

**Clinton and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable
Approved Meeting Summary as of March 11, 2024**

Meeting date: November 1, 2023, 1:00PM to 4:00PM

Location: In Person at Clinton Memorial Hall and online

Present:

Bonaparte First Nation – Brenda Antoine
Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society – Al Midgley
BC Parks – Terri Worthen
BC Timber Sales – Jeff O’Hara
BC Wildfire Service – Rob Barnett, Peter Holub, Tom Foley
Clinton Community Forest – Steve Law
Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness – Steve Mulholland, Nick Hamilton
First Nations Emergency Services Society – Darrick Andrews
High Bar First Nation – Jordy McKague, Zig Fletcher
Kelly Lake Wildfire Prep Team – Norene Parke
Ministry of Forests 100 Mile House District – Catherine Cautley-Davis
Stswecem’c Xget’tem First Nation – Adam Colpitts
Student/Youth – Aaron Simpson (take your kid to work day)
Thompson-Nicola Regional District – Kevin Skrepnek, Director Jim Smith
Village of Clinton – Mayor Roland Stanke, Brian Doddridge, Clr Darrell Schapansky, Karl Hansen
West Fraser – Rob Ballinger
Consultant (Fraser Basin Council) – Mike Simpson

1. Introductions, Meeting Objectives, Agenda

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone unceded territory of High Bar, Whispering Pines and Secwepemc nation was acknowledged. A moment of silence took place to reflect on the loss of life during the wildfire season by those fighting wildfires. A round of introductions took place. The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Debrief of the Wildfire Season and Lessons Learned

Participants were encouraged to reflect on the 2023 wildfire season, not just in Clinton and surrounding area, but the whole province and think of lessons learned that we could apply here.

Feedback was as follows:

Reflection	Lesson Learned to Apply
Drought and water supply issues were everywhere. Subdivision at end of Loon Lake has done a good job addressing water supply.	Communities and residents should secure water supply
Number of times BCWS staff heard “we’ve never seen this before” during weather briefings; fire behaviour is beyond what is modelled based on past conditions	Be prepared for longer more intense wildfire seasons
We’re still dealing with impact of forest fuels from Mountain pine beetle epidemic	We need more controlled disturbance on the landscape, low intensity burns to break up the large patches

Reflection	Lesson Learned to Apply
Reports from Forest Practices Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and Fire Management in BC: Toward Landscape Resilience • Practising Landscape Fire Management: Technical Bulletin 	Let's figure out how to do this; advocate to make this happen.
Realize that wildfire seasons have changed, are longer and more intense. The number of people in some wildfire-affected areas who said "we didn't know what hit us" is baffling.	Prepare with more resources, more awareness amongst residents, more education by professionals
Everyone has a role to play, including forest tenure holders	Encourage forest tenure holders to do more, such as applying fuel break objectives in all timber harvesting operations

Mike encouraged everyone to think of these lessons as we prepare for the 2024 wildfire season.

3. Debrief of the Spring Field Tour, Alan Westhaver Presentation

Participants debriefed on the spring field tour that we undertook with Alan Westhaver, and the evening public presentation that Alan gave. Mike reminded people that a narrated version of Alan's presentation is available [here](#) to circulate to anyone as an educational tool.

4. Previous meeting summary

The previous meeting summary from January 23, 2023 was approved. Action Items were reviewed, and either addressed during the rest of the meeting or removed if they were complete. See updated table at end of this summary.

5. Information Sharing

BC Parks

- Terri noted that the fuel management work at Green Lake Provincial Park (notably Sunset View campground) had challenges last year, in that they couldn't find contractors to do the work which meant debris piles were left. She noted that contractors are in place now and this work will be underway imminently.
- Terri noted that there's no work at Big Bar Provincial Park yet.

Discussion: chipping options

- Chipping rather than burning debris piles is an option, but much more expensive
- Leaving chips on site is not desirable, the material needs to be hauled away
- It's very expensive to haul chips away, it could be subsidized but there's no facility nearby

Discussion: burning tips, tricks and tools

- Venting index can be limiting to burn debris piles
- An exemption can be sought – contact the BCWS Zone technician [Rob Barnett](#) for assistance in getting an exemption, or [Steve Mulholland](#) at EMCR for some suggestions
- You can get a customized, more local ventilation index – see BC MOECCS website [here](#) for more information

BC Timber Sales

- Jeff noted that they built some wildfire risk reduction elements into their timber sale licences (TSL) for some areas near 100 Mile House. (BCTS is unique in that once the TSL is awarded, there is no supervision or direction by BCTS). There was however a pre-work with the licensee, which included BCTS and Catherine Davis from MOF.
- Jeff noted there won't be much activity in the Clinton area as BCTS Kamloops Business Area is focusing efforts on 2023 wildfire salvage in Lillooet and south of Kamloops. They also only have 2 planners for the entire area.

Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

- Steve noted that EMCR mostly focused on response and recovery, less so on mitigation and preparedness but it's good to be connected at this roundtable.
- Steve noted that EMCR's upcoming roundtable will be in spring 2024, location TBD.

West Fraser

- Rob noted that they don't have many operations in the Clinton area, having just completed timber harvest salvage in the Flat Lake area (2021 wildfire)
- Given the drought, they are behind their fire hazard abatement program (burning piles) but are starting soon
- They are working with Tsi Del Del and Arrow on a fuel management project in other areas of the Cariboo with funding from Forest Enhancement Society of BC
- They are initiating their 2024 fire preparedness plans. **ACTION:** Rob to share this

BC Wildfire Service

- Tom Foley introduced himself as the Wildfire Prevention Officer for Cariboo Fire Centre, he works to support MOF districts and others. He replaces Matt Lees who became the Cariboo Fire Centre Business Manager.
- Tom noted that within Bill 23 there is an initiative underway to require a higher degree of fuel management (e.g., removing surface fuels to a maximum level, removing ladder fuels by pruning) within wildland-urban interface (WUI) zones surrounding communities, this would be required of any forest tenure holder (community forest, woodlot licence, major licensee, etc.). This is not in place yet, but could have significant cost implications depending on how these costs are accounted for and how stumpage is paid by that tenure holder.
- Peter clarified that he is also a Wildfire Prevention Officer, but focused on prescribed burning and cultural burning, working with 3 MOF districts, 4 fire zones and 6 First Nations. Peter noted that although there were plans for prescribed burns, the conditions were too dry and there was no capacity due to the 2023 wildfire season extending into October. They are having good success within the last year doing some burning near Williams Lake after some fuel management projects with Williams Lake First Nation.
- Rob noted that in 2023 there were about 60 fires in 100 Mile House zone, about half human caused. Most were small.
- Rob and Peter are working with Catherine and local First Nations and Clinton Community Forest to identify opportunities for future prescribed burns; interest was expressed in doing a future field trip to see the outcomes.

Ministry of Forests 100 Mile House

- Catherine noted that she can serve as the local contact for any First Nation or organization that wants to do fuel management/wildfire risk reduction – she will engage BCWS staff as needed, but the “land manager” is MOF District staff. Email [Catherine](#).
- Catherine noted that similar to BC Parks, there was limited capacity of crews and equipment earlier in 2023 due to the severe wildfire season. There are now crews contracted to finish

much of the fuel management work at South Green Lake, Watch-Green Lake area, 70 Mile and Nolan Lake areas. Prescriptions for future work are being developed in the Meadow Lake Road area, including grassland benchmark areas.

Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society

- Al shared a handout that proposes a call to action and a path forward on water stewardship for multiple benefits and suggesting a proposed water storage initiative in the upper watershed.
- Brenda noted that local Kupki7s (Chiefs) of the surrounding First Nations will be meeting soon to discuss this amongst other initiatives.
- Norene noted that there are some relevant funding sources:
 - New Relationship Trust – food security and sovereignty see info [here](#)
 - Agriculture Canada – various programs see info [here](#)
- Mike suggested that this initiative may be of interest to the Qwelminte Secwepemc (QS) or the Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration Stewardship Society (SRSS) to lead

Village of Clinton

- Brian noted that the Village of Clinton is working with Cache Creek and Ashcroft to have a shared FireSmart coordinator serve 3 communities
- Village of Clinton is evaluating their plans and bylaws and will be looking at development permit area options in their official community plan, and want to work with TNRD on their emergency plans
- Karl noted that the fire department was very slow this year, there were only 2 local grass fires, but crews were sent to work on the fires west of Lillooet

Thompson-Nicola Regional District – staff

- Kevin noted that Jeremy Denny recently left his position of Regional Fire Training Officer, this position will be replaced soon
- Daniel Funk was hired in spring 2023 with grant funding as FireSmart Coordinator and has done a lot of travelling around the TNRD doing FireSmart assessments and education
- TNRD is looking to hire two additional FireSmart coordinators for 2024
- TNRD hired Forsite Consultants Ltd. to complete one community wildfire resiliency plan (CWRP) for each Electoral Area. Open houses were held in October. The CWRPs will be complete in December, and that enables TNRD to apply for additional FireSmart funding.
- TNRD's emergency operations centre (EOC) operated from their new dedicated space (3rd Floor of Kamloops office) from late April through September to address flooding and wildfires. Kevin noted that the EOC has some depth with many personnel able to complete various tasks.
- Kevin noted that the new provincial [Emergency and Disaster Management legislation](#) has received third reading. In his opinion, it is good intent and will set things up well for the long term but will be a lot of work in the short term, especially for regional districts.
- Kevin noted that the BC government is looking for [public feedback on the new Emergency Management regulations](#) by December 31, 2023

Thompson-Nicola Regional District – Electoral Area Director Smith

- Jim noted that there has been a lot of FireSmart education in the South Green Lake area, there are several local FireSmart representatives. There is work to do in the more outlying areas such as Eagan Lake, Young Lake, Pressy Lake and others.
- Jim noted that the South Green Lake VFD is looking to establish structure protection for off-shore properties running water lines through culverts

- The 70 Mile VFD will remain as a society, not a TNRD fire department, there is a good base of volunteers and “they’ll be fine” and they want to do lots of interface fire training

Bonaparte First Nation

- Brenda noted that although there has been good communication with TNRD during emergencies with the new emergency act changes they want to maintain that. Need good communications before the season.

Clinton Community Forest

- Steve noted that there were no wildfires in the community forest this year.
- He’s toured many groups to the completed fuel management break NW of Clinton
- CCF is looking to do more work in the Kelly Lake portion of their tenure area, he will be in contact with Norene soon
- CCF continues to offer free wildfire hazard assessments for property owners
- CCF continues to offer a chipping program, which Asplundh donates their services for
- CCF needs to update their 2024 fire preparedness plans **ACTION:** Steve share this

Kelly Lake Emergency Response Team

- Norene noted that their group consists of 22 individuals and they are in the process of creating a non-profit society to be enabled to work cooperatively with BCWS in the future

Fraser Basin Council

- Mike (contractor to Fraser Basin Council) said that he and Alex de Chantal, Regional Manager of Fraser Basin Council, are working with BCWS on an initiative called Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) throughout the entire BC Interior.

BC Wildfire Service wants to determine the interest and capacity of rural communities in the BC Interior in the development of rural community wildfire fighting capabilities in areas **outside of structural fire protection (i.e., VFD) boundaries**. This is aimed primarily at identification of training and equipment requirements of rural communities outside of structural fire protection.

The **Cooperative Community Wildfire Response** Stream 2 project between Fraser Basin Council, BC Wildfire Service and BC Cattlemens’ Association, with Fraser Basin Council leading the engagement of rural communities. One area of focus is rural, non-Indigenous communities. The other priority group is Indigenous communities, which started in 2022.

6. Next Steps

Mike noted that Thompson Rivers University is launching a wildfire and emergency management institute and that in fall 2021 he met with Dr. Jill Harvey and Dr. Mike Flannigan to raise awareness of possible opportunities with the community wildfire roundtables. He recently saw Dr. Harvey and raised this opportunity again.

Consider doing a tour of a prescribed burn in 2025.

Next meeting – mid-March, Mike to seek a date via doodle poll about a month in advance. Suggested to invite Dr. Jill Harvey and/or Dr. Mike Flannigan from TRU to present on their research and have them understand what research opportunities might exist through this roundtable.

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Share updated maps that show past fuel management treatments and future proposed treatments.	Matt	Ongoing
Questions about proposed fuel management projects, ribbon they see in the forest next to private property, contact Johnna Wandler at johnna.wandler@gov.bc.ca	Everyone	Ongoing
Training opportunities for Volunteer Fire Departments reach out to Kayla Topping (kayla.topping@gov.bc.ca) examples: SWPP 115 – structural, Engine boss course and Wildfire fighter 1 – equivalent to S100.	Everyone	Ongoing
Advise Rob Barnett if they see problems of excessive fuel buildup and fire risk on private land rob.barnett@gov.bc.ca	Everyone	Ongoing
Contact Rob Barnett if First Nations communities want to do training rob.barnett@gov.bc.ca	First Nations	Ongoing
Contact Rob Barnett or Reg Trapp about ideas for proposed prescribed burns	Everyone	Ongoing
Close the communication gaps – update or provide new contacts for key sectors missing on the contact list, in particular ranching	Everyone	Before next meeting
Forest tenure holders (majors, Clinton Community Forest) and BCTS – share your fire preparedness plans with this roundtable	Rob, Jeff, Steve	Before May 2024
Specific short-term actions – look for the word ACTION in throughout the summary	Everyone	ASAP