was anything the EOC could have done differently to improve their volunteer experience. 52 people provided comments. 25 of the comments were very complimentary of the way volunteers were managed. The remaining 27 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below.
 - Ensure the FireSmart Program is organized properly – keep better lists of what needs to be done, and what is complete.
 - Communicate more about the need for volunteers and what they will be doing; ask more of the community and then provide direction.
 - If people wish to stay in the Resort Village or visit during the emergency, invite them to volunteer in some way.
 - Create a second level of fire volunteer that could work on preparing the community for a fire/more proactive FireSmart.
9. Almost half of survey respondents (49.19%) said they would be interested in volunteering in some way should a wildfire or other emergency affect our community in the future. About 1/3 said they are unsure if they would volunteer.

Communication

10. Almost 88% of survey respondents said they were satisfied with communication from the EOC during the wildfire emergency: almost 56% said they were “very” satisfied.
11. The top 3 communications tools used by survey respondents were the RVCL Facebook page, Enews (messages sent by email), and RVCL Public Notices. This was followed closely by the RVCL website.
12. Almost 88% of survey respondents said the messages were clear and easy to understand: almost 50% said they were “very” clear and easy to understand.
13. Survey respondents were asked how future emergency communications could be improved. 87 people provided comments. 27 of the comments were very complimentary of the way communication was managed. The remaining 50 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below. PLEASE NOTE: The items near the top of the list were mentioned up to 10 times; the comments near the bottom of the list were mentioned less than 10 times, some only 1 time.
 - Ensure RVCL and SPSA messages are consistent regarding the distance of fire from the community.
 - Ensure messages are not repetitive – highlight “new” information.
 - Provide more direction about what to do if/when an evacuation is required (checklist).

- Issue messages at the same time every day.
- Begin detailed EOC communication on Day 1 of the emergency.
- Provide more information on the following: propane tanks and define pre-alert, voluntary evacuation order and mandatory evacuation order, state of emergency, fire fighting strategies being used, FireSmart (proactive).
- Avoid fear mongering/exaggerating the situation.
- Consider other communication tools suggestions: send emails and texts to all residents, post information on bulletin boards, create an RVCL App, provide maps/visuals.

FireSmart & Future Planning

14. Just over 80% of survey respondents said they have taken some action to conduct FireSmart activities at their property (either during or after the wildfire emergency).
15. Of those survey respondents who were not at their property when FireSmart volunteers removed flammable materials from around their buildings, 74% supported the actions taken by the volunteers while 14% did not.
16. Over 70% of survey respondents would support the Resort Village allocating some level of annual funding to conduct community-wide FireSmart activities or the construction of fire breaks in and around our community to prevent the spread of wildfire. Ten per cent would not, and almost 18% are not sure.
17. Over 65% of survey respondents would support the Resort Village allocating funding to work with neighbouring communities to develop an interagency and community plan focused on resilience, including evacuation plans, mutual aid, and business continuity in the event of an emergency (wildfire or otherwise) in the future; almost 13% said they would not. About 21% are not sure they would support this.

Suggestions for General Improvements

18. Survey respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the RVCL emergency preparedness and response in the future. 108 people provided comments. 22 of the comments were very complimentary, thanking the Resort Village, the ECO and the volunteers for all of their hard work. The remaining 86 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below.

Most mentioned (up to 12 times):

- Continue the FireSmart program in our Village and forest area
- Have stronger bylaws related to FireSmart and yard cleanliness that are enforced
- Improve communication as much as possible

Least mentioned (1 to 5 times):

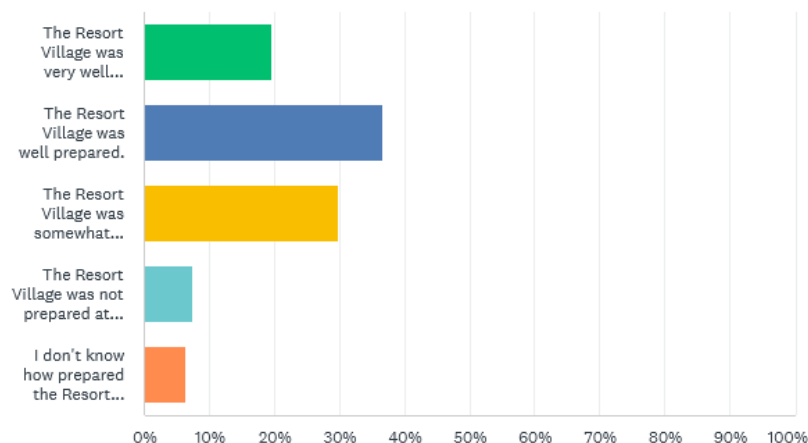
- Work on preparedness
- Keep fire breaks
- Implement fire bans sooner
- Seek funding for emergencies
- Improve Resort Village/EOC operations during an emergency

Detailed Survey Results

Emergency Preparedness & Response

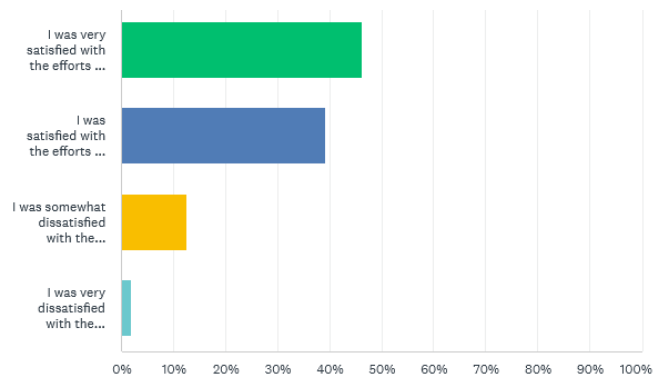
1. Over half of those who completed the survey (56.30%) felt the Resort Village was prepared to deal with the wildfire emergency before it occurred; almost 20% said they Village was “very” prepared before the emergency occurred.

- 19.69% Very well prepared
- 36.61% Well prepared
- 29.92% Somewhat prepared
- 7.48% Not prepared at all
- 6.30% I don't know



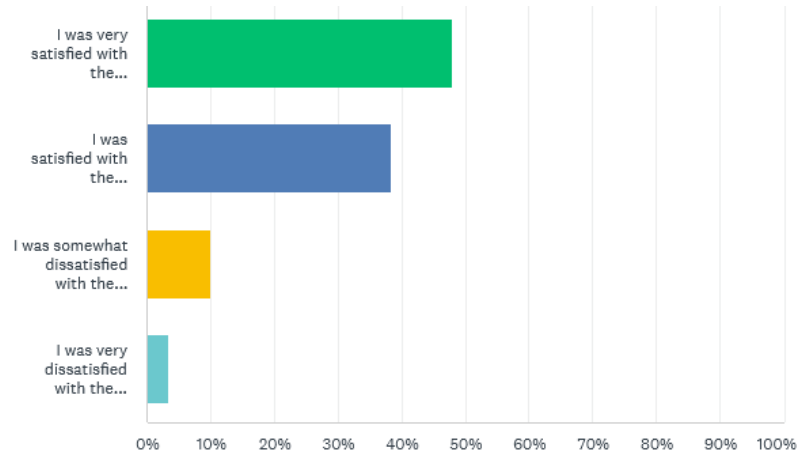
2. Most community members who completed the survey (85.38%) said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the efforts of the RVCL Emergency Operations Centre throughout the wildfire emergency; over 46% said they were “very” satisfied.

- 46.27% Very satisfied
- 39.22% Somewhat satisfied
- 12.55% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 1.96% Very dissatisfied



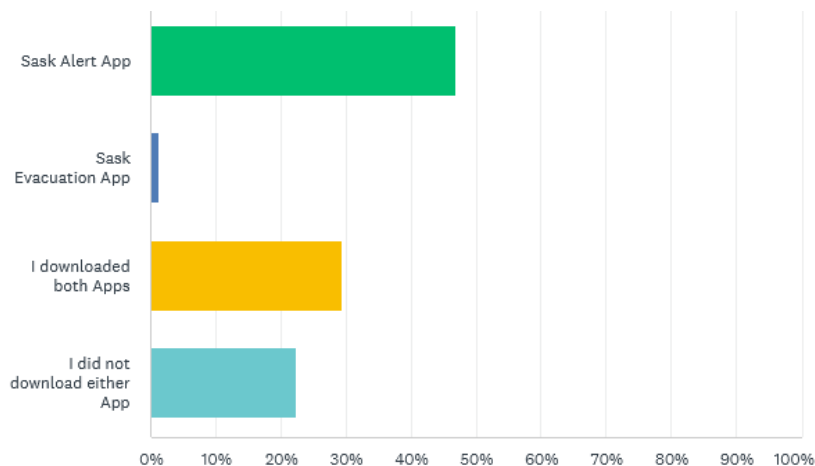
3. Of those survey participants who said they registered with the Resort Village to advise you had property, were still physically in the Village, or leaving the Village, overall, the majority (86.46%) indicated they were satisfied with the registration process; over 48% said they were “very” satisfied.

- 48.03% Very satisfied
- 38.43% Somewhat satisfied
- 10.04% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 3.49% Very dissatisfied



4. Almost 30% of survey respondents said they downloaded both the Sask Alert App, and the Sask Evacuation App. Almost half downloaded only the Sask Alert App only, and about 30% downloaded both Apps. Few (just over 1%) downloaded only the Sask Evacuation App.

- 46.85% Sask Alert App
- 1.18% Sask Evacuation App
- 29.53% Both Apps
- 22.44% Neither App

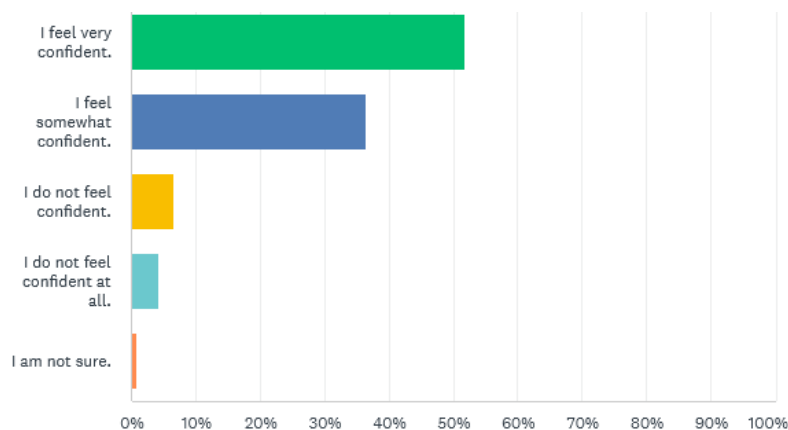


5. 121 people provided comments on how the EOC could have improved the registration or notification process. 52 of these comments were complimentary of the EOC's work in general and said the process worked well for them. The remaining 69 comments have been collated into the following themes, in order of the themes mentioned most often.

- There were technical issues with registration process.
- Needed clarity as to who should register.
- Send an email confirmation to those who register.
- Registering was not necessary – people came and went.
- Create an RVCL App to communicate.

6. With this experience behind the community, 88.23% of survey respondents said they feel confident about the community's ability to manage another wildfire emergency if one were to arise in the future.

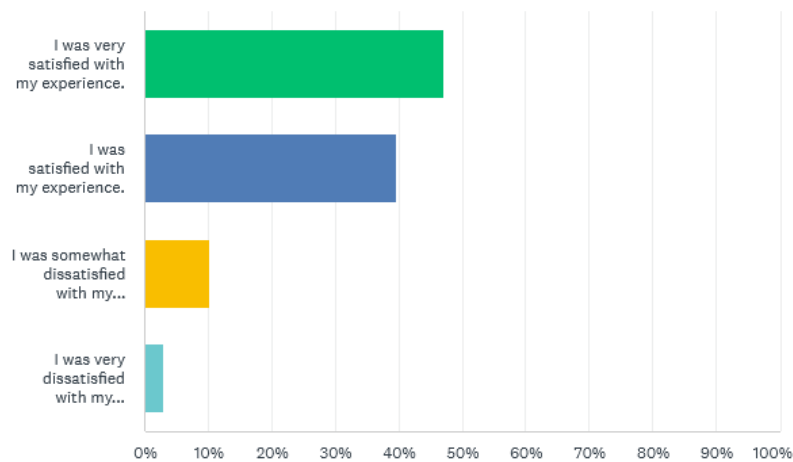
- 51.76% I feel very confident
- 36.47% I feel somewhat confident
- 6.67% I do not feel confident
- 4.31% I do not feel confident at all
- 0.78% I am not sure



Volunteer Experience

7. Over 86% of survey respondents who volunteered to help during the wildfire emergency (going door to door to deliver information, helping with FireSmart activities, feeding work crews, etc.) said they were satisfied with their volunteer experience: over 47% said they were “very” satisfied.

- 47.06% Very satisfied
- 39.71% Satisfied
- 10.29% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 2.94% Very dissatisfied

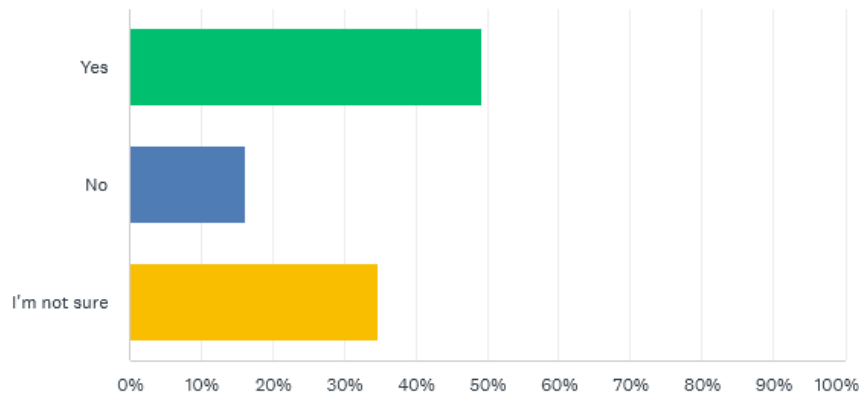


8. Volunteers were asked if there was anything the EOC could have done differently to improve their volunteer experience. 52 people provided comments. 25 of the comments were very complimentary of the way volunteers were managed. The remaining 27 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below.

- Ensure the FireSmart Program is organized properly – keep better lists of what needs to be done, and what is complete.
- Communicate more about the need for volunteers and what they will be doing; ask more of the community and then provide direction.
- Create a second level of fire volunteer that could work on preparing the community for a fire/more proactive FireSmart.
- If people wish to visit during the emergency, invite them to volunteer in some way.

9. Almost half of survey respondents (49.19%) said they would be interested in volunteering in some way should a wildfire or other emergency affect our community in the future. About 1/3 are unsure.

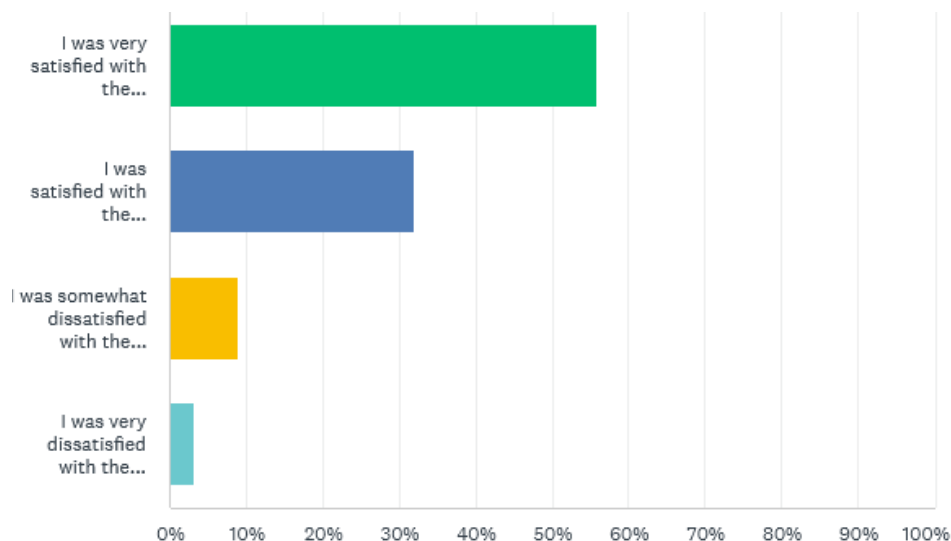
- 49.19% Yes
- 16.13% No
- 34.68% I'm not sure



Communication

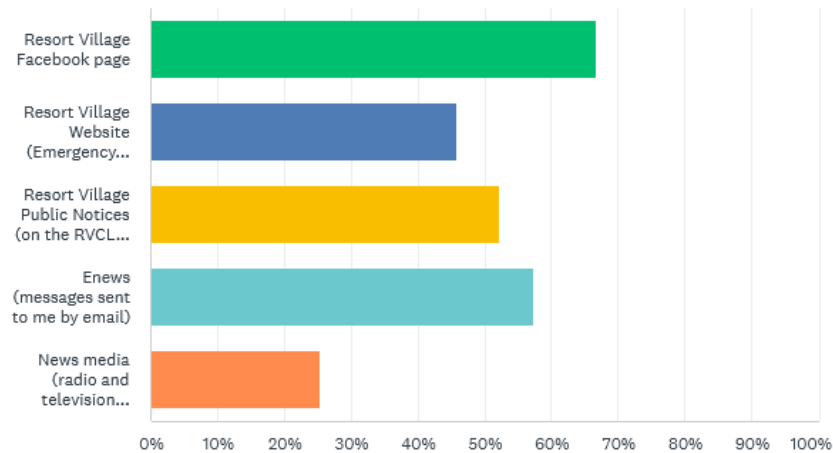
10. Almost 88% of survey respondents said they were satisfied with communication from the EOC during the wildfire emergency; almost 56% were “very” satisfied.

- 55.86% Very satisfied
- 32.03% Satisfied
- 8.98% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 3.13% Very dissatisfied



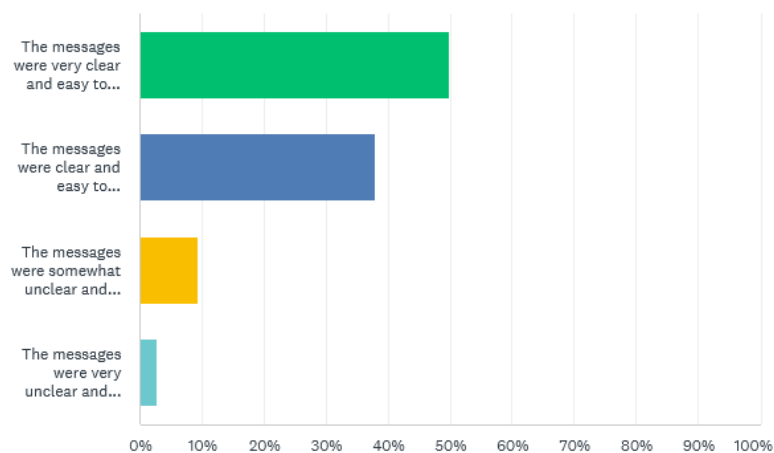
11. The top 3 communications tools used by survey respondents were the RVCL Facebook page, Enews (messages sent directly to email in boxes), and RVCL Public Notices. This was followed closely by the RVCL website.

- 66.80% Resort Village Facebook page
- 57.31% Enews messages (sent to my email)
- 52.17% Public Notices posted on the
- 45.85% Resort Village website (Wildfire Emergency webpage)
- 25.30% Media (television and radio news)



12. Almost 88% of survey respondents said the messages were clear and easy to understand, with almost 50% saying they were “very” clear and easy to understand.

- 49.80% The messages were very clear and easy to understand.
- 37.94% The messages were clear and easy to understand.
- 9.49% The messages were somewhat unclear and somewhat difficult to understand.
- 2.77% The messages were very unclear and very difficult to understand.



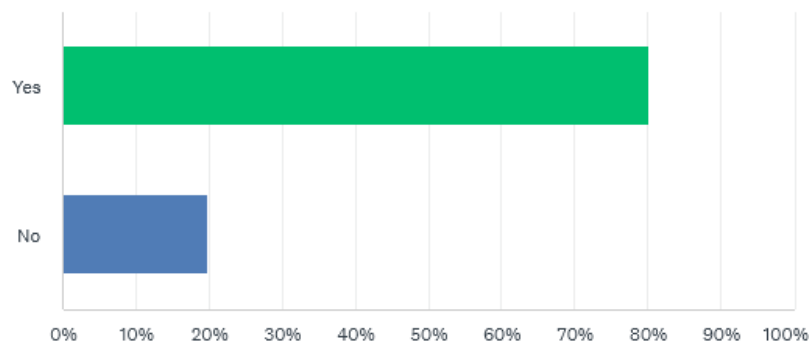
13. Survey respondents were asked how future emergency communications could be improved. 87 people provided comments. 27 of the comments were very complimentary of the way communication was managed. The remaining 50 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below. PLEASE NOTE: The items near the top of the list were mentioned up to 10 times; the comments near the bottom of the list were mentioned less than 10 times, some only 1 time.

- Ensure RVCL and SPSA messages are consistent regarding the distance of fire from the community.
- Ensure messages are not repetitive – highlight “new” information.
- Provide more direction about what to do if/when an evacuation is required (checklist).
- Issue messages at same time every day.
- Begin detailed EOC communication on Day 1 of the emergency.
- Provide more information on the following: propane tanks and define pre-alert, voluntary evacuation order and mandatory evacuation order, state of emergency, fire fighting strategies being used, FireSmart (proactive).
- Avoid fear mongering/exaggerating the situation.
- Consider other communication tools suggestions: send emails and texts to all residents, post information on bulletin boards, create an RVCL App, provide maps/visuals

FireSmart & Future Planning

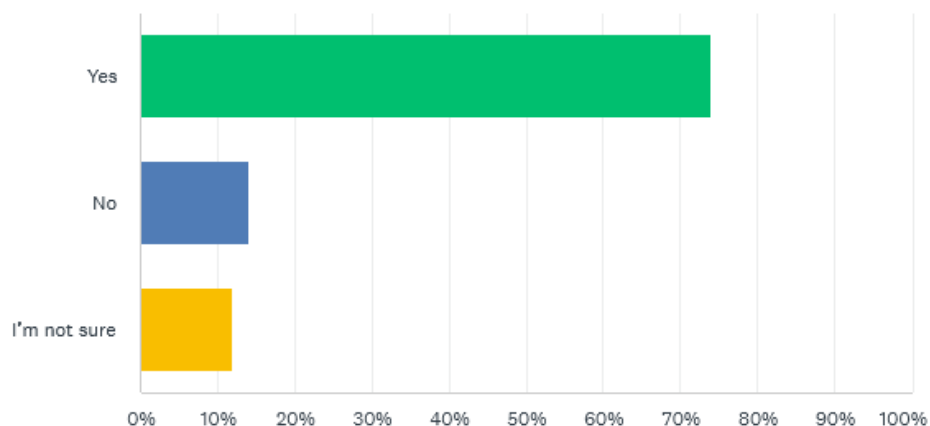
14. Just over 80% of survey respondents have taken some action to conduct FireSmart activities at their property (either during or after the wildfire emergency).

- 80.08% Yes
- 19.92% No



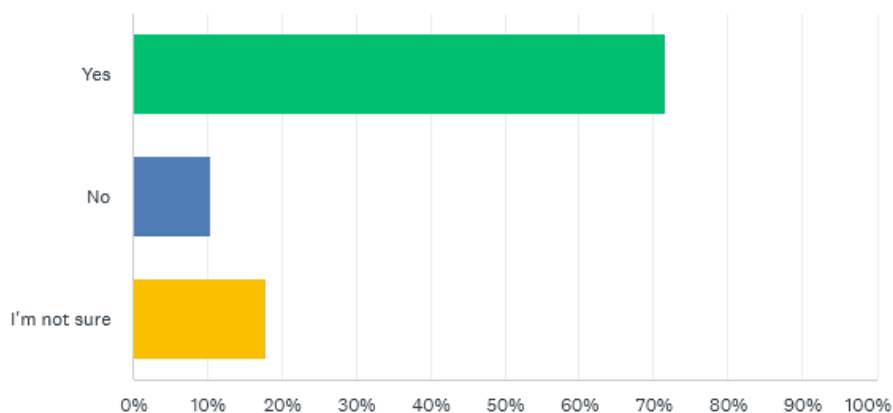
15. Of those survey respondents who were not at their property when FireSmart volunteers removed flammable materials from around their buildings, 74% supported this action. 14% did not.

- 74.01% Yes
- 14.10% No
- 11.89% I'm not sure



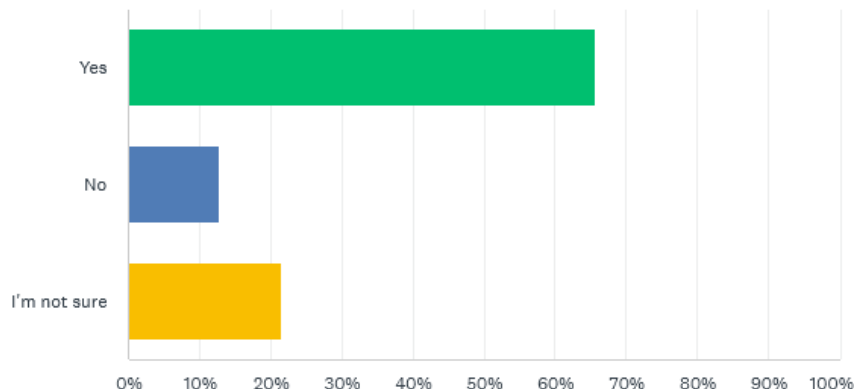
16. Over 70% of survey respondents would support the Resort Village allocating some level of annual funding to conduct community-wide FireSmart activities or the construction of fire breaks in and around our community to prevent the spread of wildfire. Ten per cent would not, and almost 18% are not sure.

- 71.60% Yes
- 10.51% No
- 17.90% I'm not sure



17. Over 65% of survey respondents would you support the Resort Village allocating funding to work with neighbouring communities to develop an interagency and community plan focused on resilience, including evacuation plans, mutual aid, and business continuity in the event of an emergency (wildfire or otherwise) in the future. Almost 13% would not; the remainder are unsure.

- 65.63% Yes
- 12.89% No
- 21.48% I'm not sure



Suggestions for General Improvements

18. Survey respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the RVCL emergency preparedness and response in the future. 108 people provided comments. 22 of the comments were very complimentary, thanking the Resort Village, the ECO and the volunteers for all of their hard work. The remaining 86 comments suggested the following improvements. The suggestions are listed in order of number of times mentioned below.

MOST MENTIONED (mentioned by up to 12 people):

- Continue the FireSmart program in our Village and forest area
 - Encourage residents to install sprinkler systems
 - Create community volunteer captains for each subdivision
 - Ensure FireSmart volunteers respect properties and belongings
 - Don't force FireSmart on property owners
 - Improve FireSmart training for volunteers
- Bylaws
 - Have a FireSmart Bylaw and give people tools/information to help them
 - Fine property owners who don't keep their yards clean
- Communication
 - Always ensure timely communication.
 - Use online apps for registration and evacuation
 - Provide summaries of EOC meetings

- Communicate the clear lines of authority for providing verified information and news, and who has the authority to make decisions regarding evacuation of the area, closure of highways, etc. RVCL, SPSA, etc.
- Provide aerial pics of the fire and more specific information to reduce speculation, esp. from those not at the village.
- Links to the NASA satellite heat signature data site and daily mapping of fire progress on your site would have been helpful to me
- Confusion regarding pre-alert and holding event on May long weekend.

LEAST MENTIONED (mentioned by 1-5 people):

- Fire Breaks
 - Keep and/or evaluate the fire breaks
 - Do not keep the fire breaks (1)
- Fire Bans
 - Implement fire bans sooner in the dry season
- Preparedness:
 - Call in help sooner (from province) when conditions are known to be dry.
 - Ban all traffic in forest areas during extreme conditions.
 - Provide resources to review and develop future plans based on lessons learned.
 - Learn from other communities.
 - Create a second exit in Glendale.
 - Involve neighbourhood "champions" to lead FireSmart efforts in the plan.
 - If not a mandatory evacuation, ask people to help instead of leave.
 - Find ways to get water to where the fire is threatening the community.
 - Consider ban on private use of fireworks.
 - Concentrate efforts on fire fighting the fire over FireSmart.
 - Include all subdivisions and RV parks in the plan.
 - Create individual plans for each community as distance between some is great
- Funding for emergencies:
 - Find ways to cut other costs and allocate savings to fire activities.
 - Try to get government funding to build fire breaks.
- Resort Village/EOC operations:
 - Ensure the Landfill is open from the beginning for material drop off.
 - Set up organic yard waste sites around the community.
 - Don't wait for government approval to make fire breaks etc. Just do it (one person mentioned this).
 - The UTV/ATV ban in the village was not realistic (one person mentioned this).

RVCL WildFire Response Expenses

The cost of the Village emergency response to the wildfires was just under \$200,000.

Expense Categories included:

- Fire Suppression Services & Supplies
- Fuel Delivery
- Accommodations
- Rental Equipment
- General Supplies
- Food Supplies/Meals
- Service Supplies
- Janitorial
- Mileage
- Hall
- Village Staff Hours
- Communications

Volunteers provided a total of 1,304 hours of time (unpaid) to support the community throughout the emergency.