

Williams Lake and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Draft Summary as of Oct 21, 2022

Meeting date: October 18, 2022, 9:00AM to 11:50AM

Location: UBC Research Forest office, 795 Campbell Road, Fox Mountain

Present (for at least a portion of the meeting):

City of Williams Lake – Gord Chipman

British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) – Matt Lees

Fraser Basin Council – Mike Simpson (contractor)

Simon Fraser University (Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue) – Yolanda Clatworthy (to 10:00AM)

Tolko Industries – Jack Darney

University of British Columbia (Alex Fraser Research Forest) – Stephanie Ewen

Williams Lake First Nation – John Walker

1. Introductions, Review Agenda

Mike welcomed everyone and thanked Stephanie and UBC for hosting the meeting. Stephanie noted that this is a 55 acre property that UBC purchased recently that has accommodation capacity for researchers when they are in the area. A round of introductions took place. The agenda was accepted as presented. Numerous regrets were noted.

2. Debriefing the Fire Season, Lessons Learned

Matt noted that overall, 2022 was a slow fire year in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, there were several small fires in the 100 Mile area including the wet belt but nothing substantial. There was a wind-driven fire at Puntzi Lake at Thanksgiving. Overall, it was an export year (exporting crews to other jurisdictions) for BCWS. What is weird is how the fire season has extended into fall and especially on the Coast. Others noted there were small fires (Knife Creek) and that their crews were not utilized much. Several people noted that communications from BCWS was good this year. Pile burning in spring was challenging due to late snowmelt, and then unexpected winds when conditions finally did improve for burning.

Lessons learned were noted as follows:

- Contracts for fuel management work need to be flexible to account for green piles (they may need to cure over a summer), to account for late spring and deep snow like we saw this year
- Artificial fiscal year deadlines of March 31 need to account for conditions noted above
- Consider best practices for burning recently published; other jurisdictions also use wax paper or tarp piles to hasten pile burning
- BCWS is already looking at extending crews to December and having type 2 contracts in the shoulder seasons

3. Previous Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from May 17, 2022, was approved. Old action items were reviewed, updated and/or prompted for discussion in the information sharing part of the meeting. See updated table of action items at the end of this summary.

4. Information Sharing – What’s Underway

SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

- Yolanda has recently been hired to oversee a program called Mitigating Wildfire. An excerpt from the program outline that she shared with Mike following the meeting describes the following:
 - “*Mitigating Wildfire* will help communities and decision-makers work through friction areas to navigate trade-offs and real-world constraints, ultimately building consensus towards actionable solutions and creating pathways for continued learning and adaptation. The initiative will bring together governments (First Nations, Provincial, Federal and Local), residents, researchers, and stakeholders to identify and advance cost-effective solutions that address the root causes of catastrophic wildfire, support community well-being and increase the resilience of BC’s forests in the face of climate change. Throughout this work, the initiative will provide a platform to hear from those most impacted by wildfire and will ground discussions in community and Indigenous values. Recognizing that successful wildfire prevention and mitigation require change at many levels, this engagement will take place in three separate but integrated streams: Place-Based, Indigenous-Guided and Systems Change”
- Yolanda can be reached via email at yolanda_clatworthy@sfu.ca

BC Wildfire Service

- Matt provided the following operational update of local prescriptions and treatments:
 - IFB 27A, B Gunanoot on track to be completed, possibly not pile burning
 - IFB05 South Chimney, underway, lots of outreach to landowners, ties into woodlot licence 587 and rugby fields
 - Comer/168 Mile worth \$150K, tentative to be tendered, based on staffing, will start on Comer side. There is a new road right of way proposed.
 - IFB59 Ross Road/White Road prescription developed, it’s out for bid, will start this fall
 - IFB28 Lower Comer has been started, it ties into Comer/168 Mile unit
- Matt noted the need for tactical plans and the limited capacity and experience to complete these. There is a [standard for developing tactical plans for wildfire risk reduction](#) and he noted there is a need to develop a tactical plans for South Lakeside, Fox Mountain, Pablo Creek and Sheep Creek.
- Matt noted that BCWS and MOF Cariboo-Chilcotin District staff will be meeting next week to discuss funding requests for the Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) program for next year
- Matt noted that Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) is in the midst of awarding some of their \$25M in funding, see here for the call for proposals
- Forest Employment Program (FEP) is coordinated through MOF, Matt is connecting First Nations with First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) staff as there has been turnover at FNESS
- Matt noted there is a new joint working group between Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP) and BCWS on fire, hopefully there will be training and education coming from that
- Matt noted that within Cariboo Fire Centre of BCWS, Jason Ward is the Senior Wildfire Prevention Officer, supervising Matt, Steve Richberg, and Peter Holub who are all Wildfire Prevention Officers (Peter focuses on prescribed fire)
- Matt reported on recent burns and prescribed fire:
 - Spring – White Road, Westridge
 - Fox Mountain – challenged by poor venting, no wind

- Joes Lake 3km – challenged by poor venting, no wind
- Williams Lake Community Forest, Flat Rock block – about 15ha burned yesterday in grasslands benchmark area, following slashing and pruning treatments
- Bond Lake 43 ha achieved in September, also had challenging venting conditions
- Leach’s Lake 68 ha achieved
- Doc English 10 ha achieved, good conditions
- TU 6 at Esketemc 57 ha achieved
- Mapping tool – static pdf maps and google earth files of fuel treatments (completed, proposed) and prescribed fire (completed, proposed) for a variety of areas in the Cariboo will be distributed. These will be updated at least once a year.

UBC Alex Fraser Research Forest

- Stephanie noted that they are planning to do a broadcast burn, post-harvest on a 25 ha block in the Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICH) near Gavin Lake camp. Don Skea has been brought out of retirement to help, he did broadcast burning “back in the day” and will be working with Peter H
- Stephanie noted there are two blocks they plan to harvest at Knife Creek and would like input on how much fuel management needs to be done. John suggested he can help, and Gord suggested to talk to Francis Johnson about Esketemc’s fire plan which abuts the Williams Lake and Area CWPP to the south.
- Stephanie noted she’d like to see a comprehensive list of possible funding sources. [post-meeting, there is one [here](#) on the FireSmart BC website with a variety of resources.]

Williams Lake First Nation

- John noted that they learned a lot with their recent prescribed burns, and that despite doing lots of communication in different forms, people still claim they didn’t know it was happening
- They learned that despite pulling brush from bases of trees, there was still debris buried that caused some scorching up to 2m
- They learned that moisture levels of moss and the continuity of fuel needed to carry a fire and burn hot enough to achieve objectives is tricky to manage and time.
- It was suggested to watch for longhorn beetle in a year following a burn
- Racetrack project – burn plan done but they’ll modify it after attending last week’s course
- Chilcotin Trailer park project is complete
- Next for them is looking at north of Hwy 20, Chimney valley up to WL 587; Brunson 300 ha project including 300m fuel break; and 2300 Road
- John asked whether there is a gap in proposed treatments south of the Chilcotin Road Trailer Park to the South Chimney unit IFB05? **ACTION** – BCWS, MOF and WLFN to look at this.

Tolko Industries

- Jack noted that Tolko was involved in the primary logging treatment at Dewar Lake, but that the approach Cariboo-Chilcotin District (DCC) is taking is different than other districts. They were involved in a treatment in 100 Mile House District as the first phase, followed by the funded treatment. In DCC things are bundled together into a forestry licence to cut (FLTC) and tendered as one complete package. Tolko is keen to play a role in achieving the goals of the CWPP.

City of Williams Lake

- Gord has recently taken over Ken Day’s role, helping coordinate wildfire risk reduction activities for the City. He also noted that Erick Petersen has left the position of Fire Chief, and that Rob Warnock is acting in an interim capacity.

- Treatments and prescription update:
 - IFB 19 South Dairy Fields – 20 ha of treatments to proceed this fall
 - Consus doing prescriptions on 40 ha in river valley currently, hope to tender the implementation work in January
 - IFT 12 Golf Course – prescription amended due to badger, looking to tender the work in winter
 - IFB 59 Tower Crescent – 8 ha prescribed, to be tendered in winter
 - South Lakeside/Juniper – steep, slope stability issues, near homes but no ability to use equipment, will be challenging to develop solutions
- Four sites on the radar being considered next:
 - IFB 03 Airport – working with MOF staff and their funding to develop prescription
 - Road to airport – 3 treatment units totalling 25 ha, also an egress route
 - Fox Mountain – 2 sites with blowdown, snowpress along Fox Mountain Road and Ross road, also around some bike trails
 - IFB 19 North, N. Mackenzie Rd
 - Looking at retreatment of Wolf Road, bottom of Fox Mountain
- City is looking to the next CRI application intake to fund three types of things:
 - Treatments and prescriptions
 - Updating the current CWPP to a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP)
 - Acquiring equipment, such as a structural protection unit (SPU) trailer (current one doesn't meet Office of Fire Commissioner Standards)

Cariboo Woodlot Association

- Mike noted that there was FESBC funds secured to treat 8.3 ha on Tamas woodlot licence 1579 last winter, the last piles were burned in spring 2022, WLFN crews did the work.
- About 10 ha of piles remain to be burned this fall on Johnson woodlot licence 1955 on Dog Creek Road
- There are a number of other prescriptions developed on other woodlot licences further out of Williams Lake, Mike will email Kerri and Matt to see if they could be funded with provincial WRR funds or the other option would be to apply to FESBC

Overall discussion and ideas for how to improve how we can learn and work together:

- Consider doing an overarching burn plan (i.e., covering a large area, highlighting general priority areas such as south aspects) then add specific polygons as needed.
- Windthrow in treatments – have we experienced significant windthrow following fuel management treatments? Trick would be achieving fuel management objectives but not opening things up too much.
- Make things easy for major licensees and utilize them as a resource to help implement things
- Modified stocking standards in MOF Cariboo-Chilcotin District are needed to account for fuel management treatments

5. Next Steps

Next meeting planned for February 2023, suggested to be hybrid. Mike will find a date via doodle poll.

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
MFLNRORD approval of CWPPs - Need for a small group to come together to see how they can help with getting community wildfire protection plans approved quicker, how to address OGMA's	Mike Gash, Ken Day, John Walker, Kerri Howse, Gord Chipman, Jason Ward, Hugh Flinton	Late – do ASAP, still needed
CRI funding intake – brainstorm ideas for a CRI funding application, supporting CRD with capacity to apply and administer a grant, advance FireSmart	Stephanie Masun, others, Mike Simpson can support	Well before next funding intake (October)
CWPP recommendations – review before next meeting, discuss which ones are top priority, and update them for progress	Everyone	Ongoing
Fire Stocking Standards – inquire and/or advocate for them to be approved for use in Cariboo-Chilcotin District, perhaps at upcoming regional stocking standards meeting	Multiple people	Before next meeting
Consider Alan Westhaver presentation to the community, and field tour	Mike Simpson	Spring 2023
BCWS to explore creating a short 5min educational video of Kelsey's research	Mike Gash, Matt Lees, Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz	Late – do ASAP?
FireSmart – review what's worked in other locations (USA as well as BC), consider ways of not making it overwhelming for people, drive-around tour	Everyone	Ongoing
Route signage, egress and evacuation planning – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map all known roads, regardless of status – build on what CRD, MOTI or FLNRORD have initiated ▪ CRD requires GIS layer of all roads. FLNRORD contacts are James Moe and Rob Haley. MOTI will provide CRD with roads commonly used for evacuations ▪ Brainstorm at next meeting about status (e.g., 2WD, 4WD, other descriptors) and suitability for evacuation purposes ▪ Explore options for alternate route signage ▪ Explore options for georeferenced maps, utilization of Avenza or other smartphone apps ▪ Invite others as needed for this topic (James Moe, Rob Haley, Carole Mahood from FLNRORD) 	Suggested to ask CRD to coordinate this – new staff person Gerald Pinchbeck	Ongoing, delayed from 2020
Reach out to major industrial enterprises whose properties adjoin areas for proposed treatment within the Williams Lake Community Wildfire Plan area	Mike Simpson	Fall 2022
Recruit sub-committee to carry forward re-treatment allocations, assessments, and priority planning	Peter Holub to initiate	Fall 2022
Funding sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rangeland Advantage IAFBC here ▪ FESBC funding window ▪ UBCM's Community Resiliency Investment Program 	Anyone interested	Ongoing Dec 31, 2022