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- BC Hydro
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- Fraser Basin Council
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- City of Williams Lake
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A complete list of committee members is provided in Appendix A.

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Executive Summary

The Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan is a collaboratively developed plan that aims to minimize the impacts of fire in the urban–rural interface surrounding Williams Lake, British Columbia. This document was proactively produced by a multi-party committee formed in October, 2004 of representatives from provincial government agencies, local government, fire departments, the UBC/Alex Fraser Research Forest, forest licensees, utility companies and First Nations. The committee worked for nine months to provide coordinated, carefully considered direction to residents, local government, land managers, utility companies, fire departments, First Nations, developers and the public. The committee's work was based on cooperation to encourage plan implementation.

The interface is considered the zone surrounding communities where low-density housing is often mixed with forested and open areas. The interface area defined in this plan encompasses the city of Williams Lake, 150 Mile House, and the Sugarcane and Deep Creek First Nation communities. Drybelt Douglas-fir forests and grasslands cover much of the interface area around the communities. The plan area comprises a geographic **core area** surrounded by a **management area** with a maximum width of 3 kilometres. Further division of the plan's land base produced 13 **Interface Fire Planning Units** based primarily on local settlement patterns.

To develop this plan, the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Committee first established the interface area boundaries and systematically assessed the defined land base to develop rankings and recommendations. Through forest stand classification and mapping, the committee was able to show both general and local fire issues for the entire interface area. Interface Fire Planning Units (IFPUs) were then defined based on population patterns, access, topography and the fire hazard classification for that area. The IFPUs were assigned relative rankings based on density of improvements, risk of ignition, risk to values, and ground-based emergency response access.

Actions in this plan are presented at two levels. A total of 22 **Interface Recommendations** apply to the entire interface area and are described and listed in Sections 3–5. Specific, smaller areas of the interface area were assigned a total of 67 actions within Interface Fire Planning Units and are listed as **IFPU Actions** in Appendix C. The nine most significant **Interface Recommendations** in the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan (and the corresponding recommendation number) are:

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

1. Develop and implement an extensive communications plan for a wide audience that addresses different methods of communicating information about the impacts of fire in the interface area. (#18)

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

2. Expand local fire protection services within the interface area, where practical and feasible. (#5)

FOREST FUEL MANAGEMENT

3. Establish pilot projects and demonstration areas to manage forest fuels. (#17)
4. Reduce forest-based fuels through stand management activities and cattle grazing. (#10)
5. Obtain funding for communities, forest licensees, woodlot licensees and others to reduce forest fuels on Crown land. (#12)
6. Develop and implement local plans to notify nearby residents of operational activities. (#13)
7. Streamline the process for selling small quantities of timber from private and public lands. (#2)

UTILITIES

8. Assess the critical factors provided by the communications, energy and transportation utilities to prioritize key fire protection efforts, investigate available backup, and develop linked action plans with utility companies and relevant organizations. (#16)

PLANNING

9. Develop a Development Permit Area policy for the interface area to protect developments from hazardous conditions, by combining resources and planning policies of the Cariboo Regional District and the City of Williams Lake. (#3)

The Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan is expected to be a living document that will be reviewed twice annually and revised as required. The plan calls for a multi-party committee, led by a Secretariat, to establish the lead agencies and key partners for each of the Interface Recommendations, and monitor and promote the implementation of the plan's recommended actions.

The full list of Interface Recommendations provided in the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan is provided below (with some recommendations condensed).

No.	Topic	Interface Recommendation (Condensed)
1	FireSmart	Distribute the FireSmart Home Owners Manual widely, and use it as a key information source.
2	Tree removal	Streamline the process for selling small quantities of timber from private and public lands.
3	Development Permit Areas	Develop a Development Permit Area policy for the interface area, to protect developments from hazardous conditions.
4	Subdivisions	In the planning and development of new subdivisions, planners and developers should: • Apply FireSmart standards; • Improve access for new subdivisions and cul-de-sacs; • Develop alternate access routes and reactivate existing roads for emergency purposes; and • Identify and develop new water sources.
5	Fire protection services	Expand local fire protection services within the interface area, where practical and feasible.
6	Waste transfer stations	Manage the fire hazard around waste transfer stations.
7	Incentives	Seek reduced homeowner insurance rates for properties that meet FireSmart standards.
8	Mapping	Add the following information, as it becomes available, to the interface plan map: • Currently unknown limitations, such as local walking and horseback riding trails; • Habitats for species at risk and special features; and • Known features identified during public consultation. Additionally, identify archeological sites before undertaking a treatment.
9	Vehicle access	Improve vehicle access by: • upgrading road standards, developing adjacent access, conducting access retrofits, and enlarging turnaround areas during silviculture development and in conjunction with other works; and • developing new access through forest licensee planning processes.
10	Forest fuel reduction	Reduce forest-based fuels through stand management activities by: • Creating fuel breaks, • Reducing the density of small trees, • Removing and reducing fuels, • Retaining large old trees; and • Encouraging aspen and birch. Use cattle grazing to reduce fire hazard from grasses. Plan all forest fuel reduction activities in consultation with agencies or groups responsible for managing the land use values identified in this plan.
11		Develop a procedure that enables landowners to remove non-merchantable forest fuels from adjacent Crown lands.
12		Obtain funding for communities, forest licensees, woodlot licenses and others to reduce forest fuels on Crown land.

No.	Topic	Interface Recommendation (Condensed)
13	Operations near neighbourhoods	Develop and implement a localized plan to notify nearby residents of operational activities planned for their neighbourhood. The plan should cover: • Methods of contact with the media, neighbourhood groups and individual residents; • How public safety, noise, smoke, increased traffic and industrial activity will be addressed; and • A process to receive and respond to residents' concerns before any work begins, including finding efficiencies for treating both Crown and private land in one operational project.
14	Invasive plants	Consult the available mapping by the Cariboo Regional District of invasive plant infestations before undertaking any ground-based work, and take measures to prevent the spread of seeds and foliage into new areas.
15	Species at Risk and special features	Ensure that forest fuel reduction activities retain habitat values for Species at Risk and consider special features.
16	Utilities	Assess the critical factors provided by the utilities within the interface area and: • Prioritize key protection efforts for the most important and vulnerable sites. • Investigate unique services and available backup. • Locate and maintain copies of current protection plans developed by utility companies and organizations in a central location for reference. • Develop linked action plans to minimize risk.
17	Pilot project	Establish forest fuel reduction pilot projects and demonstration areas on accessible sites.
18	Communications plan	Develop and implement a communications plan that covers the impacts of fire and how to address them, based on the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan. The plan should: • Address a wide audience, including the public, media, politicians and residents. • Draw on the available expertise within the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Committee. • Promote a clear and consistent message about the impacts of fire and how they can be reduced. • Include a portable information display about the interface fire committee, the plan and the fire hazard map. • Communicate the role of fire as a form of natural disturbance and the impacts of prescribed fire in interface management. • Include graphic design work to develop a mascot or logo for interface fire management, to be accompanied by a clear and catchy slogan. • Cover the development and delivery of school programs and distribute FireSmart information to students. • Provide public contact information of a designated representative of the Interface Fire Committee.
19	Website	Develop a Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Plan website for posting the interface plan, committee meeting summaries, fire hazard map and all other relevant information.
20	Media contact	Develop a media plan for the Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Committee that encourages media reporting about reducing fire risk and fire hazard.
21	Volunteer site hazard assessments	Offer volunteer site hazard assessments to the public by experienced specialists.
22	Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Committee	The Williams Lake and Area Interface Fire Committee should continue its work and: • Establish a Secretariat—with representatives from the City of Williams Lake, Cariboo Regional District, Tolko Industries Ltd. and Ministry of Forests (Cariboo Fire Centre and Central Cariboo Forest District)—to organize committee meetings and ensure progress. • Establish lead agencies and key partners for all Interface Recommendations. • Develop a budget and investigate funding sources for plan implementation. • Review and update the interface plan twice annually. • Promote and monitor implementation of the plan's Interface Recommendations and IFPU Actions.