

2017 Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

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Department: Montane Forest Management & Fire Chief

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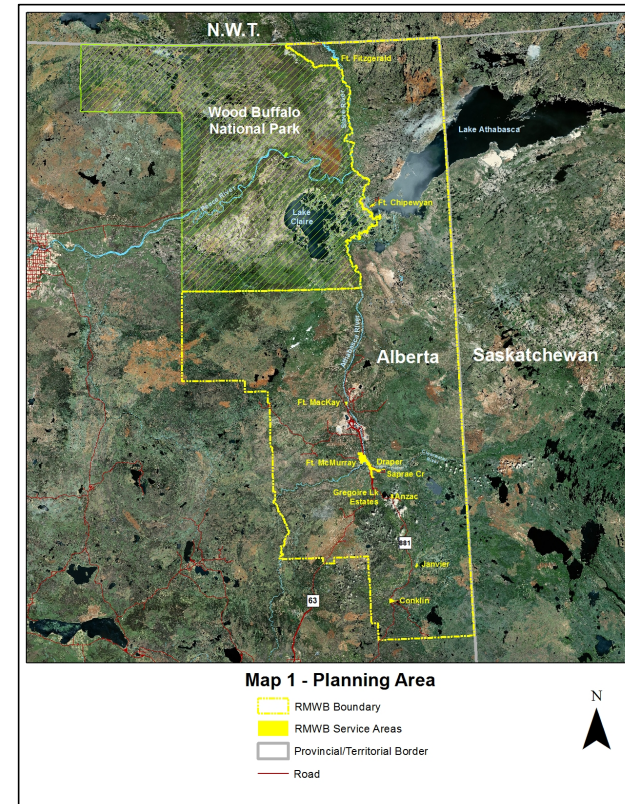


Introduction

- Review of past FireSmart accomplishments and provide updated FireSmart recommendations:
 - Vegetation Management
 - Development
 - Legislation
 - Public Education
 - Inter-Agency Cooperation
 - Cross-Training
 - Emergency Planning
- Used existing new AAF plans and update older plans into one overall WFMS.

Planning Area

- Lands within and surrounding **all** RMWB service areas.
- Developed under guidance of the Regional FireSmart Advisory Committee:
 - Stephen Fudge, RMWB
 - Hunter Langpap, RMWB
 - Paul St.John, AAF, Fort McMurray
 - Clifton McKay, AAF, Lac La Biche



Wildfire Behaviour Potential

- Uses provincial weather data and wildland fuel types to quantify overall wildfire threat at the community and landscape-levels.

Service Area	Wildfire Behaviour Potential	
	Community-Level	Landscape-Level
Fort McKay	High-Extreme	High-Extreme
Fort Chipewyan	High-Extreme	High-Extreme
Fort Fitzgerald	High-Extreme	High-Extreme
Conklin	High-Extreme	Moderate
Fort McMurray	Moderate-High	Low
Anzac	Moderate	High-Extreme
Gregoire Lake Estates	Moderate	High-Extreme
Janvier	Moderate	Low
Draper	Low-Moderate	Low
Saprae Creek Estates	Low-Moderate	Low

Vegetation Management Options

- Priority Zone 1 –will not support wildfire of any kind.
- Priority Zones 2 & 3 – will only support wildfires of reduced intensity.



Observations

- Priority Zone 1
 - Many structures with excellent Priority Zone 1 clearance however there are several structures with inadequate factors.
- Priority Zones 2 & 3
 - Vegetation management has been completed by RMWB and AAF in all of the service areas.
 - New vegetation management areas are proposed for municipal, provincial, federal, and private lands in all service areas.



Observations

- Higher-Level Planning Documents:
 - Landscape-level Wildfire Management Plans.
 - RMWB Parks Master Plan and Urban Forest Strategy.
- Both recognize community protection from wildfire as a requirement.



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Encourage residents to establish adequate FireSmart Priority Zone 1 clearance on their private or leased lands.
- **Recommendation 2:** Implement FireSmart Zone 2-3 vegetation management on Municipal and Provincial lands based on priority and available funding and encourage First Nations, residents, and lease holders to implement FireSmart Zone 2-3 vegetation management on lands under their control.
- **Recommendation 3:** Inspect and maintain all FireSmart vegetation management areas on a regular basis.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 4:** Implement the landscape-level risk reduction measures in the Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche wildfire management plans to reduce the threat of landscape-level wildfire to RMWB service areas.
- **Recommendation 5:** Implement the strategic-level RMWB Urban Forest Strategy and develop and implement an Urban Forest Management Plan for the Birchwood Trails/Conn Creek community reserve to reduce the threat of community-level wildfire to RMWB service areas.

Development Options

Structural Options:

- Roofing
- Siding
- Decking
- Fencing



Development Options



Infrastructure Options:

- Access
- Water Supply
- Utilities
- Road & Address Signage
- Parks & Open Spaces

Observations

- Roofing materials primarily non-combustible with scattered combustible.
- Siding materials primarily combustible wood or vinyl with scattered combustible log or non-combustible.
- Combustible wooden decks and porches with open undersides are common.
- RMWB considering alternative egress routes for each of the Service Areas.
- Parks and open spaces on development perimeter provide excellent fuelbreaks.



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 6:** Ensure that the following infrastructure options are improved to meet FireSmart recommended guidelines:
 - Secondary access routes for all service areas where feasible
 - Driveway access standards for all new developments
 - Identification and development of dry-hydrant fire suppression water supply for Draper
 - Danger tree removal along overhead powerlines
 - Propane tank clearance from wildland fuels
 - Road and address signage
- **Recommendation 7:** Include the planning and development of maintained parks and open spaces as fuelbreaks as a consideration in the RMWB development planning process.

Legislation Options

- Municipal Development Plan
- Area Structure Plans
- Land Use Bylaw
- Engineering Services Standards
- Comprehensive Approach to Mitigating Risks of Natural Hazards

Observations

- FireSmart standards are referred to in RMWB development legislation and policy however **none currently regulate combustible exterior building materials due to concerns with Building Code conflicts.**
- The updated Engineering & Services Standards (2016) have clear FireSmart standards w.r.t. new development planning and infrastructure; **however,** Section 10 – Landscaping & Park Development Standards conflict with FireSmart requirements.

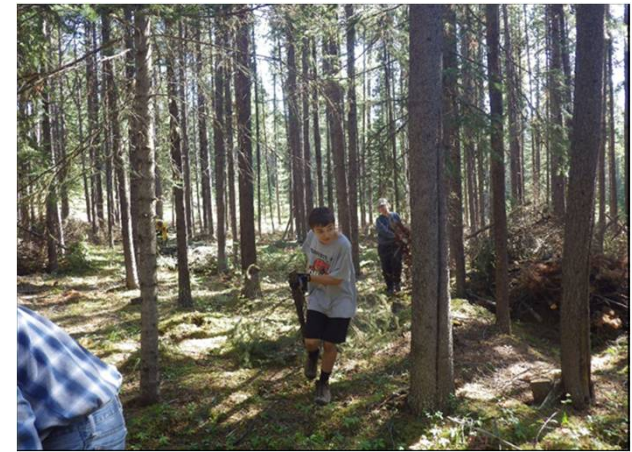


Recommendations

- Recommendation 8: Review and revise Section 10 – Landscape and Park Development Standards of the RMWB Engineering Services Standards to **prohibit planting of evergreen trees and shrubs and the use of bark mulch/wood chips within 10 metres of any structures.**
- Recommendation 9: Consider revision of the current RMWB statutory planning documents and provide input to Building Code revisions to meet FireSmart recommended guidelines.

Public Education & Engagement Observations

- Resident engagement to take action in their “back yards” is important.
- Many of the structures within the RMWB service areas are at **High-Extreme** threat to wildfire due to inadequate structural options and Priority Zones 1-2 vegetation management on private lands.



Recommendations

- Recommendation 10: Identify and train RMWB Emergency Services urban and rural members to provide FireSmart Hazard Assessments and options to reduce the wildfire threat to those residents that request one.
- Recommendation 11: Develop and implement a focused long-term and repetitive FireSmart education program on FireSmart recommended guidelines for all RMWB stakeholders.
- Recommendation 12: The RMWB should identify and train key personnel from urban and rural Emergency Services and Parks Services to act as Local FireSmart Representatives and to identify and work with the appropriate Community Champions within the RMWB service areas to work towards Recognized FireSmart Community status.

Inter-Agency Cooperation & Cross-Training Observations

- Inter-agency cooperation between the RMWB and AB. Forestry occurs through:
 - Regional FireSmart Advisory Committee
 - Mutual-Aid Fire Control Plan
 - Training opportunities provided to each other
- The RMWB provides cross-training to their staff and has identified that **additional wildland and wildland/urban interface training be provided** to all urban and rural emergency services members.



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 13:** The RMWB and AB. Forestry should identify cooperative training opportunities and provide support to each other for applicable cross-training related to emergency management, wildfire prevention, wildfire operations, and wildland/urban interface. RMWB personnel should be cross-trained and qualified based on their participation in the emergency management organization.

Emergency Planning Observations

- Update to RMWB Municipal Emergency Management Plan Part III – Appendix B Wildfire Response Plan is required.
- Wildfire Preparedness Guides have been **developed** and are updated regularly by AB. Forestry and are provided to RWMB Emergency Services.
- RMWB has purchased two **structure protection trailers**, currently procuring an additional three trailers.



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 14:** Update the RMWB Wildfire Response Plan (2010) annually to provide most current information.
- **Recommendation 15:** Conduct regular wildland/urban interface table-top, functional, and/or field exercises between AB. Forestry, RMWB, and applicable mutual-aid partners to test recommendations in the Horse Creek Wildfire Post-Incident Assessments, the RMWB Municipal Emergency Plan, and/or the Wildfire Preparedness Guide(s).

Implementation

- A collaborative approach between the Regional FireSmart Advisory Committee and the responsible Departments to define set priorities and timelines
- Long-term education and community engagement to establish a FireSmart culture that is a fabric of our region.
- Find solutions that work in conjunction with Lessons Learned and Recommendations.