

Williams Lake and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Draft Summary as at November 23, 2021

Meeting date: November 15, 2021 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Location: Online

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

Alkali Resource Management (ARM) – Gord Chipman

British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) – Brian Clark, Matt Lees, Dave Fleming, Jason Ward, Mike Gash

Cariboo Regional District – John Maclean

City of Williams Lake – Ken Day (contractor)

Fraser Basin Council – Mike Simpson, Jane Wellburn, Stephanie Huska

MFLNRORD* (district) – Geneve Jasper, Kingsley Kyere-Donkor

MFLNRORD* (region) – Peter Holub, Travis Heckford

Ministry Of Transportation and Infrastructure – Mikaela Arkesteyn

Williams Lake First Nation – Brittany Cleminson, John Walker

Xatśúll – Chief Sherri Sellars

British Columbia Timber Sales (BCTS) - Nathan Davis

University of British Columbia – Kelsey Copes

Consus Management - Tom Foley

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

Meeting objectives

- Reflect and debrief on the 2021 wildfire season
- Provide updates on what's happening with wildfire risk reduction work, discuss training and preparation needs in advance of the upcoming fire season
- Develop relationships, share information
- Identify synergies on various initiatives

1. Wildfire Season 2021

BCWS:

Mike Gash – By end of June the fire center was at max capacity. Rapidly hiring every contractor and contract crew they could find. June 30, Lytton burnt, almost all the town was destroyed. Two fatalities which was devastating. Sparks Lake fire, human caused, created a pyroelectrical storm which is when the smoke goes so high it created its own weather pattern. From that storm, the Cariboo got 40 fire starts on June 30, most E of 100 mile.

Dave Fleming – engagement went well with communities, contract crews were very helpful, including industry partnerships. Logan Lake benefitted from prevention and fuel management

Peter Holub – worked air attack in summer, fire behaviour due to fuels and climate – we can't change the climate, but we can change the fuels. Fires quickly accelerated. Limitations to our resources, we need to explore expanding on traditional burning and fuel management. heavy fuels in McKinley Lake – fire behaviour in wet belt, there was a fire through there in 1950s. show what temp/humidity etc. effect can be

Jason Ward – reviewing the decision-making process for the prohibitions, campfire bans. BCWS may revisit prohibition guidelines. Tend to have significant human caused fires – goal to increase our

prevention messaging. Provincially there are 2 major priorities. Prevention communication one of them – to do a much better job at providing more information and assisting our staff. DeKa lake would have been a great opportunity to exploit some operational successes, backburning etc. Logan Lake was protected because it is fire smart + other reasons (opportunities and weather etc.). 50-60% area within CWPP is private, very little funding available.

City of Williams Lake

Ken Day – feeling need to swerve into FireSmart in a big way. Within 30m of structures is the next place we need to go in a strong way. Our FireSmart program this fall, didn't get much traction. We assessed 15 places, everyone failed including my own.

Cariboo Regional District

John Maclean – thank BCWS – June 30 hit us hard, pretty much everything was an interface fire. We were doing Evacuation Orders (EO) and Evacuation Alerts (EA) immediately. Challenge for increasing FireSmart is how do we build/resource the program. Lucky that CRD board sees need for additional resources for emergency management. Responding to fire, flood, landslide a lot. All aspects of emergency response are changing. How does hydrology change with forest fire or fuel removal? I have heard that the fire behaviour hasn't been seen before, which challenges our ability to respond. And public response to the information. It is a challenge to communicate to a public that is highly resistant. How do we get our view points out? How do we work together to communicate to an increasingly traumatized resistant population?

Alkali Resource Management

Gord Chipman – Westside Vernon – dense community, no rhyme or reason for houses that burnt down. Some were fire traps that did not burn. Fire hydrants everywhere, water tower there, appeared that FireSmart was in some peoples minds. What stuck out – planning of the whole neighborhood seemed to be haphazard, not thirty meters between houses.

When we start accepting FireSmarting, then we need to get smarter around how we design subdivisions and houses.

I couldn't believe some houses in Monte Lake burnt down, (right beside the lake) it wasn't black and white in my mind.

University of British Columbia

Kelsey Copes interesting to hear what needs are on the ground and what questions are to make research more useful. Multiple interactive hazards – if it's a need, we can find the right people

BCWS public satisfaction survey [Public Satisfaction Survey - Province of British Columbia](#)

Data from pre and post fire to assess changing severity and behaviour. Also looking at fuel treatment effectiveness. Have plots in Logan Lake in both treated and untreated areas. Hoping for quick turnaround on some of the key lessons. Colleague (Greg) – fire behaviour/ fuel modeling/ brains behind implementing fuel models and how on the ground data translates into different fire models.

Themes –

- **FireSmart educational material development and messaging**
- **Learn from Logan Lake (FireSmart, fuel management and other factors)**
- **Education re fuel management, prevention and backburns**
- **Emergency Management System**
- **Fire science/fire behaviour (presentations in February)**
- **Public trust**

- **Speed things up for fuel management/ treat more areas on the landscape**
- **Planning subdivisions in the future with FireSmart in mind**
- **Facilitate mapping that is accessible to all to improve planning and wildfire treatment on the landscape.**

2. Review last meeting summary

Mike Simpson shared meeting summary from May. Reminder – when they are approved, they are PDF'd and [put on the website](#).

May 4, 2021 – Alan Westhaver presented – his presentation is on [FBC YouTube channel](#). Lots of specific action items

May 2021 summary approved

3. Information sharing – what's underway

BCTS

Nathan Davis - significant overlap community wildfire reduction. A consultant is engaged on doing single tree inventory and silviculture regimes to support that

Identify fire protection areas where opportunities are and then reaching out to adjacent folks building on what they have done to promote a continuity of treatments on the landscape. We tend not to focus on areas that don't have a lot of volume – we should be able to identify those areas in more detail and pass on info regarding that. Have a mandate around identifying areas with volume and areas that don't have a lot of volume but need treatment. Focus on interface – will be consistent with CPP as much as we can. Second tier through pricing captured.

MFLNRORD

Geneve Jasper (Kingsley Kyere-Donkor shared screen) – number of projects, mostly north of Williams Lake. One at the airport its a large project that has been wrapped up. Next one is in addition to the other Fox Mtn projects its on Pheasant drive on the East side of the subdivision. Are looking at doing the piece to the East of that because the fuel in that area is quite significant. Dog Creek (behind Gibbon Rd) with Williams Lake First Nation, continuing where we have mostly focused summer work this year. Two brand new projects near Chimney Valley North side, East side of Dog Creek (Gunnanoot) bid, getting contract ready to be issued.

No other sites

Looking at next spring summer (3 units behind mills and Comer Station) and IFB 59 which goes across the top of fox mountain.

Prepping for more spots on South Lakeside that we are looking at. Depending on assessments, funding, people.

Securing dollars to do next years work. Always welcome input from roundtable in terms of priorities.

Where do people think we should be going next?

Legacy data is getting collected will add them in.

Ken Day will connect with Kingsley to get him more data.

Geneve Jasper – we are planning 2-3 years out – doesn't look like more money than what we are looking at. Projects are a lot of coordination work. Slow going depending on weather and conditions. Also considering smoke management or carbon grinding.

tactical plan in south lakeside area across to WLFN to have more detailed information than we have right now. Will start there and it will help fill in the gaps for areas outside the interface.

Mike Simpson - what are we using as a common mapping platform?

Alkali Resource Management

Gord Chipman part of a workshop looking at fuel. Tour of Logan Lake. Information sharing is a huge issue. They would share all their fuel treatments, give it to everyone, then when the fires start coming down, no one had the maps, garnet used paper map with a highlighter. Communicating this for years when push comes to shove no one has the information

Finished Forestry Enhancement Society (FES) funding, moved into Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR), moved into a Community Resilience Initiative (CRI) around alkali, hired FireSmart coordinator working with community at alkali. Forest employment program, project at chimney lake above the rec site, grassland restoration prescription, drift fence that had to be replaced, wildfire risk reduction at the same time.

Two others with FET mason creek south of Alkali, getting those two WR projects shelf ready. Landscape level wildfire risk management plan to highlight where the priorities should be. winter projects on the go. We have a lot of people – over 40 – a bit of a logistical nightmare regarding level 3 first aid. Tight timelines, fire season, then WRR, coordinating it with other funding programs that are available and fighting fire in the summer. We had crews ready to go. Fire centre folks good to work with this year. We had five crews and a direct contract with fire center and using people on wildfire risk reduction contracts. Will probably get 500 ha of WRR done this year.

CRI and WRR are “lurch” projects – we could really staff up if we had continuous work. I think there is lots of capacity available. We have come very far in the last four years. Aim high – getting as much funding as we can. We should be doing way more treatment around communities. If we could make it continuous, we will be able to get the capacity.

MFLNRORD

Geneve Jasper – started dumping information into one common file, when and where fuel treatments are happening. Then could have info for coordinated planning and for wildfires education around successes and FireSmart is a great idea. Negative public response on Dog Creek. Public needs reassurance on what, how and why

Worked with Xat’sull on the airport project, it went really well.

primary fuel break Mark Tamas’ woodlot will go into 3-year plan with the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), Xat’sull desire to do fuel management in their territory.

Peter Holub –both public education and prescribed fire. Success in Boitano park and stampede grounds. Have others helping in public education. 20 ha in size taking the utmost care and precautions, do the burning before the treatment is done its better to be burned before fuel management treatment. Sig fuel loading there. Lots of different components. Large public education campaign.

BCWS

Matt Lees - BCWS developing a mapping tool/dashboard that has every project for current CRI as well as legacy projects. Trying to get everything onto dashboard, show treatment and hoping operationally we can use into the future. I understand this will be publicly available on provincial website.

WRR similar amounts to last year. Capacity is more of an issue than funding. Will see roughly 2-3 M within region, confirmed end February.

Final allotments mid march

Community Resilience Initiative (CRI) – Oct deadline passed – not a great intake for Cariboo.

working MFLNRORD on planning for WRR,

CRI – first nation applications, should invite area contact for FNESS, they could update

Municipal and municipal crown, the application being fine tuned. Only app for municipal side.

FN side – WLFN

No app from CRD. Our CRI numbers probably lowest in the Province, Crown program more significant than others. Maps and links to be shared with group to foster conversation – and bring concerns to GIS group from next meeting

Jason Ward – prescribed fire – successful spring, not so in the fall. Within city limits successful burn, adding two additional treatment units, still others in planning phase (legacy etc). Next call I could give a more detailed project list – maintenance of treatment that have been completed, working with FN on traditional burning and hazard abatement.

Mike Gash – need to champion the [Williams Lake and Area CWPP](#) to Regional Management Team (RMT) of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development to get it endorsed, what is priority, how do we move forward? Competing priorities, we can assign a team with deliverables, so we all know the playbook we are using. Mapping is a key component. CWPP got endorsed by city and regional district but there were some things that the DM for FLNRORD needs to be aware of and support.

Cariboo Regional District

John Maclean – as we make info available, in terms of being open and transparent, it goes back to education, info without context may be less than helpful. Key is to be able to get good information to provide out, working together as teams, interested parties.

concern – ongoing steady stream funding – you can't ramp up appropriately. CRD hasn't really gone out of response in 20 months because of floods, fire, etc. we still have an EOC on and EO in progress. In the process of bringing people in in 2022. Advocating with Province to get out of "lurch" projects and into steady. 108 is still high project. Still looking for how to resource the projects. Still responsible for the administrative reporting. Landscape level treatments better protection. Trying to find balance between (bylaws 50 for and against). Grant funding is a challenge.

Cariboo Woodlot Association

Mark Tamas' woodlot 1579 – fuel break treatment underway, Dugan Lake area

Albert Johnson's woodlot 1955 – Consus is supervising, ?Esdilagh First Nation do the work there.

University of British Columbia

Kelsey Copes – WLCF, WLFN, looking at historical fire frequency and severity, & indigenous fire stewardship. Using tree rings

Research that is ongoing around field treatments efficacy and efficiency. Multiple presentations at a future meeting if that it of interest.

Williams Lake First Nation

John Walker – Kingsley share screen – WLFN bond lake block harvesting complete tomorrow, 35 ha hand treated to prep for an understory burn. Adjacent to primary fuel break, completed for mechanical harvest, completed hand treatment portion, debris removal almost done.

Start Gibbon Rd. fuel break soon, also on Mark Tamas' woodlot. Racetrack block, fuel management treatment, sig to WLFN, hopefully start harvesting in December. Hot spot for lightening strikes in the plateau.

Working with Peter Holub with grassland restoration priority areas. Small one north of racetrack block that has been identified as a key spot. Gather knowledge from elders and community on cultural burning – the art of it. Gathering info through art, three sessions for the elders and community to paint what cultural burning means to them and extract some learnings.

Hired two FireSmart coordinators in conjunction with city of Williams Lake, economic recovery funding – mostly water towers, Kiwanis Park, Westridge and SD for Chilcotin road and Mountview schools.

FireSmart assessments around the city and reserve. Start advertising on reserve for elders and community for having FireSmart done. Two spring burns 1) by pioneer log homes and by the baseball diamond. Start timbered areas for CRI funding (haven't heard back yet) another CRI funding is to do the burn plan and the burn of the bond lake (understory) next fall. FireSmart & FNESS, priority development plan on the reserve. Priority area for WL wildfire protection plan – to operate in OGMAs.

City of Williams Lake

Ken Day – process to add polygons to the CWPP as we move into areas that we didn't think to cover. Or submitting CRI applications without support of CWPP.

completed treatment at the airport. WLFN did logging and hand treatment. Legacy treatments (2010) were also shown on the map. At the North end of the city, completed the project at the top end of the dairy fields and top end of 11th ave lane., another piece will be combination of hand and mechanical treatments. Have a plan to set a prescription for the north side of Missioner creek. Polygon right in creek draw, lots of dead, heavy fuels, downstream impacts could be catastrophic. Looking at potential for landslides with and without treatment. The portion outside the city included in review. Between 11th ave and downslope Cataline & TRU. Setting a prescription for implementation in the spring. Community at 168 mile and Douglas Road (top of chimney of Missioner creek) at significant risk.

Ken Day Treatment for the burning. Fuel treatment will be winter 2023 at the earliest. Application to CRI is along the creek valley – along the bench and in the gully – on the assumption we are potentially facing fire coming from the west up the river valley and into the community. Cell tower upslope in the community forest which justifies some activity.

There is municipal land that cuts a hole in the larger WRR plans as well as another piece on the bottom of Fox Mountain. Would like to focus significantly on FireSmart. Have included funding in our recent application for FireSmart works on the Fire Hall. Have funding for 24 FireSmart home assessments. 15 done, everyone failed at various levels. There are seniors that need help, even just cleaning gutters and moving debris away from homes.

Planning a grassland burn between two affluent neighborhoods. we need some public reporting that indicates to people that there has been good success and that we have been busy. Put together a community report on activities and an update on what we are doing. Done in a briefing to city council and it is an impressive list.

City of Quesnel is promoting their work. Communication here is what has been done since 2017. request to CAO for communications folks to spread information. Could be an ongoing project.

Xat'sùll

Chief Sherri Sellars – opening our files, focusing on IRs, 2017 impacts, asks are coming over from ministry from 2017, working on wildfire pieces, takes time. Biggest challenge is working within the confines of IR – beetle kill around us, meeting next week with Corporation, for how/what to do with forestry pieces.

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, Geneve Jasper	June
CRI funding intake – brainstorm ideas for a CRI funding application, supporting CRD with capacity to apply and administer a grant, advance FireSmart	Matt Lees, Stuart Larson, Mike Simpson or Jane Wellburn	Well before next funding intake
Peter Holub Planning for 21/22 grassland restoration and will connect with Ken Day about this	Peter Holub, Ken Day	Ongoing
Jason Ward (BCWS) and Mike Stinson (Xat'süll) initiate a conversation to start planning for traditional burning in early spring 2022	Jason Ward, Mike Stinson	Ongoing – carry over from May 2021 meeting
MFLNRORD - CC district Kerri Howse and Kingsley to update the 3 woodlots that Gord Chipman stated as being complete (1805, 1694, 587) on their mapping tool (they show as proposed)	Kerri Howse, Kingsley, Gord Chipman	Ongoing
Matt Lees to send Mapping Tool to Mike Simpson so he can circulate it out to the group. Need a way for both information sharing and map sharing. Bigger challenge is ensuring sharing of mapping information across all organizations/governments.	Matt Lees, Mike Simpson	Ongoing
Consider Alan Westhaver presentation to the community, and field tour	Mike Simpson	Spring 2022
Share “lessons learned on MDWR in WUI in IDF”	Chris Swan	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) 	Mike, Jane to quarterback this before next meeting Mikayla (MOTI), Carole Mahood (FLNRORD), others	Ongoing – carry over from January 2020 / pre-COVID
Development of various communication products and materials and supporting education materials on actions taken to reduce wildfire risk to date	Steph Huska, Ken Day, Geneve Jasper, Jane Wellburn, Matt Lees	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 – carry over from January 2020
CWPP recommendations – review before next meeting, discuss which ones are top priority	Everyone	Before next meeting
Ken Day to provide polygon data to Kingsley Kyere-Donkor	Ken Day	Before next meeting
Information sharing from traditional burning art from John Walker	Mike Simpson	For February meeting
BCTS to follow up with Mark Tamas’ regarding timber sale opportunity	Nathan Davis	Before next meeting

amendment to the CWPP to support a tactical plan for additional proposed treatments not originally in plan	Matt Lees	Before next meeting
Volunteer Fire Department training contact Jason Ward, examples: SWPP 115 – structural, Engine boss course, Wildfire fighter 1 – equivalent to S100. Jason.Ward@gov.bc.ca	all	Ongoing

4. Next Steps

Next meeting planned for February

Mike Simpson will organize a presentation on takeaways and learnings with Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz on her research, and also on any research UBC experts are doing on fire behaviour

Wildfire FireSmart workshop next May, information can be found [here](#)