

**Clinton and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable
Approved Meeting Summary as of October 29, 2024**

Meeting date: March 11, 2024 1:00PM to 3:45PM

Location: In Person at Clinton Memorial Hall and online

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

Bonaparte First Nation – Brenda Antoine
Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society – Al Midgley, Kayla Feenstra
BC Parks – Terri Worthen
BC Wildfire Service – Douglas Yano, Peter Holub, Tom Foley, Madison Dahl
Clinton Community Forest – Steve Law
Forest Enhancement Society of BC – Brian Watson
Fraser Basin Council – Alex de Chantal, Mike Simpson (contractor)
High Bar First Nation – Jordy McKague, Troy McElhaw
Kelly Lake Wildfire Preparedness Society – Norene Parke
Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness – Steve Mulholland
Ministry of Forests 100 Mile House District – Catherine Cautley-Davis, Johnna Wandler, Heather Williamson
South Green Lake Volunteer Fire Department – Roger Graham, Bob Bell
Thompson-Nicola Regional District – Director Jim Smith, Mike Knauff, Daniel Funk
Village of Clinton – Mayor Roland Stanke, Brian Doddridge, Clr Darrell Schapansky, Karl Hansen
West Fraser – Rob Ballinger
Whispering Pines Clinton Indian Band – Chad Frizzi, Tanner LeBourdais

1. Introductions, Meeting Objectives, Agenda

Mike Simpson welcomed everyone and unceded territory of High Bar, Whispering Pines and Secwepemc nation was acknowledged. Village of Clinton was acknowledged for providing the meeting space. A round of introductions took place. The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Previous Meeting Summary

The previous [meeting summary from November 1, 2023](#) was approved. Action Items were reviewed, and either addressed during the rest of the meeting or removed if they were complete. See updated table at end of this summary.

The lessons learned that were generated at the last meeting were reviewed.

3. What's Underway, Who's Doing What for Wildfire Preparedness

Clinton Community Forest

- Steve Law noted that they have just completed fuel break on west side of town, it was funded by Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC). It is immediately adjacent to the transmission line, and 300m wide, just recently burned off the brush piles. Also had the logging debris piles were ground up to hog fuel and shipped by Arrow to Kruger pulp mill in Kamloops. FESBC facilitates subsidizes the grounding of fuels.
- Working with High Bar to create a plan for areas around Clinton and mitigate any hazards of fuel on the ground.
- Looking to do a prescribed burn with High Bar and Whispering Pines this year as well.

- Community chipping program continues, residents bring wood debris to end of driveway and it's chipped and hauled away.
- Also completed some logging this winter, all debris piles were also ground up by Arrow and facilitated by FESBC. 130 hectares piled up.
- Questions and discussion: BC Wildfire Service don't encourage chipping and re-distributing back on site, as it remains a fire hazard when it dries out, burns hot and damages soil, and prevents native vegetation from establishing. Challenges with chipping and hauling fibre from remote areas are the status of roads, the fact that chip trucks aren't designed for logging roads and cost of hauling long distances compared to low value of the fibre. It was suggested that ranchers/agriculture operations would be interested in local chip supply.

Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)

- Brian Watson described FESBC as an arms-length non-profit organization that distributes BC government funding to address wildfire risk and utilization of low value fibre to address carbon and climate change. See more on their website [here](#).
- FESBC has secured three years of funding from province of BC, \$20M/year. His goal is to attend these meetings and get on the ground and find more partners to work with that FESBC hasn't worked with in the past. Trying to find new projects to implement over next 3 years. New focus in next 12 months, need projects that are vetted and signed off on, needs to work with plan in the area.
- FESBC funds are available for Crown land work (including BC Parks), not private land.
- FESBC funds could complement MOF Wildfire Risk Reduction program (staying close to communities within the 2km WUI (wildland-urban interface)) and local government initiatives within the WUI, as FESBC typically works outside these areas. FESBC can work in 2km WUI but work closely with District to avoid any duplication.
- FESBC funding supports community forests as well as woodlot licences
- Contact Brian Watson via email bwatson@fesbc.ca or phone 250-919-1471

BC Wildfire Service

- Peter Holub (prescribed and cultural burn specialist) noted how they are trying to work with partners including First Nations, local fire departments and local Ministry of Forests (MOF), really we work with land managers of the planning side of things to make sure the burns make sense.
- Have done a lot of burning around Williams Lake even within the city, hope to do maintenance burns around Clinton as well.
- Peter noted that BCWS recognizes there are fears around fire, smoke and prescribed burns, but it's important work and we need to respect fire but we need to do more maintenance burns. A whole range of fire that BCWS can use where appropriate. Starting with low complexity of burning and then working our way up. Have to grow these programs safely, but not scare people. Strong communication is needed, we're taking advice on how to ensure public is aware and educated around prescribed burns. It's tricky, but it's the right thing to do.
- Questions and discussion with Peter: it's important that consultants doing the prescriptions are also including burning, some won't do it if it's too close to values. It can be done and done safely. Whispering Pines is looking to do some cultural burns. Would like to connect to work together. Peter is with Cariboo Fire Centre, but in Bonaparte First Nation's area it's Kamloops Fire Centre and Peter's equivalent is Justin Waito justin.waito@gov.bc.ca
- Tom Foley, Wildfire Prevention Officer noted that the annual operating plan (AOP) to fund wildfire risk reduction projects is almost finalized, budget is \$3.8M for entire Cariboo region (excluding FESBC and FNESS which also have funding and support these projects).

- Tom is looking at the shift from community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs) to community wildfire resiliency plans (CWRPs) and how those are going to shift. The old CWPP could go outside municipalities, meant to be within boundaries, but many are going outside those boundaries now. RDs are developing CWRP on the landscape as well, looking to see who is doing what.
- Hopefully get into feeling more comfortable using mechanized treatments to do understory thinning/wildfire risk reduction work that needs to be done. Much more affordable to use machines compared to manual or hand treatments.
- Tom is also encouraging consultants developing wildfire risk reduction prescriptions to include making prescribed burns part of the original treatments.
- Tom is also working on legacy mapping of fuel treatments that have done things in the past. Lots of groups have done fuel treatments and trying to get them on paper, so that we can plan maintenance treatments and also have BCWS wildfire crews aware of treatments that are more defensible during a wildfire.

Venting and custom venting index

- Information about the venting index is [here](#)
- Instead of relying on sub-regional venting index, one can get a more localized or custom venting index, see [website](#) for list of providers of this service

- Doug Yano, Wildfire Technician at the 100 Mile House Zone, BCWS noted that they are onboarding and training their crews, 16 of 24 total crew members are in place with the remainder to join in April. Just had a new Wildfire Technician start as well.
- Doug noted that drought conditions and low snowpack is a consideration for 2024 and it could prove to be a big challenge this year.
- Doug noted that pre-org (pre-season organization) is underway in the Zone as well, anybody within equipment used in fire suppression that wants to get on their list, please reach out to Doug Yano douglas.yano@gov.bc.ca (it was confirmed that equipment operators are not obligated to respond if they're on a pre-identified list).

West Fraser

- Rob Ballinger noted that they are moving into spring breakup, they used custom venting to get burning completed. Grinding of low value fibre is a bit more challenging for West Fraser to make the economic threshold needed.
- They are currently updating fire preparedness planning, contingency plans, access/egress. Also involved with MOF district staff around planning this year.
- Rob noted that West Fraser are able to deal with fuels in some stands they manage, but need to have mechanisms in place to make fuel management work, but want to be part of the solution.

Bonaparte Watershed Stewardship Society

- Al Midgley noted that they just had their annual general meeting, and that communication among this group is so critical. Keep the strong connections in this room, it's so important.
- They started working on mitigation of water flows, main thing is that we need to store water. There is only a flow meter near Cache Creek, don't know if there are other flow meters in the watershed, don't know where else they are. If we're going to start storing water, we need to know if we are slowing that water up? Any partners here with any flow meters? The only place that was really holding any water was where land was scarified. Need to rough up that land to get it to soak in water. Scarifying was the quickest and easiest way to get water to stay.

- Kayla Feenstra just finished a short contract with Village of Cache Creek, and is now volunteering with BWSS. She wrote a grant application to install beaver dam analogues (BDAs) in Arrowstone Hills above Cache Creek (the creek that flows from the east side of Cache Creek the village). The goal of BDAs is to create natural storage for water.
- Kayla suggested that Fisheries and Oceans Canada might be interested in taking woody debris from fuel management or logging operations.
- Kayla reiterated the need for flow meters and have real data on flows. Ranchers and agriculture operations could put in pumps during heavy water flows and utilize that water in late summer during low flows, both for agriculture needs and wildfire water sources.
- Kayla noted in the last meeting summary it mentions that there is no facility for chipping options. Should a feasibility study be done about a chipping facility? Might be worth working on to see if Clinton is interested.
- Kayla also suggested there would be value in having community open houses regarding wildfire preparedness and other issues, working with BCWS and others.

Bonaparte Sales Limited Partnership

- Brenda Antoine noted that they are meeting with BCWS staff in multiple zones (100 Mile, Lillooet) about wildfire equipment and crews for 2024. They'd also like to do a FireSmart program and are looking at a thinning project in McLean Lake area.
- Roy Seriosa secured funding to do a water study at Loon Lake.

BC Parks

- Terri Worthen noted that BC Parks budget for wildfire risk reduction is part of BCWS allocations, and the allocation for BC Parks provincially is \$1.2M.
- This winter she worked with a contractor to get Big Bar Provincial Park prescriptions finished. Contract will go out for bidding in late April.
- Over winter, had small contract in Green Lake to get rid of some piles. Terri's colleague Max Goldman has taken over Supervisor role in that area, reached out to StormRiders fire crew. Will also be doing some pile burning there.

MOF 100 Mile House District

- Catherine noted that they had a busy year with lots of operational treatments and planning. Typically, have been in the WUI but now moving outside those areas. Work in South Green Lake, and Meadow Lake landscape prescription. Lot of work with High Bar, would like to do more with Whispering Pines, would like to work more with Bonaparte First Nation. Worked with major licensees and woodlots. Had crews working all winter this year.
- Questions and discussion raised the following: large landscape level break at Meadow Lake will be mechanized and try to increase utilization of fibre; consider BC Parks jurisdiction to coordinate treatments where possible; there are a lot of spruce branches piled at Nolan Lake, can't it be chipped and concerned it will be a fire risk all summer; Johnna noted they had some good venting and did some burning, but can't burned any piles that haven't been cured; there are limitations of hauling distance maximum 5km; these were mostly spruce branches, not what ranchers would want.

Village of Clinton

- Brian Doddridge noted that they are getting caught up on emergency management procedures, looking at training opportunities, inviting and welcoming Indigenous neighbours to work together.
- They are looking to apply for funding to get FireSmart Coordinator through Community Resiliency Investment program funding. Highlighted need for structure protection trailer. Need to have resiliency plan in place, which we've done. Steve Law will be coordinator.

- As part of CRI funding, Brian noted that they need a Community FireSmart Resiliency Committee. If this group could be designated as our committee, it would give us access to that funding. Everyone agreed, **there was no objection noted to the Clinton & Area Community Wildfire Roundtable serving as the Village of Clinton Community FireSmart Resiliency Committee.**
- Karl Hansen noted that their Fire Department is doing lots of training, two members took task force leader training and more will take engine boss training later in spring. They've already had one grass fire at end of February.
- Councillor Schapansky noted that he's seeing a shift to grinding and utilization of low value forest fibre and shipping it out. He's also seeing a shift to get more boots on the ground and utilizing small machines to do the fuel management work.

Thompson-Nicola Regional District

- Mike Knauff, Emergency Program Coordinator is leading evacuation route planning for TNRD, there are lots of areas for TNRD to cover but evacuation route planning for this area will be done in the next month.
- Lots of emergency management training happening in the area.
- Have been working to update planning documents with new EM legislation. Snowpack data shows [66% of normal values across the province](#) as of March 1, 2024. Working on freshet planning already, could be an issue with flooding in some areas this year.
- Working with agriculture community looking at supports for those folks, getting them access passes so producers can still make a living during wildfire season.
- Daniel Funk, Field FireSmart Coordinator noted that he's starting to do FireSmart assessments this season and many community presentations are getting lined up.
- Electoral Area E Director Jim Smith noted that he is more involved with residents rather than emergency management; some residents have expressed concerns about fuel management treatments, piles being left to cure during wildfire season and more. It was suggested that a field trip to see areas of concern could go a long way to understanding perspectives and what the treatments are aiming to accomplish.
- Question re: homeowner grants for FireSmart treatments are they available this year? Daniel said yes.

South Green Lake Volunteer Fire Department

- Fire Chief Roger Graham had a question about large piles of logging debris south of Green Lake, is it High Bar First Nation's tenure? Troy McElhaw responded that it's their tenure but West Fraser did the logging, he will follow up about the concern.

Whispering Pines Clinton Indian Band

- Chad Frizzi noted that their Chief and Council are willing to put on \$100 training if there is enough interest amongst others in the larger area.

Kelly Lake Wildfire Preparedness Society.

- Norene Parke noted that the Kelly Lake Response Team that formed in 2017 has formed new non-profit society so that they can receive training, equipment, receive grants, etc. They have a call list with phone tree of 22 residences and are signed up to receive basic training this spring through the Cooperative Community Wildfire Response initiative.
- They are looking to access grant funding now to secure new equipment including mobile storage unit.
- Mike Knauff expressed interest in knowing of funding sources for community groups to acquire equipment.

4. Next Steps

It was noted that the [BC Wildfire Resiliency and Training Conference](#) is April 20-24 in Prince George and that funding can be available through UBCM or FNESS for people to attend.

Next meeting – fall 2024, exact timing to be determined and dependent on duration of wildfire season. Mike will seek an exact date via scheduling poll at least a month in advance.

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Share updated maps that show past fuel management treatments and future proposed treatments.	BCWS, MOF	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 Kayla Topping (kayla.topping@gov.bc.ca) examples: SWPP 115 – structural, Engine boss course and Wildfire fighter 1 – equivalent to S100.	Everyone	Ongoing
Advise Ally Keir if they see problems of excessive fuel buildup and fire risk on private land alexandra.keir@gov.bc.ca	Everyone	Ongoing
Contact Ally Keir if First Nations communities want to do training alexandra.keir@gov.bc.ca	First Nations	Ongoing
Contact Ally Keir or Reg Trapp about ideas for proposed prescribed burns	Everyone	Ongoing
Close the communication gaps – update or provide new contacts for key sectors missing on the contact list, in particular ranching	Everyone	Ongoing
Forest tenure holders (majors, Clinton Community Forest) and BCTS – share your fire preparedness plans with this roundtable through Mike Simpson	Rob, Jeff, Steve	Before May 2024
Reach out to Kayla Feenstra if there is interest in pursuing funding for a feasibility study for a local chipping facility	Everyone	None
Consider a field tour of a prescribed burn in 2025, or a field trip at next meeting to see fuel management treatments	Everyone	Next meeting or 2025