

Saturna Scribbler, April 2025

Saturna Island Rescue - Recognizing Leadership Transitions and Retirement

The Saturna Island Fire Protection Society (SIFPS) would like to recognize the dedicated service of several key members of Saturna Island Rescue (SIR) who have played and are playing crucial roles in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community.

Leadership Transitions

Vanessa Verbitsky, who recently stepped down as SIR Chief, has been a steadfast leader during one of the most challenging times in recent history. She guided SIR through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that emergency services remained operational and adapted to evolving health and safety protocols. Her leadership, resilience, and dedication to both the responders and the community have left a lasting impact. We are grateful that Vanessa will continue as a SIR volunteer, and her ongoing support in transitioning the new Chief has been invaluable.

Taking on the role of SIR Chief, Chak Estable-Duquette has demonstrated exceptional commitment and initiative. He has already made significant strides in refining operational procedures, including updating the Saturna Island Rescue Member Confidentiality Agreement, reinforcing strong governance and professional standards within the organization. Retention and recruitment continue to be key areas of focus under Chak's leadership to ensure a well-functioning community service and to prevent burnout among those who take on these huge responsibilities.

Providing support in this transition is newly appointed Deputy SIR Chief Tyler Battle, whose contributions and leadership are greatly valued. Tyler has stepped up to help guide the department, ensuring the team remains effective in serving the Saturna Island community. His dedication and willingness to take on additional responsibilities are greatly appreciated. Like Chak, Tyler is focused on addressing the ongoing challenges of volunteer retention and recruitment to maintain a sustainable and resilient emergency response team.

Honoring a Lifetime of Service

SIFPS would also like to acknowledge the retirement of a true pillar of SIR, David Rees-Thomas. Over the years, David has attempted to retire multiple times, yet his commitment to the organization led him to return again and again to provide support. Now, at 80 years old, he is officially stepping away. In fact, if it weren't for SIR policy requiring volunteers to step down at 80, we're fairly certain David would still be showing up, ready to help at a moment's notice! His unwavering dedication, wealth of experience, and generosity in serving Saturna Island Rescue have been nothing short of remarkable. The community extends its deepest gratitude to David for his years of service and wishes him all the best in his well-earned retirement.

Looking Ahead

These leadership transitions and retirements mark an important moment for SIR. The continued dedication of its members ensures that Saturna Island remains well-supported in emergency response and community safety.

The SIFPS Board of Directors thanks Vanessa, Chak, Tyler, and David for their outstanding service. Their contributions have strengthened SIR and the broader Saturna Island community, and we recognize their dedication with great appreciation.