

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2011 Nominee Profile

Pender Island Fire Rescue North and South Pender Island

Category:	Group
Project:	Serving and protecting the Pender Islands
Nominator(s):	Leigh Hanson
Letters of Support:	N/A

Project Description:

Pender Island Fire Rescue's purpose is to serve and protect the Pender Islands. The department was first formed in 1972 and responded to less than 10 calls a year. Since 2009, PIFR responds to an average of 200 calls a year. Calls include structure fires, forest fires, bush fires, downed power lines, trapped or escaped animals, marine incidents, burn complaints, flooding, and search and rescue. The department is also trained in hazardous materials response and are the medical first responders for the community.

In addition to emergency response the department helps with fundraising for the local food bank, provides educational classes to all students on fire safety and assists the school for their fun day. PIFR provides fire safety education and demonstrations at the farmer's market every Saturday and hosts fire extinguisher training for the public several times annually. Every two or three years PIFR runs a cadet program to introduce Gulf Islands' youth the value of community volunteerism and protecting their communities from fires.

Since 2005, every Friday during the summer months when forest fires are a great risk, Pender Island Fire Rescue runs a wildfire prevention program out of Swartz Bay. Since that program was founded there has been a 30% reduction in fire related calls in the Southern Gulf Islands.

Pender Island Fire Rescue has over 100 volunteer members, three of whom have received Governor General Awards for their dedication to public safety. Pender Island Fire Rescue volunteers respond to many calls each year that could result in devastating consequences for residents and sensitive ecosystems if left unanswered. These volunteers provide an exemplary model of community members coming together for the common purpose of protecting their community and the wonderful environment in which they live.