



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF WOOD BUFFALO

## **Emergency Advisory Committee**

Microtel Inn & Suites, Four Hunters Meeting Room  
317 Sakitawaw Trail, Fort McMurray, Alberta

Monday November 4, 2019  
1:00 PM

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### **Agenda**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Welcome & Introductions**

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

**4. Meeting Notes Review**

4.1. Emergency Advisory Committee Meeting Notes Review - April 9, 2019

**5. Presentations**

5.1. FireSmart Program & Wildfire Behaviour Potential Update

**6. New Business**

6.1. Emergency Management Branch

- Governance
- 2019 / 2020 Planning
- KPMG Lessons Learned

6.2. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Emergency Management Program

- Vulnerable Person's Registry

6.3. Regional Conversation on Risk

**7. Next Meeting**

**Adjournment**



## Emergency Advisory Committee

Regional Discussion between the Emergency Advisory Committee and Community Leadership  
Session Notes

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

8:30 am – 12 noon

Location: Shell Place, Diamond Ballroom B/C  
1 MacDonald Drive, Fort McMurray, AB

The meeting commenced at 8:45 am

### Opening

Chief Butz and Mayor Scott welcomed guests to the meeting. They stated that this was the first Regional meeting of the Emergency Advisory Committee and its purpose under the Emergency Management Bylaw, 18/009 of the RMWB was to review the development of emergency plans and programs. It would also provide for an opportunity to have regional conversations on Emergency Management with interested indigenous communities, rural communities, social profit sector, small business and oil sands industry.

### Presentations

Chief Butz outlined the current federal, provincial and municipal legislation and the municipal Emergency Management internal structure.

### Questions:

- Bryan Fayant, McMurray Metis Local #195, asked that the McMurray Metis be a part of the authority in regional emergency management.
- John Malcom, The Original Fort McMurray Metis, asked that Alberta Forestry be a part of the regional conversation. John suggested we should have a stronger focus on wildfire hazard mitigation.

Frequency of EAC meetings will occur twice each year, however any number of meetings can occur as convened by the Mayor.

- Jean-Marc Guillemot asked if there is a concern due to the small amount of snow fall this winter and the early snow melt. Chief Butz provided an updated on the Wildfire Mitigation activities in the region since the 2016 Horse River Wildfire. Embracing FireSmart, a nationally recognized program, we are in year two (2) of a three (3) year plan with \$15.3M of grant funding to reduce the impact of Wildfire in the region. We have reduced that risk.

### Emergency Management Plan presentation

Chris Graham presented the Regional Emergency Management Plan and covered it's intent and purpose. The plan is an evergreen document and will assess risks and hazards on a yearly basis and will make relevant changes to the document.

### Questions:

- Lynda Mywart, Fort McMurray Public School District, commented that in the REMP the age of seniors was 65+; however, the WHO organization is changing the age of a senior to 60+ and asked if that might need to be changed in the document.
  - Response: The data in the REMP was taken directly from this past year's census and the criteria in the census is 65+.

- Kim Jenkins, Wood Buffalo Food Bank, commented that the school boards were not identified in the REMP and would like to see this recognized.
- Bryan Fayant, McMurray Métis Local #1935, commented that Indigenous and Métis are not recognized in the documents. Chief Butz accepted his comments and noted the request for further review.

#### Community Emergency Management Plan presentation

Robynne Ikesaka presented details on the Community Emergency Management Plans and the Community Emergency Guides.

#### Questions:

- John Malcom, The Original Fort McMurray First Nation, would like to see Industry at these meetings so they are able to speak to their involvement in the community response.
- Lynda Mywaart, Fort McMurray Public School District, asked that schools and health care centers be incorporated into the document. Is also concerned how we ensure the emergency communication would weave itself directly to the School superintendent.

#### Vulnerable Persons Registry

Cathy Steeves and Troy Palmer provided a presentation on a new program in the Municipality which is currently under development titled the Vulnerable Persons Registry.

#### Questions:

- Keith Plowman, Fort McMurray Construction Association, asked that if the region had a crisis, would we be utilizing event personnel to support the vulnerable and consequently have a short fall of resources.
  - Response: The Fire Chief responded that if there was enough lead time, adequate resources would be dispatched, and no short fall would occur. However, if by chance there was a short notice event, each situation would be assessed on an-as needs basis and managed accordingly.
- Kevin Weidlich, Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation, shared his thoughts on the Emergency Management framework. He recommended that we are at the beginning of this exercise and will evolve from here.
- Andrew Thorne, Draper Residents Society of the Clearwater River Valley, commented that we need to change the culture of emergency management in the region and suggested the Community Guides would not get read.

#### Emergency Social Services presentation

Cathy Steeves provided a presentation on the region's Emergency Social Services program.

#### Questions:

- None

A 15-minute meeting break occurred.

#### **Regional Conversation on Emergency Management**

The Fire Chief reconvened the meeting and opened the floor for a regional conversation on Emergency Management.

- John Malcolm, of The Original Fort McMurray First Nation, provided the following comments:
  - Communication of events needs improvement
  - Emergency messaging should be offered in different languages ie: Cree, Dene, Chipewyan
  - Alberta Forestry and Industry need to be at the table

- There needs to be an Animal Rescue Plan.
  - o Response: Cathy Steeves shared that a pet rescue program was identified in the KPMG Lessons learned report. Since the report was issued, a Pet Rescue Program has been developed with a communication structure that involves RMWB Pulse, Emergency Management and the Fort McMurray SPCA.

The Fire Chief asked if anyone has comments on how Communication can be improved?

- John Malcolm, The Original Fort McMurray First Nation, shared that he would like to see the return of local Indigenous firefighters.
- Lynda Mywaart, Fort McMurray Public School District, shared that we need to get a grasp on what form of communication people look to for emergency advisories. As a region, we need to consider a “buffet” of styles of communication according to the needs of our community. Some ideas might include an audio signal, Facebook and possibly school systems utilizing their mass email systems already in use. Further investigation may need to be completed.

Chris Graham commented on the Alberta Emergency Alert program which has been integrated with the federal emergency system and is available for RMWB alerts.

- Bryan Fayant suggested that Indigenous communication plans are not integrated with the First Nations and Métis plans. Offered that McMurray Métis Local #1935 assist with engagement of other Indigenous and Métis organizations for this to occur. Fire Chief suggested a specific conversation should occur with the Indigenous communities.
- Audible signal / siren
  - o Andrew Thorne, Draper Residents Society of the Clearwater River Valley, suggested concerns with having a signal or siren in a community.
  - o John Malcolm, The Original Fort McMurray First Nation, shared that the Anzac community welcomes the siren and understands its intent.
  - o Lynda Mywaart, Fort McMurray Public School District, suggested further investigation may be required.
  - o Kevin Weidlich, Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation, shared that the principals of leadership around communication is to overcommunicate. When you think you have said too much is the time you have only just got to the right place. Don't pick and choose – simply just do it. The other thing to do is to continually share that there is an emergency underway.

The Fire Chief committed to look at sirens as an audible solution for an alert.

### Closing

In closing, the Fire Chief shared that the emergency management team is going to gather up all the notes of what was discussed at the meeting and communicate back any action that will be taken. In a few months from now, the Municipality will be asking groups to engage and join in the Emergency Management Agency, as mentioned earlier, where emergency management plans were developed.

The next planned meeting of the Emergency Advisory Committee is in the fall of this year. However, the Fire Chief committed to communicating frequently throughout the year. The EAC will also look to creating sub groups with possibly the Indigenous, seniors, and the schools.

- John Malcolm, The Original Fort McMurray First Nation, welcomed participation with the committee but advised he didn't have funding for personnel and requested financial support.

- Bryan Fayant, McMurray Métis Local #1935, suggested that in order to have government to government conversations there are certain protocols, relationships, and a plan to be in place before this government conversation could occur. Bryan mentioned that he and Mayor Scott had previously discussed this and will be making recommendations on what that protocol would look like.

/meeting adjourned



Meeting Attendees		Invited	Attended	Regrets
Mayor Don Scott	RMWB	✓	✓	
Clr. Verna Murphy	RMWB	✓	✓	
Clr. Sheila Lalonde	RMWB	✓	✓	
Annette Antoniak, CAO	RMWB	✓	✓	
Fire Chief Jody Butz	RMWB	✓	✓	
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation	Chief Allen Adam	✓		✓
BILD (Urban Development Institute Wood Buffalo)	Gilles Huizinga	✓		NS
Canadian Red Cross	Guy Choquet	✓	✓	
Chard Métis Society	Raoul Montgrand	✓		NS
Chipewyan Prairie First Nation	Chief Janvier	✓		NS
Conklin Community Association	Ernie Desjarlais	✓		NS
Conklin Métis Local #193	Shirley Tremblay	✓		NS
Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee	David Berrade	✓		NS
Draper Residents Society of the Clearwater River Valley	Daphne Van't Wout	✓		
	Andrew Thorne		✓	
Fort Chipewyan Métis Local #125	Cameron MacDonald	✓		NS
Fort McKay First Nation	Chief Boucher	✓		NS
Fort McKay Métis Local 63	Ron Quintal	✓		✓
Fort McMurray # 468 First Nation	Chief Kreutzer	✓		NS
Fort McMurray Airport Authority	RJ Steenstra	✓		✓
Fort McMurray Catholic Schools	Paula Galenzoski	✓	✓	
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce	Bryce Kumka	✓		NS
Fort McMurray Construction Association	Lana Malony	✓		
	Keith Plowman		✓	
Fort McMurray Hotel and Lodging Association	Jean-Marc Guillamot	✓	✓	
Fort McMurray Public School District	Linda Mywaart	✓	✓	
Fort McMurray Real Estate Board	Danielle Schwitz	✓		NS
Fort McMurray SPCA	George Rowe	✓	✓	
FuseSocial	John Evans	✓	✓	
Janvier Dene Wood Buffalo Community Association	Jules Nokohoo	✓	✓	
Keyano College	Maggie Farrington	✓		NS
McMurray Métis Local #1935	Gail Gallupe	✓		✓
	Bill Loutit		✓	
	Bryan Fayant		✓	
Mikisew Cree First Nation	Chief Waquan	✓		NS
Northern Lights Health Region	Murray Crawford	✓		✓
Northland School Division No. 61	Gord Atkinson	✓		NS
OSCA	Karim Zariffa	✓		✓
	Industry rep	✓		NS
	Industry rep	✓		NS
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Supt. Dicks	✓	✓	
Regional Recreation Corp.	Graig Walsh	✓	✓	
Salvation Army	Major Hibbs	✓	✓	
Saprae Creek Residents Society	AnnMarie Hintz	✓		✓
Smith's Landing First Nation	Chief Tourangeau	✓		NS
The Original Fort McMurray First Nation	John Malcolm	✓	✓	
United Way of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo	Steve Yatauro	✓		NS
Willow Lake Community Association	Darryl Woytkiw	✓		NS
Willow Lake Métis	Stella Lavallee-Kreutzer	✓		NS
Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation	Kevin Weidlich	✓	✓	
Wood Buffalo Food Bank	Kim Jenkins (Suzanne Manning)	✓	✓	
Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation	Maggie Farrington	✓		NS
RMWB – Communications Dept.	Matthew Harrison	✓	✓	
RMWB – Emergency Management	Chris Graham	✓	✓	
RMWB – Emergency Management, Social Services	Cathy Steeves	✓	✓	
RMWB – Emergency Management, Community EM	Robynne Ikesaka	✓	✓	
RMWB – RES, Assistant Deputy Chief	Perry Gillam	✓	✓	
RMWB – RES, Operations	Captain Troy Palmer	✓	✓	
RMWB – RES, Office of the Fire Chief	Karoline Power	✓	✓	

NS = no show

# FireSmart Program & Wildfire Behaviour Potential Update

Presenters: Erin Fleming & Serena Quinn  
Regional Emergency Services

Meeting Date: Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

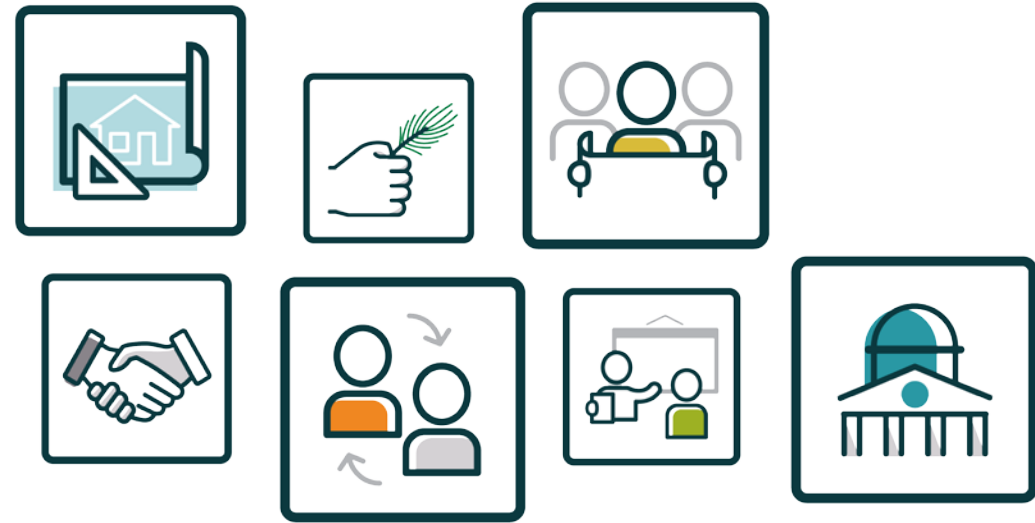
# Introduction

- 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

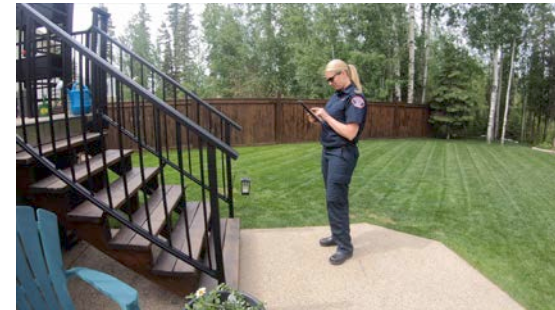
1. Education
2. Emergency Planning
3. Vegetation Management
4. Legislation
5. Interagency Cooperation
6. Cross Training
7. Development



# Program Highlights

# Program Highlights

- Approx. 350 hectares of 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





# May 2019 Fire in the Birchwood Trails

- On May 25, 2019 Regional Emergency Services responded to a fire in the Birchwood Trail System
- When crews arrived, the fire was:
  - At a class two intensity
  - Approx. 50 square metres in size
  - Moving quickly in the wind
- Crews were able to suppress the fire quickly
- A post-fire investigation found:
  - The fire was likely human-caused
  - The FireSmart treatment done around the trail system from 2016-2019 discouraged the fire's growth and aided in suppression efforts



Ariel photos of the fire taken on May 25, 2019



Project map of the FireSmart vegetation work completed in the Birchwood Trails. Full FireSmart perimeter of 125 hectares was completed in March 2019.

# 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?