

To: Electoral Area Services Committee
From: Andrew Schellenberg, FireSmart Coordinator

Date: 2023-03-09
File No: 7340-30

Subject: 2023 Forest Enhancement Society of BC Grant for Wildfire Fuel Management Prescriptions

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board support receiving a funding approval for the 2023 Forest Enhancement Society of BC grant for wildfire fuel management prescriptions up to \$118,981.

BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) developed a series of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in 2019 for all eight electoral areas. In these CWPPs, a number of fuel treatments were recommended to help protect communities from an incoming wildfire. These recommended fuel treatments are around communities and adjacent forest service roads to reduce the fire intensity and to provide an anchor point for fire suppression crews. Through pruning, thinning from below, and surface fuel removal, the prescribed treatment would reduce potential wildfire behaviour in these treated forest stands, and thus reduce wildfire potential around communities.

The Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) offers grant funding to assist in reducing wildfire risk and increasing community resiliency to wildfire by allowing recipients to complete wildfire risk reduction projects. In the fall of 2022, the FVRD submitted an application to FESBC to develop fuel management prescriptions for priority fuel treatments **recommended in the FVRD's CWPPs**. In January 2023, this application was approved and funding up to \$118,981 was awarded to the FVRD.

DISCUSSION

Before fuel treatment can be started, a fuel management prescription plan using the BC Wildfire Service provincial template must be completed by a qualified forestry professional. This funding approval from FESBC is for fuel prescription plan development only. A subsequent grant application in future years for fuel treatment would need to take place.

Five priority fuel management prescriptions from the CWPPs were included in the application.

1. **Beaudry Road Interface:** This proposed fuel treatment in Area C would reduce the wildfire potential around the homes on Beaudry Road, Scowlitz First Nation, and the community around Lake Errock.

2. **Chehalis Forest Service Road:** This proposed fuel treatment in Area C would reduce the wildfire potential around the community of Harrison Mills and properties around Echo Lake.
3. **Lost Creek Forest Service Road:** This proposed fuel treatment in Area F would reduce the wildfire potential around the community of McConnell Creek.
4. **Slesse Park:** This proposed fuel treatment in Area E would reduce the wildfire potential around the community of Slesse Park.
5. **Sumas Mountain:** This proposed fuel treatment in Area G would reduce the wildfire potential in Sumas Mountain Regional Park as well as the critical infrastructure (including 911 and Fire Dispatch radio communication) and homes on Sumas Mountain.

The development of these fuel management prescriptions would be completed by a qualified forestry professional, starting in spring 2023 and finishing in spring 2024. During this prescription phase, consultants would conduct site evaluations and data collection, site layout, conduct professional assessments, and draft and finalize the prescription plan. Professional assessments include archaeological and cultural assessments (if required), riparian area assessments, and ecology and windthrow assessments. During this time, consultation with First Nations would occur. A future grant application for fuel treatment would occur after receiving the fuel management prescriptions.

COST

The total funding approval for fuel management prescription development is \$118,981.

COMMENTS BY:

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Kelly Lownsborough, Director of Corporate Services / CFO: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.