

Clearwater and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Approved Meeting Summary as of February 24, 2022

Meeting date: November 10, 2021 1:00PM to 3:00 PM

Location: Online

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

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) – Tyson Luedtke

BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) – Richard Swift, Michael Aldred

Blackpool Volunteer Fire Department – Mike Savage

Wells Gray Provincial Park - Vladi Gat

MFLNRORD* (Thompson Rivers District) – Marina Irwin, Julie Maxwell

Fraser Basin Council – Mike Simpson, Stephanie Huska

Wells Grey Community Forest – George Brcko

TNRD – Sherri Madden, Carol Schaffer

District of Clearwater – Mayor Merlin Blackwell

West Fraser – Rob Ballinger

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

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 May 10, 2021, was approved.

3. Wildfire Season 2021

What did we learn:

Common themes

- Staffing level/capacity challenges
- Timelines – fuel was dry and fast (would prefer to be more prepared than less)
- Learning from Logan Lake (FireSmart poster child)
- Using fire department crews, fire brigades and local resources
- Communications
- Equipment – who has it where - at least getting signed up in advance
- More flexibility on prescribed burning, venting indices
- Water bars (better understanding of access and egress)

Questions and Discussion:

Blackpool VFD (TNRD)

Mike - Biggest takeaway was timeline and the impact on responders and communities – more time needed to get resources out and in place. Would prefer to front load and stand them down instead of trying to catch up.

Wells Gray Community Forest

George – there is a drive now to increase fuel management around Clearwater and the community forest interface area. Other funding sources could be used to fund summer students (high school) to pile sticks and prune. Almost 70ha done in the community forest.

Community forest can help with the water bar inventory, we can drive the roads and make an inventory within interface areas. We can utilize the forestry working group.

BC Wildfire Service

Richard – many opportunities for the fire department and locals to get into the prep side, which was successful. It needs to happen in the build up to the fire season, as opposed to in the fire season where resources are tied up.

challenges around backcountry closures – benefits too (eyes out & reporting). Restricting backcountry use uses a lot of resources (keeping people out/keeping people safe). Need to be assessed on a case by case basis. Balancing the considerations for public, land base and communities are part of that.

MFLNRORD

Marina – need to spend more time up front to understand who/when/how to communicate. People are not sticking to the plan. Maybe mock runs through the winter?

Secondly having equipment under contract needs to happen now, not when the fire is coming over the hill. It would be useful to have a component of people that know how to organize and manage equipment on the landscape.

BCTS

Tyson – not a lot of community interface area. Still active in broadcast burning for post-harvest, mostly in wet belt. Policy/political challenges allocating resources between BCTS and MFLNRORD. Weekly update to Kamloops office lists active operations, and equipment so they know what they have and where.

Search and Rescue (S&R)

Tyson - prep before the season to ensure that they were ready. Remote generator and substation to provide services if the community was cut off from some resources. Active roster to EMBC of individuals available locally and which were available to go outside to assist in outside communities. Connect S&R into communications

TNRD

Sherri – debrief of EOC from this season in 2 weeks. Kevin's report, available on TNRD website from October 21 meeting, found [here](#). Challenges – trying to control access – we ran out of bodies – S&R and RCMP were exhausted. Alerts and Orders were delivered via Voyent and Facebook. Security challenges, trying to keep people out, both people that live there and people that know no one is living there.

Carol – local contractors that were not registered that were not getting called. Can we make a list of every contractor whether they are available or not?

Who would we talk to about water bars and how to address them for access and egress?

Wells Gray Provincial Park

Vladi – Regional and provincial debrief (regional third party, no results yet). Challenge – Rangers in ICS, different zone person ever week, communication was a challenge. Also had staffing issues and had rangers come from other regions. No other work got done so it was tough.

How do we maximize this round table?

What's Underway:

BlackPool VFD (TNRD)

Mike - Trucks are all interchangeable, funding from BC hydro an additional tank placed at Star Lake school. Working to get dry hydrants – water from the river to load the trucks at Little Fort because there is no active well. Missed the federal infrastructure grant for solar agitators. Hope to get all the members at all the halls to be certified in structural. Structural assessments done allows us to prep for this year and gives us the added ability to review as we are going in to see if there are any changes and gives homeowners opportunities to FireSmart their properties. Will be adding to structural protection arsenal and trying to get equipment leveled up to the point where we are confident we can respond to mutual aid partners. Turned down four deployments because we couldn't go beneath a minimum staff level

BCWS

Richard– After action attention being paid to where we can improve, where we can change and adjust for next year.

Michael – 6 efficacy studies in province, 5 in Kamloops fire center. All funding streams come to an end this year – not expecting much change. Will get results from the studies

George – link with some fire science people (permanent sample plots) try to bring in Lori Daniels (UBC). We are on the edge of dry so there is probably stuff to learn.

Julie sharing a map – found [here](#). Continuing Clearwater CWPP and on track to complete 40 ha. 40 ha complete last year. Would like to expand into prescribed burning.

Wells Gray Provincial Park

Vladi – one wildfire reduction plan did not happen, in wells gray. Don't know of anything specific planned. Will put George in touch with Todd regarding field data collection for Sphats creek

BCTS

Tyson – very little in interface area with BCTS. Looking at 40 – 50-year-old stands for commercial thinning opportunities which could have win-win for wildfire risk reduction.

West Fraser

Rob – moving into Clearwater area significantly next season, next summer moving forward. Ensuring roads are upgraded and maintained.

4. Next Steps

Next meeting date will be in February

Action items.

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Tyson Luedtke and John Thomas to look at development permit areas. Going over subdivisions, planning and permitting requirements for new properties including FireSmart principles. Were there opportunities in the subdivision design?	Tyson Luedtke, John Thomas, Kevin Skrepnek	Ongoing
Richard to contact George if he needs any ground for SNAG training	George Brcko, Richard Swift	Ongoing
Kris Cooke or Julie Maxwell to add projects to the Kamloops TSA mapping website	Kris Cooke, Julie Maxwell	Ongoing

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Utilize the Kamloops TSA mapping website to upload fuel management polygons (past and present) from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wells Gray CF Landscape Fire Plan ▪ Wells Gray Park Fire Plan ▪ DoC and area CWPP 	MFLNRORD staff, Julie will confirm	Ongoing
Confirm whether fuel management requirements can be tied to a private timber mark, and the extent to which Wildfire Act regulations are applied and enforced on private land logging	Kris Cooke, Richard Swift	ASAP
John Thomas to reach out to Monica Johnson out of Williams Lake who managed the United Way Team around the idea of funding a Firesmart coordinator through CRI Funding	John Thomas	Ongoing
Develop a FireSmart coordinator program, with funding from either CRI Program or WGCF or Social Development Ministry or using students	John Thomas, George, others (Mike Simpson can support) and Clearwater Forestry Working Group	Follow up to see where this is at
Coordinate about evacuation plans from Wells Gray Park, Upper Clearwater Valley, share ideas and input	BC Parks staff, Steve Murray, TNRD and others	Ongoing
Get an updated map showing Blackpool VFD coverage	FBC	Before next meeting
Reach out to Mike Flanagan, Jill Harvey at TRU about participating in research in the area and/or engaging with this roundtable to share information	FBC	Before next meeting
Add Search and Rescue to the contact list for the roundtable	FBC	Before next meeting
Water bar inventory for access and egress	Forestry Working group	ongoing