

Community FireSmart™ and Resiliency Collaborative (CFRC)



Guidance Document

If you are part of a First Nations or local government and want to ensure that your community is supporting FireSmart activities that will increase your community's resiliency to wildfire, this document will assist you in forming a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Collaborative (CFRC). The term collaborative is a suggestion, established CFRCs are welcome to use other terms such as Committee, Alliance, Collective, Roundtable, Working Group, etc.

What is FireSmart?

FireSmart is living with and managing fire on our landscape and around our communities. Climate change, urban expansion and many other factors mean that we will continue to see more intense and severe fire seasons. From provincial to local government and individual citizens, FireSmart is a shared responsibility at all levels and is required to build wildfire resilient communities.

FireSmart emphasizes the utilization of [FireSmart Disciplines](#) to lessen the effects of wildfire— education, vegetation management, legislation and planning, cross-training, interagency planning, development considerations and emergency planning. These disciplines can be effective at reducing negative impacts from wildfire events, even under extreme wildfire conditions. Economically, FireSmart applied at the residential scale has shown to be one of the most cost-effective ways to mitigate structure loss and is something that every homeowner can undertake. The BC FireSmart Committee encourages citizens, in partnership with all levels of government, to prepare their homes, neighbourhoods, communities, businesses and the province for wildfire.

What is the BC FireSmart Committee?

The BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) was established by the BC Wildfire Service in May of 2017 to provide stronger guidance and coordination of the seven FireSmart disciplines across the province, following the FireSmart Canada model. The current BCFSC members include the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS), the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC), Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), BC Parks, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Parks Canada, Ministry of Forests (MOF) – Regional Operations, and the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC). FireSmart Canada sits on the committee in an advisory capacity.

For more information about the BC FireSmart Committee, visit: <https://firesmartbc.ca/who-we-are/>

What is a CFRC?

A CFRC provides for organized collaboration under a scalable format. A CFRC may include local fire departments, First Nation and/or local government staff (municipal and regional) and elected officials, as well as provincial government organizations and industry representatives. It takes the collective efforts of multiple partners to develop wildfire resilient communities.

CFRCs bring partners together under a common vision connected to the seven Firesmart disciplines. The purpose of the CFRC is to strengthen collaboration between key partners to coordinate, plan and share information on how to successfully implement the seven FireSmart disciplines at a local, regional or multi-scale level.

As B.C. is a varied province in terms of risk, level of involvement, and existing governance structures, there is no set criteria or specific format for the formation of a CFRC. The remainder of this document is strictly suggestions regarding scale, structure, relationships, and activities that will help facilitate the creation and starting phases of a CFRC.

How can I find out about existing CFRCs?

Before initiating a new CFRC within your community, check the FireSmart BC CFRC map to see if one already exists in your area. If there is an existing CFRC in your area, reach out to the primary contact to see if you can join. If the CFRC is regional in-scope and you're looking to establish a more local CFRC or vice-versa, it is still recommended to reach out to pre-existing CFRCs in your area to gain a fulsome understanding of the CFRC scope.

Where can I register my CFRC?

All CFRCs must register their Collaborative with the FireSmart BC team by filling out the following form: <https://firesmartbc.ca/cfrc/>. All registered CFRCs will be added to the FireSmart BC CFRC map.

Suggested activities for a CFRC:

Successful CFRCs reflect a range of local knowledge and expertise, creating a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency collaborative group that helps to steer messaging and opportunities within a defined geographical area.

Below is a list of suggested activities that could be part of a CFRC:

- Advise on and contribute to First Nations and local government Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) content.
- Ensure CWRPs/CWPPs align with one another and are not in conflict when multiple jurisdictions have authority.
- Develop, update, implement, and monitor the success of your CWRP.
- Discuss linkages and provide collaboration and coordination between FCFS funded activities and Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction funded activities.
- Develop a Terms of Reference document for the CFRC based on the template provided by the BCFCSC.
- Develop a CFRC structure, including a list of First Nations, local governments, agencies, and partners that are diverse and can influence wildfire risk reduction.
- Develop a Code of Conduct for new and existing members to follow.
- Establish a cost sharing agreement to help address how various costs should be shared between members. A cost sharing agreement could consist of the following:
 - Facilitation and coordination fees and expenses for the CFRC shared equally between members
 - Facilitation contract alignment with funding allocation.
 - Shared public outreach expenses, including community engagement and related CFRC activities
- Utilize an impartial facilitator for meeting facilitation. Impartial facilitators can support logistics including organizing the venue, setting up the meeting, and supplying food.
- Reference the [BC government cultural agility web page](#) (or connect with FNESS) to help you successfully collaborate with Indigenous peoples on the CFRC.
- Engage with local businesses and industries such as insurers, business bureaus, and real estate associations.

- Share information to help identify risk reduction project initiatives that span multiple jurisdictions and industries.
- Collaborate on a communication and public education strategy with multiple First Nations and local governments to align across jurisdictions.
- Collaborate and host public events as a collective, showcasing the “all levels of responsibility” approach.
- Align wildfire development permit areas, landscaping regulations, bylaws and official community plans across jurisdictions.
- Participate in or liaise with a government-led fuel management planning tables in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests, Natural Resource District, Mountain Resorts Branch and/or BC Parks.
- Streamline Firesmart Home Assessment programs and FireSmart rebate programs by sharing capacity between multiple local authorities.
 - Align rebate program offerings and messaging.
- Develop a network of Local FireSmart Representatives in the area and coordinate their activities within the region.
- Create an advocacy program for participation in the [FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program](#) and work towards increasing the number of recognized neighbourhoods in the region each year.
- Identify FireSmart activities that should be undertaken to best build wildfire resilience in higher risk areas.
- Identify funding sources to access and support priority projects from Provincial, Federal and Regional programs.
- Ensure information sharing of project initiatives that span multiple jurisdictions and scales over space and time.
- Identify and recommend opportunities for continuous program improvement to the BC FireSmart Committee and FireSmart BC team.

Suggestions on CFRC structure:

The CFRC structure should build on the diversity that is currently present on the BCFSC, including all agencies and partners that are directly impacted and can influence or impact wildfire risk reduction in and around neighbourhoods and communities.

How a CFRC is structured is dependent on many factors that will be unique to your Collaborative. While these formats are common among existing CFRCs, you are not obligated to follow them. These are only intended to be suggested formats that can be modified and combined.

1. Regional CFRCs are collaborative groups that encompass a larger geographic area and include participation from multiple First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts. They may also include relevant agencies and other partners.
2. Sub-regional CFRCs can be utilized when a Regional CFRC becomes too large. Many CFRCs find that when membership rises above 10-15 members, the cost and coordination of hosting a single meeting can become unreasonable. Sub-regional CFRCs can allow for larger membership across a geographical area, where each can send “delegates” to Regional CFRC meetings.
3. Local CFRCs are smaller scale groups, often within a single community, that may include participation from local government, neighbourhood champions, strata representatives, business owners, non-profit leaders, and other local key partners.
4. Internal/Functional Working Groups can be an addition to any form of CFRC where members with certain areas of focus can work together on specific goals. An example would include a wildfire internal working group at the local level, bringing together departments that play a role in wildfire mitigation such as emergency management and fire department personnel, city planners, building developers and parks departments.

It may benefit communities to participate in, or lead, multiple forms of CFRCs to allow for high-level collaboration and foster grassroots, community participation. It is not required, however, to participate in more than one CFRC in order to meet the FireSmart foundational activities required under the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program.

To ensure true partnership, collaboration, and diversity, it is suggested to include First Nations in the creation of the CFRC from the beginning and at all levels of planning, decision making and implementation. The First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) can help play an essential role in connecting with and supporting First Nations in this process.

While there isn't a set list of agencies and partners that need to be involved, below are some suggested participants and agencies:

- Government of B.C. as represented by:
 - BC Wildfire Service local staff
 - Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR)
 - Ministry of Forests - Regional Operations
 - Mountain Resorts Branch
 - BC Parks
- First Nations and Indigenous communities
- First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS) local staff
- Fire Departments
- Local government(s) planning or parks departments
- Forest industry partners including Community Forests
- Local business and non-government organizations
- Local insurance providers
- Business bureaus
- Community emergency support service organizations
- Active emergency preparation advocacy groups
- Funding agencies (e.g. Columbia Basin Trust)
- Partners in agriculture (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, BC Cattlemen's Association, etc.)

The frequency and format of meetings are dependent on the needs and desires of each CFRC. The Chair could be rotating, a co-chair position, or even chaired through collaboration, as determined by the specific CRFC. A successful CFRC meeting schedule could include: quarterly meetings with the Regional CFRC and bi-monthly meetings with the Sub-Regional or Local CFRC to bring information back to the local level, as well as monthly Internal Working Group meetings to discuss ongoing projects.

Available Funding:

The [Community Resiliency Investment](#) (CRI) program funds the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS) and the Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) streams.

[FireSmart Community Funding and Supports \(FCFS\)](#)

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia (FNESS) and the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C. (FESBC) work with the Ministry of Forests, (MOF) — represented by the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) — to administer the FireSmart Community Funding and Supports portion of the CRI program for First Nation and local government applicants.

This stream provides funding to Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to participate in wildfire risk reduction and prevention activities, including public, reserve and private land. This program supports activities associated with the seven FireSmart disciplines, which can help increase a community's resiliency to wildfire impacts. To qualify for funding, all applicants are required to have a FireSmart position, participate in a CFRC and have an acceptable

Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan or Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Establishing or participating in a CFRC is an eligible activity for applicants under the Interagency Cooperation category.

Next Steps:

If you require any assistance or have questions regarding developing a CFRC in your area, please contact your local Fire Centre Wildfire Prevention Officer.

Cariboo Fire Centre: BCWS.CAFCPrevention@gov.bc.ca

Coastal Fire Centre: BCWS.COFCPrevention@gov.bc.ca

Kamloops Fire Centre: BCWS.KFCPreventionFunding@gov.bc.ca

Northwest Fire Centre: Shannon.Irvine@gov.bc.ca

Prince George Centre: BCWS.PGFCPrevention@gov.bc.ca

Southeast Fire Centre: Daniel.Klein@gov.bc.ca

BC Parks Land and Resource Program: BCParksLRP@gov.bc.ca

First Nations Emergency Services' Society: FireSmart@FNESS.bc.ca

Together we can build a FireSmart B.C.