INTRODUCTION

• In 2019, B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd. were retained to develop three Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for three Zones (A, B, and C) of the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD).

• The CWPP Program was created in BC to:
  • Aid communities in developing plans to assist in improving safety; and
  • Reduce the risk of damage to property.
Key Points

The consequence of a potential wildfire to the FVRD is significant, but there are actions which can be taken to reduce the risk.

1. Fuel reduction treatments, updates to plans/policies/bylaws, and FireSmart initiatives;

2. Provincial programs such as the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program can be leveraged to support the FVRD in implementing recommendations from the 2019 CWPP; and,

3. A variety of staff and departments within the FVRD can contribute to reducing risk within the various communities.
Area of Interest

Zone A – Electoral Areas A and B
Area of Interest

Zone B – Electoral Areas C, F and G
Area of Interest

Zone C – Electoral Areas D, E and H
Fire Threat and Behaviour

Zone A
Fire Threat and Behaviour

Zone B
Fire Threat and Behaviour

Zone C
Proposed Priority Treatment Areas

Zone A

27.7 ha – moderate priority
Proposed Priority Treatment Areas

Zone B

~836 ha of which 331 ha are high priority
Proposed Priority Treatment Areas

Zone C

~ 704 ha of which 252 ha are high priority
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

• Select recommendations outlined in the Zone A, B, and C CWPPs will be highlighted in this presentation under the following categories:

  • Policies & Bylaws;
  • Fuel Management;
  • Access/Egress;
  • FireSmart;
  • Communication and Education;
  • Wildfire Preparedness; and
  • Fire Suppression Resources.
Policies & Bylaws – All Zones

• Update existing legislation to be consistent with fire management and prevention goals
  • Revise the corresponding OCPs to include:
    • an interface wildfire hazard objective, and set policies relating to development in the wildland urban interface.
    • a growth management policy that considers wildfire risk and other natural hazards during development.

Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Policies & Bylaws – All Zones – Continued

• Complete updates to the FVRD Regional Parks Strategic Plan (2025-35), to consider wildfire threat in park acquisition and trail maintenance.

• Work with the Planning & Development Department to ensure house numbering is posted on new development to facilitate emergency response.
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Fuel Management – All Zones

- Proceed with the detailed assessment, prescription development and treatment of the proposed treatment units identified in the three CWPPs.

Photo by: B.A. Blackwell & Associates
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Access / Egress – All Zones

- Complete and participate in regular testing and updates to the FVRD evacuation plan
- Develop a Total Access Plan that includes a map and inventory of trail and road networks within natural areas in the FVRD to aid in fire suppression planning.

Photo: B. A. Blackwell & Associates
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Access / Egress – Zone A
• Collaborate in the completion, and regular testing, of an evacuation plan for the Sunshine Valley.

Access / Egress – Zone B
• Collaborate in the completion, and regular testing, of an evacuation plan for the Hemlock Valley.

Photo by: B.A. Blackwell & Associates
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

FireSmart - All Zones

• Complete formal FireSmart assessments by a qualified professional for all critical infrastructure.

• Use fire-resistant construction materials, building design and landscaping, when completing upgrades or establishing new infrastructure.
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

FireSmart – All Zones – Continued

• Train fire department members or hire a qualified professional as a Local FireSmart Representative to conduct FireSmart home assessments and assist communities in complying with FireSmart principles.

• Develop and implement a community chipper program.

• Apply for funding through the UBCM CRI program to develop a local FireSmart rebate program for residential homeowners completing FireSmart activities.

Photo by: B.A. Blackwell & Associates
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Communication & Education – All Zones

• Make the CWPP document and associated map publicly available.

• Promote FireSmart approaches to residents in the interface.

• Establish a local Interface Steering Committee with government, First Nations, and key stakeholders, to coordinate wildfire risk reduction efforts.
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Communication & Education – All Zones

- Apply for a FireSmart demonstration grant through the CRI program.
- Promote the use of external residential sprinklers as a FireSmart tool to private landowners.
- Encourage FireSmart practices on private farmland through the distribution of wildfire action planning resources specifically for the agricultural sector.

Graphic: FireSmart Canada (https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/mdocs-posts/firesmart-home-ignition-zone-graphic/)
Summary of Key Recommendations & Objectives

Wildfire Response Resources

- FVRD fire departments should work with BCWS to create or maintain annual structural and interface training programs.
- Maintain a high level of fire departments member education and training specific to interface and wildland fires.
- All new rural development outside of existing FVRD water systems should meet NFPA 1142 minimum standards.

Photo: B.A. Blackwell & Associates
Wildfire Response
Resources

All Zones

• Complete a vulnerability assessment of all critical infrastructure, secondary power sources, and fuel availability.

Zone B

• Pursue funding opportunities to acquire wildland specific equipment for fire departments (i.e., for Hemlock Valley and North Fraser).

Photo: B.A. Blackwell & Associates
SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

• This CWPP sets the stage for implementing important actions to reduce the risk of wildfire to the FVRD.
• A total of 143 general and specific recommendations have been outlined for the for the three FVRD zones to reduce the overall wildfire risk profile.
• Collaboration with member communities, First Nations, and stakeholders (BC Hydro/Fortis BC/CN Rail/licensees) is key to successfully addressing risk in the WUI.
Thank you!

Questions?