



FireSmart Hazard Assessment Report: **KA:'YU:'K'T'H' / CHE:K'TLES7ET'H' (Kyuquot)**

This document was developed in a combined effort between First Nations Emergency Services (FNESS) and the community of Kyuquot. The FireSmart report is designed to be used as a resource in which the residents of Kyuquot can implement a community plan from. The FireSmart report looks at what was determined to be the highest risk area of the community and the issues this area faces. Included in the FireSmart report are recommendations from the Local FireSmart Representative (LFR) as well as a detailed outline of the next steps the Kyuquot community needs to take to become nationally recognized as a FireSmart community.



FireSmart Demonstration House

Location: Knox Mountain, Kelowna B.C.

Pictures By: www.kelownanow.com

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Introduction

The FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program is designed to provide an effective management approach for preserving wildland living aesthetics while reducing community ignition potential. The program can be tailored for adoption by any community and/or neighbourhood association that is committed to ensuring its citizens maximum protection from wildland fire. The following report is intended as a resource to be used by the residents of Kyuquot to create a FireSmart Community Plan. The plan developed from this information should be implemented in a collaborative manner, updated, and modified as needed.

On September 18th 2019, Quentin Nelson from First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) completed a Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. The priority area for this assessment was determined with the help of Elizabeth Jack (Emergency Preparedness Coordinator). It was determined that the entire community of Kyuquot required an assessment because it identified opportunities where several houses could benefit from incorporating FireSmart principles.

Definition of the Ignition Zone

Wildfires will happen – exclusion is not a choice. The variables in a wildfire scenario are when the fire will occur and where. This assessment addresses the wildfire related characteristics of the Kyuquot community and examines the areas of exposure to wildfire as it relates to ignition potential. The assessment does not focus on specific homes, but rather examines the community as a whole.



A structure burns because of its relationship with its surroundings within the ignition zone – the house and its immediate surroundings. To avoid home ignition, a homeowner must make every effort to eliminate wildfire potential on his/her house and property. This can be accomplished by interrupting the natural path a fire takes. Changing a fire's path by clearing the ignition zone is an easy-to-accomplish task that can prevent home loss. To accomplish this, flammable items such as excessive vegetation must be removed from the area immediately around structures to prevent flames from contacting it. Reducing the volume of live vegetation will lower the wildfire intensity as it nears the home.

Included in this assessment are observations made while visiting the Kyuquot reserve. This assessment addresses just how easy home ignitions can occur under severe wildfire conditions and how these ignitions may be avoided within the ignition zones of residents.



Priority Zone 1 & 1a: It is best to establish a fuel free zone around your home by reducing and/or eliminating all flammable fuels within 10m of a structure.

Priority Zone 2: In this zone it is best to modify the fuel through thinning, pruning and removing excess surface fuels which will reduce the intensity of a fire. This zone occurs between 10 – 30 meters from the structure.

Priority Zone 3: The best approach to take when treating fuels that are

30 – 100 meters away is to thin and prune trees.

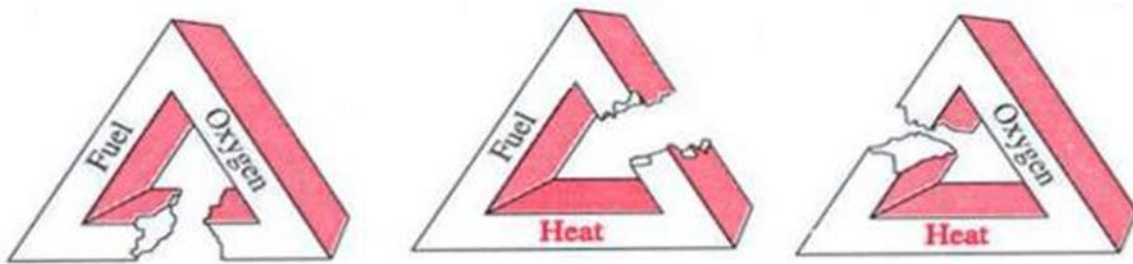
It is important to note that within Priority Zones 2 & 3, the aim is to retain an appropriate amount of deciduous species within forested ecosystems, as they tend to display lower levels of fire behaviour.

The results of the assessment show (under current conditions) that wildfire behaviour and subsequent losses will be dominated by the unique characteristics of Kyuquot. The good news is that residents will be able to substantially reduce their exposure to loss by

addressing community vulnerabilities. Relatively small investments in time and effort will reap great rewards in community wildfire safety.

Description of Severe Case Wildland Fire in Local Area

Fire intensity and rate of spread depend on the fuel type, fuel conditions, weather, and topography prior to, and during ignition. The images below illustrate the 3 required components for fire. Removing one of these elements breaks the fire triangle, resulting in no ignition. FireSmart focuses on reducing or eliminating the potential fuel sources around the home, because it is the easiest factor to manipulate.



In addition to the fire triangle, the relationships between fire behaviour, fuel, weather and topography are other factors to consider.

- Fine fuels ignite more easily, increase the rate of spread and produce higher intensity burning than coarser fuels. For a given fuel type, the more fuel build-up and continuity there is, the faster the rate of spread and the higher the resulting intensity is. Fine fuels take less time to burn than larger, coarser fuels.
- The weather conditions affect the overall moisture content of both live and dead vegetative fuels. Dead, fine fuel moisture content is highly dependent on relative humidity and the degree of sun exposure. The lower the relative humidity and greater exposure to the sun, the lower the fuel moisture content will be. Lower fuel moisture produces higher intensities and rates of spread.
- Wind speed significantly influences the rate of fire spread and fire intensity. The higher the wind, the greater the rate of spread, intensity and ember transport distances.
- Topography influences fire behaviour primarily by the steepness of the slope. The configuration of the terrain in the form of narrow draws, saddles and so on can

influence the fires rate of spread and intensity. In general, the steeper the slope, the greater the uphill fire spread and intensity.

Site Description



One portion of Treaty Land for the Kyuquot First Nation community is located in Kyuquot Sound on Vancouver Island West in British Columbia. Much of this treaty reserve land is comprised of a mixed wood forest, and therefore is in a wildfire prone environment. Evidence is provided by several recent wildfires in the area dating back to 1965, including fire #V00596 which was approximately 213.8 hectares in size, fire #V80014 in 1984 at 91.7 hectares in size, and fire #V92702 in 2018 at 9 hectares in size. Although wildfires within the vicinity of the reserve are typically uncommon, it is

important to be proactive in mitigation efforts to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire in your area. The Kyuquot First Nation has a population of approximately 174 on-reserve members and a total of 47 homes, along with other infrastructure.

Biogeoclimatic zone maps for the province place the community of Kyuquot in a Coastal Western Hemlock (CWHvh1) zone. The Biogeoclimatic zone designation places the community in a Natural Disturbance Type 1 (NDT1) area which means that the forests surrounding the community could experience major fires on a 250-year cycle. Since this type of ecosystem experiences rare stand-initiating events, wildfires in NDT1 are known to be fairly small (<20 hectares). The local terrain is slightly rolling to even in some areas. Immediately surrounding the Kyuquot community, there is a mixture of coniferous and deciduous vegetation, as well as the Pacific Ocean to the South.

Assessment Process

On September 18th, 2019, Quentin Nelson from First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) travelled to Kyuquot. The purpose of travel was to complete a FireSmart Hazard Assessment for the community, utilizing the local knowledge of the area provided by Elizabeth Jack. The hazard assessment is not designed to provide detailed information about each home in a subdivision, but rather the subdivision as a whole. During the assessment we walked around the reserve, documenting hazards and taking necessary pictures to complete a Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment Report. Important details regarding the hazards and solutions were recorded onto the FireSmart Hazard Assessment Form (Appendix 1). Using the details recorded on the hazard assessment form, the FireSmart Hazard Assessment Report will be written and sent to the FireSmart Board members. Since FireSmart looks at the subdivision as a whole, it would be encouraged that each homeowner looks at their property while going through the checklist located in the FireSmart Homeowners Manual, or online at the [FireSmart Canada](https://www.fire-smart.ca) website.

Observations and Solutions

The following section will highlight the main observations and provide some guidance on possible solutions as determined by the Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment;

Structures

- **Roofing Assembly**



Type of Roof – It appears the majority of roofs are made of metal roofing or asphalt shingles. The odd structure is comprised of unrated wood shakes. A number of roofs were in good condition but some should likely be replaced over the next few years with a material that adheres to FireSmart standards. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-5.**



Roof Cleanliness – A number of roofs on structures that residents currently occupy were free from debris, a good practice to maintain. What was more evident here was the accumulation or build-up of moss on older structures. Roofs displaying this characteristic will likely need replacing in the future. It is important to note that when overhead vegetation is closer to structures, it is easier for debris to accumulate on roofs and in gutters. Ideally, if any vegetation is overhanging a structure, it should be removed because it poses a risk of structure ignition. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-6.**

- **Building Exterior**



Siding, Decks & Eaves - The majority of structures within the community have vinyl or wood siding, while newer structures are likely to be made of hardy plank. Vinyl siding has a tendency to melt when it is exposed to radiant heat which can expose vulnerabilities in the structure and should be replaced if it has fallen off. Utilizing a hardy plank siding for new home developments or siding replacement over time would be very beneficial because

it has proven to be very resistant to fire. To ensure further structure protection, the lower portion of siding should be a non-combustible material anchored into the ground. A suggestion here would be to create a 15cm ground-to-siding non-combustible clearance. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-7.**



Windows & Doors - The window arrangement observed on occupied structures appeared to be double-paned and this should be standard for new developments and renovations over time. Research has shown when single pane windows are impacted by radiant heat they break a lot easier, allowing embers to enter the structure. It is important to consider that when a home becomes abandoned, windows can get broken, so it's good practice to cover any openings to prevent embers from entering a structure. The installation of tempered glass in all doors and windows that need it, or the correction of gaps in doors to prevent ember entry points should be considered. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-10.**



Ember Accumulator Features - During the assessment, there were several areas observed that could easily accumulate embers given the right conditions. Some of these areas occurred underneath decks and porches where fuels can accumulate over time. Full sheathing in these areas would prevent vegetation from growing, as well as debris and embers from accumulating.



Nearby Combustibles - It appears that the majority of homes on the reserve have some degree of combustible material located within 10m of the home. Some residents have their firewood stacked directly against their houses or under car-ports/decks. Ideally, household debris and firewood should be located at least 10m from a structure during the wildfire season and brought closer to the home as winter approaches. If 10m is not an option, these combustibles should still be separated from the structure. Outbuildings should be properly maintained so they don't pose an additional hazard during a wildfire event. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-11.**

Priority Zone 1a (0 -1.5m):



Priority Zone 1a – Is also known as the non-combustible zone around the structure where any combustible material should be removed so that potential fuel is separated from the structure. Creating a non-combustible area around the structure could be completed by using materials like gravel, brick, concrete and/or other xeriscaping practices.

Priority Zone 1 (1.5 -10 m):



Overstory Vegetation – Overstory vegetation in PZ1 is comprised primarily of a mixed wood forest with slightly more coniferous representation. Overstory trees near homes can drop leaves or needles onto the roof. These fine fuels can be easily ignited under the right conditions and pose a significant risk to the structure. Where larger trees are close to homes it would be ideal to have them removed in order to create defensible space. If removal is not an option, spacing and pruning activities can be beneficial to lower the risk. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-14.**



Ladder Fuels –Although it wasn't too common, some residents did have trees with ladder fuels needing vegetation management in priority zone 1. Ladder fuels were primarily found on those properties that contained cedar trees which can also produce dead fuel near the base of the tree. In addition, some shrubs and deciduous vegetation could act as ladder fuels under the right conditions. Ideally, any combustible vegetation in this zone would be removed since it can significantly increase the chances of a structure surviving a wildfire. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-17.**



Surface Fuel – In this priority zone, various properties had maintained lawns, but some needed further maintenance to reduce their surface fuel load. The taller shrubs and grasses in the area could provide a continuous fuel source all the way up to a structure, should a wildfire occur. Grass should be regularly mowed and clippings removed off site where applicable, especially when it comes into contact with structures, wood piles or is growing underneath decks. The intent is to ensure a well-maintained lawn while removing

flammable, continuous, and tall growing plants where appropriate. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-16.**

Priority Zone 2 (10-30 m):



Overstory Vegetation – Most of the structures within the community are complimented primarily by a coniferous overstory with a deciduous sub-component in priority zone 2. The majority of homes appear to have untreated over story vegetation in this zone. Where vegetation occurs, the landscape could benefit from spacing and pruning activities to reduce the risk even further. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-14.**



Ladder Fuels – Untreated areas of priority zone 2 contained ladder fuels that could benefit from pruning activities. Although deciduous trees and shrubs present a lower wildfire risk, it is important to note that under the right conditions, they can act as ladder fuels as well. Most residents could benefit from some vegetation management activities to further establish a buffer around their properties. Ideally, pruning should be done to a minimum of 50% of the tree height or 3 metres off the ground. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-17.**



Surface Fuel – Many residents have well-kept laws but, as you get further from the homes, most areas could benefit from regular mowing or some form of vegetation management to reduce the risk. This should include the removal of any previously downed fuels. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-16.**

Priority Zone 3 (30-100 m+):



Light Fuel – Most areas around the community have scattered to abundant deciduous shrubs and grasses present in priority zone 3. Areas such as this should be regularly maintained via mowing and/or weed whacking. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-16.**



Moderate Fuel – As you move further out in this priority zone, the untreated stands tend to become thicker with coniferous vegetation and some deciduous. These areas could benefit further from thinning and pruning treatments to decrease ladder fuels abundance and increase spacing. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-17.**

Topography:



Slope – The community sits on a slope that ranges from 0 -15%. Wildfires that occur on slopes quite often move faster than they do on flat ground. Most structures are located in the valley bottom, so setback is not a major concern. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-12 and 2-19.**

Infrastructure – Access / Egress, Signage:

Access Routes – Kyuquot has a looped road system within the community, but the community itself is surrounded by either the ocean or the adjacent forest, as they are an island community. Looped roads are ideal as they provide two ways to get out of an area. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-28.**



Roads – Many of the road systems throughout the community are adequate for travel, but some road widths may become smaller over time due to overgrown vegetation. Proper maintenance along the roadside will create a buffer that may act as a fire break and increase the overall road width for evacuation or emergency response purposes. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-30.**



Fires Service Access – The majority of homes had short driveways which is beneficial for fire services to access an area if required. Long driveways can make access more difficult for emergency services, especially if the driveways are not maintained. During the assessment, some driveways were found to have abundant/overgrown vegetation and household debris which can limit the amount of space fire services have to work. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-30.**

Street Signs / House Numbers – Street signs and house numbers appear to need updating throughout the community. These are important for any first responders when entering a community they might be unfamiliar with. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-30.**

Fire Suppression – Water Supply, Fire Services, Homeowner Capability:



Water Supply – There are approximately 6 hydrants on-reserve, but water capacity to support these hydrants remains unclear. Some hydrant locations appear to be well maintained, but others require further vegetation management to reduce the hazard in the future. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-32.**

Fire Service – There is no on-reserve fire department for the community. There are equipment sheds with some response gear near each hydrant. Nearest response would be from Zeballos. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-25.**

Homeowner Suppression Equipment – It is likely some residents will have the basic equipment such as shovels, hoses and sprinklers. Providing community members with the proper tools can allow them to reduce the risk on their property. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 3-28.**

Fire Ignition and Prevention – Utilities, Chimneys, Burn Barrels / Fire Pits, Ignition Potential:



Utilities – The appropriate clearances between vegetation and powerlines should be maintained. If propane tanks are close to structures, they should be secure and well maintained. If possible, they should be moved out of priority zone 1 and into priority zone 2. Being pro-active in reducing vegetation as it encroaches on propane tanks and powerlines can help prevent accidental ignitions and will be important in preventing disasters. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-24.**

Chimney, Burn Barrels / Fire Pits – If community members have fires it would be beneficial to encourage them to review the FireSmart standards before constructing their own fire pit. **See FireSmart: Protecting your Community from Wildfire: Ref 2-22.**

Recommendations

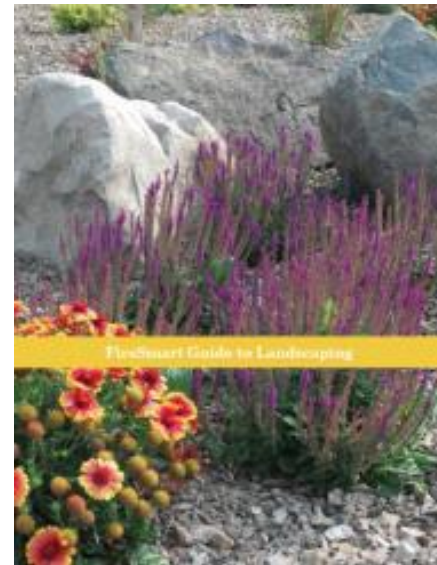
The FireSmart Community Recognition Program seeks to create a sustainable balance that will allow communities to live safely while maintaining environmental harmony in a wildland urban interface (WUI) setting. Homeowners already balance their decisions about fire protection measures against their desire for certain flammable components on their properties. It is important for them to understand the implications of the choices they are making. These choices directly relate to the ignitability of their home ignition zones during a wildfire.

A homeowner/community must focus their attention on the home and surrounding area while eliminating the fires potential relationship with the house. This can be accomplished by disconnecting the house from high and/or low intensity wildfire that could occur around it as well as being conscious of the effects of wind driven embers. A good reference

to understand the effects of embers on homes during a wildfire is the video called [Wildfire Ember Highlights](#) that can be found on YouTube via the hyperlink.

The following section of this report provides recommendations for consideration by the FireSmart board concerning the wildfire safety issues that were identified as priorities for Kyuquot during the assessment;

- Organize a FireSmart board led by community members who are aware of the dangers of fire and want to help their community. The FireSmart board can access a lot of useful information on the [FireSmart Canada](#) or <https://firesmartbc.ca/> website to share with the community.
- Continue working on creating a combustible-free priority zone 1a and 1 to start, and then work your way out into the other priority zones, building that defensible space.
- Where appropriate, establish adequate roadside buffers throughout the community that are free of overgrown vegetation to help act as a fire break and increase the overall road width for evacuation or emergency response purposes.
- Educate the residents of Kyuquot about the realities of wildfire potential in the area and the steps that can be taken to FireSmart homes. This can be accomplished by hosting FireSmart education days and inviting local fire chiefs, FNESS or BC Wildfire Service representatives to come share their knowledge and experiences with the community. Each homeowner should be encouraged to use the [FireSmart Home Assessment](#) to critically evaluate their home.
- Organize a FireSmart event day for local residents. The event day can include the volunteer portion of the FireSmart recognition process by having people complete an agreed upon task prior to the event day.





- Encourage FireSmart landscaping practices over time by removing highly flammable fuels adjacent to the house. Refer to the [FireSmart Guide to Landscaping](#).
- Develop and or maintain a good working relationship with local fire departments along with fire officials from other areas to ensure good support for FireSmart activities.
- When completed, use the results of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and this FireSmart Report to determine which areas in/around the community require attention to mitigate the risks to wildfires.
- The Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) along with FNESS and the BC Wildfire Service can assist communities with accessing funding to complete FireSmart activities. This FireSmart funding is currently available through the [Community Resiliency Investment \(CRI\) Program](#).
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has a lot of good information on how to develop new fire protection bylaws and building codes in your community. This information is certainly worth looking at and potentially implementing in your community. The hyperlinks below are some of the standards worth reviewing;

- [NFPA 1141](#) - Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildland, Rural, and Suburban Areas
 - [NFPA 1142](#) - Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting
 - [NFPA 1144](#) - Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire
- The FireSmart board should look at developing a community plan which essentially identifies several FireSmart related activities that the board would like to accomplish and provides a tentative completion date for each activity. Please refer to appendix 3 for additional information on how to develop a community plan.



Both pictures courtesy of NBC News article lone house, surrounded by scorched earth, survives wildfire

Successful FireSmart Mitigations

When adequately prepared, a house can likely withstand a wildfire without the intervention of the fire service. Furthermore, a house and its surrounding community can be both FireSmart and compatible with the area's ecosystem. The FireSmart communities program is designed to enable communities to achieve a high level of protection against wildfire loss, even as suitable ecosystem balance is maintained. Increased green space around the house as well as keeping combustible materials away from the house will increase the chance your home is protected from wildfire.

Next Steps

After reviewing the contents of this assessment and its recommendations, the Kyuquot FireSmart Board, in consultation with its advisors will determine whether or not it wishes to continue seeking FireSmart community recognition status. The FireSmart board should contact FNESS in the future if they have any questions or require assistance in planning FireSmart events for their community.

If the report and recommendations are accepted and recognition will be sought, the Kyuquot FireSmart Board will create agreed – upon, area specific solutions to the FireSmart Community Hazard Assessment Report Recommendations. They will then prepare a FireSmart community plan in cooperation with their Local FireSmart Representative and local fire agency personnel who may be acting as advisors.

Assuming the Kyuquot community seeks to achieve recognition as a FireSmart community, the FireSmart board will need to complete the following 8 steps to become nationally recognized as a FireSmart community.

1. Contact Local FireSmart Representative (LFR) – Completed

- FNESS has several LFR's on staff that would be more than willing to assist your community with FireSmart. It may also be beneficial to communicate with LFR's in your local area and get training for your community members when the LFR course is offered.

2. Have LFR complete a Community FireSmart Hazard Assessment – Completed

- The community FireSmart hazard assessment was completed by Quentin Nelson, FFML - LFR. Individual structure and site assessments can still be completed for each resident that will identify concerns specific to that structure.

3. Local FireSmart Rep to complete a detailed report to provide recommendations to help start the FireSmart Program – Completed

- The FireSmart report was developed by Quentin Nelson, FFML - LFR from First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS).

4. Start a FireSmart Board – In Progress

- Sponsor a Local FireSmart Board that is in charge of maintaining the FireSmart community program and recognition status. The board can include anyone whom wants to participate including residents, fire chiefs, chief & council, maintenance workers, etc.

5. Complete FireSmart Community Action Plan – In Progress

- The FireSmart board should look at developing a community plan which essentially identifies several FireSmart related activities that the board would like to accomplish and provides a tentative completion date for each activity. Please refer to appendix 3 for additional information on how to develop a community plan.

6. Host a FireSmart Event/Cleanup day – In Progress

- Invest a minimum of \$2.00 annually per capita in local FireSmart events and activities (work completed by municipal employees or

volunteers, using municipal or other equipment, can be included as can provincial/territorial grants dedicated to that purpose).

7. Apply for National FireSmart Recognition Status – *In Progress*

- Submit an application form with the supporting documentation to FireSmart Canada. This application documents participation in the FireSmart communities program with respect to the above criteria.

8. Renew on an Annual Basis – *In Progress*

- Complete another education or event day, compile the supporting documentation and then submit a renewal application to FireSmart Canada. All the forms can be found online at the [FireSmart Canada](#) website.

Community Resiliency Investment & FireSmart

Launched in 2018, the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program is a new provincial program intended to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire to communities in BC through community funding, supports and priority fuel management activities on First Nations land and provincial Crown land. Through this program, communities have access to potential funding opportunities for various eligible FireSmart activities. For further information on what your community may be eligible for through the CRI program, please see the 2020 Program & Application Guide at <https://www.ubcm.ca/cri>. More specifically, Table 1 has a comprehensive list of activities that are eligible for funding based on the seven FireSmart principles.

Signature of Local FireSmart Representative



Quentin Nelson, FFML, LFR
First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS)
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October 16th 2019
www.FNESS.bc.ca



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Appendix 1 FireSmart Hazard Assessment

See Attached

Appendix 2 Map of Assessment Area

See Attached

Appendix 3 FireSmart Community Plan

The following is a basic example of a FireSmart community action plan with some common activities listed. This plan should be developed by the FireSmart board along with their advisors if applicable. The objective of the action plan is to identify several activities that will benefit the community. Once the activities that are most relevant to your community are agreed upon, the next step is to decide on who will be completing the work and the timelines for completion. Your community plan is one of the required deliverables to receive national recognition as a FireSmart community.

FireSmart Community Action Plan					
Event #	Activity	Who is going to do this?	Start Date	End Date	Progress
1	Host a community education & awareness Day				
2	Host a community wide cleanup				
3	Distribute FireSmart informational brochures to residents				
4	Cut grass around fire hydrants to provide easy access				
5	FireSmart board meetings				
6	Apply for FireSmart funding				
7	Review housing policies and building codes				
8	Remove unnecessary debris from homes				
9	Apply for Community Wildfire Protection Plan funding				