

## **Shuswap Community Wildfire Roundtable**

### **Approved Summary as of May 1, 2025**

**Meeting Date:** December 4, 2024, 1:00PM to 3:45PM

**Location:** Prestige Harbourfront Resort, Salmon Arm

**Present (for at least a portion of the meeting; note some people have multiple roles; *virtual*):**

Adams Lake Indian Band – Councillor Cory Sampson, Jobe Krause, Cole Avery  
British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) – Mike Aldred, Vanessa Purves, Darcy McLeod  
Canoe Forest Products/Gorman Group – Ray Mills  
City of Salmon Arm – Mayor Alan Harrison, *Councillor Tim Lavery*, Erin Jackson, Carmen Guidos  
Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) – Sophie Randell, Jeremy Denny, Tom Hansen, Crystal Gower  
CSRD Area D Wildfire Prevention Society – Roy Reinmuth  
Forsite Consultants – Randy Spyksma  
Fraser Basin Council – Alex de Chantal, Mike Simpson (contractor)  
Gardom Lake Community Park Society – Doug Hearn  
Interested individuals or consultants – Alan Westhaver  
Ministry of Forests, Okanagan Shuswap District – *Jeff Hunter*  
Regional District of North Okanagan – *Alistair Crick, Nathan Betz, Andrew Hunsberger*  
Shuswap Outdoors – Keith Cox  
Shuswap Trail Alliance – Adrian Bostock  
Sicamous Fire Department – Richard Anderson  
Silver Creek Fire Department – Darcy Blair  
Skatsin Resources LLP (Neskonlith) – *Gary Grey*  
Skwlex te Secwepemc – Andrea Stelter, *Kristina John*  
South Canoe FireSmart Neighbourhood – Charlie Burt  
Sunnybrae Canoe Point neighbourhood – Barbra Fairclough  
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association – *Rob Grifone*  
Thompson-Nicola Regional District – *Mike Knauff*  
Tolko Industries – Ryan Potter, AJ Wood  
Town of Golden – didn't catch name  
Village of Chase – Michael Henderson  
Woodlots BC – Kerry Rouck  
Yucwmenlucwu (Splatsin) – Frank Joe

#### **1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda and Objectives**

Mike Simpson, a facilitator and professional forester on contract to Fraser Basin Council, welcomed everyone and acknowledged unceded Secwepemc Territory. A round of introductions took place. The agenda was accepted as presented.

#### **2. Salmon Arm Bowl Landscape Fuel Management Strategy**

Randy Spyksma [presented](#) on a concept discussed at the May meeting, and that was also the impetus for initiating this roundtable. The idea is to develop a landscape fuel management strategy in the geographic area of the “bowl” surrounding Salmon Arm (essentially if you stand at the wharf, everything you can see

to height of land). This strategy would be implemented with an “all hands, all lands” approach to address fuel management, fuel corridors as a multiple lines of defence approach to enable better response for BCWS crews when (not if) fire approaches the community. Randy suggested the approach is a collaborative plan that coordinates grass-roots efforts, not a plan with authority or that forces any specific action.

Mayor Harrison spoke in favour of this approach, noting that residents are scared of potential wildfire impacts on the community. Suggestions were made to provide various financial incentives for private landowners.

No objection was noted to this approach of taking next steps to develop a project charter, gathering data and information and reaching out to Secwepemc governments and relevant land jurisdictions.

### **3. Significance of the Home Ignition Zone**

Alan Westhaver presented on the significance of the home ignition zone (HIZ), the 30m surrounding homes and how it is the key area to focus on in avoiding disasters that are the result of structural fire departments being overwhelmed in suppression efforts. Alan’s perspective is that wildland-urban fires are a structure ignition problem, not a wildfire control problem on the basis that if houses don’t ignite, they don’t burn. The key point of FireSmart is to make homes ignition resistant. Alan advocated for the neighbourhood approach and the FireSmart Neighbourhood Recognition program.

Questions and discussion covered the following:

- Alan supports allocating majority of resources to FireSmart property assessments, FireSmart education and outreach
- Nurseries and garden centres should do their part and not sell specific plants, and discourage planting upright cedars and junipers adjacent to homes and structures
- Neighbourhood champions are key to influencing behaviours
- Mike noted that there is a longer narrated version of this presentation by Alan [here](#) and at about 31:00 in the video, there is live footage of the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire that demonstrates the impacts of embers

### **4. Approval of previous summary/Status review of action items**

The meeting summary from May 9, 2024 was approved and is now posted [here](#). Action items were reviewed; an update on some key ones is below, those that remain are updated on the last page:

- Mike and Sophie discussed potential duplication of this community wildfire roundtable (CWR) and the CSRD FireSmart Committee over the summer, she has agreed to dissolve the CSRD FireSmart Committee. This CWR can serve the needs of any government requiring a FireSmart Committee going forward.

### **5. What’s Underway, Who’s Doing What for Wildfire Preparedness**

**Adams Lake Indian Band** – Corey noted that they received funding for cultural burning on reserve lands.

**CSRD FireSmart Committee** – Sophie noted that they focused on home assessments this year, did about 600 which was double from 2023. Completed 42 community visits. Had an educational school program,

Silver Creek school won the competition, and Ember will be visiting them. Expanded their staff complement. Vegetation management they chipped and removed 42 cubic yards of material from properties with rented chippers. In response to a question about identifying community champions, Sophie suggested to focus on relationship building, and find existing community groups that already meet regularly. Sophie collected names of those present interested in brainstorming on neighbourhood champion approaches.

**City of Salmon Arm** – Carmen noted that outreach and name recognition of FireSmart seems to be working. They have initiated a garden/plant program, worked on a landscape education program. Fuel management implementation takes up 75% of their budget, with Little Mountain being finished this year, amongst other projects.

**CSRD Area D Wildfire Prevention Society** – Roy relayed his personal experience of FireSmarting a neglected property he bought. He is part of a non-profit organization that received S100, S185 and ICS training this past year through the cooperative community wildfire response initiative.

**BC Wildfire Service** – Vanessa noted that Union of BC Municipalities now funds training and some personal protective equipment costs for non-profit organizations such as the CSRD Area D group; these groups must work through the CSRD to access funding. She also noted that Fraser Basin Council (Alex) still has some remaining funding for training only in spring 2025.

Vanessa also noted that for local government and First Nations FireSmart programs, there are new funding opportunities for 2025. Contact her [vanessa.purves@gov.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.purves@gov.bc.ca) for suggestions on how to get “the biggest bang for the buck.”

Vanessa also noted that the Home Partners Program is being rebranded as “Wildfire Mitigation Program” but the content will be the same.

**Ministry of Forests** – Jeff Hunter noted that two projects are under development right now for implementation next spring: Silver Creek WRR project, about 90ha and ties in with Tolko cut blocks in the area to remove non-merch understory, scheduled for next fall; and Tappen near Recline Ridge. They also have Lee Creek, Anglemont, and have been ongoing with St. Ives starting in the new year. Another one is out near Eagle Bay and under prescription development right now, aiming for treatments next fall.

It was noted that exact locations, even rough shapes if not the final boundaries would be useful to know so that others planning nearby WRR treatments can line up logically.

**Woodlots BC** – Kerry noted that Woodlots BC (representing woodlot licensees, which is a very small area-based tenure on Crown land held by individuals, groups/societies or First Nations) have funding to initiate wildfire risk reduction activities on woodlot licences, which are often located close to communities in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and next to private property. He noted that there are 24 woodlot licences in this area, with 12 being in the WUI. He’s hoping to have 4-6 with WRR projects.

**Skwłax te Secwepemc** – Andrea noted that they are doing burnt timber salvage on 3 of 5 reserves, focusing on IR 1 Quaaout and then Scotch Creek next month. Working on a community wildfire resiliency plan (CWRP) and building back better with focus on wildfire resilient housing, and improved reforestation.

**South Canoe FireSmart Neighbourhood** – Charlie noted that neighbours have been cleaning up their yards, and took truck and trailer around to take debris to the dump. Most beneficial aspect has been with LFR walking a neighbourhood property to identify problem areas.

**Maple Woods FireSmart Neighbourhood** – Alan thanked Adrian and Shuswap Trail Alliance, they hosted their first community event in October. They focused on an area along a community trail and did some education and treated 50% of the east side of the trail. Working with STA is critical as they held insurance to work under their umbrella. Will be applying for their FireSmart sign soon.

Note that FESBC staff weren't present, but requested that the following be added:

**Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)** – [FESBC](#) can fund wildfire risk reduction activities that complements other wildfire risk reduction activities funded by Union of BC Municipalities or Ministry of Forests Wildfire Risk Reduction programs. FESBC can fund a broad variety of applicants, not just local governments, or First Nations. There is an open [funding call](#) right now. Contact for this area is Chris McGourlick, Operations Manager [cmcgourlick@fesbc.ca](mailto:cmcgourlick@fesbc.ca) or 250-668-7030.

Note that BC Parks staff weren't present, but requested that the following be shared:

**Shuswap Lake Park WRR Project**  
Cabin Operations was the successful bidder for the multiyear contract to complete the implementation of the fuel management prescribed for the park

- Cabin started October 23
- TU1 (perimeter) treatment has been complete, with pile burning outstanding
- TU3 (woodland trails and nature house) treatment has started and forecast to be complete this fiscal
- Outstanding will be the campground TU, which will be treated through the subsequent years

## 6. Next Steps

It was suggested to host a community open house to educate people about FireSmart in late winter/early spring, hosted by multiple organizations, and to invite the media and raise awareness about the Shuswap Community Wildfire Roundtable.

**Next meeting** – late April, exact date TBD based on a doodle poll Mike will initiate about a month in advance. Plan to have a field trip (work with Jeff Hunter). Venue outside of Salmon Arm.

- Presentation – Darcy McLeod, How BC Wildfire Responds to Wildfire

**Upcoming events** - Wildfire Resiliency & Training Summit, April 12-16, Penticton

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Secwepemc name</b> – consult with elders, language speakers and come up with a Secwepemc name for the Shuswap Community Wildfire Roundtable	Cory Sampson to lead, engage others	Ongoing
<b>Mapping</b> – explore having past and future treatments from multiple plans in one place on Forsite webmap	Randy Spyksma	October
<b>Venue</b> – open to having meetings in outlying areas such as Tappen, Silver Creek, etc. where community halls are available	Everyone	Ongoing
<b>Community Open House/Educational event</b> – host a community open house to educate people about FireSmart in late	Not fully determined, but possibly City of Salmon Arm,	Late winter/early spring 2025

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winter/early spring, hosted by multiple organizations, and to invite the media and raise awareness about the Shuswap Community Wildfire Roundtable	CSRD, Secwepemc governments	
<b>Neighbourhood champions</b> – have a small committee of people brainstorm on how to develop and support neighbourhood champions.	Sophie Randell	Ongoing
<b>BCTS and Mt Ida</b> – follow up re: status of proposed works	Mike S for Tim Lavery	ASAP
<b>BC MOF led WRR projects</b> - reach out to Jeff Hunter <a href="mailto:jeffrey.hunter@gov.bc.ca">jeffrey.hunter@gov.bc.ca</a> if you want exact locations, shape files or google earth kml files	Everyone	Ongoing