

East Sooke Fire Commission renews lease with JDF Search and Rescue

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Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue's renewal of a lease with the East Sooke Fire Commission serves the community well, says fire commission chair Falk Wagenbach.

"I think we have the perfect partner," Wagenbach said. "We're both in emergency services, and we do two or three rescues a year together on average, usually for a hiker in East Sooke Park who's become disoriented or injured."

The agreement means Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue will lease space on the upper floor of the community hall in East Sooke for another five years. A similar arrangement covered the past seven years.

That helps keep the community safe and provides funding to run the new community hall for the next five years, which serves the community in many different ways by providing space for various groups and classes, Wagenbach said.

Sue Strugnell, a senior Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue member, said the organization is pleased with the new agreement.

"We have developed a wonderful relationship with the East Sooke Fire Commission through this process and enjoy being part of the East Sooke community," she said. "It gives stability to the community hall and our place of residence."

Strugnell, a six-year veteran who serves on many specialty teams, said the group has about 45 members, all volunteers, who responded to 41 calls last year.

She wanted to remind people that there is no charge for rescue in B.C., and people should call immediately once they realize they're in trouble.

"The sooner, the better," she stressed. "It makes our job less hazardous, especially during daylight hours."

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