

FireSmart™ BC Education Program



Lesson Five

In this lesson, students participate in a simulated community planning meeting by proposing and prioritizing powerful commitments, actions, and policies for a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP).



Lesson Question:

What could communities do to effectively mitigate the causes and impacts of wildfires?

Lesson Challenge:

Suggest at least two powerful commitments, actions, or policies that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses, or governments could take to effectively address the causes and impacts of wildfires.

Suggested Materials

- **Activity Sheet A:** Exploring Powerful Community Actions (one copy for each student)
- **Activity Sheet B:** Developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (one copy for each group of 3–5 students)

Big Ideas

- Human practices affect the [sustainability of ecosystems](#). (Grade 11 Environmental Science)
- Humans can play a role in [stewardship and restoration](#) of ecosystems. (Grade 11 Environmental Science)
- [Living sustainably](#) supports the well-being of self, community, and Earth. (Grade 12 Environmental Science)
- Scientific understanding enables humans to [respond and adapt to changes](#) locally and globally. (Grade 11 Science for Citizens)
- [Scientific processes and knowledge](#) inform our decisions and impact our daily lives. (Grade 11 Science for Citizens)
- Scientific knowledge can be used to develop procedures, techniques, and technologies that have implications for [places of employment](#). (Grade 11 Science for Citizens)



Start the Thinking



1. Begin the lesson by organizing students into pairs and providing each student with a copy of Activity Sheet A: Exploring Powerful Community Actions. Ask groups to suggest which people or groups in a community could take action to address or mitigate the causes and effects of wildfires. Prompt groups to add their ideas to the web on the activity sheet.
2. Ask groups to now suggest at least one action, commitment, or policy that each community member could take or support to help mitigate wildfires. For example, "Leading cultural burning" could be added to "Fire Keepers from local First Nations."
3. Invite groups to share at least one example of an action, commitment, or policy with the class. Prompt students to suggest which actions might be the most powerful. As students share, use their ideas to co-develop or present the criteria for a powerful action, commitment, or policy. A powerful action, commitment, or policy is
 - **practical:** It is feasible and possible to implement.
 - **effective:** It achieves the desired results.
4. Introduce the lesson question and explain that the challenge of this lesson is to identify at least two powerful commitments, actions, or policies that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses, or governments could take to address the causes and impacts of wildfires.
5. Ask students to refer to their selected actions and identify the two most powerful commitments, actions, or policies that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses, or governments could take to address the causes and impacts of wildfires. Remind students to use the criteria to guide their decision-making.

Grow the Thinking



1. Organize the class into groups of 3–5 students and explain that their task is to participate in a simulated community planning meeting to create a community wildfire protection plan to help mitigate the effects of wildfires in their community.
2. Ask groups to select one of the community groups identified at the beginning of the lesson, or, alternatively, assign each group a community group. Explain that each group will represent their selected community group. Other possible community groups include
 - education workers (for example, K–12 teachers, college professors, university researchers)



- community infrastructure professionals (for example, construction workers, civil engineers)
 - local government officials (politicians, community planners)
 - first responders (firefighters, police officers, paramedics, first aid providers)
 - local First Nations Elders and community members
 - local business owners
3. Provide each group with a copy of Activity Sheet B: Developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan. Explain that a community in central British Columbia is developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) to come up with ideas to prevent wildfires and also reduce potential damage to properties if wildfires ever happen in their community. The community has received \$100,000 from the government to help fund this plan. The students' task is to represent their selected community group at a simulated community planning meeting and to help decide how the \$100,000 should be spent.
 4. Ask groups to review the list of possible commitments, actions, and policies and to select those that would most effectively mitigate the causes and effects of wildfires within the grant budget. Remind groups to keep in mind the priorities of their assigned community group and to use the criteria for a powerful action to guide their decision-making. For example, education professionals might be most concerned with teaching people about wildfire safety, while emergency workers might prioritize actions that ensure a community is prepared to act quickly and effectively if a wildfire occurs.
 5. After groups have made their selections, direct them to select four of the suggested actions that are most important to their specific community group. Prompt groups to note their selections on their activity sheet and to rate how practical and effective each suggestion might be.
 6. Ask groups to select their top two choices of powerful commitments, actions, and/or policies that they will present to the simulated community planning meeting.
 7. Conduct the simulated community planning meeting by inviting each group to present their two selected commitments, actions, and/or policies. The main objective of the meeting is to decide which commitments, actions, and/or policies should be part of the CWRP. Consider allowing each group three minutes to present their ideas to the meeting and holding a final vote to determine the top actions to be prioritized in the \$100,000 CWRP.
 8. After the meeting, ask students to reflect on the simulation and the main result of the meeting. Encourage each group to suggest how their opinions or perspectives changed because of the meeting discussions.

Reflect on the Thinking



1. Guide students' attention back to Activity Sheet A and their initial ideas about which community members might contribute to powerful commitments, actions, or policies that could help address the causes and effects of wildfires. Prompt students to add any groups or actions to their initial thinking.
2. Ask students to select the two most powerful commitments, actions, or policies that might be the most useful in their community. Encourage students to note their choices at the bottom of the activity sheet.
3. Conclude the lesson by encouraging students to share their choices and thinking with the class.
4. Possible extensions of this lesson include the following:
 - Consider introducing students to the CWRPs found at <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/main/services/emergency-management/wildfires/community-wildfire-protection-plans.html#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20a%20CWPP,to%20reduce%20the%20wildfire%20risk>. Ask students to identify the most powerful commitments, actions, or policies in the CWRPs.
 - Consider inviting FireSmart representatives to the class to support the simulated community planning meeting and the development of the CWRPs.



Activity Sheet A: Exploring Powerful Community Actions

Who in our communities can take action to mitigate the causes and effects of wildfires?

Use the space below to create a mind map of any people or groups that can act to help address the causes and effects of wildfires. An example has been done for you.



Which two powerful commitments, actions, or policies might be the most useful in your community?

Activity Sheet B: Developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan

What actions should the community take?

Decide which of the possible commitments, actions, and/or policies listed below should be prioritized in a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP). The total cost of your choices cannot exceed the government grant amount of \$100,000.

What is a CWRP?

- A program that aims to identify smart ideas to make people safer and reduce the damage to properties if wildfires ever happen in their communities
- Created in British Columbia in response to the devastating 2003 wildfire in Kelowna
- Part of the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative, which is managed and funded by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Our Selected Community Group:





Possible Commitments, Actions, and Policies	Estimated Cost	Indicate Your Selection
Create a school education program	\$30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make summaries of the CWRP accessible to the public	\$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in the National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day	\$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand door-to-door FireSmart assessment within the community	\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Commitments, Actions, and Policies	Estimated Cost	Indicate Your Selection
Create fuel breaks to stop wildfires from spreading from the local forest to the community	\$40,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a study of fire flow and water vulnerability (possibilities for water shortages) in the community	\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify potential dangers in areas that have already been affected by wildfires	\$25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create wildfire hazard development building permits	\$25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create wildfire-smart landscaping community standards	\$5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create and enforce wildfire covenants for all property owners to ensure they regularly maintain their properties	\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a petition to persuade town council to pass a law against campfires and burning of yard waste	\$500	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide yearly training and reviews for wildfire emergency response workers	\$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hire a duty officer in each Fire Protection Area in the community	\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a Total Access Plan of all trails and roads in natural areas	\$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use cultural burning practices to mitigate wildfires in areas surrounding the community	\$40,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total cost of selected actions:		



Prepare for the simulated community planning meeting by following these steps:

1. Choose four of the suggested actions that are the most important to your specific community group.
2. Rate each of the suggested actions.
3. Decide which two of your selected actions and policies would be the most powerful for mitigating the causes and effects of wildfires in the community.

The Most Important Suggested Actions for Our Assigned Community Group	How powerful is the action?	Reasons or Evidence to Support the Rating
1.	<p>Practical</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>  <p>Not effective Very practical</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>  <p>Not effective Very practical</p>	
2.	<p>Practical</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>  <p>Not effective Very practical</p> <p>Effective</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>  <p>Not effective Very practical</p>	

3.

Practical

0 1 2 3

Not effective Very practical

Effective

0 1 2 3

Not effective Very practical

4.

Practical

0 1 2 3

Not effective Very practical

Effective

0 1 2 3

Not effective Very practical

Which two of these commitments, actions, or policies should be prioritized in the CWRP?

1.

2.

