

In this Issue:

CWPP—
North Vancouver

CWPP—
The Process

Farewell



Why Have a CWPP?

Wildfires are a part of the natural ecological cycle of forests. But human encroachment onto forested lands increases the risk of interface fire, threatening peoples' lives and property as well as communities' infrastructure and resources.

Loss of life, property, infrastructure, and resources are threatened. One of the most dangerous operations for fire fighters involves fire suppression in the interface zone.

The intent of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is to establish a cooperative framework under which interface management programs are developed and implemented to protect human and natural resource values in an effective and efficient manner. It is a tool to identify fire risk, recommend management actions that can be utilized to minimize the risk, and provide a device to communicate and educate a commu-

nity about fire risk and management issues.

The CWPP can put into perspective the danger of wildfire in a particular community.

Some of the questions answered are what is most at risk in the region; is it the watershed, hydro facilities, homes, businesses, transportation links? By identifying some of these issues before a wildfire event, damage is minimized, danger may be abated and a community may breathe easier.

While any emergency situation is scary, the goal of a CWPP in conjunction with a comprehensive FireSmart program is to lessen the affects of such a potentially catastrophic event.



North Vancouver CWPP

In 2006 the District of North Vancouver retained a contractor to develop a CWPP for the region. The result is an assessment that takes into account the differences between a larger urban centre versus that of a more rural wildland/urban area. The writers of the plan acknowledge that 'the probability of fire in coastal communities is substantially lower when compared to the interior of British Columbia' but they also point out that 'the consequences of a large fire are likely to be very significant in lower mainland interface communities given population size, values at risk, and environmental considerations.' In short, the density of population would not allow the District to ignore the need to prepare for the eventuality.

The results of this study will not only provide the District with a comprehensive plan to deal with wildfire but provides a frame-

work by which 'to guide the development of emergency plans, emergency response, communication and education programs, bylaw development in areas of fire risk, and the management of forest lands adjacent to the community.'

The District of North Vancouver CWPP goes on to mark out specific goals and objectives including: Communication and Education, Structure Protection, Emergency Response, Training, Fuel Management and Wildfire

Rehabilitation Planning. The resulting CWPP is a common sense plan that can be completed in stages without burdening the municipality with undue expenses, and will ensure any dollars spent are part of an overarching plan. It is well thought out with all substantial risks identified and plans to deal with each. For more information on emergency services go to: <http://www.nsemo.org>.



To Date in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person Caused 200

Lighting Caused 328

Total Number of Fires Actioned 528

Hectares burnt 7560

Number of Incidents Responded To this year 1890

Fire Danger Rating



Low

Be Safe!



The CWPP Process

Step 1 - Application for Funding.

Applications for funding can be submitted electronically at <https://ground.hpr.for.gov.bc.ca/cwpp2006programprofessional.htm>. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by letter from the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) Program Manager. A BCEID is required to submit an application for funding. It is strongly recommended that funding applications are coordinated with the local Ministry of Forests and Range (MFR) fuel management representative.

Step 2 - Application Review.

Submitted applications for funding are reviewed by UBCM and MFR Fuel Management staff against specific program criteria. Communities may be contacted to provide additional information or clarification.

Step 3 - Application Approval.

If the application meets all the criteria for the program, a letter of approval will be sent to the community by the UBCM Program Manager confirming the availability of funds for use as described in the application. Once approved, any changes or variations to the project must be approved, in advance, by the UBCM Project Manager or disbursement of funds will be interrupted.

Funds are not transferable to other projects.

Step 4 - Community Completes the CWPP.

The community then completes the plan as detailed in the Funding Submission. Note that Fire / fuel behavior expertise must be solicited when the plan is prepared. If the plan contains information with regard to higher level plans—forest policy, impact statements (timber harvest, environmental, etc.) - then review by a Registered Professional Forester will be required. Two copies of the final CWPP report must be submitted in print to the UBCM Program Manager and electronically via their site.

Step 5 - CWPP Final Report Approval.

Completed CWPPs are reviewed by UBCM and MFR staff to ensure they contain the mandatory elements in sufficient and accurate detail. Clarifications and additional information may be requested by the prior to approving the plan.

Step 6 - CWPP Final Report Approval.

Once a CWPP has been approved, and the UBCM Chief Financial Officer has approved the expenses, project funding is disbursed to the community. The approved CWPP, including any lessons the community learned in the process, will be posted publicly as a legacy for other communities.

Farewell for the Winter

We hope you enjoyed reading the Coastal Wildfire News as much as we did producing it. When we developed the concept last spring, we hoped to provide some insight and depth of understanding of our very unique business.

As we prepared for a busy season this year—all the weather forecasters had given us a heads up, and we were getting ready—we had put together some articles that we hoped would help explain what we were about.

We knew we had the fuels. The forecasters warned of the weather and heat. All we needed was the spark. The weather gave us that, too.

Our danger class rose to incredible heights early in the spring. The weather station at D'arcy near Pemberton had the highest Build Up Index (a measure of available fuels) in the province this year, right behind Lytton.

Then the lightning started. Our first storms ar-

rived Jun 10-15. The lightning continued to strike the Coastal Fire Centre area almost non-stop for all of July and August. By the beginning of September, the number of fires on the coast were the highest recorded since we started counting in 1985.

Despite that, we had no fatalities, few injuries (none serious) and no homes lost. We are very proud of the hard work of our crews, staff and all those to who stepped in to help us out.

This is the last of the Wildfire News for 2009. We plan to use the winter to develop some more informative articles for you for next summer. If you have any suggestions on what you would like us to cover please e-mail us at FORHPRP.INFOCO@gov.bc.ca, and we'll do our best.

We hope you have a safe and happy winter. We'll be back next year—just like the wildfires will be!