

Williams Lake and Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

Approved Meeting Summary as at January 27, 2020

Meeting date: October 28, 2019 1:00PM to 4:20PM

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

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

Alkali Resource Management (ARM) - Gord Chipman

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) - Wilf Goerwell

BC Wildfire Service - Matt Lees, Matt Sherlock, Mike Gash, Dave Fleming, Jason Ward (also on behalf of Miocene VFD), Dylan Simpson

150 Mile House Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) - Ed Marshall

Horsefly VFD - Linda Bartsch

Cariboo Regional District - Maureen LeBourdais, Stuart Larson, Alice Johnston

Cariboo Woodlot Association - Carl Hennig (Woodlot 587)

City of Williams Lake - Erick Peterson, Rob Warnock, Milo Macdonald, Ken Day (consultant)

WL Community Forest - Hugh Flinton

Fraser Basin Council - Nola Daintith, Mike Simpson

MFLNRORD - Kerri Howse, Geneve Jasper, Lindsey Wood, Peter Holub, Becky Bings

UBC Alex Fraser Research Forest - Rob VanBuskirk

Tolko - Jack Darney

Xat'sull - Mike Stinson, Edna Boston

NSTC - Kate Hewitt

Consus Management - Tom Foley

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.

2. Meeting summary from June 20, 2019 and action items

June 20 meeting summary was approved. Mike reported that past and proposed fuel management treatments have been added to the Forsite maps. The CWPP document and maps are hosted on the City of Williams Lake website [Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) and it was proposed that Fraser Basin develop a simple website where Roundtable maps and meeting notes could be stored. Mike Simpson drafted a Terms of Reference for the Roundtable for discussion later in the meeting. Nola followed up with a number of organizations regarding egress routes (see discussion on Key Needs)

3. Key Needs identified from June 20th summary:

Egress Routes and signs - a number of areas with egress issues were noted in the CWPP. These are areas/subdivisions where there is only one way in and one way out, or there may be a trail, at best, as an alternate route out.

- **Erick Peterson** - the City of WL has hired a consultant to identify additional routes out of Williams Lake and to identify issues with evacuations. The city does have an

evacuation plan and the consultant will also be looking at improvements to the plan. There have been preliminary discussions with CRD on potential partnership.

- **Gord Chipman** - ARM has FESBC funding to improve egress on Dog Creek Road from Alkali to the Chimney Lake turnoff, along Chimney Lake Rd to Enterprise Road, along Enterprise Road from km 9 to Highway 97. Initial assessments have started to identify land ownership, eventually there will be work done to increase right-of-way widths and install signage.
- **Maureen LeBourdais** - is there funding available for training people working on evacuations?
- **Ed Marshall** - the bridge on Borland Road was identified as an issue in CWPP; there are two alternate routes to using the bridge. He also reported that the road from Russet Bluff through Sugarcane is generally passable.
- The Roundtable should request participation from Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to identify work required on public roads to improve evacuations (eg. brushing right-of-ways).
- Mike Simpson will follow-up with Emergency Management BC to see if there are standards for egress route signage.

Working definitions for resiliency, fuel breaks, old growth management areas (OGMAs)

Resiliency - there are components pertaining to forest/ecological, and social/community

- Forest or ecological resiliency is ability of forest to recover without human intervention; recovering natural state of equilibrium; intensity of a fire that doesn't result in a crown fire; and reducing the long-term impact of a wildfire or disturbance event. A resilient stand can maintain the condition that you want it in; it is self-sustaining for a period of time after a fuel management treatment.
- Social or community resiliency considers the capacity to recover quickly, and the impacts on structures, safety of people, and ability to recover from a wildfire at multiple scales (individual, family, neighbourhood, community). Adaptability and capacity to recover quickly. It is having the resources in the community that held the community together to start with still there after an event to help people; peace of mind that lives will come back together.
Ability of community to respond to but also recover from adverse situations.
- It was noted that resistance is different than resiliency - a resistant community would resist houses burning (e.g., FireSmart), whereas resiliency is more about recovery; need resistance first separate from resiliency

Fuel break - suggested as too broad of a term

- BCWS definition is a barrier or change in fuel type or condition or a strip of land that has been modified or cleared to prevent fire spread. Can be natural (river) or man-made.
- It doesn't have to necessarily prevent fire, just make it be able to be fought and prevent spread that results in a crown fire. Modifying a forest stand to reduce energy output so that the fire can be fought. Need to clearly communicate to the lay public that fuel breaks won't stop a fire.
- Access for suppression activities can be a component of a fuel break. Road networks are fuel breaks, including reducing right of way vegetation
- Fuel breaks can be variable in scale - landscape level or private property (i.e., FireSmart on an individual property).

Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs)

- They are defined through [land use orders](#). MFLNRORD would like to clarify that they can be managed; they are static areas; there is clear guidance on how we can do fuel management work in OGMAs. Fuel loading defined by the land use order to assist people in achieving that land use order. Reduction of fine surface fuels, small diameter trees, separating crowns up to 6m, etc.
 - Small diameter tree - 22.5cm dbh? That's what Tom used. Depends on dominant or co-dominant trees. Stand by stand basis.
 - Access, logging? Look at on a case by case basis.
- Experience - written some plans, but not implemented yet. You can achieve wildfire risk reduction; doesn't define small diameter trees.
- There are some blocks in 100 Mile underway with fuel treatments in OGMAs
- Get the message out - they're not set aside areas, they are to be managed.
- Other places - they can be moved with an amendment.
- MDWR are tied to geographic features. Can't be moved. Lots that can be done in orders for management within MDWR to reduce fire risk.

MOU between City and CRD regarding implementation of the CWPP

- Could be potential for friction along city boundaries but this would be reduced by the fact that FLNRORD has funding for treating Crown land.
- The issue will be taken to the Joint Committee between CRD and City
- Possibly could expand the MOU to include the NSTC (WLIB and Xat'sull are members and have reserve lands within the CWPP and assert territory throughout)
- Highlights the need for communication between organizations involved in implementing the CWPP.

4. What's Already Underway

Those present provided updates on work underway.

City of Williams Lake Fuel Management (Ken Day)

- Prescriptions completed for Missioner Creek, Midnight Dr and a portion of the primary fuel on the west side of Williams Lake.
- Midnight Dr will be completed this winter; hand treatment only
- Missioner Creek will be chipped, or piled and burned
- FireSmart funding planned for 10 public buildings, 3 neighbourhoods and 24 private residences but may not complete all work.
- Applied for CRIP (Community Resiliency Investment Program) funding for more prescriptions, including 2 at the airport, and for 40 ha of treatments
- Scout Island Nature Centre completed fuel management work around the buildings and the city has funding for public education signage

City of Williams Lake Fire Department (Erick Peterson)

- City received funding for S185 training for all firefighters and for the purchase of Nomex coveralls.
- They have also received training for working within the command structure of BC Wildfire Service (BCWS). They have upcoming training on Emergency Operation Center (EOC) logistics and planning and there are still 6 spaces available.
- City will also be doing egress route planning and the Justice Institute has been doing training for emergency operations.

Alkali Resource Management and Esketemc First Nation (Gord Chipman)

- Working on a 40 ha FESBC-funded project on Fox Mtn (Celtic Engineering). It is at the prescription stage.
- Dog Creek/Chimney Lake/Enterprise Roads egress assessment identified a lot of private land. An open house was held at Alkali for the landowners but there was not a good turnout. They will be door-knocking to create awareness and discuss opportunities. Prescriptions are being done for crown land sections.
- CRIP funding for FireSmart assessments around private homes in Alkali community.

Tolko (Jack Darney)

- Partnering with FLNRORD on adaptive management project
- Have partnered on fuel management projects where harvesting has been adjacent

BC Timber Sales (Wilf Goerwell)

- Currently have salvage activities (bark beetle single tree and small openings, and fire salvage) in north area of CWPP
- Working with Xat'sull but no overlap with fuel management treatments
- Some BCTS prescriptions in Fdi stands called for slash to be brought back on site to aid in Fdi regeneration; contradictory to fuel management practices. Wilf was not sure whether this treatment had been curtailed.
- Question arose whether there is 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 taking place with the Timber Sales Manager.

Cariboo Woodlots (Carl Hennig Woodlot 587)

- Carl has a prescription for fuel management on the east end of his woodlot where there is commercial harvest but he doesn't want to do the logging due to AAC implications.
- There are 4 woodlots in the CWPP area (including Carl's) with FESBC funds for implementation that have similar issues; they have fuel management prescriptions where logging in combination with hand treatment would yield better results but there are AAC implications. They have FESBC funding to do hand treatments but it would be more effective to do hand treatment and harvesting at the same time.

Cariboo Regional District (Stuart Larson)

- Stuart is new in his position so wasn't aware of fuel management activities in CRD
- If local project ideas come into FLNRORD; they should contact the CRD directors; Maureen LeBourdais (Area F - east), Steve Forseth (Area D - north), Angie Delaney (Area E - south)

Williams Lake Community Forest (Hugh Flinton)

- Landscape level fuel break - working on issued cutting permits in the fuel break in the community forest
- Prescriptions have overlapped tenured bike trails in some areas so he has been working closely with the bike groups
- As he nears the end of FESBC funding he is trying to determine where and how to continue doing fuel management on the community forest.

- With FESBC funding he is able to ship fuel management debris to Pinnacle Pellet and Atlantic Power and not lose money. On sites further than 20km from Williams Lake, shipping debris is not an option financially.
- Outside of the CWPP he is working on fuel management plans for Big Lake and Cave Road.
- Discussed the difficulty of identifying and contacting adjacent property owners; knowing Property Identification Number (PID) you can determine ownership, but you can also contact CRD Directors and they may be able to help.

Ecosystem Restoration (Peter Holub):

- Trying to expand the use of prescribed fire on the landscape
- Working with Bob Gray on develop a training curriculum for burn bosses and delivering training, including to First Nations. The next intake will be in 2 years.
- Assessing past fuel management treatments for maintenance and opportunities for prescribed fires (looking at treatments on White Rd, Fox Mountain and Borland Drive)
- Doing fire science modelling to correlate residual stand volume to fire intensity.

BC Wildfire Service (Matt Sherlock, Matt Lees, Mike Gash, Jason Ward)

- Crews have been burning piles on Fox Mtn until just recently and doing treatment along the airport road
- Working with Erick P. to develop a burn plan for Boitanio Park
- Have re-vamped the FireSmart education to target schools and the program has been developed by public educators
- BCWS is moving from simply suppression to more of a land management and prevention role. They have added several new positions (prevention officers and wildfire technicians)
- Looking at solutions for self-supporting fuel management treatments via tenures and timber pricing.
- Current land use objectives may have to change to make wildfire prevention a higher priority. There are ongoing discussions on potential for a legal objective for wildfire risk reduction.

Central Cariboo Resource District (Kerri Howse, Geneve Jasper, Lindsey Wood)

- Prescription contract for areas identified through the CWPP and fuel management opportunity mapping, and adjacent areas where there are no harvest opportunities due to tricky ground. Contract was awarded to Consus who will be working in partnership with the Williams Lake Indian Band. Building on past Douglas-fir bark beetle sanitation work. Referrals will come out of the prescriptions.
- A second contract has been advertised for the area north of Williams Lake and areas for treatment were identified in the CWPP
- Ongoing project at Borland Valley for habitat enhancement and fuel management will be completed with funding to complete the entire 430 ha.
- Need to be communicating with City so as to not miss any areas adjacent to city boundaries.

Miocene VFD (Jason Ward)

- Hosted structure protection training for Miocene department and members from Horsefly, 150 Mile and Wildwood VFDs
- Hosted a FireSmart workshop in the community but doesn't have capacity to do anything further

- Noted that CRIP does have funding for FireSmart activities

Horsefly VFD (Linda Bartsch)

- Horsefly has an official evacuation plan, developed with CRD
- Identified areas requiring fuel management treatment and they are looking for funding for prescriptions
- Horsefly does not have a CWPP but there is funding through CRIP; contact BC Wildfire Service for information
- Have had lukewarm response to FireSmart but they are trying something different; contacting private owners to triage their property for demonstration to the public.

150 Mile VFD (Ed Marshall)

- Always adding to training and skills
- Have done FireSmart training in the past but not much buy-in. There may be more buy-in from residents now but there is limited personnel time in the VFD to assist.

Consus Management (Tom Foley)

- Working on WL community forest and woodlot fuel management prescriptions
- Contract to complete prescriptions for FLNRORD
- They have written prescriptions for areas within OGMAs and they are waiting for cutting authority approval. Within mule deer winter range (MDWR) there are opportunities for thinning from below and harvesting so there is more flexibility for fuel management treatments than in OGMAs

Xat'sull First Nations (Mike Stinson and Edna Boston)

- They have had a lot of staff turnover lately so they are catching up
- Community has an evacuation plan and routes identified
- Tree Canada project reported at the June meeting is complete
- 2017 fireguard rehab is still in progress

United Way (no representative but reported by Erick P)

- United Way is still helping seniors and disabled property owners with FireSmart
- It has been a successful program and it will continue next year

5. Funding Resources

It was noted that Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) has issued its last intake, they will manage these last projects, but future funds for fuel management and other activities will be undertaken by BC government staff. *Wildfire Risk Reduction* is the new funding program internal to MFLNRORD. Funding or project ideas can be taken to district or BCWS staff, especially if areas are in an endorsed plan.

CRIP funding application deadline just passed - City of Williams Lake applied for funding as reported by Ken Day.

UBCM will have a grant opportunity coming up November 15th which will fund small VFDs and First Nations communities for up to \$25,000 for training and equipment.

Gord Chipman noted that applying for funding was not an easy process and that it takes a lot of capacity since all funding application processes have their own nuances. There needs to be incentives in the process, or the process needs to be easier.

Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) will be replacing the CWPP process. BCWS and community will work in partnership to develop plans.

6. Terms of Reference

Mike Simpson presented the draft Terms of Reference (TOR). The TOR presented was generic for two other Roundtables so it will be revised specifically for the Williams Lake and Area Roundtable. A few revisions were made by the group, and it was approved and will be circulated with this meeting summary.

7. Next Steps

- Need to determine the priorities for the next round of treatments. There will be quite a few prescriptions completed this year, most of which will be treated in fiscal 2020/21. It was suggested that most areas where prescriptions are being developed will likely be funded for treatment. Kerri and Geneve to seek input by various means by December 1.
- Suggested that the Roundtable have a spring field trip, invite elected officials and others; generally agreed that this was a good idea.
- Roundtable should work to increase public engagement. City and CRD have staff to help out with this as well as BC Wildfire Service.

Next meeting - Late January 2020 (potential for a field trip in spring 2020). Mike/Nola will determine logistics of a field trip and seek a date 3-4 weeks in advance.

The following ACTION items were agreed to:

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Follow up with Emergency Management BC to see if there is standard signage for evacuation routes	Mike Simpson	November
Joint Committee to determine if an MOU is needed; if yes, involve NSTC, T'exelc, Xat'sull, Esketemc	City, CRD	By early 2020
Seek input on treatment priorities for 2020/21 funding; reach out to Mike S or Nola to coordinate with this roundtable or a smaller group, or Xat'sull and T'exelc	Kerri, Geneve	By Dec 1
Finalize Terms of Reference and attach to meeting notes	Mike	November
Develop a simple website for the Roundtable	Mike, Nola	Nov-Dec
Contact others in between meetings	Everyone	Ongoing