

Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC)



Guidance Document

*If you are part of a First Nations or local government community and are interested in ensuring that your community is supporting effective **FireSmart** activities that will increase your community's resiliency to wildfire, this document will assist you in forming a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC).*

What is FireSmart?

FireSmart is living with and managing for fire on our landscape and around our communities. Climate change, urban expansion and a host of other factors have made it likely that we will see more fire seasons like the summers of 2017 and 2018 in the future. FireSmart is our shared responsibility at all levels from provincial to local government and individual citizens, to build wildfire resilient communities that protect life and property from the eventuality of wildfire.

FireSmart emphasizes the utilization of [FireSmart Disciplines](#) to lessen the effects of wildfire— education, vegetation management, legislation and planning, cross-training, interagency planning, development considerations and emergency planning. These principles have shown that they can be effective at reducing negative impacts from wildfire events even under extreme wildfire conditions. Economically, FireSmart applied at the residential scale has shown to be one of the most cost-effective ways to mitigate the loss of homes and is something that every homeowner can undertake. The BC FireSmart Committee encourages citizens, in partnership with all levels of government, to prepare their homes, neighbourhoods, communities, businesses and the province for wildfire. Together, we can build a FireSmart B.C.

What is the BC FireSmart Committee?

The BC FireSmart™ Committee (BCFSC) was initiated by the BC Wildfire Service in May 2017 to ensure greater direction and integration of the seven FireSmart disciplines across the province and is based on the FireSmart Canada model. The current BCFSC members consist of the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS), the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC), Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), and the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC). FireSmart Canada sits on the committee in an advisory capacity.

For more information on FireSmart, visit www.FireSmartBC.ca

What is a Community Firesmart and Resiliency Committee?

A CFRC fills a key level of collaboration and organization on a scalable level that is currently missing across B.C. It takes the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders working together to achieve wildfire resilient communities. This may include local fire departments, First Nation and/or local government staff and elected officials, provincial government organizations such as EMCR and BCWS, industry representatives and other community stakeholders. **The Community Firesmart and Resiliency Committee** can provide the missing link bringing partners together under a common vision connected to the seven Firesmart disciplines. The purpose of the CFRC is to strengthen collaboration between key partners including local communities and provincial agency staff (EMCR and MOF) with stakeholders to coordinate, plan and share information on how to successfully implement the seven FireSmart disciplines at a regional or multi scale level.

As B.C. is such a varied province in terms of risk, level of involvement, and existing governance structures, there is no one set of criteria or format suggested. The remainder of this document will outline suggestions regarding scale, structure, relationships and activities that will help facilitate the creation and starting phases of a CFRC. This document is created for local government, First Nations, and those involved in building resilient communities by following the seven FireSmart disciplines as a holistic approach to reducing wildfire risk to communities.

How can a CFRC support you and your community?

Community planning is a very effective tool for reducing wildfire risk for lands and buildings within the administrative boundaries of a local government or First Nation communities. The [Community Resiliency Investment](#) (CRI) program funds the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS) and the Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) streams. Under CRI it is possible to apply for funding to create or maintain a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee.

[FireSmart Community Funding and Supports \(FCFS\)](#)

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia (FNESS) and the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C. (FESBC) are working with the Ministry of Forests, (MOF) — represented by the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) — to administer the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports portion of the program for local government and First Nation applicants.

This category provides funding to Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to participate in wildfire risk reduction and prevention activities, including public, reserve and private land. This program supports activities associated with the seven FireSmart disciplines, which can help increase a community's resiliency to wildfire impacts. Establishing or participating in a CFRC is an eligible activity for local governments under the Interagency Cooperation category.

[Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction \(CLWRR\)](#)

The CLWRR funding mechanism is administered through the Ministry of Forests, (MOF). This program is available for internal provincial government delivery of priority activities on higher risk areas and not directly accessible by local governments and First Nations. CLWRR program highlights include:

- Fuel management planning and treatment activities focusing on provincial Crown land located around communities.
- Prescribed fire (including planning and operational treatments) 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.

The CLWRR program maintains its decision-making independence from the CFRC but can be an active member of the tables to both share and gather information that can help to inform CLWRR plans.

Successful outcomes for the CRI program require a level of collaboration between communities, First Nations local stakeholders BCWS and government land management agencies (e.g., natural resource districts, BC Parks) to ensure the seamless integration of community planning and provincial fuel management activities on crown lands. The CFRC is the recommended mechanism to facilitate this knowledge sharing . Participation in, or development of a CFRC is an eligible activity in the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports stream.

Suggested activities for CFRC Committee

Successful CFRC committees reflect a range of local knowledge and expertise, which can be accomplished by creating a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency steering committee that also includes other representatives. A CFRC is also a strong mechanism for providing a venue to discuss linkages between local FCFS funded activities and CLWRR funded activities, and to collaborate on new plans and projects for the future. Defining audiences sets the stage for how these interests can be represented during the development process.

Below is a list of suggested activities that could be part of a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee:

- Develop or maintain a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan.
- Develop a Terms of Reference document for the CFRC based on the template provided by the BCFSC.
- Develop a CFRC structure, including a list of agencies, partners and First Nation communities that is diverse and can influence wildfire risk reduction.
- Reference the [BC government cultural agility web page](#) to help you successfully collaborate with Indigenous peoples on the CFRC.
- Provide collaboration and coordination on Community Funding and Supports Projects and Crown Land Wildfire.
- Share information to help identify Risk Reduction project initiatives that reduce risk to First Nation and Municipal communities and support critical infrastructure.
- Collaborate on a communication and public education strategy with multiple local governments.
- Participate in or liaise with a government led fuel management planning table in collaboration with MOF and other agency staff.
- Develop/update, implement and monitor the success of your Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan.
- Streamline Firesmart Home Assessment and FireSmart grant programs by sharing capacity between multiple local authorities.
- Develop a network of Local FireSmart Representatives in the area and coordinate their activities within the region.
- Create an advocacy program for participation in the [FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program](#) and work towards increasing the number of recognized neighbourhoods in the region each year.
- Identify FireSmart activities that should be undertaken to best build wildfire resiliency in higher risk areas.
- Connect and share via social media.
- Identifying funding sources to access and support priority projects from Provincial, Federal and Regional Programs.
- Ensure information sharing of project initiatives that span multiple jurisdictions and scales over space and time.
- Identify and recommend opportunities for continuous program improvement to BC FireSmart Committee.

Suggestions on CFRC structure

The CFRC structure should build on the diversity that is currently present on the BCFSC, including all agencies and partners that are directly impacted and can influence or impact wildfire risk reduction in and around a neighbourhood, community, or multiple communities.

To ensure true partnership, collaboration, and diversity, it is suggested to include First Nations in the creation of the CFRC from the beginning and at all levels of planning, decision making and implementation. The First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) can also play an essential role in connecting with and supporting First Nations in this process.

While there isn't a concrete list of agencies and partners that need to be involved, below are some suggestions.

List of suggested participants and agencies:

- Government of B.C. as represented by:
 - BC Wildfire Service local staff
 - Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR)
 - Regional or district forest staff linked to the CLWRR collaborative planning.
 - BC Parks staff linked to CLWRR.
- First Nations and Indigenous communities
- First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS) local staff
- Fire Departments (i.e. FCABC)
- Local government(s) depending on the scale of the committee
- Forest industry partners including Community Forest Areas
- Local business and non-government organizations Community emergency social service organizations
- Active emergency preparation advocacy groups
- Funding agencies (i.e., Columbia Basin Trust)
- Agriculture contact (Ministry of Agriculture)

The frequency and format of meetings is dependent on the needs and desires of each CFRC. The Chair could be rotating, a co-chair position, or even chaired by committee, as determined by the specific CRFC.

Next Steps

If you require any assistance or have questions regarding developing a CFRC in your area, please contact your local Fire Centre Wildfire Prevention Officer.

Together we can build a FireSmart B.C.

