

Clinton and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Meeting Summary at February 28, 2022

Meeting date: February 25, 2022, 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Location: online

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

Bonaparte Indian Band – Ellen Torng, Darryl Ketter

Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society – Al Midgley

BC Timber Sales – Chantelle Davis, Jennifer Gibson

BC Wildfire Service – Mike Gash (to 10:30), Rob Barnett, Matt Lees

Clinton Community Forest – Robin Fenell, Steve Law

Emergency Management BC – Trevor Pratt

Fraser Basin Council – Mike Simpson

High Bar First Nation – Kukpi7 Roy Fletcher (from 11:40)

Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (formerly Dog Creek and Canoe Creek) – Adam Colpitts, Judah Melton

Thompson-Nicola Regional District – Kevin Skrepnek (from 9:30)

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

West Fraser – Rob Ballinger

1. Introductions, Agenda, Objectives

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone; territory was acknowledged. Introductions were made. The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Previous meeting summary

The meeting summary from November 16, 2021 was approved. Action items not completed remain in the table at the end of this summary.

3. Information Sharing.

BC Wildfire Service

- Mike Gash noted that as a result of the provincial budget earlier this week, there is an increased budget and more full-time staff for BCWS, and more funding for prevention and wildfire risk reduction through allocations for Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)'s Community Resilience Investment (CRI) program and Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC). There is also an increased focus on Indigenous capacity and engagement. More full-time staff means more ability to engage with local people during wildfire season and provide better information. There is also dedicated capital funding, and Mike reminded participants that 100 Mile House is looking to create a new base there.
- Mike Gash noted that the Cariboo Fire Centre has trialled a First Nations boot camp and would like to expand it, to have more First Nations members on fire crews or serving their own communities
- Matt Lees provided an overview, via map and spreadsheet, of the wildfire risk reduction projects scheduled for 100 Mile House District of Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations

and Rural Development (FLNRORD). Key projects include the Clinton primary fuel break (\$200K), and finishing up South Green Lake egress (\$40K) and funding MCH treatments (repelling Douglas-fir bark beetle from attacking remaining live trees). Matt noted they are trying to move to a 3-5 year plan with each district to know what is proposed and budget accordingly.

- A question was asked about impacts of old growth deferrals on wildfire risk reduction activities; Matt noted that this doesn't impact treatments too much, there can still be non-commercial "hand treatments" in these areas, but just not commercial timber harvesting.
- Matt also noted that Forsite has been hired to help develop updated maps with past treatments and proposed treatments. This map will be updated at least annually and will have a .kml file that can be used by anyone on Google Earth and Arc GIS files for more advanced users.
- Rob Barnett noted that BCWS are hoping to do a prescribed burn west of Poison Lake Road this spring. They did successful burns on the Clinton Community Forest last year; none planned this year. He also noted that he will be reaching out to all volunteer fire departments with information packages before April. Fire crews will be returning starting next week.
- Question was asked about debris and buildup of fuels on private land following logging; Mike Gash noted that the Wildfire Act applies to private land, and that he has the ability to direct specific actions that a landowner needs to undertake. Mike asked local people to advise Rob Barnett if they see problems of excessive fuel buildup and fire risk on private land.

Emergency Management BC

- Trevor advised that next fiscal year there will be training opportunities for local and First Nations governments for emergency operation centres (EOC) through the Justice Institute of BC, see more info [here](#)
- With the provincial budget, there are grants of up to \$25K for local and First Nations governments through UBCM's Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF), this can cover emergency support services, route planning, flood mapping, cultural safety and humility training and more; more info [here](#) in the future
- He noted that new legislation on Emergency Programs Act is coming in fall 2022
- Regional preparedness workshops are coming up, focused on flood and freshet, with updates from Environment Canada, River Forecast Centre BC, and EMBC Modernization updates, March 10 from 9AM to 11:30AM for Kamloops and surrounding area. Contact him if your community has not received an invite, trevor.pratt@gov.bc.ca or office 250-312-7457.

Village of Clinton

- Murray advised that there's no formal announcement yet on the funding application submitted by the Village and TNRD to develop a community wildfire resilience plan
- Karl advised that Wildfire Structural Protection Program training with the Clinton Fire Department will proceed in March.
- There will be an open house on March 26 at the Fire Hall to do multiple things: a recruitment drive for the volunteer fire department; and information from the Clinton Community Forest about the proposed primary fuel break NW of town
- Mayor Swan noted that the Village now uses Voyent Alert for public notification of emergencies

Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society

- Al Midgley noted that their annual general meeting is coming up at Bonaparte Band community hall on March 3 from 11AM to 1PM, all are welcome
- Al advocated for keeping local people involved, informed and to take proactive measures for tangible projects on the ground to improve the watershed, rehabilitate and reduce fire risk

Thompson-Nicola Regional District

- Kevin Skrepnek updated the group that their wildfire debrief planned for mid-November had to be rescheduled due to the flooding in the Nicola valley.
- Kevin noted that in addition to the subscription based Voyent Alert public alerting system that TNRD uses, Emergency Management BC can use the provincial “alert ready” system when requested by local governments. This is a new opportunity not available in previous years.
- Kevin advised that since the Village of Clinton is part of the TNRD Emergency Management program, TNRD provides support for updating emergency management bylaws, development of plans and training opportunities. He noted that there will be a new provincial Emergency Program Act introduced this fall that will change expectations and content required in local government emergency management plans. There are some updates that need to be done for plans in 2022, before substantial changes to comply with the new legislation after this fall.
- Unincorporated areas of the TNRD have emergency plans for different areas that make geographic sense.
- It was noted by several participants that advocating for increased cellular coverage in the areas surrounding Clinton, which would benefit emergency response, is underway

Bonaparte Indian Band

- Darryl noted that adjacent to Indian Reserve lands, it’s been challenging to address wildfire risk reduction in the wildland urban interface. There are challenges both with capacity in the community to tackle the work, but also with FLNRORD staff (Mike Simpson noted that this would be Thompson Rivers District, not 100 Mile House). There are also larger concerns in the community about hydrologic and flood challenges in the upper watershed as a result of past wildfires.
- Actions as follow up – Mike Simpson will connect Ellen and Darryl with Mike Aldred (Matt Lees’ counterpart in Kamloops Fire Centre) and Julie Maxwell of FLNRORD Thompson Rivers District to discuss wildfire risk reduction adjacent to Bonaparte IR
- Action as follow up – Darryl and Ellen to follow up with Trevor Pratt re: flooding concerns; Mike Simpson to share [Thompson Flood resources](#)

Clinton Community Forest

- Steve noted that they are leading public consultation about the primary fuel break (300m width) NW of Clinton, this will be part of the March 26 open house at the Fire Hall, they are also doing mailouts to residents
- The FESBC project from Sawmill Road to Fenton Road is almost complete
- Seeking additional funds from BC Community Forest Association for wildfire risk reduction
- Community Forest offers free wildfire hazard assessments for properties

Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (SXFN)

- Judah noted that their communities are isolated and maintenance of roads if egress during a wildfire is an ongoing concern. They are working on wildfire risk reduction with FLNRORD, but there are lots of areas with constraints such as mule deer winter range, old growth management areas and more. Their community has launched a guardian program that is doing monitoring the territory and providing information back about concerns.
- Adam noted that cellular coverage for their communities is an ongoing challenge. He also noted that their fire departments are doing training and expanding capacity.

West Fraser

- Rob noted that there are no current operations in the Clinton area, but they are always open to contributing to wildfire risk reduction with timber harvesting as needed. West Fraser is doing this currently in the Forest Grove area.
- With much of the 100 Mile House area burned in 2021, they are focusing on timber salvage, as well as updating plans for wildfire season 2022.

BC Timber Sales

- Chantelle noted that similar to West Fraser, they are working on burnt timber salvage, and working with FLNRORD on fuel breaks in the district.

High Bar First Nation

- Chief Fletcher noted that he's concerned about the amount of dry grass along the Kelly Lake Road. Rob Barnett will follow up with him about concerns and options, but it was noted that burning along linear features with homes nearby can be challenging.

4. Next steps

Next meeting date will be in May (possibly in-person), Mike will seek a date a few weeks in advance.

Wildfire FireSmart workshop is coming up May 11-12 in Kamloops, information can be found [here](#)

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. Connect with Rob Barnett.	Robin Fennell, Rob Barnett	Carry-forward from November 2021
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 Johnna Wandler at johnna.wandler@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
Attend Village of Clinton open house on March 26, encourage your community members to attend. Recruitment drive for Volunteer Fire Department and public consultation on the primary fuel break NW of Clinton	Everyone	March 26, 1-4PM
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 or take part in the boot camp rob.barnett@gov.bc.ca	First Nations	Ongoing
Chief Fletcher and Rob Barnett connect re: grass and fire risk on Kelly Lake Road	Chief Fletcher, Rob Barnett	ASAP