

## Sugar Cane Wildfires 2017



**Fire started approximately at 3:00pm on Friday July 7, 2017 evacuation by 6:00pm.**

- There were issues trying to get through to report the fires.
- Had to call 911 three times because of glitches with the system.
- When we did get through were told to call to another agency.



- Chief was told, "If you feel it is unsafe for your community tell them to get out".
- Expertise to assist and advise community leader would have been helpful.
- RCMP were stopping community members from leaving, highway was closed.



- Our community was not provided any fire suppressant supplies to fight the fires until we asked Cariboo Fire Centre for piss cans while in meeting with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) the day after a house in our community was burnt down.
- Cariboo Fire Centre did not assist our community until the 3rd day after the fire started and learned of a structural loss.



Community Members Home.



Community Member's one of two shops that were lost.



Ensuring fire is extinguished.

## Emergency Social Services

- Emergency Social Services would not provide groceries or billeting forms in Williams Lake due to Forestry and Cariboo Regional District miss coding Sugar Cane community as an alert and not an evacuation on July 7, 2017.
- Thanks to Dave Dickson's assistance and several meetings between ESS and our Band Social Development Manager, Administrator and Chief, grocery vouchers were finally provided to Sugar Cane residents on July 14<sup>th</sup>, a week after they were evacuated. City of Williams Lake was evacuated July 15<sup>th</sup>.



- Red Cross confusion on distributing emergency funding due to Sugar Cane community coded as an alert and not an evacuation and that the community's addresses and postal codes are listed as the City of Williams lake.
- Because the community was grouped in with City of Williams Lake, community members were being denied second \$600 due to the evacuation dates.

#### Recommendations:

- Require First Nations Emergency Services Funding/planning go directly to the First Nation communities.
- Support Ed John call for \$100 million for First Nations Emergency Fund.



#### Positive outcomes:

- Local, Provincial and Federal governments recognize that First Nations must be included in all emergency planning.
- The Government recognized First Nations needs for funding and supports.
- Awareness that First Nations know the lay of the land.
- Promotion of potential partnerships with Cariboo Regional District and the City of Williams Lake.
- Development of potential partnerships with the 150 Mile House and City of Williams Lake Fire Departments.