



ALERT NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2015

North Galiano Fire Protection Society
RR2 Site 44, C-47, Galiano, BC, V0N 1P0

THIS ISSUE

Mini-park near
new fire hall ?

New commision
members

Fire departments
merger discussions



Clearing the blackberry bushes besides the new fire hall has revealed the creek and the water fall.... a refreshing area perhaps suitable for some picnic tables... Suggestions for beautification of the area are invited.... for example, native plants might help control the blackberries and stabilize the stream banks.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTH GALIANO FIRE DEPARTMENT

In the 1950s firefighting on North Galiano relied on co-operation between local residents and MacMillan Bloedel, which supplied most of the firefighting equipment. There was no formally organized department as we know it today, but the late Harry Baines Sr. was the designated fire chief. He had care of the equipment that included some forestry pumps, hose, nozzles and various shovels, axes and other firefighting tools. Later MacBlo made available a transportable water tank that could be lowered onto a pickup truck and moved to the scene of a fire as required. That was our first “fire truck!”

During this same period the North Galiano Community Association (NGCA) was evolving, having grown out of a desire to use the old North Galiano School building for social events when the school closed in 1953. In 1974 the NGCA held some fundraisers that raised upwards of \$2500, which was applied to the purchase of fuel, fire hoses and a new Wajax forestry pump. As a result, residents decided to organize a “proper” fire department, and the NGCA took on the task.

While fire protection on North Galiano began to be funded by property taxes in 1991, the department continued to rely on private donations and gaming grants for certain types of equipment well into the 90s and early 2000s. At the same time that equipment was being upgraded, firefighters were also becoming more disciplined and well-trained. In light of those changes the North Galiano Fire Protection Society was formed in 2004 to assume responsibility for the overall governance of the fire department. In discussions with the CRD, seeing some financial benefits of a closer relationship, directors of the new Society decided to become a CRD fire department, rather than continue under contract to provide fire services to the CRD. The bylaws which established the fire service were amended, and the North Galiano Fire Service Committee was formed to manage the fire department. This committee consisted of our CRD Director and up to 9 Directors of the North Galiano Fire Protection Society.

Relations between the NGCA and the Fire Protection Commission are cordial and mutually supportive. The Community Association regularly donates proceeds from its Sale of Modern Antiques to the Department, and firefighters always pitch in to flip burgers and assist as required at the Association’s Canada Day Jamboree. The NGCA recently transferred title to the site of our new fire hall, to the North Galiano Fire Protection Society.

In 2010, the governing bylaw was again amended and the North Galiano Fire Protection Committee became the North Galiano Fire Protection and Emergency Response Service Commission (NGFPERSC). Unlike many other CRD Commissions whose commissioners are simply appointed by our CRD Director, our fire commission members are elected by our community at the annual meeting of the commission, and ratified by our director. The North Galiano Fire Protection Society continues to raise money for the fire department, and, thanks to the foresight and generosity of Steve Oskco, the NGCA, and others, owns the land on which our new fire hall stands.

Today the North Galiano Volunteer Fire Department has 18 firefighters on its roll; 14 are Red Cross Certified First Responder 3’s, with 4 being certified as instructors.

The fire department would not be what it is today without the foresight and effort of the many pioneers in our hallowed past!

Harry Baines Sr.	Jan 30/1952 to Jan 30/1982	Honoured for 30 years of service as Chief
Thom Liddell	Jan 30/1982 to Nov 13/1987	
Ted Waterman	Nov 13/1987 to March 01/1998	
Cees den Holder	Mar 01/1998 to Dec 31/2003	
Cliff Murchison	Feb 19/2004 to Dec 31/2005	
Tom Darby	Dec 31/2005 to present	

ONE or TWO Fire Departments ?

A fire insurance requirement for the presence of a fire hall within 8 kms led to the construction of two fire halls on North Galiano. We thus now have three fire halls on the island, including our brand new one at the corner of Cook Rd. Both volunteer fire departments are now well equipped and professionally led by competent fire chiefs. Nevertheless, the question arises: Would there be any advantage in having a single fire department for the whole island?

Members of the North Galiano Fire Protection and Emergency Services Commission (a CRD body) and directors of the South Galiano Fire Protection Society, the supervisory bodies for the fire departments, recently resolved to have a good look at the question. Preliminary enquiries with CRD officials suggest that -- not surprisingly -- under current levels of expenses, property tax levels for fire protection would increase somewhat in South Galiano and decrease in North Galiano. A deeper study will be required to look at more realistic conditions that would follow a merger.

The purpose of a merger would be to improve fire protection services over the whole island as well as perhaps reducing costs. The two departments have worked together through a "mutual-aid" agreement, where one department can call the other for help once on the scene. An extension of this agreement in the form of "auto-aid", where calls would go to both departments, the lead one responding, the other getting ready at their hall in case they are called. This change would save a few precious minutes at a critical period of fire fighting and would at first be in effect weekdays from 6 am to 6 pm and for all structure fires. Before merging, a decade ago, the two Pender Island fire departments went through an extended period of working closely together... that would seem to be a desirable move, whatever the outcome.

Nothing is going to happen until we all want it. The CRD is hiring a consultant to review all its affiliated fire departments. We have requested an additional specific examination of the requirements and consequences of a merger. This is YOUR fire department and YOUR money, and your input on this matter will be most appreciated.

Commission and Society News

The North Galiano Fire Protection and Emergency Services Commission consists of seven members, including, ex-officio, the CRD's Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area director, David Howe. Commissioners must own property in the North Galiano Fire Protection area. Current commissioners are Paul LeBlond (Chair), Roger Pettit (Vice-Chair), Phillip Buller, David Koster, Ben Maberley and Sandy Moodie.

Commission meetings are open to the public and are held at 10:00 am on the first Sunday of the month at the Retreat Cove fire hall (unless posted otherwise).

Commissioners are also directors of the North Galiano Fire Protection Society, which holds title to land on which the new fire hall was built. The Society also provides additional support to the Fire Department.

Application for 2015 Membership - North Galiano Fire Protection Society

* Donations of \$10 or more above the membership fee qualify for a charitable tax receipt *

Everyone over the age of 17 who is a full or part-time resident or property owner in North Galiano is eligible to join. Annual Membership Fee is \$5.00 per person except Fire Department Personnel and Board members are complimentary.

Name.....

Mailing address.....

Galiano street address or lot number.....

Local phone #.....Other phone.....e-mail.....

Additional members' names

..... \$.....

..... \$.....

..... \$.....

Additional donation \$.....

Please make your cheque payable to NGFPS..... Total amount \$.....

I would like to find out about joining the fire department.

I would like to know how I can help