

Williams Lake and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Meeting Summary as at January 29, 2020

Meeting date: January 27, 2020 1:00PM to 4:00PM

Location: Fire Hall, 230 Hodgson Road, Williams Lake, BC

Present:

Alkali Resource Management (ARM) - Gord Chipman
 BC Timber Sales (BCTS) - Wilf Goerwell
 BC Wildfire Service - Matt Lees, Orin Caddy, Jason Ward (also on behalf of Miocene VFD)
 150 Mile House Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) - Ed Marshall
 Cariboo Regional District - John MacLean
 Cariboo Woodlot Association - Mike Simpson (representing Cariboo Woodlot Association)
 City of Williams Lake - Erick Peterson, Ken Day (consultant)
 MFLNRORD - Geneve Jasper, Peter Holub, Travis Heckford
 MOTI - Mikayla Arkesteyn, Ron McCormack
 Tolko - Jack Darney
 Williams Lake Indian Band - Brittany Cleminson, Loretta Weingart
 Fraser Basin Council - Nola Daintith, Mike Simpson

1. Introductions, Agenda, Objectives

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone, acknowledged Secwepemc territory, and thanked Erick and Rob for hosting the meeting at the Fire Hall. Introductions were made around the room. Agenda was approved as presented. Checked quorum and all required organizations were represented.

2. Meeting summary from October 28, 2019 and action items

October 28 meeting summary was approved. It will be posted on the Wildfire Roundtable website.

Follow-up on Action Items from October 28th:

Issue	Status/Discussion
Follow up with Emergency Management BC to see if there is standard signage for evacuation routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOTI would prefer the use of temporary signage so they can be flexible depending on fire location and evacuation routes. • CRD agrees that they need the flexibility. They also indicated it would be helpful to have a complete road layer for GIS with type of road and condition (FLNRORD contacts James Moe and Rob Haley). MOTI (Mikayla) can provide a map of evacuation routes that are used regularly. • City may be looking at signing the routes out of town. Evacuation routes will be identified through current contract with ISL. • ARM feels that the egress route they are working on from Alkali Lake to Highway 97 would benefit from permanent signage, e.g. "Alternate Route to Highway 97"
Joint Committee to determine if an MOU is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoU between City and CRD would address and political issues. This will be discussed at the next Joint Committee meeting.

needed; if yes, involve NSTC, T'exelc, Xat'sull, Esketemc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should develop an MOU with First Nations (NSTC, WLIB, Esketemc, XatSull) depending on City/CRD outcome.
Seek input on treatment priorities for 2020/21 funding;	See Discussion under updates
Finalize Terms of Reference	Done
Develop a simple website for the Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.wildfireroundtables.ca is the general site https://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/Williams_Lake_Area_Roundtable.html is specific for WL

3. What's Already Underway

Those present provided updates on work underway.

City of Williams Lake Fuel Management (Ken Day)

- Prescriptions completed for Missioner Creek, and a portion of the primary fuel on the west side of Williams Lake (WL River valley under powerline).
- Midnight Dr treatment is underway.
- Applied to CRIP (Community Resiliency Investment Program) in November for two years of funding with the emphasis on treatments.

City of Williams Lake Fire Department (Erick Peterson)

- Have been doing in-house training.
- City has a contract with ISL to do evacuation planning. They have received an initial draft from the contractor where they looked at 3 scenarios for evacuations. Contract will be completed at the end of February. It is strictly looking at the City of WL and routes out of the city.

Alkali Resource Management and Esketemc First Nation (Gord Chipman)

- ARM is doing fuel management along the Enterprise Rd; the portion from Highway 97 to km 9 (Chimney Lake turnoff)
- Doing fuel management on an area above IR1 which is funded by Wildfire Risk Reduction
- Finished a fuel management project on the WL Community Forest (Birch Lane/Esler)k in December.
- Will be starting a project on WL1805 (Herrick's WL in Frost Creek area) which will be timber harvesting followed by spacing and pile and burn.

Tolko (Jack Darney)

- Tolko has cutting permits throughout the CWPP area and they are working to partner on fuel management projects as the primary harvester where there are overlaps or treatment is adjacent to harvesting e.g. treatments in Miocene, Dewar, Spokin.
- Currently harvesting a block north of Anderson Road - will essentially be a shaded fuel break when finished.
- Would like to move forward with landscape level planning with FLNRORD

BC Timber Sales (Wilf Goerwell)

- BCTS has had inquiries about fibre utilization opportunities on sold timber sales and they are investigating options.

- At the October meeting there was discussion on the potential for BCTS to have a fuel management sale to provide a benchmark for timber pricing since there is a need for fuel management treatments to be self-supporting. Discussions are still ongoing.

Williams Lake Indian Band (Brittany Cleminson, Loretta Weingart)

- Loretta is the new Emergency Operations Coordinator; she will be working on Emergency Plans and co-ordinating training for band members.
- Brittany is the Natural Resource Officer/Archaeologist
- WLIB have been doing fuel management contracts (doing the treatment at the end of Midnight Drive)
- Completing wildfire resiliency planning and have funding for FireSmart.
- BCWS wants to see more traditional burning and they are contacting FN to see if they need help with burn plans. WLIB contacts for traditional burning are Aaron Higginbotton and Rhonda Leech.

Cariboo Woodlot Association (Mike Simpson provided the update)

- There are 4 woodlots in the CWPP area with FESBC funding for fuel management: Marty Lauren (W1694 Fox Mtn) has started work, Aaron Herrick (W1805 Dog Creek Road) has started work. Carl Hennig (W0587 Dog Creek Road), and Alvin Johnson (W1955 Dog Creek Road) hope to start in spring.

Cariboo Regional District (John MacLean)

- John will take the information from the Roundtable meeting to the elected officials for areas D, E and F.
- They are reviving the CWPP for the CRD
- They have been having conversations with WLIB on preparedness and will be reaching out to other communities.
- CRD did not apply for CRIP funding due to staff changes; BCWS encourages them to apply in the next intake. FBC can help with funding applications if necessary.

Williams Lake Community Forest - no representative attended but the following information was provided by Ken Day and Jason Ward

- Primary fuel break west of town - continuing to work northwards on this fuel break
- WLCF staff worked on an exemption to the new Open Burning Smoke Control Regs with the help of Jason Ward (BCWS). Contact Jason for further information on the exemption.
- Feelings on the new OBSC regs is that they have found very few days to burn (Tolko) and the main issue is not to have piles burning overnight (Ken Day - burning on Midnight TU)

Ecosystem Restoration (Peter Holub):

- Trying to expand the use of prescribed fire on the landscape
- Presented a fire ecology course with Bob Gray in December; want to increase the number of burn bosses.
- Completing burn plans in WUI for maintenance of past fuel management treatments (White Rd, Fox Mountain and Borland Valley). Fire Center will do the burning. WL Fire Department requested that they be invited to shadow when Fire Center is doing burning.

BC Wildfire Service (Orin Caddy, Matt Lees, Jason Ward)

- Matt has been reviewing WRR prescriptions and would like to see as many operational treatments on-the-ground as possible. Prescriptions seem to be the bottleneck.
- Orin is acting for Matt Sherlock at the Zone level and they are currently recalling staff and preparing for spring with industry meetings.

FLNRORD Landscape Ecology (Travis Heckford)

- Travis is the new landscape ecologist for FLNRORD and he will be assessing forest/habitat response to disturbance (and many other things)
- He is interested in the fuel management prescriptions.

FLNRORD Central Cariboo Resource District (Geneve Jasper)

- Geneve brought an overview map with all fuel management projects (including those of other proponents). Orthomaps of prescription areas identify mechanical and hand treatment areas. In the spring they will prioritize treatments areas (coming out of prescription contracts) with BCWS. BCWS has criteria for setting priorities for treatments. They will request funding for all treatment areas but if they do have to set priorities in will be based on science. It is more likely that Matt will be providing a rationale for prioritizing blocks rather than asking for input from the Roundtable (although he will try to get input).
- The WRR funding request needs to be submitted at the end of January and they should know their allocation in February so that work can start in April.
- The treatment prescriptions will identify archaeology needs and arch work will start in April.
- Active WRR projects include the IR1 project (reported by Gord Chipman), ongoing project at Borland Valley for habitat enhancement and fuel management, and project in the WL River valley.

Miocene VFD (Jason Ward)

- Had a big fundraiser and were able to purchase a structure protection trailer.
- Will be hosting a wildfire fighter train-the-trainer course on March 21st. This is basically the S100 course that is endorsed by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

150 Mile VFD (Ed Marshall)

- Always adding to training and skills
- Monitoring fuel management treatments and looking at next prescriptions for 150 Mile area.

MOTI (Mikayla Arkesteyn, Ron McCormack)

- First Roundtable meeting they have attended; wanted everyone to be aware of seasonal road restrictions. They provided valuable input on the evacuation signage discussion.
- MOTI have roads classified which determines how much maintenance they get, including brushing of right-of-ways.
- In an emergency situation (2017 wildfires) MOTI loses jurisdiction over roads and this role is taken over by RCMP. MOTI engages with contractors to set up detours evacuation routes

United Way (no representative but reported by Erick P)

- United Way is still helping seniors and disabled property owners with FireSmart; they are looking for additional properties to treat.
- Contact is Spring Wiebe at the United Way

4. Preparedness for 2020

- BCWS is going through their pre-season planning process with staff recalls/hiring and industry meetings. Setting up TEAMS program within government.
- When wildfires occur, arch and cultural sites are lost. Brittany (WLIB Archaeologist) requested that there be some awareness/consideration of this in emergency planning. BCWS has worked with TNG to develop a quicker process regarding fireguard location. A similar process could be developed with NSTC.
- Independent Volunteer Fire Depts struggle to raise funds for equipment and training. CRD used to have a Chief's Weekend for VFDs. Erick P suggested that this could be hosted by the City. Stuart Larsen would be CRD contact.
- City will be having an emergency planning meeting in mid-February
- Preparedness could be covered in more depth at next Roundtable meeting.

5. Input Requests

- Roundtable website - should include fuel management news releases from City and FLNRORD, FLNRORD brochure on fuel management (being produced), Accomplishments, Link to venting index and OBSC Regulation.
- Community Wildfire Preparedness Day - there have been a number of attempts to engage the public in FireSmart and we need ideas to get buy-in.
 - FBC will look at other jurisdictions to see what has worked e.g. Fire Adapted Communities in the US.
 - Suggested that we host open house and invite Allen Westhaver to present on his findings from the Ft McMurray wildfire
 - Roundtable website could include photos of local FireSmarted properties, map showing location of local FireSmarted properties so that people could drive-by and be inspired (like a Christmas lights tour), could also have information on the triage process for assessing properties for protection.
- CWPP Recommendations - FBC has compiled recommendations from CWPP in a spreadsheet along with progress to date. Spreadsheet will be sent out with meeting summary for input on progress, and where Roundtable can advance recommendations. It was felt that good progress was being made on #16. Despite frustrations with encouraging people to FireSmart their properties, it was felt as the best opportunity to get action underway on 35% of the CWPP area that is private property.

6. Next Steps

- Jack Darney - WRR is providing a lot of funding to projects; what happens when this funding runs out. Need to utilize industry to support fuel treatments and maintenance, not only in WUI but also expanding to the landscape level. This is a provincial issue that could be advanced with the WL Roundtable.
- Spring Field Trip - should include media, April would be good timing, sites could include Midnight (completed treatment), Borland (number of different treatments). FBC will develop logistics for input from Roundtable.
- Aim to have Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz at future meeting so she can update the Roundtable on her research on fire history/frequency in the area.

Next meeting - April 2020. Mike suggested that the Roundtable meet in the morning, field trip in the afternoon, Allen Westhaver presentation in evening at Gibraltar Room for public.

The following ACTION items were agreed to:

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
FBC will propose agenda/schedule for April meeting. Determine availability of Allen Westhaver.	Mike Simpson, Nola Daintith	February
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, Nola to quarterback this before next meeting Mikayla (MOTI), Carole Mahood (FLNRORD), others	Before and then at next meeting
Joint Committee to determine if an MOU is needed; if yes, involve NSTC, T'exelc, Xat'sull, Esketemc	City, CRD	February, March
Website updates - add status of recommendations, links to venting index, OBSCR,	Mike	Ongoing
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	Nola, Mike	Before next meeting
CWPP recommendations - review before next meeting, discuss which ones are top priority	Everyone	Before next meeting
CWPP recommendations spreadsheet sent out to Roundtable for input. Put a pdf version on Roundtable website	Nola Daintith, Mike Simpson	February
Reach out to Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz about a presentation on her research findings at a future meeting	Mike, Nola	For a future meeting
Reach out to Spring Wiebe at United Way spring@unitedwaytnc.ca if you or anyone you know needs assistance with FireSmarting their property	Everyone	Ongoing