



ENHANCING WILDFIRE RESILIENCE

Summary Report of the BCCFA's Wildfire
Risk Reduction Economic Recovery Initiative





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May 2024

Acknowledgements

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BC Wildfire
Service

Graphic design by Hands on Publications



British Columbia
**Community
Forest
Association**
local people, local forests, local decisions

British Columbia Community Forest Association

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Executive Summary

COMMUNITY forests¹ are leaders in wildfire risk reduction in British Columbia. For over a decade, they have proactively worked to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zone surrounding rural communities. They see the urgency of the problem for their communities, and they have prioritized fuel management activities on their land base. Community forests are often the point of connection between communities and their surrounding forests, and as a result have developed strong and trusted relationships and meaningful engagement strategies.

In April of 2021, the Province of British Columbia identified wildfire risk reduction in community forests as a mechanism through which employment can be generated. Under the Economic Recovery Initiative, approximately \$5 million was allocated to the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) to fund 45 wildfire risk reduction projects in 15 community forest tenures across the province. The BCCFA collaborated with BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) to build and implement this program from 2021 to 2023.

Over the duration of the program, a total of 1,362 ha was treated for wildfire risk reduction near communities, with another 1,272 ha prescribed for future treatment. With a large focus of this program dedicated toward supporting local economies, a total of 9,895 person days of employment was generated, 55 per cent of which was allocated to First Nation workers.

In addition to reducing the risk of wildfire and improving community safety, this initiative resulted in a number of successes from the 15 participating community forests. These include collaboration and strengthening of relationships, completion of prescribed burn projects, enhancing wildfire preparedness around rural communities, contributing to local economies and jobs, and managing for forest health. Further, this program presented a unique opportunity to learn from on-the-ground operations, allowing for improvement in future wildfire mitigation projects.

Without external funding, much of the wildfire risk reduction work that community forests achieve in the forested area near rural communities would not be possible. Multi-year funding will support the successful implementation of wildfire risk reduction treatments and encourage local contractors to retain and train workers and invest in specialized equipment for these projects. It is recommended that flexible, long-term funding is secured for community forests to continue to excel with wildfire mitigation around rural communities, without the restraints of a fiscal year-end deadline.

BC's community forest program offers applied examples of collaboration, co-management, innovation, and adaptation, making community forests ideal partners and leaders when implementing the four pillars of wildfire

¹ "Community forests" in this report refers to Community Forest Agreement holders.

“This program has been a resounding success, providing much-needed economic stimulus to rural communities through direct employment.”

— Mike Tomlinson, Manager of Eniyud Community Forest

management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The partnership between BCWS and BCCFA has been a crucial step in enhancing the efforts of community forests to make forests and communities more resilient, while addressing wildfire risk and supporting local economies. Maintaining a strong relationship between the BCCFA and BCWS is highly encouraged for supporting community forests in their endeavours to complete wildfire risk reduction work and protect rural communities in BC.



FUEL TREATMENT IN HARROP PROCTER COMMUNITY FOREST, PHOTO BY ERIK LESLIE

**The BCCFA's
Wildfire Risk
Reduction
Economic
Recovery
Initiative
created jobs and
helped to make
communities
and forests
more resilient.**

Program Background

Community Forestry and Wildfire Mitigation in BC

COMMUNITY FORESTS ARE LEADERS in wildfire risk reduction. With long-term tenures that place multiple local values at the forefront, community forests consistently demonstrate initiative in coordination and management to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zone and larger forest land base around rural communities. Responding to the rise of extreme wildfire events across the province, community forests have prioritized fuel management activities on their land base.

Community forests with a high degree of community support are in a good position to provide education about the necessity of wildfire risk reduction. The BCCFA has resources to assist its members in cultivating that support, or “social license.”²

Social license is a cornerstone of community forestry, requiring ongoing efforts to cultivate community support for managing small tenures in evolving and complex communities. As forestry organizations that are owned and operated at the local level by Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, they are in a unique position to manage forests and, in turn, be a key partner in building community resilience.

Community Forest Agreements are area-based, long-term forest tenures held by community-based organizations. There are 61 CFAs in the province, half of which are held by First Nations or in partnership with First Nations.

In addition to the accomplishments of the Economic Recovery Initiative, it is estimated that community forests have collectively treated over 8,100 ha prior to 2023 and have invested over \$8 million of their own dollars, while managing over \$17 million in grants and funding from outside sources, such as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC).³ Without external funding, much of the work that community forests achieve in the WUI and on the larger landscape would not be possible.

The community forest program features applied examples of collaboration, co-management, innovation, and adaptation, making community forests ideal partners and leaders when implementing the four pillars of wildfire management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and

recovery. Trusted partnerships between community forest organizations and a variety of stakeholders allows for cohesive management of many related values on the land base beyond timber sales, including forest health, wildfire mitigation, biodiversity, recreation, education and more.

² *Building Relationships and Cultivating Social Licence: A Guide for Small Tenure Holders in BC*, bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CFA-Social-License-and-Collaboration-signoff-May-15.pdf

³ *BCCFA 2023 Indicators Report*, bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BCCFA-Indicators-Report-2023-Final.pdf

BCCFA & BCWS Partnership

In April of 2021, the Province of British Columbia identified wildfire risk reduction in community forests as a mechanism through which employment can be generated as a part of Covid-19 pandemic economic recovery. The economic recovery dollars were allocated through the Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) stream of the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program and coordinated by the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) in partnership with the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS).

“Managed by local communities and First Nations for the benefit of the entire community, community forests are key partners in our work to reduce wildfire risks across the province,” said Katrine Conroy, former Minister of Forests.

The BCCFA is a membership-based organization that advocates for community forestry in BC, representing a network of community forest organizations across the province, many of whom already actively manage for wildfire. The majority, 80%, of community forests that participated in this program are members of the BCCFA.

The partnership between BCCFA and BCWS has been an important and valued step in enhancing the efforts of community forests to make forests and communities more resilient, while addressing wildfire risk and supporting local economies.

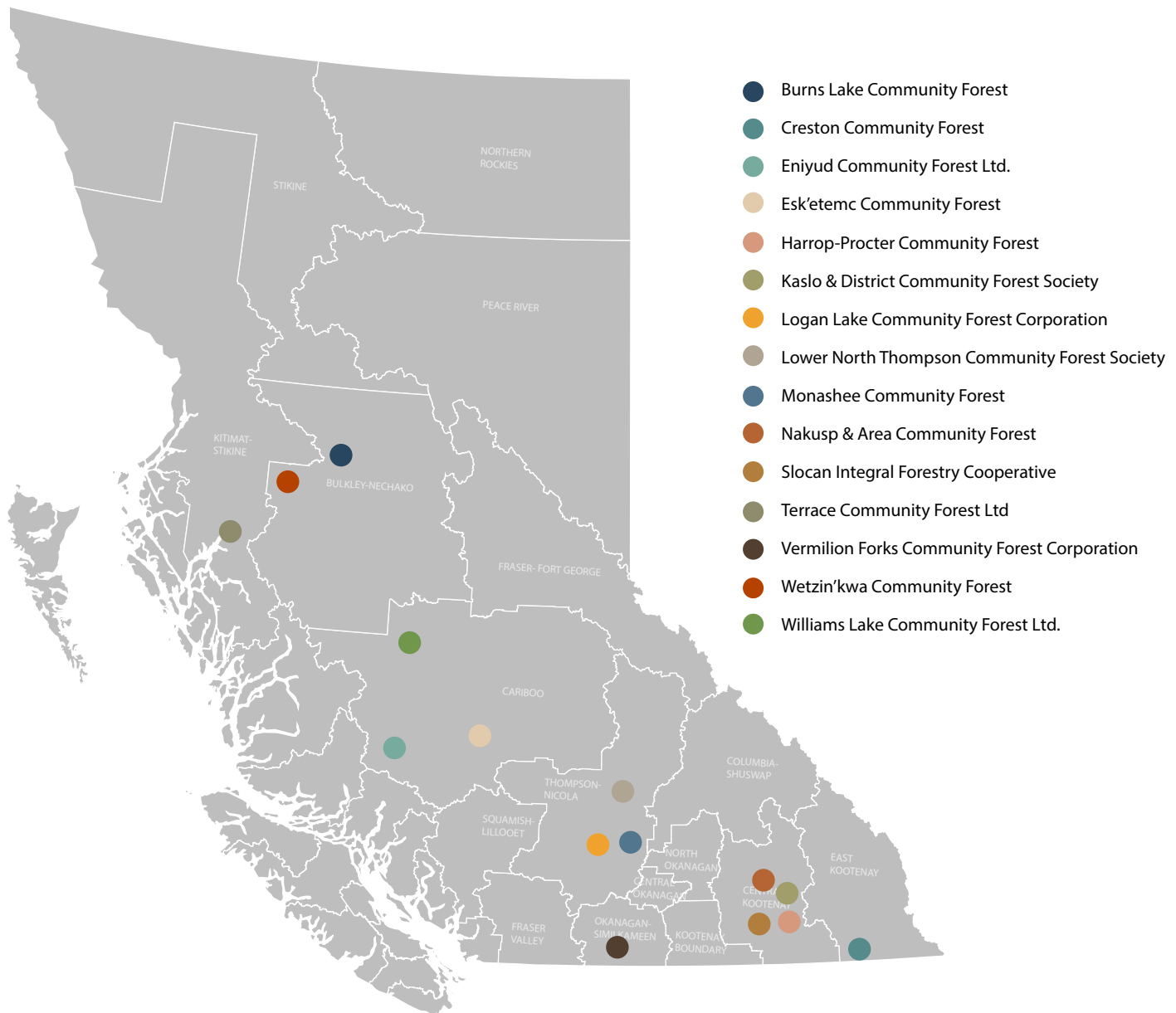
Under the Economic Recovery Initiative, approximately \$5 million was allocated to the BCCFA to fund 45 wildfire risk reduction projects in 15 community forest tenures across the province. The BCCFA collaborated with BCWS to build and implement this program.

POST-PREScribed BURN, PHOTO BY CRESTON COMMUNITY FOREST



Participating Community Forests

The 15 community forests that participated in the program are outlined on the map below.



The program work was largely completed from 2021–2023. The program deadline has been extended to December 2024 to allow for the completion of four projects that were delayed due to burn venting restrictions. The results provided in this report reflect the projects that have been completed as of January 2024.

Summary of Results

OVER THE SPAN OF THE PROGRAM, wildfire risk reduction work was successfully completed in 15 rural communities across BC. As of January 2024, completed projects accounted for approximately \$4 million, with the remaining projects to be completed by the end of 2024. Please contact the BCCFA at info@bccfa.ca for a full summary of the quantitative program results.

Program Activities

Program activities by project type

Operational treatment: 51%

Prescribed fire: 4.5%

Prescription development: 40%

Planning: 4.5%

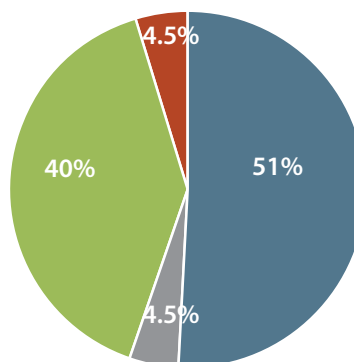


Table 1: Program Activities

Community forest	Activities	Funding	Total person days of employment	Area treated	Prescription development	Planning
				(ha)		
Burns Lake	Prescribed Fire, Operational Treatment	\$337,557	675	188	0	0
Creston Valley	Prescribed Fire	\$12,430	28	21	0	0
Eniyud	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$323,346	563	36	46	52
Esk'etemc	Operational Treatment	\$369,795	2,500	229	0	0
Harrop-Proctor	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$213,531	158	46	115	53
Kaslo and District	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$220,378	511	41	100	275
Logan Lake	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$539,975	1,253	115	186	186
Lower North Thompson	Prescription Development	\$115,095	230	0	235	275
Monashee	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$153,717	156	77	149	230
Nakusp and Area	Prescription Development	\$29,990	57	0	52	186
Slocan	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$117,440	214	30	74	153
Terrace	Planning	\$37,010	54	0	0	150
Vermilion Forks	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$295,318	172	16	64	64
Wetzin'kwa	Prescription Development, Operational Treatment	\$758,243	1,875	279	254	267
Williams Lake	Operational Treatment	\$404,134	1,450	284	0	0
		\$3,924,978	9,895	1,362	1,272	1,890

Fuel Treatments

A total of **1,362 hectares** was treated for wildfire risk reduction around communities.



CRESTON CF SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED A PRESCRIBED BURN IN COLLABORATION WITH BCWS, PHOTO PROVIDED BY CRESTON CF

Fuel Prescriptions

As part of an ongoing commitment to conducting wildfire risk reduction activities around rural communities, multiple projects focused on developing and approving prescriptions for fuel treatment work.

A total of **1,272 ha** was prescribed for future treatment.

A total of **1,890 ha** was surveyed for inventory and analysis during this program in order to enhance wildfire planning and management. Planning is needed to identify fuel treatment opportunities that meet current standards, encompass new risks, and build on the momentum neighbouring and overlapping local governments and Indigenous communities have gained through other funding. Identified fuel breaks and fuel treatment units through this process will increase wildfire resiliency and provide economic opportunities to the communities within.



FIELD SURVEYS WERE COMPLETED TO DEVELOP FUEL PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FUTURE TREATMENT, PHOTO PROVIDED BY WETZIN'KWA CF

Local Employment

A total of **9,895 person days** of employment were generated throughout the BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative. Of these person days, 55 per cent were allocated to the employment of First Nation community members.

LOCAL CONTRACTORS WERE EMPLOYED
TO COMPLETE FUEL TREATMENTS,
PHOTO BY RACHAEL BONE



Successes & Accomplishments

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY INITIATIVE resulted in numerous successful outcomes, which is reflective of the positive relationship between BCCFA and BCWS, and the dedication of community forests to complete wildfire mitigation work around their communities.

Collaboration & Strengthening of Relationships

Through this program, BCWS improved and fostered its relationships with multiple community forests. This continued collaboration is essential for effectiveness and efficiency in future treatments. “The collaboration between the Creston Community Forest and the BCWS was a success,” said Community Forest Manager Daniel Gratton. The BCWS did the outreach to the general public which was a huge help. This included the BCWS Facebook posts, notifications in the local newspaper and on the radio. There were very few complaints about the smoke from the prescribed burn. Wetzin’kwa Community Forest Corporation former Manager Aurora Lavender said “Wetzin’kwa Community Forest worked closely with BCWS to develop the prescriptions to fit 90th percentile of fire weather conditions, and BCWS provided a great deal of feedback throughout their development to ensure that they were in line with provincial standards.”

It was noted from reporting managers that communications with BCCFA were effective, and several were able to resolve investment schedule issues through the clear and adaptable management of the program.

In advancing many of the wildfire risk reduction activities in the interior region of BC, several community forests have been successful in building internal capacity over time and working together on the land base through shared resources, including specialized wildfire crews.

Further, community forests work closely with local governments and regional districts to accomplish wildfire mitigation work adjacent to communities. These long-lasting partnerships created a reliable and trusted foundation that was instrumental in the success of this program. Garnet Mireau of the Logan Lake CF Management Team said, “Our Youth FireSmart program is truly a ‘team approach’ with the District of Logan Lake Fire Chief, the Logan Lake Wellness, Health and Youth (WHY) Society, and the Community Forest.”

In advancing many of the wildfire risk reduction activities in the interior region of BC, several community forests have been successful in building internal capacity over time and working together on the land base through shared resources, including specialized wildfire crews.



CREATED THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, THE LOGAN LAKE YOUTH FIRESMART CREW HELPED CONDUCT FUEL MITIGATION TREATMENTS AS PART OF THE BCCFA ECONOMIC RECOVERY INITIATIVE, PHOTO PROVIDED BY FORSITE

The BCCFA and BCWS have deepened their relationship through the implementation of this program and have committed to maintaining a long-term partnership to support community forests in their wildfire risk reduction work. This measure of collaboration is a key indicator of the success of the BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative.

Prescribed Burning

- 21.2 ha of prescribed burn were completed at Creston Community Forest in collaboration with BCWS.
- A 123 ha prescribed burn project was completed at Burns Lake Community Forest, which engaged cultural practices of indigenous use of fire.

“Led by the Burns Lake Community Forest in partnership with the BC Wildfire Service, Nadina District, Shifting Mosaics Consulting, and our professional prescribed fire crew from Northern Fire WoRx, we have successfully built a program that is reducing wildfire risk, employing local community members, empowering and engaging cultural practices of indigenous fire, and truly putting fire back out on the land in a good way. Cultural burning and indigenous fire management are recognized as important in natural resource management, and they are integrated fully into the planning and application of fire within the Burns Lake Community Forest.” — Dr. Sonja E.R. Leverkus, PhD, RPBio, RPF, Pag, EP, Ecosystem Scientist, AFE Certified Wildland Fire Practitioner and founder of Shifting Mosaics Consulting

Community Wildfire Preparedness & Resiliency

The BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative enhanced community resiliency and wildfire preparedness in 15 rural areas of BC. Completed projects include the following examples:

- Creation and maintenance of fuel breaks around communities;
- Development of prescriptions for complex areas adjacent to private land and domestic and community watersheds;
- Development of safe ingress and egress through roadside treatments to communities and rural homesteads, and establishing primary fuel breaks;
- Reducing landscape level fuel loading by treating surface fuels, conducting stand thinning, and removing dead overstory;
- Protection of key community resources, including recreational infrastructure, through the prescriptions and treatments implemented during this program;
- Enhancing community wildfire awareness through educational programming, communications strategies, and direct engagement with community members; and
- Many communities have embraced wildfire risk reduction treatments.



FUEL BREAK ADJACENT TO COMMUNITIES OF HARROP AND PROCTER, PHOTO PROVIDED BY HARROP PROCTER COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE

“The Eniyud Community Forest would like to thank all parties involved for making this program very successful and a model/demonstration for future initiatives within the region. Overall, the program has been a testament to the power of collaboration and proactive wildfire management, providing a boost to the local economy while ensuring the safety and security of the surrounding communities.”
— Mike Tomlinson, Manager of Eniyud CF

Local Economy & Jobs

By creating rural employment opportunities, the BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative was successful at contributing to local economies and enhancing capacity through developing skills and knowledge exchange.

- High quality wildfire risk reduction work was completed by local contractors.
- Local contractors have built capacity and now have trained wildfire crews to work on these types of projects.

“The funding provided by the BCCFA for prescription development and implementation allowed Wetzin’kwa Community Forest to provide work for local contractors, including a Wet’suwet’en contractor, and helped to increase local knowledge and capacity when it comes to WRR treatments. The completion of this work also helps provide continuity of work to contractors. Over the two years that this funding was utilized, the WRR crew has gotten to a point where they can successfully accomplish work with less oversight and have consistent workers available to complete this work. As a small area-based community forest tenure holder, WCFC is proud to work together with provincial and local organizations to improve and promote community resiliency and protect important community values.” — Aurora Lavender, Wetzin’kwa Community Forest, former Manager

“This program has been a resounding success, providing much-needed economic stimulus to rural communities through direct employment.” — Mike Tomlinson, Manager of Eniyud CF



FUEL TREATMENTS SUPPORTED LOCAL EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES, PHOTO BY RACHAEL BONE

Forest Health

Community forests are committed to long term forest management that considers multiple values on the land base beyond just selling timber.

Examples of forest resiliency work completed through this program are:

- Stand rehabilitation and conversion to more a resilient and productive forest;
- Ensuring treatments maintain grassland benchmark areas and other forest range features;
- Wildfire treatments incorporate the objectives for maintaining Mule Deer Winter Range; and
- Improved forest health, for example wildfire risk reduction treatments target the removal of bark beetle infested Douglas-fir trees.

“The work we are doing in Harrop-Procter is not a simple point-in-time intervention. The fuel treatments are part of a larger strategy and a broader community conversation about climate change and ecosystem resilience.”
— Erik Leslie, Forest Manager, Harrop Procter Community Co-operative

Unanticipated Results

While many project outcomes were planned and achieved, there were several results that were not anticipated in several community forests, for example:

- The length of time that it took to complete some projects was underestimated. Many hoped to burn piles and complete their wrap up in the late fall/early winter of 2022, but were unable to do so. In response, the funding agreement has been extended to allow time to complete this important work.
- The opportunity to improve community recreational features through completing fuel treatments was a positive outcome.
- There was considerable public interest in high visibility treatments in some communities.
- There was a high level of contractor interest in innovative approaches (e.g., optimizing mechanical and manual treatment interactions).
- Integrating consultants and community forest staff to complete work was very effective and allowed for knowledge transfer and increase in capacity.
- Some community forests were able to take on additional areas to prescribe and treat because they were ready, willing, and prepared to.
- More hand piling was utilized for the completion of this work than originally anticipated in some community forests.
- Dieback of remaining subalpine fir overstory has occurred in some treated areas, which may require subsequent treatments to ensure public safety.

Program Challenges

Regulatory Obstacles

- Some community forests experienced difficulties obtaining regulatory approval to commence treatments. Multiple Ministry of Forests reviews of the Fuel Management Prescription were required (BCWS, District Stewardship and Wildlife). This process could be streamlined for more efficiency.
- Blanket Cutting Permit (“one” Cutting Permit – 1CP) facilitated the implementation of wildfire risk reduction treatments for the community forests that were able use this option.
- The Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation can limit the number of days that pile burning or prescribed burning can occur. This obstacle prevented many community forests from being able to complete their projects within the fiscal deadlines of the program.

Limitations with Prescribed Fire Projects

- Prescribed fire projects are important for communities, not only for wildfire risk reduction, but also for cultural and ecosystem health/diversity reasons. It is hoped that more prescribed fire projects will be funded in the future.
- There is still a steep learning curve for prescribed fire projects. Community forests are eager to implement these types of treatments, but the experience/expertise provincially is currently very limited.



PRESCRIBED FIRE IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL IN WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT, PHOTO PROVIDED BY CRESTON COMMUNITY FOREST

- Scheduling and implementation of prescribed fire treatments can be difficult if the weather conditions are not appropriate. The dry Fall in 2022 limited burning activities on the projects in this program.
- Prescribed burn projects need more than one year to be fully implemented, so these timelines should be incorporated into future funding programs.
- The season is short for completing fuel treatments, especially at higher elevations.

WRR Projects Adjacent to Communities

- Some members of communities continue to have concerns about wildfire risk reduction treatments, which required community forests to provide additional stakeholder engagement and delay project implementation.
- Many community forests have high public use due to the presence of established recreation sites, trails, and associated infrastructure. This can complicate the implementation of fuel treatments (for example, the need to address/protect the recreation features and manage the public during the implementation phase).
- Challenges were faced in having to cross private land and work with landowners to access treatment areas.

Capacity

- Although some community forests have built up their capacity as a result of multiple years of funding, the availability of contractors generally remains a challenge.
- While there is a desire to complete more fuel treatments mechanically, there is a limited number of contractors with appropriate machinery and equipment.
- Some local contractors are not familiar with fuel treatment work, particularly the expertise required for prescribed burning. This requires additional resources in training and knowledge exchange.



CAPABLE CREWS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE WILDFIRE TREATMENT WORK,
PHOTO PROVIDED BY HARROP PROCTER COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE

Treatment Costs

- Manual fuel treatments (on a cost per hectare basis) vary significantly depending on the stand type, type of treatment and objectives of the fuel management prescription.
- Piling costs for the completed treatments were higher than anticipated due to challenging terrain and excavator operator availability supply chain issues (equipment, vehicles, first aid, etc.), which drove up the cost/ha of piling beyond original estimates.
- Many community forests would have to conduct fuel treatments at a financial loss if funding were not available to complete these projects.

Challenging Terrain

- Some community forests tenures have steep and rocky terrain, requiring qualified and capable crews to complete the work.
- Extremely dense understory as a result of previous blowdown events, past forest harvesting practices (e.g., high grading in the 1970s). Treating these areas requires an extra cost of specialized equipment.
- Applying fire in landscapes with limited natural features to incorporate as prescribed fire unit boundaries is challenging. As a result, prescribed fire units needed to have strong containment, well planned ignition operations, and appropriate resources to achieve the objectives of the fire.



DR. SONJA LEVERKUS AND CREW COMPLETING A PRESCRIBED BURN PROJECT AT BURNS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST,
PHOTO BY DR. SONJA LEVERKUS

Lessons Learned

Fuel Treatment Funding

- Streamlined, multi-year funding with minimal administrative burden is highly effective and results in successful wildfire mitigation programming, including treatments in complex areas with challenging terrain.
- Many community forests would not be able to operate in the WUI and larger land base around communities without external funding. The introduction of a funding structure that provides flexibility and autonomy would increase the number of community forests that would be interested and able to complete fuel treatments.
- Funding that is not bound by a fiscal year-end structure would increase the completion of treatments that require pile burning or prescribed burning. This would address the challenges this program faced with the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation and constraints on burn window timeframes.

Operational Considerations

- When conducting prescribed burns, having clear access points and reliable sources of water nearby are essential. If natural water sources are unavailable, large water tenders should be employed.
- Treatment of blocks close to Old Growth Management Areas or high Visual Quality areas require manual protection and are cost restrictive.
- The cost of treating the steeper areas was under-estimated which resulted in treatment costs being higher than anticipated.
- Hiring contractors who are already knowledgeable in fuel treatment work is a considerable benefit.
- Treatments must have flexibility regarding project goals and outcomes. Working in a variety of ecosystem types results in significant differences in the time required to complete treatments.
- Working seasons tend to be short, either due to extreme fire hazards or long winter conditions; this limits the operating windows for treatment. Due to the slow curing of cut and piled debris and high snowpack, some projects were delayed until the fall of 2023 when final burning and cleanup could be undertaken to complete the project.

- Although there is government funding going toward WRR treatments, the research still has a great deal of work to do to ensure the efficacy of these treatments for reducing the risk of wildfire to communities and community resources. Follow-up monitoring of these areas to ensure that subsequent treatment happens at key intervals needs to be based on sound data to ensure that greater wildfire risk is not created by brush encroachment and flash fuels in treatment areas.
- Multiple stand entries may be required to achieve the desired treatment specifications and meet the stated fuel management objectives.



FUEL TREATMENT PLOT CLEAN UP IN WINTER CONDITIONS, PHOTO PROVIDED BY LOWER NORTH THOMPSON COMMUNITY FOREST SOCIETY

Engagement

- Proactive and meaningful engagement is a foundational pillar of community forestry and is also necessary for conducting fuel treatments around communities. Most community forests are already proficient in communicating regularly with their communities, making them a natural point of contact for wildfire-related projects.
- Effective communications between BCWS and community forests are essential for the success of wildfire risk reduction projects, which often entail collaborative operations between multiple stakeholders.
- Community forests are often asked by members of the public about the efficacy of wildfire treatments. More extension from the research community to community forest managers would help them answer these questions.
- Multiple values must be considered and discussed with the public in order to meet visual quality objectives, stocking standards and wildfire objectives.
- Many participating community forests increased their communications around fuel treatments by creating videos for public release, engaging with the public through presentations to local groups and council members, issuing newspaper advertisements, conducting radio interviews, and utilizing social media. This ensured that the public was well informed of the treatment details, timelines, and the anticipated community benefits of these projects.



UBC RESEARCHERS CONNECTING WITH FUEL TREATMENT WORKERS AT HARROP PROCTER COMMUNITY FOREST, PHOTO BY ERIK LESLIE.

- Three Site Visit Reports were completed by the BCCFA, highlighting the project details and successes of four community forests. These documents include photos from the field and are a valuable tool for informing communications pieces on the BCCFA Economic Recovery Initiative. See Appendix A for links to the site visit reports.

“Balancing community forest tenure objectives with wildfire objectives was achieved. Meeting with residents that lived near the proposed treatment areas was very informative and important for maintaining public trust.”

— Mike Francis, Manager, Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society



YOUTH CREW IN LOGAN LAKE, PHOTO BY FORSITE

Conclusion & Recommendations

The many successes of the BCCFA CLWRR Economic Recovery Initiative provide evidence of the effective leadership of community forests in wildfire risk reduction, as well as the essential role of collaboration and partnership between BCWS and community forests. Over the span of this program, tangible lessons were learned that can be utilized to enhance and improve future treatment operations.

Maintaining a strong relationship between the BCCFA and BCWS is highly encouraged for supporting community forests in their endeavors to complete wildfire risk reduction work and protect rural communities in BC.

Wildfire risk reduction treatment projects are best implemented over several fiscal years. In general, the fuel treatments (spacing, pruning, piling) can be completed during the fiscal year, but it is challenging to finish pile burning before March 31 (fiscal year end). Piles need time to cure/dry and atmospheric venting can limit the number of days when burning can occur. This can be challenging for community forests because of their proximity to communities.

Multi-year funding will support the successful implementation of fuel treatments and encourage local contractors to retain and train workers and invest in specialized equipment for these projects. It is recommended that a flexible funding structure is developed to assist community forests in managing these complex projects on their dynamic and interactive land bases.

Community forests are willing, able, and eager to conduct wildfire treatment work in the forests around rural communities in BC. With the support of stable funding and long-term partnerships, community forests can continue to implement programs that enhance community resiliency, boost local economies, and adaptively manage for multiple important values on the land base.

“It should be noted that it would have been very difficult to complete these prescriptions alone. Community forests across the province are working very hard to reduce the risk of wildfire to communities and it is amazing to hear about the work that is being done province wide to support these initiatives. Thank you to the BCCFA, BCWS and the CLWRR program for funding this essential project and helping to reduce community wildfire risk across the province!” — Aurora Lavender, Wetzin'kwa Community Forest, former Manager

Community forests are willing, able, and eager to conduct wildfire treatment work in the forests around rural communities in BC.

Site Visit Reports

Links to site visit reports can be found below:

- **Esk'etemc Site Visit:** bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/BCCFA-Site-Visit_Report_Esketemc-Community-Forest_September-2022.pdf
- **Kaslo Site Visit:** bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/BCCFA-Site-Visit_Report_Kaslo-and-District-Community-Forest-Society_October_2022.pdf
- **Williams Lake Site Visit:** bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/BCCFA-Site-Visit_Report_Williams-Lake-Community-Forest_September-2022.pdf



POST-PREScribed BURN, PHOTO PROVIDED BY CRESTON COMMUNITY FOREST

The BC Community Forest Association is a network of community-based organizations engaged in community forest management, and those seeking to establish new community forests. We represent over 90 rural and Indigenous communities across our province. We share a vision of a network of diverse community forest initiatives, where local people practice ecologically responsible forest management in perpetuity, fostering and supporting healthy and vibrant rural communities and economies.



British Columbia
**Community
Forest**
Association

local people, local forests, local decisions

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