

# Salmon Arm & Area Community Wildfire Roundtable

## Meeting Summary

Approved as of May 9, 2024



**Meeting date:** February 29, 2024, 10AM to 3PM

**Location:** Little Mountain Fieldhouse, Salmon Arm, BC

### Welcome & Introductions

Louis Thomas, an elder from Neskonlith welcomed everyone to unceded Secwepemc territory. Salmon Arm Mayor Alan Harrison and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Board (CSRD) Chair Kevin Flynn also welcomed everyone and provided some opening comments.

Mike Simpson, a facilitator and professional forester on contract to Fraser Basin Council (FBC), welcomed everyone and acknowledged the small group of people from the City of Salmon Arm, CSRD and Forsite Consultants Ltd. for their work in helping organize the meeting by working behind the scenes since October 2023. Randy Spysma spoke to the logic behind the proposed boundaries, including fire behaviour and jurisdictional considerations.

The agenda (Appendix 1) was reviewed and accepted as presented. Mike introduced the approach for the day in the [meeting slides](#), noting topics centering around wildfire preparedness. He gave an overview on the history, purpose and status of [community wildfire preparedness roundtables](#) that FBC has supported since 2019 in Williams Lake, Clearwater and Clinton and their surrounding areas, and more recently in Lillooet, Prince George, Quesnel and their surrounding areas as well as Similkameen. Fraser Basin Council is funded by BC Wildfire Service to support this work.

Alex de Chantal, Thompson-Okanagan Regional Manager for FBC, gave an overview of the [Fraser Basin Council](#) as a province-wide non-profit organization that often works impartially to convene multi-party discussions and actions on complex issues.

Introductions were made around the room. See list of participants present (Appendix 2). It was noted that several people from other organizations are interested to attend but couldn't either due to conflicting schedules or illness.

### **What's underway for wildfire preparedness?**

Participants were offered the opportunity to present on the following questions:

*What's underway for wildfire preparedness and where? What's planned and where? What programs or opportunities do you offer?*

**City of Salmon Arm** – Carmen Guidos, FireSmart Coordinator with the Salmon Arm Fire Department noted that they have focussed on Little Mountain and Park Hill fuel mitigation. They follow the 2020 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, will be changing to a CWRP in 2025. They also put a big focus on FireSmart, recognized community neighbourhood programs like South Canoe that clean up the areas around the homes. Intention is not to focus on one home, but instead focus on the entire neighbourhood. The value of these neighbourhood initiatives is the communication. On March 27, the City of Salmon Arm will have a meeting to discuss what they are doing for wildfire preparedness. Fire departments are trained on initial attack for wildfires. Training is key for structural firefighters to be exposed to wildfire training.

Mayor Harrison added that they don't have expertise in FireSmart, so it's key to have people like Carmen leading the program. Salmon Arm applies for grant funding from Union of BC Municipalities to undertake this work. He noted the gap is the Crown lands that circle the city.

CSRD Board Chair Flynn noted that there has been public outcry over removing trees in parks such as Little Mountain, education of the public of what we're doing is key. Coordinating tipping fees for vegetative material at landfills and transfer stations is a key opportunity to not hamper efforts for landowners to FireSmart their properties.

**Ministry of Forests, Okanagan Shuswap District** – Brent Lipinski, Land and Resource Specialist, gave an overview of fuel mitigation projects in the Salmon Arm area. See the presentation slides [here](#).

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- What's the desired effect of treatment and prescription? To reduce the severity and intensity of wildfire should it enter the area. Also look to work with forest industry to see some harvesting done in the area so that if a wildfire does approach in the canopy it will drop next to a harvested area. We need the government to agree to negative stumpage to encourage industry to go in and help with harvesting in these high-risk areas.
- Alan Westhaver commented that he wanted to reinforce that prescribed and cultural burning does overlap, but that both of those activities are captured by burning for ecological purposes.
- Tolko wants to continue to work with MOF about fuel treatment around Silver Creek. Wants to dovetail operations and treat more area.
- We hear so much about timber supply and mills closing. 90% of province is Crown land, we talk about prescribed burning after harvesting. Can't the province do more? Multiple people answered with the following: this topic comes up at forestry conferences a lot. The fuel removed is not valuable timber, it's slash debris. It's low-grade timber and that's the shift we need to make in the big picture. The other consideration is the perception of subsidizing industry as a contributing factor in the softwood lumber dispute with USA that's been ongoing since the 1980s.

- Any consideration to how we handle forests here in the Interior cedar hemlock (ICH) ecosystems, thinking about climate change. Brent noted that it may not be climate change, it could be that we haven't had wildfires for 100 years and there's a lot of fuel built up. Climate change will affect the vegetation. Treatments are being done differently and working towards higher fire severity and make the forest more resilient.
- Is there any work on what can be replanted on cut blocks so that genuine forest can be replanted and not just saw logs, moving more towards forest resiliency? Not always commercial species being replanted, but now other deciduous species being put in. The forest sector has a long way to go, but we are seeing more talk and action around this topic.

**Columbia Shuswap Regional District** – Len Youden, Deputy Regional Fire Chief, gave an overview of what CSRD has been doing for FireSmart education and fuel mitigation. See presentation slides [here](#). He noted that he's recently moved into a new structural fire protection role, and that Sophie Randell is now the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist for CSRD.

CSRD Board Chair Flynn noted that following a delegation to the board on February 15, they have prepared a resolution to be submitted to the Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA) (Appendix 3).

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- As a homeowner FireSmarting his property, any thoughts to incentivizing property owners, what about reduced home insurance? BC was going through this with insurance companies, in the USA you can't even get wildfire insurance in some states. Consensus is that we're 5 years behind the US. In general, in the coming years, it might not be possible to get wildfire insurance unless you FireSmart your property. When insurance companies draw the line in the sand and say no coverage, that's when we'll see serious adoption of FireSmart.
- It was noted by one participant that they are already seeing that from insurance for properties that are not covered by fire protection boundaries. You'll likely see more insurance companies to avoid covering wildfire. It's a reality, it's about profit, there may be a time when government must step in to ensure coverage.
- There are \$500 for FireSmart rebate for those homeowners who complete FireSmart on their properties, contact CSRD to find out more.
- Really trying to push to get neighbourhoods to work together.

**Thompson-Nicola Regional District** – Mike Knauff, Emergency Program Coordinator spoke about initiatives that they have underway. Community wildfire resiliency plans (CWRPs) have been completed for all 10 electoral areas. TNRD has on staff one FireSmart Coordinator full time and one part time, looking to add a third this year. Priorities are reviewing evacuation plans and route planning. Looking at access passes for some of the communities in this region working with Min. of Agriculture. Promoting education around Voyent Alert app. Want to get more FireSmart folks in community meetings, lots of interest from the public. Looking at freshet as well, close to last year in terms of snowpack, some serious impact last year. Preparing for upcoming season. New Emergency Disaster Management Act (EDMA) from the province has some new language that's been recently released. Consultation requirements with First Nations has funding allocated now.

**BC Wildfire Service** – Dale Bojakra, Wildfire Officer for Vernon Fire Zone (which covers Shuswap) gave an overview of BCWS capacity and roles at the fire zone level. They have four initial attack (IA) crews, four

wildfire technicians and two seasonal wildfire assistants. BCWS has grown by 50% over the past three years; any organization that experiences that level of growth and a lot of turnovers in various positions has challenges. Quite a bit of change in their org structure. IA crews went from 3 to 4 people and Unit crews from 20 to 22 people. Supervisors are on full time year-round now. Continued change within the fuels program. A lot of other changes related to communities over the years. Seeing the development and usage of liaison contracts with First Nation communities. Look to establish liaison relationships early. A tremendous amount of change and turnover. Trying to grow as quick as possible to keep up, but number of challenges as well with facilities and recruitment. Retention is up for wildfire crews, and recruitment is doing well. Pace has increased, a lot more engagement meetings, BCWS tries to do as much as they can pre-season. Please be patient with us if you're looking for a meeting. We do struggle to keep engagement levels high, just from capacity perspective. Prescribed fire starting to take a front seat, seeing more discussion on this topic. Hope to have more prescribed burns in the future.

Mike Aldred, Wildfire Prevention Officer with BCWS at the Kamloops Fire Centre, noted that a lot of what he does gets implemented as fuel treatments and prescribed burns by others such as Brent Lipinski. Lots of projects on the go, with a lot of the folks in this room are on the ground. FireSmart Community funding supports with local governments is a key component of his work, with some being Union of BC Municipalities, Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction program, Forest Enhancement Society of BC, and a pilot project called Farmland Advantage.

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- You still do a lot of project work that dovetails with your training? Yes, a lot of training we do on chainsaws. It's about three years before someone can be certified a faller. Have worked here in Salmon Arm with the rap attack crew. If you have something in your community that you think we could help with, do reach out to Dale Bojakra. Always willing to look at options for work projects.
- General public doesn't understand BCWS structure, the role of local government. In the heat of the summer during wildfires, the public calls local government about wildfire suppression. There is a real need for education with the public about the various roles during wildfires. Dale explained how it works: *BCWS deals with operations, depending on the jurisdiction, on Crown land the BCWS they handle it. If a community is impacted, then it's their role to manage any evacuation and communication surrounding them. Where it gets complicated is where wildfire is cross jurisdiction, and an incident command structure. Usually, it falls to whoever has the most equipment and capacity to action the fire. When it crosses to structure fire, best to have rep from BCWS and local gov fire station. Incident Command will create a three-way call. Usually, incident management team will be brought in to take over and leave the Zone staff to handle new fires. BCWS will discuss the fire and priority and make recommendations, at the end of the day it's local gov to start the evacuation process. There is room for discussion of course, but local government has the prerogative about where to draw evacuation lines.*
- First Nations were ignored in the past because the reserves are federal responsibility, so there was a lack of communication with BCWS. Is there a way to have bands liaise with BCWS? Yes, we have something in place and will be working with First Nations communities to have a liaison in place prior to wildfire season.
- Mike Aldred noted that in this area around Salmon Arm, the ICH is drying out and private lots are very large. When fuel treatments are done on Crown land, they are 500m from a house with private around. So, the forest is right up to property owners' homes and a lot of fuel is on the private land, unless they FireSmart their properties.

**Fraser Basin Council** – Alex de Chantal, Regional Manager, Thompson-Okanagan described the Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) initiative that he and Mike Simpson have been working on with BCWS since spring 2023. The intent of the CCWR is identification of training and equipment requirements of rural non-Indigenous communities outside of structural fire protection. This would provide some local capacity to work under the direction of BCWS crews. It is aimed at providing training to groups that are organized as a non-profit society, not individuals. Fraser Basin Council is receiving funding from BCWS to launch training (\$100, \$185, incident command and FireSmart Wildfire Risk Reduction) in spring 2024 for up to 350 participants around the BC Interior.

**BC Hydro** – Ben Cave, Transmission Right of Way Manager, spoke about what BC Hydro's role for fuel management and debris management in their jurisdiction. They manage a lot of transmission corridors, 18 500km of high voltage overhead transmission lines, and 90 000km of overhead distribution lines, some up to 200m wide, so a lot of land to manage covering a 78 000 ha footprint. Fuel management is typically done in two different ways, manually or mechanically. Southern Interior is heavily weighted to mechanically. We can meet more of our fuel management objectives. Objectives based on fuel management inspections to look at acceptable thresholds. He wants to align with community initiatives that are happening, so there isn't duplication of work, lots of value to attend these roundtables.

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- How appropriate is it for fuel management treatments to chip and redistribute debris as wood chips on the land? Always better to chip branches and trees, better than having vertical fire in tree stands. Others noted that these can still trap embers and smolder for a long length of time. Can be difficult to mop up post wildfire. Those fuels will dry out, so they will burn when we may not want them to. It can spread fire, and the depth of the chips is important. Can also smother native vegetation. Mike Aldred noted that they are doing a lot of research on this currently. Prefer to do xeriscaping where possible and remove fuels. Distributing chips does affect hydrology, animals, plants, etc.
- Are herbicides used by BC Hydro? Yes, we do use herbicides and have Pest Management Plans in place. It is an option, but we do it selectively, we do consider other uses based on the land and budget is also considered.

**Emergency Management and Climate Readiness** – Nick Hamilton, Emergency Management Technician spoke about what EMCR does in the realm of wildfire preparedness. Quick updates: waiting on Expert Task Force for any changes that may come up through that process. New legislation EDMA addresses State of Local Emergency and has gone from one week to two weeks.

**Shuswap Trail Alliance and Shuswap Outdoors** – Adrian Bostock, Operations Manager with STA and Keith Cox, President Shuswap Outdoors gave an overview of what they do to address wildfire preparedness on trail networks [it was noted that Cam Brown, board member with Larch Hills Nordics was present in the morning but this topic pertains to them as well.] Adrian has been running STA Trails Crew and works closely with City of Salmon Arm and CSRD and have been truck loading fuels off the trail networks. It becomes cost-prohibitive due to new tipping fees for double axle trailers. Have been looking at chipping on site more recently. Keith has done a little bit of chipping near Larch Hills clubhouse. Cut anything that has fallen on the trail, leave on forest floor. Lop and scatter, so cut small and spread out. Eventually rots and keeps fire on the ground.

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- Kevin asked about getting Larch Hills in its entirety added to the current mapped area for the geographic boundary of this community wildfire roundtable.

**Regional District of North Okanagan** – Alistair Crick, Manager of Protective Services, discussed what they are doing for wildfire preparedness. Several parks and rail trail within their area. Evacuation plans are managed through RDNO and we look at the smaller communities that have only one road in and out. Have the same challenges as CSRD in that regard. Considers the watershed as critical infrastructure, without water you don't have a community. Becomes so important should a wildfire approach. Challenge is dealing with private land and fuel management. Large sections of land that is private that surround communities. One project that City of Vernon has undertaken has been putting up chemical sensor system (SensorNet) that detects like a gas detector sensor in Ellison Park. Works on a network with all sensors communicating with each other. Sponsored through federal government. Now Predator Ridge is looking at the same approach.

**Tolko Industries Ltd.** – Dale Jones, Harvesting Superintendent noted that Tolko is active in this area from Falkland, HWY 97 corridor and Silver Hills. The real change in their business is partial cutting, loggers are good at fuel reduction. One gap he sees is that they're not coordinating or dovetailing with other work going on in the area. Perhaps look at working in Larch Hills and reduce fuels around town. Tolko is working on timber salvage on three different wildfires: Ross Moore Lake, White Rock Lake, and West Kelowna. Message he would share is that we are all the same community, when that fire comes, loggers are evacuating as well. Tolko want to support these fuel mitigation projects.

Questions and discussion raised the following:

- Connection between Deep Creek group concerned about logging, Mallory Ridge area, Adrian at STA also offered to connect folks as they did work in there.

**BC Timber Sales** – Grace Chomitz, Planning Officer noted that they are currently working on Mt. Ida coming on in next year doing some mechanical fuel treatments there. They are also taking preliminary steps for White Lake area.

**Alan Westhaver** – How do we use the science that we have to reach our common goals. We do know that these disasters happen when we have big winds and very dry fuel. Which is 3% of fires; 97% of wildfires are put out before they become a community disaster. What's the source of ignition? Usually, it's **embers and structure to structure transfer**. The sequence is extreme conditions, and then structure to structure transfer. Lytton was a good example of an overwhelming challenge. Wildfires are inevitable, but wildfire urban interface fires don't have to be. The real problem is that structures are so easily ignited. Last night in Texas it was weeds, dead grass, and pine needles. Just like Lytton, not many trees burned, it was grass fires that spread quickly. The home ignition zone around structures is 30m around the home and structures. 50-70% of the causes of losing homes to wildfire is due to the landscaping around the home. If you remove the landscaping, then it's just the embers. Bring the problem down to a small challenge, deal with the home ignition zones around our houses, work with our neighbours. Start at the values and work out. [Mike noted that Alan Westhaver toured to five community wildfire roundtables in May 2023, a recording of Alan's presentation can be accessed [here.](#)]

## Reflections

Are there any duplications or gaps with what's underway? What are the opportunities to work together, share resources? Responses were noted:

- There's generally an understanding there's more going on than each individual group realizes. These meetings can shed a lot of light on what neighbouring partners are doing, creates more connections. Great venues for knowledge and sharing of information.
- Great to hear what's going on, but the problem is out scaling the good activity that is happening. Gaps: connecting all the activities, neighbourhoods are doing the same, how are they connected on the landscape? Gaps: let's be intentional with blocks and Forest Service Roads to connect areas. Community watershed resilience.
- We need a platform where each jurisdiction can add what they're doing, add in layers showing the work with contact info and sharing things by maps.
- Locals can provide contacts to property owners on the wildfire interface. Help to simmer down any tensions between locals and wildfire suppression efforts. Perhaps there is a need for more liaisons. Developing relationships before.
- There must be some public education around climate change to raise awareness that forests also need to change. Fuel treatment is important, we need to tell the public that we do need to take some trees out to reduce possible wildfire intensity.
- Locals are trying to be trained and be useful but building that back up so that we're building trust. BCWS need to trust going back down the ladder from fire departments to locals. Feeling of respect is needed both ways. Good opportunity for relationship building.

It was agreed by consensus to form a community wildfire roundtable for Salmon Arm & Area. There was insufficient time to review and discuss the draft terms of reference circulated before the meeting.

### **Geographic area**

The following was received as feedback on the proposed geographic area of the roundtable, to be discussed further at the subsequent meeting:

- Need CSRD Electoral Area F on North Shore of Shuswap Lake. We need to include those affected areas as well, should align with Shuswap Emergency Program area. North Shuswap because of the fire halls and set program, need to consider including that area.
- Annis Bay is included in this area, the response in this area is covered by District of Sicamous, so consider removing it.
- What about CSRD Area E, Malakwa and Swansea point should be included.
- Consider creating an overlap with TNRD and Adams Lake Indian Band on the west, but not all the way to Agate Bay. TNRD staff were not opposed to including some of Turtle Valley, Skimikin.
- Larch Hills area should be all in
- Need to include all Secwepemc communities

### **Who's missing?**

Participants were asked to consider organizations that are missing and should be invited to participate.

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)
- Cattlemens
- Rec Sites and Trails BC

### **Next meeting**

- Support to meet in late April to mid May, avoiding Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit April 22-24 in Prince George and SILGA April 30-May 3 in Kamloops

**Next meeting draft agenda:**

- Finalize terms of reference
- Finalize a geographic boundary for the CWR
- Suggestion of doing a partial field portion at next meeting, partial harvesting and fuel treatments at Silver Creek perhaps

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Convene Community Wildfire Roundtable in spring 2024.	All – Mike to seek a date via scheduling poll at least a month in advance.	Late April to mid May 2024 (see constraints above)
Finalize a boundary for the CWR	All	May 2024
Finalize contact list for the Salmon Arm & Area CWR with key contacts for each agency	Mike S.	May 2024



Appendix 1 – Agenda

**Salmon Arm & Area Community Wildfire Preparedness Roundtable**

**10:00AM to 3:00PM, Thursday February 29, 2024**

**Little Mountain Field House, 250 30<sup>th</sup> St SE, Salmon Arm, BC**

**Purpose:** Bring together all governments and organizations working towards wildfire preparedness in the Similkameen Valley for regular communication and coordination.

**Topics in scope:** wildfire risk reduction/fuel management, prescribed and cultural burning, FireSmart, training and capacity development, equipment, emergency planning for wildfires, inter-agency cooperation

**Geographic area in scope:** Salmon Arm & Area (see map on page 2)

**Who should attend:** any order of government or organization with a role to play in preparing for or mitigating the risk of wildfire, including emergency preparedness staff or elected officials:

- Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- City of Salmon Arm
- Swklax te Secwepemculecw
- Adams Lake Indian Band
- Splantsin First Nation
- Neskonlith First Nation
- Ministry of Forests
- BC Wildfire Service
- Other BC government ministries
- Volunteer fire departments and fire brigades
- Neighbourhood FireSmart Committees
- Forest tenure holders (community forest, woodlot licensees, major licensees, BCTS)
- Other organizations

**Meeting objectives**

- Understand what’s underway for wildfire preparedness by different governments and organizations
- Explore the concept of a creating a Salmon Arm & Area Community Wildfire Preparedness roundtable
- Develop relationships, improve communication, share information
- Identify synergies on various initiatives

Time	Topic	Who/format
9:30	Doors open, sign in, coffee on, peruse maps on wall	
10:00	Welcome	Secwepemc representative, Mayor Harrison, CSRD Board Chair Flynn
10:15	Review agenda, objectives, introductions around room	Mike Simpson
10:45	What’s underway for wildfire preparedness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s underway and where?</li> <li>• What’s planned and where?</li> <li>• What programs or opportunities do you offer?</li> </ul> Questions and clarification to follow	Everyone – open floor
12:00	Lunch (provided)	
1:00	What’s underway for wildfire preparedness? (continued)	Everyone – open floor
1:30	Reflections on what’s underway, opportunities to work together, share resources, any duplication or gaps, opportunities	Everyone
2:00	Community Wildfire Preparedness Roundtable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What it is, how it would operate</li> <li>• Establishing a long-term table for wildfire preparedness</li> <li>• Draft terms of reference</li> </ul>	Mike Simpson
2:30	Next steps	Facilitated discussion
3:00	Adjourn	

## Appendix 2 – Participants

First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization
Adrian	Bostock	Operations Manager	Shuswap Trail Alliance
Alan	Harrison	Mayor	City of Salmon Arm
Alan	Westhaver	President	ForestWise Environmental Consulting Ltd
Alan	Rendell	Fire Chief	Eagle Bay Fire Department
Alastair	Crick	Manager Protective Services, EPC	RDNO
Alex	de Chantal	Regional Manager	Fraser Basin Council
Andrea	Stelter	Emergency Program Coordinator	Skwlax te Secwepemcúlecw
Ben	Cave	Transmission R/W Manager	BC Hydro
Brent	Lipinski	Land and Resource Specialist	Ministry of Forests
Cam	Brown	Board Member	Larch Hills Nordic
Carmen	Guidos	Fire Prevention	Salmon Arm Fire Department
Charlie	Burt	Champion	South Canoe Firesmart Neighbourhood
Chris	Pisesky		None
Dale	Bojahra	Wildfire Officer Vernon Fire Zone	BCWS
Dale	Jones	Harvesting Superintendent	Tolko Industries
David	Price	retired	retired
Erin	Jackson	CAO	City of Salmon Arm
Grace	Chomitz	Planning Officer	BC Timber Sales
Jeff	Avery	Fire Chief/EPC	Adams Lake Indian Band
John	Edry	Deputy Chief Eagle Bay Fire Department	CSRD Eagle Bay Fire Department
Keith	Cox	President	Shuswap Outdoors
Kevin	Flynn	Councilor/ Board Chair	City of Salmon Arm/ CSRD
Kevin	Skrepnek	Manager of Community and Emergency Services	TNRD
Len	Youden	CSRD Fire Services	Columbia Shuswap Regional District

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Louis	Thomas	Elder	Neskonlith Indian Band
Marvin	Gros	Fire Chief & Fire Smart Rep	Ranchero Deep Creek FD
Michael	Aldred	Wildfire Prevention Officer	BC Wildfire Service
Mike	Knauff	Emergency Program Coordinator	TNRD
Mike	Simpson	President	M.F. Simpson Ltd.
Nick	Hamilton	Emergency Management Technician	Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
Randy	Spyksma	Planning Forester	Forsite Consultants Ltd.
Rebecca	Kneen	Representative, Farmer	Chase and Area Farmers' Institute
Sean	Coubrough	Deputy Regional Fire Chief	Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Shawn	McCarthy	Emergency Program Coordinator	Neskonlith Indian Band
Sophie	Randell	Wildfire Mitigation Specialist	CSRD - FireSmart
Tom	Hansen	Emergency Program Coordinator	Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Shuswap Emergency Program
Vikki	Tronson	Tkwamipla7	Splatsin

## **Appendix 3 – CSRD Resolution for Southern Interior Local Government Association**

### **RESOLUTION**

#### **Sustainable Forest Management Practices and Wildfires**

Columbia Shuswap Regional District

WHEREAS the current forest ecosystem contains significant unnatural old growth forest, excluding Interior Cedar Hemlock and Coastal Rainforest, and experiences damage from devastating wildfires and insect epidemics;

AND WHEREAS the biodiversity and sustainability of forests in British Columbia is at risk, impacting human and wildlife health, ecosystem health, and the economy of the forest sector:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of BC, in conjunction with Indigenous Nations, to modernize forest management policies and regulations, update biodiversity targets, and promote environmental stewardship, which are key in creating healthy forests, reducing fire hazards, and protecting community safety and critical infrastructure.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of BC to support education on the value of reintroducing fire plan strategies to responsibly manage fuel sources as a healthy way to maintain the forest, ungulate, bird, and amphibian populations, and protect community safety and infrastructure.