

Williams Lake and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Meeting Summary as at May 4, 2021

Meeting date: February 10, 2021 1:00PM to 2:55PM

Location: online

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

Alkali Resource Management (ARM) - Gord Chipman, Francis Johnson
BC Wildfire Service - Matt Lees, Dave Fleming, Mike Gash, Brian Clark, Jason Ward
Cariboo Regional District - John MacLean, Stuart Larson, Maureen LeBourdais, Angie Delainey
Cariboo Woodlot Association - Mike Simpson (representing Cariboo Woodlot Association)
City of Williams Lake - Erick Peterson, Ken Day (consultant)
MFLNRORD (district) - Geneve Jasper, Peter Holub, Travis Heckford
MFLNRORD (region) - Lindsey Wood, Becky Bings, Chris Swan, Peter Holub
Miocene VFD - Jason Ward
MOTI - Ron McCormack
Northern Shuswap Tribal Council - Jenny Allen
Tolko - Jack Darney
UBC - Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz
West Fraser - Mauro Calabrese
Williams Lake Community Forest - Hugh Flinton
Williams Lake Indian Band - John Walker
Xat'sull - Edna Boston
Fraser Basin Council - Mike Simpson (facilitator, recorder)

1. Introductions, Agenda, Objectives

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone, acknowledged Secwepemc territory. He noted that FBC Regional Manager Jane Wellburn sent her regrets. Introductions were made. Agenda was approved as presented.

2. Meeting summary from January 27, 2020 and action items

Previous meeting summary was approved. It will be posted on the Community Wildfire Roundtable website.

Follow-up on action items were discussed briefly, see table at back for current status:

- Still need to finalize evacuation route planning; flood and COVID took priority in 2020

3. What's Already Underway

Those present provided updates on work underway.

BC Wildfire Service

- Mike Gash reported that there is a lot of wildfire risk reduction (aka forest fuel management) work underway, provincially and within the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Some jurisdictions are falling short on delivery and utilizing funds; the Cariboo-Chilcotin is a leader in this work, let's use the shortfalls both this fiscal year (ending March 31) and in the future. Contact Geneve, Matt Lees to get projects in the queue.

- Matt Lees reported that they are welcoming any project ideas that could use funding by March 31 this year to implement “shelf-ready” projects. There is \$3.2M planned for next fiscal year 2021/22, to implement projects and fund positions.
- Matt noted there were only 3 projects submitted to the October 2020 UBCM Community Resilience Investment (CRI) Program FireSmart intake. Next intake October 2021, this group should brainstorm ideas. Contact Douglas Yano at douglas.yano@gov.bc.ca with questions about CRI Program funding.
- Matt also noted that a mapping project is underway, to be complete by March 31, that will map past, current and future wildfire risk reduction/fuel management treatments regardless of funding source. He will share with Mike Simpson when ready.
- Brian Clark, the Acting Zone Officer, reported that fire crews will start to be hired back in March. He is looking for sites where they can be faller-trained; BCWS can take on the liability. Solicitation letters for stand-by offers for equipment for wildfire season will be sent out by late February. A forest industry task force looking to coordinate large equipment groups will connect with industry folks in April. There are several prescribed burns planned, communication with governments and stakeholders is underway. Brian invited anyone to contact him at 778-799-2090 or brian.clark@gov.bc.ca with questions or falling sites.
- It was noted that there are several concerns with **geotechnical, hydrological and flood issues** throughout the area, and we need to be sure that wildfire risk reduction works don’t exacerbate these issues

MFLNRORD (district)

- Geneve noted and showed on-screen the wildfire risk reduction work currently underway or completed recently (river valley, Russet Bluff, Borland Creek, airport, Pheasant Drive at Fox Mountain) and the implementation work planned for fiscal year 2021/22 (below Dog Creek Road/above Walmart, and IFB-05 Dog Creek/Chimney Valley). In addition, there are many areas where assessments are complete, prescriptions are being finalized.
- Geneve can share the geotechnical report on the proposed works below Dog Creek Road/above Walmart
- There are two prescribed burns planned for the foot of White Road, and Fox Mountain along the roadside (both had fuel management treatments completed about 10 years ago). Mauro noted there are slope issues at White Road.
- It was noted that most adjacent private property owners of all of this work have been appreciative, but some have raised concerns. It was noted that hopefully private property owners emulate these treatments and FireSmart their own properties.

Williams Lake Indian Band

- John Walker showed on-screen the 180 ha of area proposed for wildfire risk reduction work at Bond Lake, to start this spring, including trap tree falling (for Douglas-fir bark beetle control), timber harvesting, then pruning and an understory burn
- Borland Creek Logging crews are doing the work at Russet Bluff this winter, and another crew at the airport

City of Williams Lake

- Ken Day reported and showed on-screen with Google Earth that there are numerous wildfire risk reduction projects underway, including at the airport (one burned, one not); 9 ha in the river valley; the Dairy Fields below Midnight Ave. to 11th Ave.
- Ken suggested there is a TRU-owned parcel in town that could benefit from treatment.

- Ken noted there are several areas with prescriptions underway: between Westridge and golf course (major archaeological issues there); a city-owned property above South Lakeside; and city park in Westridge.
- Ken noted there is existing funding in place to do FireSmart assessments on institutional properties, it's on his list to do.
- Ken suggested that the Missioner Creek area should be collaborative: part is in the City, part outside the City; there are significant archaeological values; there is a school and West Fraser plywood plant downhill/downstream; geotechnical concerns; and risks of flooding if culverts get plugged (city culvert, Hwy 97 culvert)

Alkali Resource Management

- Francis reported that their crews have been busy implementing many wildfire risk reduction projects (too many to list), with funding from many sources, and many have had a fibre recovery component which has sent fibre to Atlantic Power or Pinnacle Pellet. They have installed a fibre storage facility on reserve. They have also completed the fuel management work to address egress along Chimney Lake road and Enterprise Road.
- Francis thanked Becky for support on obtaining mule deer winter range (MDWR) exemptions

Cariboo Woodlot Association

- Mike reported that since January 2020, wildfire risk reduction work funded by Forest Enhancement Society of BC has been completed on woodlot licenses 1694 (Fox Mountain), 587 (Dog Creek Road), 1805 (Frost Creek/Flett subdivision) and things are just underway at 1955 (Dog Creek Road), totaling approximately 110 ha

Williams Lake Community Forest

- Hugh reported that the landscape level fuel break on the Flat Rock block is almost complete, funding has come from multiple sources. He also noted that wildfire risk reduction projects have been completed in the Big Lake block near Cane Road and the school. Hugh noted he's glad to see other wildfire risk reduction projects adjacent to the Flat Rock block proceeding (e.g., Westridge, river valley)
- Peter added that about 9 ha in the Flat Rock block will be an ecosystem restoration burn, planned for fall 2021

Tolko

- Jack reported that he would like to connect with Ken and Geneve, to make sure that Tolko's proposed fuel break projects above South Lakeside align with other efforts
- Tolko also has initiatives underway at Dewar Lake
- Geneve noted that there can be exemptions granted for silviculture stocking standards, as most licensees don't have "fire stocking standards" in their forest stewardship plans (FSPs)

West Fraser

- Mauro showed on-screen a small, expensive wildfire risk reduction project on Fox Mountain, uphill of the road and below the neighbourhood that West Fraser is leading.

Miocene Volunteer Fire Department

- Jason Ward reported that a group of local foresters coordinated a wildfire risk reduction project around the community hall, acquired a forestry licence to cut, and contributed the revenue proceeds to the local 4H club

MFLNRORD (region)

- Chris noted that they are pulling together a “lessons learned” document about addressing MDWR needs in the wildland urban interface (WUI) in the Interior Douglas-fir (IDF) biogeoclimatic zone. Mike Simpson offered to distribute to this group.

4. Next Steps

Resources available - a new funding program was announced Friday January 29, 2021, with a closing date of March 19, 2021. The UBCM CRI Program [FireSmart Economic Recovery Fund](#) is offering up to \$500 000 of 100% funding for coordinated applications to primarily employ and train people to build local wildfire resiliency. Mike Simpson noted that eligible activities include funding assessments of FireSmart score cards/workbooks on residential areas (private land, IR land) and farms and ranches, community assets and infrastructure. It can fund implementation of residential and farm/ranch actions where the landowner is 65 or older or has mobility challenges. It can also fund fuel management demonstration projects, and all sorts of training. Ken noted that the City is already looking into this, and John Walker expressed interest.

Leslie, Mike Smith and Kevin will review the program and application guide further. Mike Simpson is available (at no cost, support is funded by BCWS) to assist with the applications.

Contact list - all present agreed to share their contact info. Mike Simpson will email an updated contact list.

Alan Westhaver - Alan is a former Parks Canada employee, extensive experience with wildfire and fuel management (here's a [video](#) on his assessment of FireSmart effectiveness post-Fort McMurray wildfires) is aiming to host a spring webinar for all three community wildfire roundtables. Fraser Basin Council can fund his labour and expenses. More details to come.

Next meeting - 2-3 hours online, late April or early May 2020.

The following ACTION items were agreed to:

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Collaborate on approach for Missioner Creek (see above)	Ken, Matt, Ron (MOTI), others	Ongoing
Collaborate on projects in South Lakeside/Dog Creek Road/Walmart area	Geneve, Jack, Ken, others	Ongoing
Collaborate on UBCM CRI Program FireSmart Economic Recovery Fund application	Erick, John, John, Ken, Gord	By March 19
Share geotechnical reports completed with CRD	Geneve	ASAP
Share link with new map of wildfire risk reduction projects when complete	Matt Lees	By March 31
Contact Brian Clark about sites where BCWS crews can undertake faller training	Everyone	By early March
Contact Matt Lees about opportunities to spend wildfire risk reduction opportunities	Everyone	ASAP
Share “lessons learned on MDWR in WUI in IDF”	Chris Swan	By March 31
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) 	Mike, Jane to quarterback this before next meeting Mikayla (MOTI), Carole Mahood (FLNRORD), others	Ongoing - carry over from January 2020
Joint Committee to determine if an MOU is needed; if yes, involve NSTC, T'exelc, Xat'sull, Esketemc	City, CRD	Ongoing - carry over from January 2020
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	Jane, Mike	Ongoing - carry over from January 2020
CWPP recommendations - review before next meeting, discuss which ones are top priority	Everyone	Before next meeting
Brainstorm funding needs for the next UBCM CRI Program wildfire risk reduction intake	Matt Lees, others	At a meeting around October