

Clinton and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Approved Meeting Summary at February 25, 2022

Meeting date: November 16, 2021; 1:00PM to 4:00PM

Location: online

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

BC Timber Sales – Chantelle Davis, Jennifer Gibson

BC Wildfire Service – Mike Gash, Rob Barnett, Jason Ward, Matt Lees

Clinton Community Forest – Robin Fenell, Steve Law

Fraser Basin Council – Mike Simpson, Stephanie Huska

High Bar First Nation – Kukpi7 Roy Fletcher, Tasha Townsend

Ts'kw'aylaxw - Chief Justin Kane

MFLNRORD* - Kane Copley

Village of Clinton – Mayor Susan Swan, Karl Hansen, Madeleine Haynes, Murray Daly

West Fraser – Rob Ballinger

Gold Country Community Society - Marcie Down

**Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development*

1. Introductions, Agenda, Objectives

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone and acknowledged. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved as presented. Mike brought up the map for the Clinton and area roundtable. Map can be found [here](#). Includes the communities around Clinton, Jesmond, 70 Mile, south Green Lake and part of Loon Lake as well as more rural areas around Big Bar Lake and more.

2. Wildfire season 2021 – BC Wide

- a. Debrief and reflect, what did we learn
- b. What can we do with this roundtable to maximize preparedness?

High Bar

Kukpi7 Roy – lots of grass along the highway concerns about a grassfire, looking at managing not just forest fuels but other fuels along transportation corridors

Ts'kw'aylaxw

Chief Justin Kane – hay creek fire – started during the heat wave, need to assess stopping industry work for some time, hot and windy, anything could have started the Lytton fire. Industry stopping may reduce the risks for the fires started. All industrial activities. Need to evaluate the fuel out there. McKay creek fire. Backcountry, train, stops to eliminate the chance opportunities.

Fires travelling very quickly, largely grass and sage, fastest they've ever seen it go. Regulations may need to be re-evaluated.

Chief Justin Kane – guards and back burning – fire jumped the Fraser River. Local understanding of the wind, ICS Teams should be tuned into local knowledge.

Chief Justin Kane – timber that needs to be logged for fuel management. First thing that needs to be addressed – dead standing timber.

Clinton Community Forest

Steve Law – no fire in the community forest, were able to contain McKay creek, the heat dome and subsequent drought is like nothing we have ever seen before. Governed by BC wildfire regulation, Robin Fenell – don't have the resources to hit some of the fires as quick as we should and consequently the fires get large.

Steve Law – more human caused fires, what can we do to get the word out to the public. Curbing a small percentage of that could go a long way.

Robin Fenell – should be striving for Logan Lake

Not a silver bullet but a key contributing factor

Key – FireSmart not to prevent fire but to slow it down.

BCWS

Matt Lees – challenging season for BCWS, 10 weeks in 100 Mile, resourcing needs. Operations when first lightning strike off Sparks Lake. Fire behaviour similar to 2017 – Lightning strikes over 50ha in the first half hour. Learned a lot regarding fire behaviour in terms of seeing things that we've never seen before. A lot of success on the initial attacks. Impressive fire behaviour this last year

Mike Gash – weather in June was extremely abnormal, heat dome. Lytton recorded temp higher than Las Vegas. With that came curing of fuels much earlier in fire season, and quicker than we have seen.

McKay fire, Lytton fire, McKinley Lake, sparks lakes – all human caused, grew very quickly, very aggressively, and were interface which required a ton of resources. Sparks Lake created a pyroelectrical storm – fire created its own weather pattern, which includes thunder and lightning. 40 starts in Cariboo region out of electrical storm which taxed initial attack, fire department, probably only 4-5 that resulted in fires of a significant size. Initial attack success allowed BCWS to focus on other fires in weeks and months to come. lobbying for resources

Jason Ward – historically – nearly half fires in BC in a fire season are human caused. We have had a number of human caused fires that have had a significant impact on the land base. Resourcing issue, because of covid and Ontario fires. Provincial meeting consensus that there are two main priorities. More education forward, how we do the back burns, probable causes of fires. What are the fines? Administrative up to 100K, starting a fire, causing a fire – pay for the cost of it. And the values of what was lost

Rob Barnett – human caused fires 25-30% range for 2021, average for over normal ten-year period. Most are from open burning primarily in the spring. Need to move our messaging around to actual measurable objectives to what we see in the field. Local level – trying to engage our fire departments more in the process, semi regular communication with fire department. Operational details re what's going on in their response area. Not caused by cigarette butt proven in last ten years.

Matt Lees – what can Clinton do? CRI application, access egress, fuel treatment, prescribed fire (updating document) pushing BC FireSmart program, Firesmart.bc.ca, weekly good news stories about fire prevention around homes.

Mike Gash trains governed by national transportation board. After 2021, changes were made to the regulations to try to limit any additional railway caused fires.

Rob Barnett – railway transportation is not high risk, but some activities are not considered high risk under the act.

Mike Gash – still an active RCMP investigation re Lytton fire.

Ashcroft - Elephant Hill human caused and not find the person involved.

Jason Ward – who is developing the CWRP – identifying hazards, where they are and communication.

White rock lake fire threatened Logan Lake – they had invested heavily in FireSmart, that as well as wind, and other conditions that allowed the firefighters to keep fire out of the town. It gave us an anchor line to work from

West Fraser

Rob Ballinger – incident command/stakeholder daily debriefs for Sparks Lake and others for those that were involved. Quite a large group of people, teams calls, zooms, multitude of people, getting an update and what was happening daily. Communication links that were developed was one of the best. Road conditions for some of the utility providers. Beneficial when people were coming and going. If roundtable can be connected to Incident command daily briefings would really cement information sharing.

Village of Clinton

Susan Swan – we don't know fire behaviour because it changes. Always evolving thing and something that we need to anticipate and manage as best we can. Education – that type of fire since no ashtray in cars.

Susan Swan recently in direct communication with CN – sent a photo of a spot – was actioned right away. She was assured tracks were cleared all the way up

Gold Country Community Society

Marcie – Communicating where they can go and where they can't, what they should not be doing.

Trying to prevent problems such as boats in the way of bombers

First response tourism – getting out the message of where people can go, and where they can have campfires, etc. ensuring visitors are aware of constant changes. DriveBC not keeping up as well. Quicker communication between what's happening on the ground and DriveBC. Information came from BCWS, social media, emails, communication with organizations. Aware of all perspectives. Destination BC also doing this “know before you go”. More communication avenues provincially

Themes

- **Communication**
- **Tourism**
- **Fuel management**
- **Community wildfire resilience plan**

3. Meeting summary from May 10, 2021

Summaries are posted [online](#) after they are approved. Alan Westhaver's presentation from May is online at the Fraser Basin Council's [YouTube channel](#).

Summary from May 2021 approved.

4. Information Sharing.

Village of Clinton

Village submitted a \$70 000 application to create a Community Wildfire Resilience Plan (CWRP), for a smaller area within the larger map focused on the SW part of the area. If the development of the plan is funded, first step will be to engage Indigenous governments and all other interested organizations.

Susan – haven't heard anything back from UBCM yet about the application.

Murray – UBCM acknowledged application. TNRD was required to submit a resolution as a portion of the resilience plan. UBCM was able to wait for a resolution from the TNRD. Therefore, the application is complete.

BCWS

Matt Lees – I received it on the fifth of November, to review and do the worksheets. Feeling confident. All the feedback they would have received may just be administrative.

Broadly, the main purpose of the CWRP would bring everyone together, getting a plan on paper for areas that have been treated, or areas that would be treated in the future. Brings all the different projects into one document. All the concerns can come up and will be action items within the document. Big document, lots of intent, overall hopes to reduce the risk to the community.

Will be working with 100 mile district, to develop a tactical plan in the 70mile area. Tactical plan is like a CWRP but focuses on the fuel treatments over the community engagement (?). tactical plans are new last year, hones in on the product, not so admin heavy and focus more on risk reduction

Matt Lees – an upgrade. No duplication of what has been developed. Consultant will go through WPP and takes out what has already been done. Touches on fire fighting apparatus that the communities have, egress. Intent is to get to the treatments on the ground.

Matt Lees – CWRP – opens up the funding envelopes for fuel treatments through CRI.

Jason Ward – last spring – take notes for training through BCWS: travelling circus in the spring.

Cooperation through fire departments very much improved. All working off the ICS structure.

Rob Barnett - The lookouts show that people are reliably calling in fires. Not used in traditional sense, used on patrols.

Jason Ward - look at completed fuel treatments and monitor for potential future. Also collaborate and discuss with first nations to build relationship regarding cultural value and western perspective. Reach out to the region or the zone. Need to be putting more “good fire” and less “bad fire”. Morphing into an all-response system -floods

BCWS – need to extend certification out to fire departments, FN, Forest Professionals to get more fire on the landscape. Current state is slow. Can work with local FN, to help them achieve their goals with aligns with Abbott Chapman.

Rob Barnett – community reduction in Clinton, down by the Fraser River, working on a new project with Kane, outside of the Clinton community boundary. Ecosystem restoration, promote healthy grassland, diversify species. Hoping to do it this spring – waiting for approval through habitat section.

Matt Lees – CRI application looked good; deadline is closed. Link to prescribedfire.ca. three or four videos, traditional, ecosystem restoration burning, prescribed fire. Lots of benefits to reintroduce fire on the landscape. Need to educate the public.

Area operating plan finalized by the end February should know how much funding we get in each area.

Gold Country Community Society

Marcie – have media budget share FireSmart and good news stories on their media. Start with Logan Lake and then move through. Can be a platform for sharing information. Connecting and promoting information.

West Fraser

Rob – following up on fuel hazard abatement. Not a lot within the roundtable area. A few fire salvage blocks. some fuel treatment FES projects north of forest grove in partnership with Canim. Advocacy needed in support of fuel treatment.

Village of Clinton

Karl – FD haven’t done much since May, kept to ourselves this year, didn’t send anyone out due to proximity of other fires. Plans for next year, training for structural protection through OFC. Carrying on training.

Mayor Swan – want to be proactive and ready in case. Fires all around us and no where to go.

Clinton Community Forest

Steve Law – complete the 100m wide break on the S SE side of town

Lee's sawmill road to Hinton Road. Clinton community forest, village woodlot and a private woodlot. Also impacted by the burn. All the dead dying burnt trees removed as well as Douglas Fir beetle removed. No understory stand at all. Biomass logs were shipped off. Will plant 100 stems/ha of aspen in spring 2022. FESBC funding.

Landscape level primary fuel break on the other side of town. Entirely in community forest, OGMA, MDWR, Watershed. Laid out, preliminary field reconnaissance (PFR) completed by High Bar band, now will go to community engagement/public engagement. Another on transmission line, 300 m wide that is too rugged and steep in the SW to do the treatments. Showed the draft map, subject to change.

Preliminary field recon is done, waiting on final report. Hopefully carrying out the treatment in 2022, funding Forest Employment Program, treatment through wildfire risk reduction funding.

Promote FireSmart in the community, free fire hazard assessment, tried to do a chipping program in 70 mile, no one signed up. May try again next year.

Steve Law – selling fibre to Ledcor. Ship biomass – grinding facility just outside of Clinton, so biomass was going to that site. Arrangements with both Ledcor and Arrow? Only enabled through funding through FNESS. biomass has very limited economic value, and its only made possible through subsidies. Burnt saw logs, can't chip a biomass log, some can be made into pulp, most must be ground into biomass.

Still operating under Elephant Hill salvage guidelines so large diameter Douglas-fir are being reserved unless they are a danger tree.

Ts'kw'aylaxw

Chief Justin – fuel management in our area for quite a few years, waiting for application that went through this year. Planned work in Marble Canyon, last year nothing got done with covid.

Understory a big part of the process for managing our forest. Secwépemc have a declaration on the understory, would like to see that to be recognized. Secwepemcul'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society SRSS done a lot of work, invited here to participate in recovery of McKay Creek.

McKay creek – Emergency management (Daryl), in the office of BCWF, liaison between our communities which worked well.

Started a rehabilitation planning for MacKay creek across the river and above us. The motor vehicle ban is helping to protect some land base. Looking to put signs up reminding people that there are no motorized vehicles allowed into the fire zone. Pushing for funding from BC for land guardian program.

Visited watchtower outside of 100 Mile are an asset for all of us? Might be useful to use them.

Fire from lightning hit a hydro pole which burned and simmered all night. Width of powerline in community, no fully functioning fire department. Would like to explore training opportunities with BC Hydro. All the hazards with the live wires.

High Bar First Nation

Tasha – High Bar is a small nation, limited capacity, appreciate inclusion, would like to collaborate more with Clinton community forest and the village. Looking for funding for fire suppression crews.

Have staff trained in S100, S185

Funding for the plan will kick the collaboration into high gear.

MFLNRORD

Kane Copley – looking at fuel management to connect burned area from Fraser River to the Thompson.

About 30% of the 100 Mile Forest district is burnt in the last 10 years. Burned areas are considered lower risk and lower priority to treat. Looking at areas where we can connect some of the fires to make

a more fulsome fuel break. Some proposed fuel breaks that will connect Elephant Hill fire to Flat Lake fuel break. Preliminary stages, this would be a good fire break for 70 Mile. Canoe Creek doing archeology work on some other projects. Above Loon Lake there is a burned over fire break Green lake – finishing a fuel break that has been going on for a couple of years. Between Green Lake and Nolan Lake. Hoping to harvest back there. But no interest yet. Will look at doing some treatment to reduce fuel hazard. Egress road from Green Lake – through south Bonaparte and north Green Lake road. Graveling and a gate managed by local fire department.

Forest Enhancement Society (FES) funded fuel reduction treatments around the Big Bar Lake community Reforestation in all burned areas – planting fir and deciduous. Also planting deciduous along roads. Prefer to utilize existing roads as much as possible.

Old Action item – Chantelle to talk with Kane regarding fuel mitigation in timber sale – on hold due to old growth management deferrals.

Old action item – committed to use the [foresite](#) tool for the Cariboo Forest Region – prompt for everyone to all use so that people without GIS can see where the polygons are.

Should all be uploaded except 70 mile polygon until First Nation consultation is done

Kane - can do changes to forest plans to add deciduous. It used to be a deleterious species now considered non deleterious. Doesn't work for you, doesn't work against you. Strategically we need to start putting deciduous in different areas. 2017 changed the norms for us.

BCTS

Chantelle – Big Bar – old growth deferral is on hold. Looking at fuel breaks that Kane brought up to see if there are any overlaps and address them in conjunction with FLNRORD. Other than that fire salvage is high priority. *Question - Are stocking standards changing to accept deciduous in all sorts of blocks.* In fuel breaks it is an exemption. Not pursuing it for regular blocks, when management objective is fire mitigation

Question how much initiative BCTS is having with fuel treatment to put them into the market system. Need to capture so licensees can get a partial cut reduction on their initiative.

Chantelle – yes one TS license so far, towards 100 mile. Looking at what Kane is proposing, trying to work on timber pricing.

5. Next steps

February next meeting

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Robin Fennell to map out areas of concern within the MOTI zone near highway 97 and the rail line north of town for potential prescribed burning. Robin Fennell to send that information to Matt Lees	Robin Fennell Matt Lees	ASAP
Advise Mike on status of CWRP funding application	Murray	When response from UBCM received
Chantelle Davis to talk with Kane Copley about funding in regard to funding works on the Big Bar TSL	Chantelle Davis Kane Copley	Ongoing
Consider Alan Westhaver presentation to the community, and field tour	Mike Simpson	Spring 2022
Utilize the Cariboo Region mapping website (Forsite) to upload fuel management polygons (past and present)	Kane, everyone	ongoing

Questions about proposed fuel management projects, ribbon they see in the forest next to private property, contact matt.lees@gov.bc.ca	Everyone	Ongoing
Training opportunities for Volunteer Fire Departments reach out to Jason Ward (Jason.Ward@gov.bc.ca) examples: SWPP 115 – structural, Engine boss course and Wildfire fighter 1 – equivalent to S100.	everyone	Ongoing
Consider connecting roundtable to incident command through BCWS during wildfire season	BCWS	Ongoing