

1. Clearwater Valley Corridor Management Strategy

Date: March 31st 2019

The Clearwater Valley Corridor and the surrounding area has unique wildfire related risks. As the primary access/egress for the majority of Wells Gray Park with over 100 permanent residents, this area may be at substantial risk during a wildfire event. This area has been identified by the Planning Team for the Wells Gray Wildfire Risk Management Plan as an area that requires specific attention, through the development of management strategies.



Figure 1: Ortho

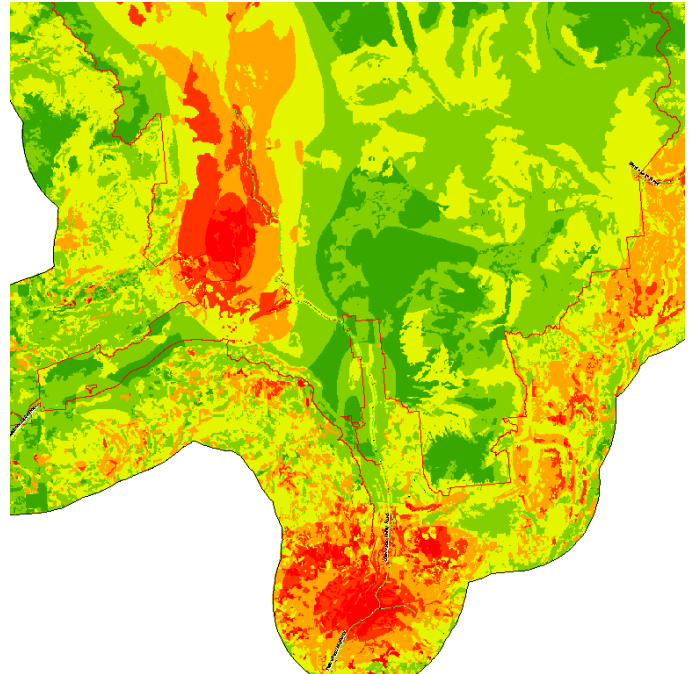


Figure 2: Partial Burn Probability

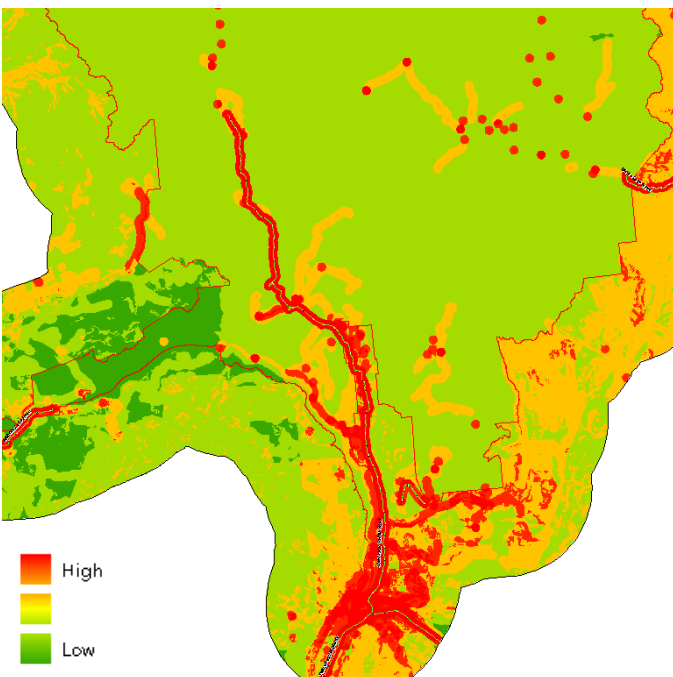


Figure 3: Values at Risk

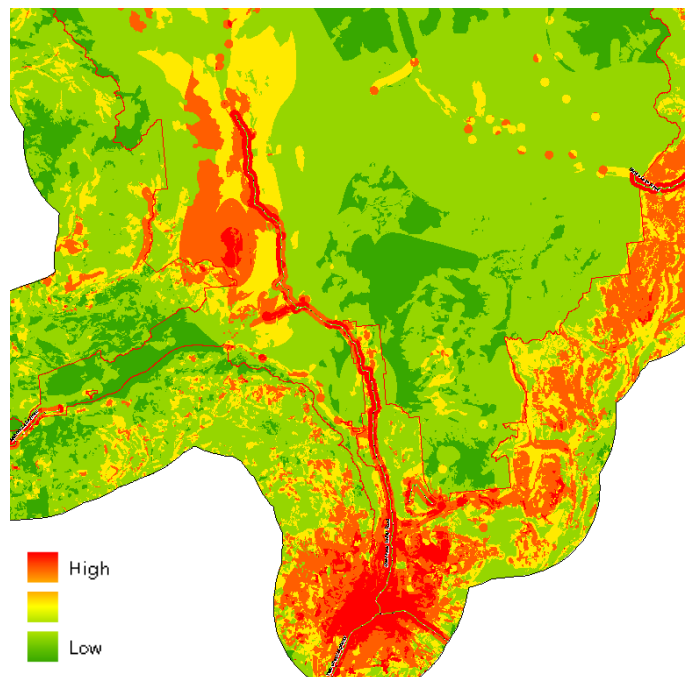


Figure 4: Wildfire Risk

Summary of Values at Risk

HUMAN LIFE AND SAFETY

- 100 + Residents
- High number of tourists in the area (daily)
- Access to Park – Key economic activity for area
- Only evacuation from park
- Campgrounds/Sightseeing areas

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Powerlines
- Emergency Operations Center
- Rec Center
- Thompson Rivers University research center
- Travel corridor

HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

- Caribou Habitat
- Biodiversity
- Old growth management areas
- Points of diversion

RESOURCES VALUES

- Area based forest tenures
- Range infrastructure
- Trails
- Forestry plantation with investment
- Available live timber over 250 m3/ha

Management Strategies

1.1 CONSIDER APPLICATION OF FUEL MANAGEMENT TREATMENTS WITHIN THE CLEARWATER RIVER CORRIDOR

DISCUSSION: There is significant risk to values from wildfire within the Clearwater Valley Corridor. Fuel management is a tool to manage for this risk through a reduction of fuel loading, and wildfire behavior such as spotting and crown fire initiation. This strategy mitigates wildfire behavior/intensity through fuel management adjacent to high use areas such as campgrounds, site seeing areas, and travel corridors; and will provide the following benefits:

- Reduction in risk of damage to infrastructure
- Increased suppression opportunities for wildfire crews
- Increased travel corridor evacuation safety
- Increased ecosystem resiliency
- Safer recreation opportunities

ACTIONS:

1. Consider fuel management treatments within key areas with Wells Gray Park including, but not limited to:
 - Pyramid campground
 - Helmcken Falls
 - Spahats Falls
 - Clearwater Lake and Falls Creek Campgrounds
 - Moul Falls and Dawson Falls trails
 - Clearwater Valley road (specifically between first and third canyon)
 - Other key tourist areas and evacuation routes as identified through prescription development process

These areas should be ground truthed and further refined based on operability. These areas will require guidance in the form of a fuel management prescription for ground crews that will assess ecological impacts and suitable treatments based on the advice of a qualified professional. See **Appendix A** for example maps of potential fuel management areas.

2. Apply for funding for fuel management prescriptions and treatments.
3. Consider the use of treated fuel management sites as public education tool for fire ecology and safety. This may include the installation of educational signs.

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: Park Operators/BC Wildfire Service/Forest Enhancement Society of BC (Funding)/License Plate Funding Program

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Reduce risk through fuel hazard reduction.

1.2 FIRESMART PROGRAM

DISCUSSION: The FireSmart Canada program implements initiatives to reduce wildfire hazard to homes and communities. While there is no private land within Wells Gray Provincial Park, there are buildings within the park that could adopt FireSmart principles for both risk reduction and public education. This may include buildings with FireSmart materials and landscape design.

ACTIONS:

1. BC Parks to consider adopting FireSmart principles to buildings (key infrastructure) within Wells Gray Park.
 - Visitor's Center
 - Hemp Creek Ranger Station with work yard
 - Murtle Lake Ranger Station (PO station)
 - Falls Creek and Clearwater Lake Campground (Fuel Sheds, Day use / naturalist shelter)
 - Pyramid Mountain Campground buildings
 - Mahood Lake Campground buildings
 - Majerus Warming Hut
2. FireSmart activities may include the following:
 - Strategic firewood supply placements
 - FireSmart building materials
 - Others as identified through FireSmart assessments

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: BCWS/FireSmart Canada

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Reduce risk through increased awareness and increased FireSmart principles to mitigate fire hazard

1.3 INCLUDE CLEARWATER VALLEY CORRIDOR IN WELLS GRAY PARK EVACUATION CONSIDERATIONS

DISCUSSION: The Clearwater Valley Corridor Road is the main evacuation route for almost all of Wells Gray Provincial Park. The vast majority of park visitors use this corridor. During a wildfire emergency, this road will require careful management and consideration to ensure an efficient and safe evacuation. While a section of this road is outside the park boundary, it is important to include the entirety of this road in evacuation discussions to ensure emergency planning continuity.

ACTIONS:

1. BC Parks to incorporate the Clearwater Valley Corridor road into the larger Wells Gray Evacuation Plan (see 02: Evacuation Strategy).
2. BC Parks to continue to engage with key partners (listed below) regarding a coordinated approach required during an evacuation.

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: BC Wildfire Service/MOTI/RCMP/TNRD/District of Clearwater/Clearwater Valley Corridor residents/EMBC (Emergency Management BC)

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Reduce risk through increased awareness and consolidated planning.

1.4 BC PARKS TO DISCUSS MUSHBOWL BRIDGE WITH MOTI IN REGARDS TO WILDFIRE RISK

DISCUSSION: The Mushroom Bridge over the Murtle River has wooden decking that may be damaged during a wildfire event. Damage to this bridge could hinder emergency evacuation on the northern side of the Clearwater Valley Road.

ACTIONS:

1. BC Parks to communicate with Ministry of Transportation to discuss the risk of a wooden decked bridge in a wildfire event and the effect of the loss of that bridge on evacuation logistics.

RESPONSIBILITY: BC Parks

PARTNERS: MOTI

RISK RESPONSE GOALS: Transfer knowledge of risk to MOTI/reduce risk through replacement of bridge

Appendix A: Potential Fuel Management Areas

