



CRD EMERGENCY PROGRAM

TO: Committee of the Whole
AND TO: Murray Daly, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Irene Israel, Manager of Emergency Program Services
DATE: June 19, 2024
SUBJECT: Wildfire Mitigation in the Cariboo Regional District

1. What is the Cariboo Regional District's FireSmart Program for 2024?

The Cariboo Regional District has a **region-wide education program**, which is facilitated by a **FireSmart educator**. In addition to this educational initiative, the district is promoting vegetation management among residential property owners by **waiving the tipping fees for off-site disposal of vegetative debris**. This incentive is specifically designed for homeowners in and around areas included in the **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**, covering Lac La Hache, 108 Mile Ranch, and Lone Butte.

2. How do we currently fund the Cariboo Regional District's FireSmart Program?

The FireSmart program is funded through the Community Resiliency Investment Program's Stream 1: FireSmart Community Funding and Supports, administered by the Union of BC. Municipalities (UBCM). The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program provides funding to First Nations and local governments in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community-based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire.

3. What are the activities supported by the UBCM CRI funding, and what are the funding amounts?

The Cariboo Regional District can apply for a maximum of \$200,000 per year (for up to two years) and up to \$50,000 per electoral area to do the following

- Hiring FireSmart Positions such as a FireSmart Coordinator, Local FireSmart Representative, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist, Wildfire Forest Professional, or FireSmart Crew Member
- Establishing Community FireSmart & Resiliency Committees
- Supporting FireSmart educational events and materials, including community preparedness days, wildfire evacuation checklists, banners, posters, tents, mascots, pamphlets, FireSmart magnetic boards, and wildfire resiliency literacy kits

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- Developing Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans
- Offering assessments and rebate programs for residential properties.
- Amending Official Community Plans, landscaping zoning, and revising Development Permit Areas for wildfire hazard to incorporate FireSmart principles
- Developing FireSmart policies and practices for publicly owned land and buildings
- Enhancing interagency cooperation and emergency planning
- Providing FireSmart training, including training for FireSmart positions and cross-training for firefighters in both structural fire and interface wildfire scenarios
- Implementing FireSmart improvements to local critical infrastructure, community assets, and residential areas, and establishing programs like the FireSmart Canada Neighborhood Recognition Program and Home Partners Program
- Managing and treating fuels within regional district parks, gardens, cemeteries, naturalized spaces, trails, and pathways
- Implementing recommended FireSmart improvements to local critical infrastructure and community assets
- Managing residential-scale FireSmart vegetation, including providing dumpsters, chippers, or other collection methods, waiving tipping fees, and offering curbside debris pick-up.

4. What has the CRD Emergency Program Service achieved through this grant stream so far?

- 1 FireSmart position
- A regionwide FireSmart education program
- Vegetation management among residential property owners by waiving the tipping fees for off-site disposal of vegetative debris. This incentive is currently for homeowners in and around areas included in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, covering Lac La Hache, 108 Mile Ranch, and Lone Butte.
- A Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2019 Update (includes areas from fringe of 100 Mile House to Lac la Hache North in Area G and including unincorporated communities in Areas H & L).

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5. What are the conditions for applying for the CRI grant to fund FireSmart activities?

To access funding for FireSmart activities through the UBCM CRI grant we require

- A FireSmart Position
- A Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee
- Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) or Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

If these aspects are not already in place, funding is available specifically to establish them.

6. Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) vs Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) partnered with the BC FireSmart Committee to develop a new framework for Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans and when the old format Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) expires, they will have to be amended to follow the new CWRP format.

To be considered acceptable, CWRPs must be developed in accordance with the template and guidance document and must include assessment and identification of FireSmart and fuel management priorities.

CWRPs must then be signed off by BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), FNESS and/or, where applicable, BC Parks for it to be accepted by UBCM.

Change to the Area of Interest (AOI)

The new guidance for the CWRP AOI says that it should reflect how the community is organized and how it approached other similar planning projects within its jurisdictional boundaries. For regional districts, this could mean using the boundary of an electoral area that encompassed multiple communities.

Municipalities and First Nations are restricted to planning within their respective jurisdictional boundaries, and regional districts are encouraged to develop plans for each of their electoral areas.

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CRD's Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans (CWRP's)

Our one active Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2019 Update (includes areas from fringe of 100 Mile House to Lac la Hache North in Area G and including unincorporated communities in Areas H & L) is due amendment/change next year.

7. What are a few options available to us and the potential outcomes?

- Continue FireSmart education while opting not to develop any Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans. This can be funded through the UBCM CRI Funding 2024.
- Develop Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans (CWRPs) for the whole Cariboo Regional District to fully leverage the grant's potential. This will need additional personnel and structured programming.
- Identify and establish priority locations for the implementation of FireSmart; build CWRP's for those areas and implement FireSmart programming initiatives for those areas only. This will need additional personnel and structured programming.
- Consider establishing a FireSmart Service that operates independently of grant conditions, allowing for sustained efforts in wildfire mitigation. Grants can further support its initiatives.
- Consider a FireSmart position funded by the Cariboo Regional District to provide greater stability to the program. Costs can be recovered through grants if available.

For Discussion

- Determining CRD's Wildfire Mitigation priorities
- UBCM's CRI grant rules & nuances
- Wildfire Mitigation, Wildfire Risk Reduction & FireSmart landscape in the Cariboo Regional District
- FireSmart program – implications to other departments

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