

Statement:

The BC FireSmart™ Committee (BCFSC) works collaboratively to support wildfire resiliency in BC, ensuring alignment with the seven FireSmart disciplines. The BCFSC facilitates interagency cooperation to support wildfire preparedness, prevention and mitigation necessary to reduce the risk that wildfires pose to populated areas.

Appropriately managing wildfire requires balancing its natural role with the protection of human life, property, and economic values. This equilibrium demands comprehensive risk management approaches including an appropriate mix of mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.

Cultural burning and prescribed fire are land management tools that can help maintain the health and safety of our forests, communities, and wildlife. Prescribed fire is the planned and controlled application of fire to a specific land area and is one of the most ecologically appropriate and relatively efficient means for achieving a variety of land management objectives, including wildfire risk reduction for protection of communities and critical infrastructure.

The prescribed fire microsite is designed to educate audiences about the many benefits of prescribed fire and cultural burning and promote the use of prescribed fire as a land management tool.

The microsite is governed by the Provincial Cultural and Prescribed Fire Steering Committee (an inter-ministry committee) and the BC FireSmart Committee.

Key Messages:

1. Wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility between the public, business, and government.
2. The FireSmart program is implemented through seven disciplines: education, vegetation management, legislation and planning, development considerations, interagency cooperation, emergency planning and cross-training.
3. These disciplines make up the framework for how FireSmart works at the home, community and landbase level.
4. Cultural Burning and Prescribed Fire supports the BCFSC and the seven FireSmart disciplines including:
 - a. Vegetation management: Prescribed fire is a vegetation management tool that reduces wildland fuels and can increase ecosystem resilience, therefore reducing wildfire intensity, severity, and rate of spread.

- b. Education: The Cultural and Prescribed Fire Steering Committee is committed to educating audiences about the use of controlled burning as a land management tool to achieve various outcomes.
- c. Emergency Planning: Cultural burning and prescribed fire are part of wildfire prevention and mitigation specific plans.
- d. Legislation and Planning: Legislation, bylaws, plans, policies, and development standards all play a significant role in building and maintaining FireSmart neighbourhoods. This includes legislation that enables prescribed fire to be undertaken safely and effectively.
- e. Development Considerations: When a new development is being proposed or undertaken it is integral that these developments are being protected using FireSmart principles and tools such as prescribed fire.
- f. Interagency Cooperation: Prescribed fire and cultural burning are collaborative tools that require strong partnerships between multiple groups within government, First Nations, industry, and residents.
- g. Cross Training: Wildfires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries and can move from forested lands into neighbourhoods and from neighbourhoods into forested lands. Emergency response and preparedness requires the collaboration of many different partners and tools including the use of prescribed fire.