



# Regional Board Report

**TO:** Regional Board

**FROM:** David Komaïke, Director of Engineering  
Wayne Darlington, Manager – Park Planning & Capital Projects

**DATE:** November 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** UBCM CRI FireSmart Grant Application (2022)

**Voting Entitlement:** *All Directors - Unweighted Corporate V – Simple Majority – LGA 208*

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**Purpose:** To seek Regional Board support for an application to the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Fund's FireSmart Community Funding and Support Grant.

**Executive Summary:**

*'The FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community-based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire'<sup>1</sup>.*

The RDCO is requesting funding for projects associated with wildfire risk reduction for both the regional district's electoral areas, and regional parks. Electoral area funding is requested for the development of a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP), residential fire reduction assessments, information and financial support, FireSmart training for RDCO staff, and interagency cooperation. Parks funding is requested for FireSmart education, three fuel management prescriptions and a fuel management treatment at Kalamoir Regional Park.

The RDCO is requesting \$250,000 in 2022 FireSmart funding from UBCM, and an RDCO contribution of \$30,000 to cover the remaining costs associated with a term FireSmart Coordinator position and project administrative overhead. The total, combined, project costs is \$280,000.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Regional Board support an application to the '2022 UBCM Community Resiliency Investment Fund - FireSmart Community Funding and Support Grant' for the following two Regional District of the Central Okanagan projects:

1. Developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan with related Fire Smart activities in Electoral Area East and Electoral Area West, and
2. Developing Fuel Management Prescriptions (3) and a phased Treatment (1) in support of fuel management activities in the Regional Parks.

Respectfully Submitted:

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David Komaïke,  
Director of Engineering

Handwritten signature of Wayne Darlington in black ink.

Wayne Darlington,  
Manager of Park Planning

Approved for Board's Consideration

Handwritten signature of Brian Reardon in black ink.

Brian Reardon, CAO

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<sup>1</sup> Union of British Columbia Municipalities, *FireSmart Community Funding & Supports*, UBCM, 2021, <https://www.ubcm.ca/funding-programs/local-government-program-services/community-resiliency-investment/firesmart-0>, Accessed on November 14, 2021

*Prepared by: Cathy MacKenzie, RPF, Parks Natural Resource Technician/Volunteer Coordinator, and Mareike Mimi Miller, Asset Management Analyst*

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### **Implications of Recommendation:**

Strategic Plan: Wildfire protection and mitigation strategies support the following priorities in the RDCO: Climate Change and Hazard Management

Financial: UBCM Community Resiliency Investment funding provides the majority of the funding for the Regional District's FireSmart education, fuel management prescriptions and forest fuel treatment.

Policy: The RDCO Parks Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2020), received by the Regional Board on February 11, 2021, is a guiding document for the Parks FireSmart and fuel management activities outlined in this report.

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### **Background:**

Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program is a provincial program intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC communities. Under the CRI, the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire. This grant was developed in collaboration between the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS), the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (FLNRORD).

The FireSmart grant allows for the allocation of funding based on a community's 'Wildland Urban Interface' (WUI) Risk Class. The WUI Risk Class Framework was developed by the BC Wildfire Service to support initiatives related to wildfire risk reduction. Based on the Framework, the Central Okanagan falls into the highest WUI Risk Class<sup>2</sup>. This means that our communities are eligible to apply for the highest amount of funding available through the FireSmart grant (\$250,000).

The RDCO intends to undertake FireSmart activities within its two electoral areas, Central Okanagan East (Ellison) and Central Okanagan West, as well as continue fuel management activities within RDCO Regional Parks and the Central Okanagan East community of Joe Rich.

As per the grant guidelines the activities listed below need to be completed within one year of UBCM project approval. Project approval is anticipated early in 2022 with all activities to be completed by March 31, 2023

#### Electoral Area activities (Fire Services) include:

- Hiring a FireSmart Coordinator to implement electoral area FireSmart activities (1 year term).
- Develop a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan. The plan will guide wildfire risk reduction activities and provide a platform for cooperation with the Province regarding the treatment of the surrounding crown land.

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<sup>2</sup> Province of British Columbia, *Wildland Urban Interface Risk Class Maps*, BC, 2021, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/vegetation-and-fuel-management/fire-fuel-management/wui-risk-class-maps>, Accessed on November 14, 2021

- Forming and Participating on a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee in partnership with other local and provincial stakeholders.
- Providing FireSmart outreach and educational activities to residents with a focus on those living in areas that interface with Crown Land and forested areas.
- Providing a FireSmart grant program for residents within the RDCO.
- Providing FireSmart education, outreach, and community engagement for wildfire fuel mitigation activities in regional parks

In 2020, Fire Services applied for FireSmart funding for Electoral Area East: Joe Rich. The Joe Rich project includes the development of a CWRP for the community as well as wildfire prevention activities for residential properties. The project is still underway, and completion is anticipated in 2022.

Regional Parks activities include:

- Develop three fuel management prescriptions (FMP) for priority treatment areas.
- Complete a fuel management treatment in Kalamoior Regional Park as part of a phased project utilizing one of the FMP's developed
- The other two FMP's will be used for planning future treatments and funding applications.

In February 2021, Parks Services staff presented the Parks Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) (2020) to the Regional Board. This report was funded through the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program. The final report provided 35 recommendations to increase public safety and decrease community vulnerability. The recommendations focused on improvements in areas such as fuel management, FireSmart initiatives, community education, park infrastructure and wildfire response. The report also provided a priority ranking for fuel treatments in and around RDCO parks.

The current CRI application addresses the recommendations of the Parks CWPP by initiating the operational components of the plan as well as providing FireSmart education related to fuel management activities in parks. The intent is to complete three fuel management prescriptions, a fuel management treatment in Kalamoior Regional Park as well as providing a FireSmart information session in Kalamoior detailing the project and highlighting what park neighbours can do on their properties to support what is being done in the park. FireSmart education is a key component of the CRI funding and must be provided in all applications.

Fuel management prescriptions are detailed site plans outlining all the conditions of a fuel management treatment. Prescriptions must be approved by the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) Fuel Management Specialist prior to initiating any treatment. Based on the priorities identified in the Parks CWPP, this CRI application considers the development of three regional park prescriptions, including: Kalamoior, Mill Creek and a portion of Scenic Canyon.

The prescription for Kalamoior Regional Park will be completed in spring of 2022 to enable approval from a BCWS Fuel Management Specialist prior to a fall 2022 treatment. While the prescription will be written for the entire park, it is anticipated that approximately 8.7 ha of priority treatment will be completed under this CRI application. Additional priority areas identified in the Kalamoior prescription will be treated under future funding applications. It is anticipated that disposal of forest fuels will be by open burning due to the limited access in the park.

Additionally, having approved prescriptions for Mill Creek and a portion of Scenic Canyon Regional Parks will create shelf-ready fuel treatment projects for future applications. It is the intent of Parks Services to operationalize the Parks CWPP, according to the priorities identified in the report, through annual CRI applications provided funding supports remain in place.

**Financial Considerations:**

The revenues and expenses associated with these projects are subject to approval from both the Union of BC Municipalities (through the grant approval process) and the Regional Board (through the RDCO 2022-2026 Financial Plan Bylaw approval process).

**Total Project Costs Per Department**

• Fire Services: Fire Prevention 019	\$180,000	(83% Grant, 17% RDCO contribution)
• Regional Parks 142	<u>\$100,000</u>	(100% Grant)
Total	\$280,000	

**External Implications:**

The grant encourages participants to develop an inter-agency approach to wildfire reduction. The RDCO's application includes the establishment of a local Community FireSmart Resiliency Committee. Staff will reach out to stakeholders, including the RDCO's member municipalities, Westbank First Nation, the Okanagan Indian Band, and local BC Wildfire representatives regarding the potential establishment of a Committee.

**Alternative Recommendation:**

**THAT** the Regional Board receive the UBCM CRI FireSmart Grant Application (2022) report for information.

***Considerations not applicable to this report:***

- *General*
- *Organizational*