

# **FireSmart Program & Wildfire Behaviour Potential Update**

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# Introduction

- FireSmart is a national program that helps communities across Canada mitigate their risk of wildfire damage.
- The program dates back to 1990 when it was established to address common concerns about wildfire in the wild/urban interface.

# The Seven Disciplines of FireSmart

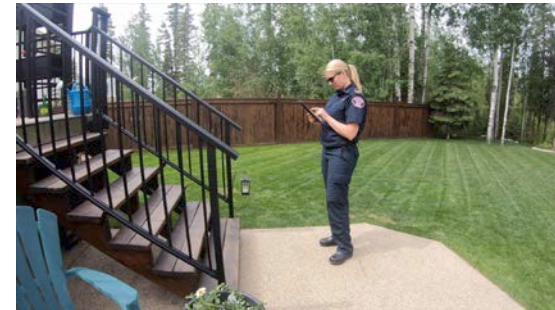
1. Education
2. Emergency Planning
3. Vegetation Management
4. Legislation
5. Interagency Cooperation
6. Cross Training
7. Development



# Program Highlights

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- Approx. 350 hectares of municipal land treated with FireSmart prescriptions
- Effective education and awareness campaigns launched
- 160 free FireSmart assessments completed on residential property, at the homeowner's request
- National recognition by FireSmart Canada
- A clear and documented reduction in wildfire risk for many of our communities



# Vegetation Management Projects

- 9 projects have been fully completed since 2017, 2 are nearing completion and 4 are planned for 2019/2020.
- Projects have taken place in:
  - Urban Service Area
  - Anzac
  - Conklin
  - Gregoire Lake Estates
  - Fort Chipewyan
- Approximately 350 hectares of densely forested land treated with FireSmart prescriptions



# Education and Awareness Campaigns

- FireSmart Begins at Home campaign
- Started spring of 2018 and was revamped in spring of 2018 with strategic and multi-faceted approach
- Appeared in various areas throughout the region to create awareness for the FireSmart program and educate residents on simple steps they can take to become FireSmart at home





# FireSmart Home Partners Program

- Launched region-wide in 2019
- Provided free FireSmart assessments to homeowners in the RMWB
- 160 homes assessed, at the request of homeowners
- Property-specific reports provided to residents identifying potential wildfire hazards around the home, along with FireSmart recommendations





# FireSmart Canada Community Protection Achievement Award

- The RMWB was presented with a national award and recognition in October 2018
- Award is presented to communities who have made significant steps towards implementing FireSmart solutions within their communities
- Presentation of award took place at 2018 FireSmart Community Series, hosted in Fort McMurray



# Key Upcoming Projects:



- FireSmart Interpretive Trail
  - Trail will serve as a positive resource for the community, helping to connect residents with nature while also providing an opportunity to learn about:
    - FireSmart in the Wood Buffalo Region
    - Taking FireSmart action at home
    - Building with FireSmart in mind
    - Forest ecology
    - Forest regeneration
- 2019 FireSmart Research Study
  - Currently being conducted to understand how we can further reduce our risk of future wildfire damage in the region, in a way that works with our community's specific needs and demographics.



Rough outline of proposed site, located off of Cornwall Drive in Thickwood

# **Wildfire Behaviour Potential Update**

# Background info

- The 2017 RMWB Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) was presented to Council on January 30, 2018.
- The strategy contained the Wildfire Behavior Potential Ranking in addition to 15 recommendations. These recommendations looked at ways to reduce the risk of future wildfire damage and increase overall public safety.



# Goal of Vegetation Management Projects:

Remove surface and ladder fuels that would intensify a wildfire. This will potentially help slow the spread of a future wildfire and give first responders the time and space needed to safely suppress and extinguish the fire, before it reaches developed communities.



# Vegetation Management Work Completed 2019 - Present

2017 – 2018: Approximately 117 hectares completed

- GLE Fuel Reduction
- Fort Chip Airport mulching
- Anzac (Year 1)
- Burnt Tree Harvest
- Rehabilitation

2018 – 2019: Approximately 66 hectares completed

- Birchwood Trails – Phase 2B
- Conklin

2019 – 2020: Approximately 124 hectares planned

- Fort Chip Phase 1
- Anzac (Year 2)
- Conklin (Year 2)
- Urban Service Area

Unmitigated Forest



Mitigated Forest





# Wildfire Behavior Risk Comparison 2017 to 2019

The Regional FireSmart Advisory Committee is working to reduce wildfire behaviour potential around communities.

- The RMWB initiates projects on Municipal lands
- Alberta Agriculture & Forestry initiates projects on Provincial and Federal lands
- Collaboration occurs on cross-jurisdictional projects

Service Area	Wildfire Behaviour Potential				Comments
	Community-Level		Landscape-Level		
	2017	2019	2017	2019	
Fort McKay	High-Extreme	Moderate-High	High-Extreme	High	2018/18 Vegetation Mgt
Fort Chipewyan	High-Extreme	Moderate-High	High-Extreme	High Extreme	2018/19 Vegetation Mgt.
Fort Fitzgerald	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	
Conklin	High-Extreme	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	2018/19 Vegetation Mgt.
Fort McMurray	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate	Low	Low	2018/19 Vegetation Mgt.
Anzac	Moderate	Low-Moderate	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	2018/19 Vegetation Mgt.
Gregoire Lake Estates	Moderate	Low-Moderate	High-Extreme	High-Extreme	2018/19 Vegetation Mgt.
Janvier	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	
Draper	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low	Low	
Saprae Creek Estates	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low	Low	

# Conclusion

The following preliminary conclusions have been found for the 2017-2019 vegetation management treatment areas:

- The RMWB service areas/communities with completed 2017-2019 FireSmart vegetation management projects show a significant reduction in community-level wildfire behaviour potential.
- Vegetation management projects are meeting FireSmart standards and are reducing the wildfire behaviour potential by at least one wildfire behaviour potential class.
- Vegetation management treatments on the perimeter of developments have resulted in a significant wildfire threat reduction to structures from landscape-level wildfire.
- Vegetation management treatments on the perimeter of Beacon Hill, Abasand Heights and Wood Buffalo Estates have reduced the longer-term wildfire behaviour potential from burnt-tree blowdown accumulation and vegetation regrowth.

# Questions?