

## **Couple needs help rebuilding after Inverhuron honey farm fire**

**By [Troy Patterson](#), Kincardine News and Lucknow Sentinel**

**The owners of Inverhuron's Natural Acres Honey Farm lost their home and much of their honey-extraction equipment to fire on March 14, 2018. The loss, close to \$300,000 is largely uninsured because of the property's remote location and an account is set up for those who would like to donate to their rebuilding efforts.**

**The victims of an off-grid house fire in Inverhuron's are turning to the community for assistance after they lost their home and a lifetime of belongings in the blaze.**

**The couple, who didn't want to be named, said their three-story home and honey farm, incorrectly identified as a cottage by fire officials, burned for hours on March 14, 2018 along other buildings where the fire spread.**

**"It was everything we owned," the man said.**

**The owner said the damage estimate is also higher than originally reported by the Municipality of Kincardine Fire Department, at close to \$300,000.**

**The couple learned a number of passers-by had seen smoke from the fire while driving along Bruce Road 23 and Bruce Road 20 as early as about 3:30 p.m. on March 14, but failed to report it assuming it was someone burning a garbage pile. The blaze wasn't reported to the fire department until just after 5 p.m. and firefighters had difficulty finding the source of the blaze, even with a fire number, having to first search the area on foot before locating the driveway and cutting the lock on a gate at the Victoria Street entrance to the 226-acre property.**

**The buildings were a total loss by the time firefighters arrived to douse the blaze, which Kincardine's deputy fire chief Steve Otterman previously said took until about 10 p.m. that night. Firefighters also had to return the next day to help extinguish a burning wood pile.**

**The owner said the home and buildings where the fire spread were equipped with an \$80,000 solar power system, a \$30,000 in-floor heating system, their honey extracting equipment, along with other equipment and personal belongings. He said so far the 100-plus bee hives on the property seem to be okay.**

**"Fortunately it didn't get into our tractors and equipment, but we did lose a mower," he said.**

**The couple said their buildings were uninsured because of the home's location over 3,000 metres from the nearest fire hydrant, aside from some content insurance they were able to obtain. They were later told by the fire department the pond on their property, which was the source used to extinguish the blaze, could be considered an alternative water protection source and were told to consider bringing up the issue with an insurance company if they're able to rebuild.**

**"We never knew that and it's what we could have done," he said.**

**The owner said they were up north ice fishing at the time and were disappointed when they heard it took so long for the blaze to be reported. He acknowledged that firefighters "did the best they could on the timeline they had" to save the property once they arrived, but asked what use is a fire number if the fire department didn't have the information to find the property.**

**"What is the purpose of a fire number, if the fire department doesn't know that we're back there," he said.**

**A municipal official he spoke to told him he had to look the property up on Google Earth to find it.**

**"That's sad," he said. "The issue I have is the information they had to protect us... nothing. What does a fire number do? I'd like to know, so it doesn't happen again to other people. If structures aren't visible from the road, how do they know what they're up against? It's a danger to them as well."**

**The couple said they live privately and many locals don't know they live back on the property he's owned for nearly half a century.**

**They are thankful that so far a neighbour has come forward to offer a room for them to stay in, and another offered his cottage while he travels to Florida.**

**Fire officials said a cause could not be determined and the blaze was not being investigated by the Ontario Fire Marshall's office.**

**An account has been set up at Kincardine's Scotiabank for those who would like to donate to the couple's rebuilding efforts, care of 'Inverhuron Natural Acres Honey Farm'.**