

CROWN LAND WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PLANNING GUIDE 2020-2021

Community Resiliency Investment Program



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Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding Planning Guide 2020-2021

1.0 Introduction

British Columbia (BC) has invested significantly in mitigating the impact of wildfire to communities and critical infrastructure. The two funding streams of the Community Resiliency Investment program, FireSmart Community Funding and Supports and Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction, the provincial government has allocated \$135 million dollars through 2022 to reduce wildfire risk and impact in BC.

This document is to provide direction on investment principles for the 2020-2021 Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) component of the CRI program.

1.1 Background

The CRI program, as announced by Government in 2018, is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on B.C. communities. The importance of this is outlined in the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (FLNRORD) Action Plan “[Respond to Natural Hazards](#)” and the “*FLNRORD 2019/20 – 2021/22 Service Plan*” [Objective 1.2: Improve Community Resilience Through Proactive and Collaborative Natural Hazard Management](#) (Appendix 2).

There are two delivery and funding mechanisms within CRI: **FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS)**, and **Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR)**.

FireSmart Community Funding and Supports: Administered through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) with an initial investment of \$60M, this program is available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to deliver FireSmart activities as supported by the [BC FireSmart Committee](#). Highlights of the program include:

- 100% funding of up to \$150,000 across a suite of FireSmart activities.
- Additional funding can be leveraged for Crown land treatments on higher risk areas defined as WUI Risk Class 1 to 3 for full funding.
- Regional, multi-jurisdictional applications are encouraged
- Incentives have been added to undertake FireSmart activities on private land.
- Funding opportunities are available for fuel management projects on First Nation reserves.
- More information on the CFS program can be found here:
<https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/community-resiliency-investment.html>

Technical reviews and prioritization of FCFS applications are now done by a committee made up of UBCM, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD),

FESBC, and First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) staff with final approval by the BC FireSmart Committee.

Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction: Administered through FLNRORD with an initial 2019/20 investment of up to \$25M per year, through to 2021/22. This program is available for internal delivery of priority activities on higher risk areas. Highlights of the program include:

- Fuel management planning and treatment activities focusing on **provincial** Crown land located around communities.
- Prescribed fire (including planning and operational treatments on **provincial** Crown land) and the development of a comprehensive provincial prescribed fire program.
- Risk reduction activities targeting provincially identified critical infrastructure, beginning with critical response infrastructure such as government-owned radio repeaters, weather stations and airtanker bases.

Successful wildfire risk reduction (WRR) outcomes require collaboration and coordination within joint operations as implementation of these funds will occur in partnership between BCWS, Resource Districts, BC Parks, BC Timber Sales and Mountain Resorts Branch

2.0 Wildfire Risk Reduction Planning Hierarchy and Prioritization Criteria

The identification of priority projects within the Annual Wildfire Risk Reduction Operating Plan (AOP) is the outcome of a collaborative effort between the partners. A summary of partner Roles and Responsibilities is provided in Appendix 1. The AOP process will identify projects around high-risk communities and critical infrastructure as well as opportunities to advance prescribed fire. This prioritized project list will inform the annual and two-year budget forecasts. As part of the AOP, identification of funding leverage opportunities with other programs can be highlighted.

Priority WRR projects are based on their potential contribution to reducing the risk of negative impacts to values from wildfires in BC as summarized below. Generally, investments will be prioritized based on:

1. The magnitude and impact in addressing provincial and service plan goals e.g multiple high-risk communities having a reduced risk.
2. The ability to leverage other funding sources including CRI Community Funding and Supports, Forest Enhancement Society BC , Forest Carbon Initiative, Ecosystem Restoration (ER), forest sector (e.g licensee harvesting).
3. Additional benefits to local governments and the province including social and economic benefits such as forest employment, tourism and recreation.

2.1 Annual Operating Plan Process and Timelines

An annual operating plan (one-year project plan, two-year forecast) developed locally with the BCWS, Regional Operations, BC Parks, and Mtn. Resorts will then be sent to the BC Wildfire Service HQ for

provincial roll up and funding. The outputs in the AOP tables for the first two years should be realistic, based on capacity, and feasibility. The AOP and two-year forecast will be updated annually to reflect the status of progress towards goals and to reflect any changes in provincial direction. The AOP should outline all projects that will be delivered in the course of the fiscal year. All approved projects are expected to be consistent with the standards provided at the [Tools for Fuel Management](#) page.

2.3 Prioritization Criteria

There are three primary filters which will be used to identify and prioritize projects. Filters cascade from coarse (provincial), to medium (project alignment with government objectives), to fine (project level).

Provincial Scope - Coarse Filter 1

Determining the wildfire risk reduction priority is based on [2019 Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis \(PSTA\)](#) and [Wildland Urban Interface \(WUI\) Risk Class](#). This filter assists in determining which communities and critical infrastructure are at highest risk. WUI Risk Class 1 and 2 areas are a priority for WRR funding and are present in every Fire Centre. In addition to WUI Risk Class and PSTA, additional new local information should be considered if it accurately portrays the real wildfire risk of a given area/community when supported by the Fire Centre.

Fire Centre	Landbase	Landscape Threat		WUI Risk Class		
	Total PSTA Hectares	High and Extreme Threat (PSTA) (HA)	% of Provincial High to Extreme Threat	Total % all Interface Fires*	Risk Class 1 and 2	% of Risk Class 1-2
Cariboo	7,809,210	3,566,689	12%	13%	53	17%
Coastal	11,733,520	1,203,885	4%	13%	19	6%
Kamloops	6,383,380	3,621,517	12%	22%	94	30%
Northwest	23,891,707	4,564,877	15%	15%	33	10%
Prince George	32,331,103	14,463,986	47%	9%	52	16%
Southeast	7,182,183	3,197,204	10%	8%	65	21%
Grand Total	89,331,103	30,618,158	100%	NA	284	100%

Table 1: Summary of 2019 PSTA and WUI Risk Class by Fire Centre

*% of interface fires starts labelled in Fire Reporting SOP

Project Alignment with Government Objectives - Medium Filter 2:

This filter shows the relative priority of individual projects within the Fire Centre.

ALL PROJECTS

Projects on provincial crown land, including projects that are CFS identified fuel management and/or prescribed fire linkages towards larger logical areas (i.e. crown land within a municipal boundary where it links to a larger project extending to provincial crown land– collaboration/consultation with Local Government is required).

FUEL MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

1. Projects that have been Identified by and are supported in communities. There are existing wildfire and fuel management plans (e.g. BC Parks Fire Management Plan, Fuel Treatment Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan) that have been funded through provincial funding initiatives and may identify treatment opportunities. This links to the ongoing transition between the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports and historical fuel management projects on crown land.
2. Projects that are carrying forward into a new phase (e.g. prescription to operational treatments) and are implementable within the fiscal year.
3. Maintenance projects for previously completed fuel management projects. Some of these may be highlighted by communities as they may have been funded previously though UBCM administered programs such as the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative (SWPI).
4. Projects that improve egress/evacuation from remote communities that also provide safer access to and from for first responders.
5. Projects that are higher risk and are occurring in economically impacted communities.
6. Projects that support the Province’s reconciliation with Indigenous peoples consistent with UNDRIP and the B.C Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act which has received Royal Assent in December.
7. Projects that maximize funding linkages (ie FESBC, FCI, ER, CFS etc).

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

1. Projects focusing on reducing risk to provincially owned critical infrastructure (e.g FLNRORD radio repeaters and weather stations, provincially owned emergency response buildings).
2. Projects on provincial crown land that reduce threat to provincially identified key facilities (e.g communications towers used to support emergency response).
3. Projects that reduce risk to critical drinking watersheds and reservoirs that are located close to a community.

PRESCRIBED FIRE PROJECTS

Projects with signed/sealed prescriptions and approved burn plans that are able to be implemented in 2020-2021as per the criteria below.

Note: this criteria is applicable to prescribed fire planning and operational/implementation phases.

1. Projects with a primary management objective of Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) to communities and/or critical infrastructure.
2. Projects that demonstrate partnerships with First Nations including projects that support the incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural burning practices.
3. Projects that maximize funding or value integration linkages (ER, Habitat, Silviculture) to further WRR as a clear secondary or tertiary objective.
4. Projects with primary management objectives other than WRR (i.e. ER, Habitat, Silviculture, Range, etc.) as prioritized by the Land Manager and regional planning committees.

Project Level - Fine Filter 3:

This filter is to be used when developing priorities between individual project:

1. Project objective is to reduce the risk in areas identified WUI Risk Class 1 and 2 (or ground truth data showing equivalency) as priority then WUI Risk Class 3. WUI RC 4 and 5 are a lower priority for funding.
2. Project rationale showing how this project fits within a larger risk reduction strategy or plan as outlined in the [Standard for Developing Tactical Overview and Operational Plans Fuel Management](#).
3. Clear project objectives and target conditions for fuel management treatments. Fuel loading targets and measures for expected post treatment fire behaviour outcomes:
 - a. Targeted from the value out generally located within the wildland urban interface adjacent to communities.
 - b. Reduce the wildfire intensity within the areas treated by reducing crown fire initiation, and spotting as outlined in the [BCWS Fuel Management Prescription Guidance Document](#).
 - c. Reducing the probability of fire occurrence and spread beyond treated areas.
4. Threat rating from the Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis (PSTA) greater than 7 for the majority of project area or ground truth data showing equivalency.
5. Community and provincial resiliency - mitigating risk to values in the following order of priority:
 - a. Fuel Treatments located in the wildland urban interface (WUI) specifically; including evacuation corridors.
 - b. Critical infrastructure by priority:
 - i. Response infrastructure – provincially owned
 - ii. Energy and communications infrastructure – privately owned
 - iii. Transportation infrastructure
 - c. Identified at risk high value community and drinking watersheds within WUI area.
6. Cost effectiveness of the project:

- a. Fibre utilization opportunity maximized.
- b. Projects that leverage additional funds from other sources.

ADDITIONAL PRESCRIBED FIRE CRITERIA

1. Projects that are in the implementation phase should be further evaluated and prioritized with operational feasibility in mind. This includes consideration to the complexity of the burn, associated resource and personnel requirements, and the availability/capacity of the resources to implement the project.

2.4 Key Planning Due Dates for Wildfire Risk Reduction 2020-2021

Below are the target timelines for project development and approval. Note: Agencies with a provincial mandate such as BC Parks and Mountain Resorts Branch may require some flexibility and support to connect with all districts and regions.

April 1 st	Release of next fiscal budget. Implement or modify AOP.
April to June 30 th	Review of last yr. planning process for opportunity for improvement. Revise planning templates, HQ program prioritization and direction, documents as required.
June to September 30 th	Begin planning process for next development of next fiscal WRR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold annual planning meeting with BCWS, IIS and Resource Region, NR Districts, BC Parks, and Mtn. Resorts to set program direction. • Business area leads being development of AOP for next fiscal.
October 31 st	Draft business area AOP's due in order to support annual face to face meetings.
January 31 st	Face to Face Fire Centre AOP meetings to build Master list of priorities by Fire Centre.
February 14 th	AOP's due to BCWS HQ.
February 28 th	Provincial roll up and requests for changes to AOPs' if required. AOP finalized.
March 25 th	HQ submit final AOP to ministry executive for approval.

Table 2: WRR Key Planning Dates 2020_2021

Appendix 1 - MFLNRORD 2019/20 – 2021/22 Service Plan Objective 1.2: Improve Community Resilience Through Proactive and Collaborative Natural Hazard Management

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Objective 1.2: Improve community resilience through proactive and collaborative natural hazard management

Key Strategies:

- Reduce risk and increase community resiliency through supporting implementation of the [Government’s Action Plan: Responding to Wildfire and Flood Risks](#) in response to [Addressing the New Normal: 21st Century Disaster Management in British Columbia](#);
- Deliver funding through the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program to support work in treating the wildland-urban interface through delivery of the FireSmart program, and strengthen capacity of local emergency authorities and First Nations to prepare and respond to wildfire events;
- Support the development of an Integrated Disaster Recovery Framework to proactively coordinate recovery activity across provincial government agencies, including the important roles of First Nations and other recovery partners;
- Implement a provincial risk reduction strategy to reduce wildfire risk through targeted wildfire management activities in high wildfire risk landscapes.

Performance Measure	2018/19 Baseline	2019/20 Target	2020/21 Target	2021/22 Target
1.2 Number of higher risk Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities ¹ actively engaged in wildfire risk reduction activities ²	0%	20%	40%	50%

¹ Higher risk communities include: First Nations reserve areas, treaty settlement lands, municipalities and unincorporated areas within regional districts that are located within a Wildland Urban Interface risk class 1 or 2 area or have a locally approved plan that has identified high or extreme threat areas.

² Data Source: BC Wildfire Service

Linking Performance Measure to Objective:

This measure tracks the number of higher risk Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that are actively involved in [wildfire risk reduction activities](#) aligned with FireSmart disciplines, including vegetation management. These activities address wildfire risk near public and private infrastructure through preventative activities that reduce the negative impacts of wildfires to communities.

Appendix 2: WRR Planning and Implementation Flowchart

