



Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy

Taking Action Together



Canadian Council
of Forest
Ministers



Conseil canadien
des ministres
des forêts

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Introduction

Wildland fires are a natural hazard¹ that occur across Canada's landscapes, including forests, tundra, shrub lands, and grasslands. Wildland fires also are a vital element for sustaining healthy and diverse forest ecosystems. However, wildland fires can become a concern when they threaten people, communities, and other forest-based values, such as infrastructure, timber supply, and areas of cultural significance.

Wildland fires in Canada are happening more often and are getting worse. One of the main reasons for this is climate change², along with factors such as the increasing wildland-urban interface and historical wildland fire suppression approaches.



Aftermath of wildland fire in the Northwest Territories.

Canada experienced a record-breaking wildland fire season in 2023. A historic record was set for the total amount of land burned and greenhouse gases emitted, and the number of firefighting personnel (including international support) mobilized³. Millions of Canadians across the country were impacted. Some people had to leave their homes or lost their belongings, while others grieved loved ones. Communities were damaged, businesses ceased operations, and the poor air quality impaired breathing and overall health.

The causes and impacts of wildland fires are broad and go beyond economic, geographic, and social boundaries. The growing complexity of wildland fires requires attention and action from all of society. No government, organization, or entity can address the prevention and mitigation of wildland fires alone. It is a job for all of us, and everyone has a role to play.



What is prevention and mitigation?

Prevention and Mitigation⁴ – to adapt to, eliminate or reduce the risks of disasters to protect lives, property, the environment, and reduce economic disruption. Includes structural mitigative measures and (for example, building materials and vegetation management), non-structural mitigative measures (for example, building codes, land-use planning, and insurance incentives). Prevention and mitigation may be considered independently, or one may include the other.

¹ Hazard refers to a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation.

² Environment and Climate Change Canada. (2019). Canada's Changing Climate Report. <https://changingclimate.ca/CCCR2019/>

³ Jain, P., Barber, Q., Taylor, S., et al. (2024). Canada Under Fire – Drivers and Impacts of the Record-Breaking 2024 Wildfire Season. <https://essopenarchive.org/users/747500/articles/719254-canada-under-fire-drivers-and-impacts-of-the-record-breaking-2023-wildfire-season>.

⁴ Public Safety Canada. (2017). Emergency Management Framework for Canada. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2017-mrgnc-mngmnt-frmwrk/index-en.aspx>

As a result, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) has spearheaded the development of the Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy (the Strategy)⁵. The Strategy aims to provide a cohesive vision of wildland fire prevention and mitigation to mobilize collective action and reduce the negative impacts of wildland fire. Canada can, and must, be united, in its approach to adapting to, and living with, wildland fire. **By taking action together, we can inform, empower and equip citizens, communities and businesses to proactively reduce their risk from wildland fire.**

In the Strategy, the term “wildland fire” refers to unplanned fires within forested landscapes, including industrial and agricultural areas, and where communities and built infrastructure mix with forests. The Strategy uses “we” and “our” to symbolize all sectors of society as a collective.

The Strategy reflects over two years of engagement by the CCFM with municipal, provincial, territorial, federal and self-governments, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representatives, academia, industry, and many others across Canada. Together, our combined efforts can build a more wildland fire resilient society.

Airtanker dropping fire retardant over a Saskatchewan forest.



Clearing and burning vegetation in the Yukon.

⁵ Québec contributes to the work of the CCFM according to its priorities and in accordance with its jurisdiction over forest management. As Québec is already involved in forest fire prevention and mitigation on its territory, it acts as a member-observer of the CCFM’s Forest Fire Management Working Group. In this sense, Québec is not bound by the targets, objectives and commitments of the Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy.

A Call to Action

Wildland fire management agencies cannot achieve a resilient future alone. No matter how large or small the activity, every sector and individual has a role to play. The CCFM is calling to action all sectors of society to participate in the Strategy to build greater resilience to wildland fire. The Strategy highlights the need for a whole-of-society approach and builds upon the progress already made by all governments, Indigenous Peoples, and other partners to manage wildland fire.

The Strategy outlines a set of goals, commitments, and targets to provide a clear path forward for wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts in Canada. This approach recognizes that contributions and implementation will vary across the country, based on existing programs and diverse needs. Sustained leadership is pivotal and CCFM partners have committed to being at the forefront. We will only be successful if all of society is involved.

Whole-of-society partners, including all governments, Indigenous Peoples, private sector, and individuals are invited to actively contribute to prevention and mitigation efforts based on their sphere of responsibility, influence, and capability. Activities can be tailored to align with the unique priorities and geographically diverse needs of each partner. Wildland fire resilience depends on the involvement of individuals and entities committing to collective action and mobilizing others to do the same.



Wildland fire crew extinguishing hotspots in British Columbia.



Community members clearing vegetation to reduce wildland fire risk in Newfoundland.

Who is included in a whole-of-society approach?



A whole-of-society approach includes:

- All federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and self-governments
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations, and businesses
- Private sector, including (but not limited to) the construction and insurance sectors
- Non-governmental organizations
- Schools and academia
- Community groups and clubs
- Individuals

This Strategy will create a more wildland fire resilient Canada by:

- Helping and motivating Canadians to be informed and prepared for wildland fire risks.
- Focusing on building capacity in our communities, businesses and in our own backyards.
- Improving our ability to collaborate and coordinate work across jurisdictions.
- Protecting and strengthening public safety, health, and wellbeing.
- Building on the successful work already done across Canada.
- Accepting wildland fire on the landscape, where appropriate.
- Achieving multiple benefits for all, including ecosystem health and economic stability.

Background

Wildland fire is a natural process and has an essential role as part of ecosystem regeneration. Eliminating wildland fire is not possible, nor would it be beneficial. Thus, jurisdictions and partners across Canada must learn to balance the risk and benefits of wildland fire.

Canada is experiencing longer and more intense wildland fires. Multiple wildland events are happening simultaneously, causing greater impacts on communities, economies, and the environment. In 2023, approximately 15 million hectares of land burned during the wildland fire season. This total amount of land, which is about three times the size of Nova Scotia, shattered the 1989 record of 6.7 million hectares and is more than seven times the average of the past 10 years⁶.

Northern, rural, and Indigenous communities often face disproportionate negative impacts from wildland fires. Collaborating with Indigenous Peoples and communities is fundamental to reducing wildland fire risk and deciding what actions to take. It also provides the opportunity to learn from the deep body of local and Indigenous knowledge. Ultimately, this will increase the resilience of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and contribute towards meaningful reconciliation.



Drummers at the British Columbia Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit.

⁶ Skakun, R.; Castilla, G.; Metsaranta, J. et al. (2022). Extending the National Burned Area Composite Time Series of Wildfires in Canada. Remote Sensing, 14, 3050. DOI:10.3390/rs14133050

The CCFM, representing the federal, provincial, and territorial governments responsible for forestry and/or wildland fire management, recognizes that wildland fires are a critical issue for Canadians. Suppression activities alone (for example firefighting) will not be adequate to address the increasing challenges posed by wildland fires⁷. Measures are needed to prevent and mitigate risks before they occur, especially for the most at-risk communities.

Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM)



The [CCFM](#) provides a forum for federal, provincial, and territorial governments to collaborate on common forest and forestry-related issues important to Canada and the world. The CCFM establishes the united direction for wildland fire management in Canada by cooperating with all governments, Indigenous Peoples, non-governmental, and private organizations. The CCFM Wildland Fire Management Working Group is responsible for developing and carrying out wildland fire policies and actions.

The [Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy](#) (2005) highlighted the emerging trends and conditions contributing to increased wildland fire threat and risk including climate change, community and resource expansion into landscapes, and declining forest health.

When the [Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy](#) (2016) was updated, these trends were found to be accelerating faster than anticipated⁸. Notably, Canada's national wildland fire response capacity was continuously exhausted and that national and international resource sharing had become an annual requirement. The renewed Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy acknowledged that although great gains had been made in wildland fire suppression capacity, more work needed to be done to prevent and mitigate wildland fires.



Wildland fire crews from Spain getting ready to depart for Canada.



A wildland fire in Manitoba.

⁷ Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. (2021). CCFM Wildland Fire Management Working Group, Action Plan 2021-2026. <https://www.ccfm.org/releases/wildland-fire-management-working-group-action-plan-2021-2026>

⁸ Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. (2016). Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy. A 10-year review and renewed call to action. <https://ostrnrcan-dostrncan.canada.ca/entities/publication/e15e651e-7359-48f9-8f7b-7713bd0b6ae9>

In 2022, the CCFM held the [Canadian Dialogue on Wildland Fire and Forest Resilience](#) (the Dialogue). This event brought together representatives from approximately 100 organizations across society including Indigenous leaders, firefighting agencies, public safety organizations, municipalities, researchers, forest industry representatives, and more. The purpose of the Dialogue was to develop the foundational elements of a whole-of-society Strategy, and to kick-start new connections and partnerships that would form the basis of new initiatives.

Key Themes from the Dialogue What We Heard Report



- Staying the course is not an option; the time for change is now.
- Wildland fire is a climate change adaptation issue; responses and activities must align with other adaptation efforts.
- A whole-of-society approach is mandatory; government leadership is critical.
- Access to data is critical to inform resilience-building activities.
- Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous knowledge must be recognized, respected, and included in Canada's wildland fire management.
- Stable and significant investments are needed now to avoid guaranteed disaster response costs in the future.
- FireSmartTMCanada⁹ works and needs to be implemented across the country.



In 2023, the CCFM conducted additional engagement on the Strategy's goals and outcomes, further building upon input received from the Dialogue. The opportunity to inform and provide input on the Strategy continues. The CCFM is committed to fostering new relationships and strengthen existing ones with whole-of-society partners to build a more wildland fire resilient Canada. As such, the Strategy can be seen as the building block for future conversations, nurturing new collaborations and encouraging cooperation on wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts across the country.

⁹ FireSmart, Intelli-feu and other associated Marks are trademarks of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC).

Risks and Impacts of Wildland Fire in Canada

The risk that wildland fires pose to people, infrastructure, cultural values, and the environment is increasing because of various factors that include changes to climate and changes in how people live, work, and play on the land. For example, more people are living in rural and/or semi-rural areas. Demand for rural recreation property is increasing and industries and infrastructure are expanding into forested areas (also known as the wildland-urban interface).

Decades of wildland fire suppression approaches, such as discouraging the intentional use of fire on the land by Indigenous Peoples or extinguishing small wildland fires near communities, have changed the makeup of Canada's landscape. This has led to a build up of flammable vegetation (trees, shrubs, or grassland). The forest's natural ability to recover from a wildland fire has been interrupted, making it easier for them to spread to where people live.



Wildland-urban interface

The Wildland-urban interface (WUI)¹⁰ areas are where the built environment meets or mixes with wildland vegetation (trees, shrubs, or grassland). Across Canada, the WUI accounts for 32.3 million hectares of land. Approximately 96% of Canadian communities have some areas that intersect with forests.

A wildland-urban interface fire in Nova Scotia.

Wildland fire can harm society, cultural values, people, the environment, and the economy. Effects includes health problems from smoke, strain on residents, evacuees, and first responders, damage to the environment (for example, loss of trees and plants) and a higher risk of floods¹¹. Furthermore, there are substantial economic repercussions, such as expenses for wildland fire suppression, evacuations, infrastructure damage, loss of property, loss of timber values, as well as disruptions to industry, tourism, and agriculture¹².

¹⁰ Johnston, L. M., & Flannigan, M. D. (2017). Mapping Canadian wildland fire interface areas. *International Journal of Wildland Fire*, 27(1), 1-14. DOI: 10.1071/WF16221

¹¹ Morton, D. C., Roessing, M. E., Camp, A. E., & Tyrrell, M. L. (2003). Assessing the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Wildfire. GISF Research Paper 001. Forest Health Initiative. Yale University. School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry. 360 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut, 06511 USA

¹² Bénichou N., Adelzadeh M., Singh J., et al. (2021). National Guide for Wildland-Urban Interface Fires. National Research Council Canada: Ottawa, ON. 192 pp. <https://nrc-publications.canada.ca/eng/view/object/?id=3a0b337f-f980-418f-8ad8-6045d1abc3b3>

Wildland fire impacts Indigenous communities differently because of their unique vulnerabilities and location, such as socioeconomic inequities, housing conditions, and infrastructure challenges. Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected by wildland fire and face greater risk of evacuation, threats to communities, infrastructure, and resources. First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities have distinct identities and cultures, each facing unique realities, needs and priorities when adapting to wildland fire. Current approaches to evaluating at-risk communities and allocating emergency management resources do not always align with needs or capacity. As a result, challenges for wildland fire management and actions to support risk reduction are created. This understanding is crucial to effectively supporting inclusive and equitable approaches to wildland fire risk management and upholding the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination.

Safeguarding the lives of Canadians remains the top priority for all governments. Consequently, reducing the risks and impacts that wildland fire poses to public safety is a key priority for wildland fire management agencies.



Wildland fire in the Northwest Territories.



Smoke plume dominating the sky in the Northwest Territories.

The Roles of Prevention and Mitigation

Wildland fire suppression will always be essential, and Canada has the know-how to meet this challenge. Emergency management efforts in Canada have largely consisted of preparedness and response activities¹³. However, suppression alone is no longer adequate to address the growing challenges from wildland fire. **Wildland fire management in Canada needs to be transformed.** This transformation can only be achieved by taking a more proactive approach to preventing and mitigating risks before they occur.



Wildfire Community Preparedness Day in Manitoba.

Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)

The [CIFFC](#) has the mandate to operationalize pan-Canadian prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response recovery activities in partnership with the CCFM Wildland Fire Management Working Group. Its committees and working groups, with representation from wildland fire management agencies from across Canada can plan, coordinate, and deliver on actions related to wildland fire prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. With its Resiliency and Partnerships Division, where FireSmart Canada is a key prevention and mitigation program, CIFFC is positioned to take an enhanced leadership role and support the efforts of all jurisdictions to expand FireSmart Canada programs.

Over the past decades, collaborative efforts occurred to significantly advanced emergency management and disaster risk reduction within Canada. These efforts are reflected in various pan-Canadian strategies and actions, including: [Emergency Management Framework for Canada](#) (2017); [Emergency Management Strategy for Canada: Toward a Resilient 2030](#) (2019); an expanded mandate of the CIFFC to include prevention and mitigation (2020); the [CCFM Wildland Fire Management Working Group, Action Plan](#) (2021); the [CIFFC Prevention and Mitigation Action Plan](#) (2022); and the [National Risk Profile](#) (2023).



United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)

The [United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) coordinates international efforts in disaster risk reduction. Canada has joined the global Framework which promotes a whole-of-society approach to disaster management that focuses on inclusive and accessible practices for all.

The Emergency Management Framework (2017) and the Emergency Management Strategy for Canada (2019) advances the implementation and foundational principles of the Sendai Framework.

¹³ Public Safety Canada. (2019). Emergency Management Strategy for Canada: Toward a Resilient 2030. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgncy-mngmnt-strtg/index-en.aspx>

Prevention and mitigation occur in tandem with climate adaptation. This Strategy further aligns with climate change adaptation strategies and initiatives including [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) (2016); [A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#) (2020); and [Canada's National Adaptation Strategy](#) (NAS) (2023). The NAS calls for greater uptake of prevention and disaster risk reduction actions to reduce wildland fire impacts on communities.

Of equal significance, provincial, territorial, self-governments, and Indigenous Peoples have developed and implemented strategies, frameworks, and actions to further enhance prevention and mitigation efforts in collaboration with various partners. These entities play a crucial role in advancing collective action within their jurisdictions, especially concerning natural resource and land management, emergency management, and the collection of data and information to better understand wildland fire risks. (See Annex B for information and reports on provincial, territorial, and federal prevention and mitigation initiatives).

In Canada, prevention and mitigation activities in Canada can include prescribed fires, traditional cultural burning practices, and promoting the growth or elimination of certain vegetation (shrubs, grasses, and herbs). For centuries, Indigenous Peoples have focused on preventative burning techniques to mimic natural burn cycles. Traditional cultural burning plays a significant role in lowering wildland fire risk by managing combustible material and controlling the frequency, timing, and severity of fires.

Using fire to fight fire

Prescribed and traditional cultural burning are land management tools to reduce wildland fire risk and can increase ecosystem resilience (for example habitat enhancement, preparation for tree planting and disease elimination).

Prescribed burning is the deliberate and planned use of fire to a specific land area¹⁴.

Traditional cultural burning refers to intentional fire on the land to achieve cultural objectives¹⁵. These objectives can include promoting the growth of medicinal and food plants, cultural and language preservation, pest reduction and access to forest products.

Cultural burning has existed since time immemorial and holds different meanings for different Indigenous communities.



Top: Prescribed burn in British Columbia.

Bottom: Prescribed burn in Yukon.

¹⁴ Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre Glossary was used for the definition of prescribed fire.

¹⁵ FireSmart™ Canada. (2020). Blazing the Trail: Celebrating Indigenous Fire Stewardship. <https://firesmartcanada.ca/product/blazing-the-trail-celebrating-indigenous-fire-stewardship/>



Kluane First Nation councillor Bertha Doris using a drip torch to ignite a prescribed burn at Duke Meadows.

Good fire revitalizes the landscape and supports culture in Yukon

Story by Haley Ritchie (Government of Yukon)

The Yukon Handgames Championships are an annual tradition for First Nations across Yukon – an opportunity to gather, compete, and share stories, laughter, and food. Burning the site for the event just a few months prior might seem counterintuitive, but it was just what was needed to make the 2023 Championships a success.

Kluane First Nation Elders had observed the vast open meadow, an important cultural gathering site, become overgrown with yellowed grasses and scrubby vegetation during their lifetime. The Kluane Handgames Planning Committee suggested that a burn could be used to help “reset” the ecosystem. Committee members, Kluane First Nation Council, and Yukon Wildland Fire Management worked together to plan and execute the burn.

After months of careful planning, the burn at Duke Meadows took place on May 17, 2023. A helicopter and firefighters were on deck to ensure control, wet down nearby areas and extinguish the burn when the task was done.

Over the following months, the rich blackened soil gave rise to fresh green grasses and fireweed. By the time the Championships took place in July, the lush green meadow was a perfect spot for a big cultural gathering.

“I’m really glad that it happened because it was looking pretty yellow and dry down there. For it to green up for all our guests that were coming to Kluane, it was very much needed.”

– Marissa Mills, Member of the Kluane Handgames Planning Committee

“These kinds of activities should happen more, and the more people in the community we can get involved – from young to old – the better.”

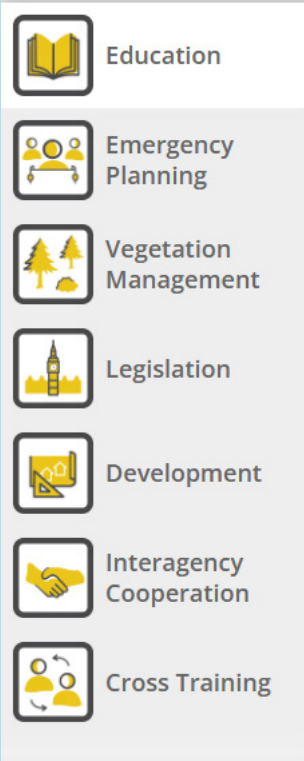
– Doug Cote, Yukon Wildland Fire Management Emergency Response Officer



Considering the known benefits and progress to date by the organizations and partners involved in wildland fire management, there is an opportunity to enhance and better coordinate our collective efforts. Prevention and mitigation need to be considered in everyday decisions to transform wildland fire management and build a resilient Canada.

There are many opportunities¹⁶ to enhance wildland fire prevention and mitigation capabilities across the country:

- Reducing hazardous fuels (shrubs, grassland, or any flammable vegetation).
- Expanding landscape wildland fire management activities.
- Assessing wildland fire hazard through modelling.
- Adopting standards for community expansion and developments.
- Enhancing our commitment to implementing CIFFC's FireSmart Canada tools, principles, and measures.
- Engaging whole-of-society partners to increase our collective knowledge and understanding of wildland fire risk in Canada.
- Educating the public on how to limit human-caused wildland fires.



FireSmart Canada

[FireSmart Canada](#) is a program and brand within CIFFC's Resiliency and Partnership Division. FireSmart Canada leads the development of resources, programs and recommendations designed to empower the public and increase neighbourhood resilience to wildland fire across Canada. These resources, programs, and tools can be used by individual homeowners, landscape planners, forest managers and others to provide advice on how to protect homes and communities.

FireSmart programming is implemented through seven disciplines.

The infographic lists seven disciplines, each with an icon: Education (book), Emergency Planning (people with arrows), Vegetation Management (trees and fire), Legislation (tower), Development (house and triangle), Interagency Cooperation (handshake), and Cross Training (people with arrows). A black arrow points from the text 'FireSmart programming is implemented through seven disciplines.' to the 'Cross Training' icon.

Source: FireSmart Canada

¹⁶ The list of opportunities to increase prevention and mitigation capability has been adapted from the [CCFM Canadian Wildland Fire Management Strategy: A 10-year Review and Renewed Call to Action](#)

The Path Forward: A United Approach

This Strategy highlights a united approach towards a more wildland fire resilient Canada. It expresses a bold and unifying vision for our desired future state, laying the groundwork for both individual and collective actions across four goals. This Strategy is intended for all of us with equity and inclusion at the heart of our shared goals.



A vision for enhancing wildfire resilience across Canada

Vision: A resilient Canada where all parts of society are prepared, empowered, and engaged in preventing and mitigating the negative impacts of wildland fires.

The future is one of unity where all parts of society coordinate and work together to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts caused by wildland fire. Groups collaborate using the best available Indigenous and Western knowledge, to create inclusive, common practices and shared responsibilities that everyone can follow and participate in. Promoting awareness, education, and action with a commitment to building prevention and mitigation capacity will better position Canada to maintain healthy and sustainable landscapes, while minimizing wildland fire risk and negative impacts.

Recognizing the urgency of acting together, the Strategy is guided by commitments and targets to set priority actions on challenges we are already facing today and over the years to come. Everyone should be empowered to make choices that resonate with their values and are meaningful to their individual circumstance. Under each commitment, additional information is provided to guide whole-of-society actions, so that everyone can take action. The Strategy acknowledges the significant interconnections amongst the goals and commitments, highlighting that actions in one area have the potential to support positive outcomes in another.



Goal – Enhance Whole-of-Society Collaboration and Coordination


Enhance coordinated prevention and mitigation efforts across all sectors through common/shared understanding and use of standardized practices.

Commitment – A pan-Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation group will be established to help identify and mobilize whole-of-society actions on wildland fire prevention and mitigation.

A pan-Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation group will provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and strengthened relationships between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, CCFM jurisdictions, and other whole-of-society partners.

The establishment of this group will increase opportunities to develop prevention and mitigation standards and best practices across Canada. It will also support the ongoing delivery of the goals and commitments outlined within this Strategy, through regular reporting opportunities and status updates. The CCFM looks to the CIFFC as the owner of FireSmart Canada to implement the advisory committee of this group.

Actions to implement this commitment:

- 
- Actively contribute to the development of solutions related to wildland fire prevention and mitigation needs.
 - Participate in information and knowledge sharing opportunities to build and enhance activities related to wildland fire prevention and mitigation.
 - Promote coordination, collaboration, and inclusivity to develop equitable recommendations or programming representative of all interests.


Women wildland firefighters in New Brunswick.



Commitment – Develop and make available wildland fire risk assessment and risk planning resources and promote their adoption and integration across all sectors of society.

Wildland fire risk reduction practices need to be inclusive, equitable, accessible and account for specific local and regional characteristics to be successful. Equity will be prioritized from planning to implementation of risk management strategies. The development and implementation of wildland fire risk assessment and risk planning resources will ensure risk is measured and assessed consistently across all sectors.

Actions to implement this commitment:

- 
- Understand the wildland fire risk around your home and community.
 - Learn how wildland fire risk is determined and become familiar with risk resources and terminology.
 - Utilize and apply wildland fire risk information as part of individual and/or local prevention and mitigation initiatives.


Goal – Strengthen First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Partnerships


Strengthen partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous leadership, traditional practices and Indigenous knowledge systems in wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts.

Commitment – Collectively advance collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations to remove barriers to participation and provide long-term support for Indigenous-led wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts.

Indigenous leadership and knowledge are critical to increasing wildland fire resilience. Collaborating with Indigenous partners on wildland fire prevention and mitigation activities, will help identify capacity needs and develop opportunities to remove barriers and support Indigenous-led initiatives. Indigenous Peoples have valuable knowledge about wildland fires due to their cultural heritage and connection to the landscape. This knowledge must be respected as an equally valid approach to shaping wildland fire policy, programs, and decision-making processes. Advancing collaborative solutions requires equitable distribution of resources and that Indigenous Peoples are full and equal partners in decisions that affect their communities. This includes co-development, and sharing the pen while respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis research protocols and data sovereignty.

Actions to implement this commitment:

- 
- Foster a culture of equity, inclusivity, and self-determination with Indigenous partners and communities to support diverse and unique wildland fire management needs.
 - Value, recognize and ensure the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems and practices in advancing prevention and mitigation efforts.
 - Create space for Indigenous-led prevention and mitigation opportunities across and within jurisdictions by removing barriers to participation.
 - Provide long-term support for self-determined actions in addressing the wildland fire prevention and mitigation priorities of Indigenous Peoples.



Cultural burn practitioner, Michela Carrière, demonstrates making a torch from birch bark and tree sap in Saskatchewan.



A cultural fire on the Saskatchewan River Delta¹⁷.

¹⁷ Muskrats to Moose Project Team. (2023). *We Are Fire: A Toolkit for Applying Indigenous-led Fire Practices and Western Fire Management in the Saskatchewan River Delta*. <http://www.werefire.ca/>

Goal – Increase Knowledge and Understanding

Increase collective awareness and understanding across all sectors of society to enhance wildland fire prevention and mitigation practices.

Commitment – Public awareness campaigns aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of wildland fire prevention and mitigation actions across whole-of-society will be developed.

A public awareness campaign will enhance awareness and elevate the public profile of wildland fire prevention and mitigation principles to audiences across all provinces and territories. The campaigns will be tailored to diverse audiences, ensuring inclusivity through meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. These initiatives will complement other efforts, fostering the adoption of risk reduction actions across Canada. In addition to developing public awareness campaign(s), wildland fire management agencies will assess the effectiveness of these public awareness campaign(s).

Actions to implement this commitment:



- Proactively increase awareness and understanding of wildland fire prevention and mitigation.
- Seek opportunities to promote prevention and mitigation awareness and understanding within your communities.



Raising awareness at a Wildfire Community Preparedness event in Prince Edward Island.



Community Leadership Builds Wildfire Awareness and Resilience in Chateau Village, Nova Scotia

At the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Chateau Village Property Owners' Association (CVPOA), the provincial Wildfire Prevention Officer was invited to provide a FireSmart presentation. After the presentation the CVPOA Board of Directors decided to become a FireSmart community.

The project started with a community assessment, organizing CVPOA's first Wildfire Community Preparedness Day and community-based clean-ups.

With a \$15,000 community wildfire prevention grant, the CVPOA Board of Directors created a FireSmart residential demonstration site around the community's sugar shack. To reduce the vulnerability of the building and property to wildfire, FireSmart home and vegetation treatments were completed within three zones: the Home/Immediate Zone, the Intermediate Zone and the Extended Zone. Posters were placed on each side of the building to explain the FireSmart home and vegetation treatments within each zone.

The demonstration site is an important community learning resource where residents are able to see tangible ways to reduce wildfire risk around their own homes. Community members now gather annually at the sugar shack for a community wildfire awareness day and continue to work together to manage wildfire risk in and around the Chateau Village community.

In 2022, Chateau Village proudly became the second Nova Scotia community to be FireSmart under the Neighbourhood Recognition Program.

“You get all these charts on paper and all of that – but this gives people something to visualize what it is really. Someone can walk in there and imagine what their property could look like.”

– Marcel Simard, Director of Chateau Village Property Owners Association

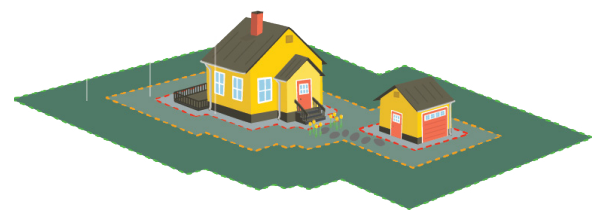


Community members transformed a sugar shack into a FireSmart demonstration site.

Top: After
Middle: During



EXTENDED ZONE
10 m to 30 m
INTERMEDIATE ZONE
1.5 m to 10 m
IMMEDIATE ZONE
0 m to 1.5 m



Source: FireSmart Canada

“It's amazing that this community and other communities in the area are taking a leadership approach to wildfire mitigation.”

– Jennifer Daniels, Nova Scotia FireSmart Neighbourhood Recognition Program and Advanced Home Assessment Specialist

Commitment – Training targeted at increasing wildland fire prevention and mitigation expertise across Canada will be developed.

Training will be current, cohesive, and based on widely accepted best practices and recommendations. Targeted training will assist in filling current gaps in prevention and mitigation expertise across Canada.

Actions to implement this commitment:

- Identify gaps in training or knowledge related to wildland fire prevention and mitigation expertise in workplaces and communities.
- Participate in training or learning opportunities to improve wildland fire prevention and mitigation knowledge, awareness, and best management practices.



Wildland firefighter training at the British Columbia Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit.

Goal – Expand Investments in Prevention and Mitigation

Expand investments, incentives, and programs to increase whole-of-society participation and uptake in preventing and reducing the impact of wildland fires.

Commitment – Recognizing the need for sustained investment and focus to increase wildland fire resiliency, incentives and support programs will be created and/or enhanced to support the advancement of wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts.

The development of innovative approaches, incentives and financial support programs will increase prevention and mitigation capacity across Canada. Thus, making landscapes more resilient, supporting risk planning, and lowering the overall economic impact of wildland fires. Increasing the number of prevention and mitigation practitioners developing cutting-edge methods for sustainably managed forests, and dedicating resources for communities to be wildland fire ready may also be included. New or enhanced investments will increase opportunities for whole-of-society participation. The economic, social, health and cultural resilience of people, communities, and the environment will also be strengthened.

Actions to implement this commitment:



- Increase incentive or capacity building initiatives such as prevention and mitigation program allocations, financial incentives, grants, and training programs. Thus, meeting demand for long-term investments and a stronger emphasis on preventing and mitigating wildland fires.
- Increase involvement in wildland fire prevention and mitigation planning and governance.



Igniting ground cover with a drip torch in British Columbia.

Moving to Implementation: What's Next

Prevention and mitigation work is already underway across the country. This Strategy and its future implementation plan will help coordinate and monitor efforts and assess progress towards the goals. As a “living” Strategy, it will continue to evolve as progress is made.

This Strategy and implementation actions will evolve based on:

- **Best available knowledge as research and science advance.**
- **Feedback from partners and stakeholders.**
- **Outcomes from implementation actions.**
- **Monitoring and assessment of our progress.**

Sustained leadership and a commitment to continuing the process of engagement with whole-of-society partners will be important. Maintaining cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among CCFM jurisdictions and with partners will ensure that performance measures and targets are achieved in a way that benefits everyone.



Airtanker releasing water over an Ontario wildland fire.

What's next?

- The CCFM will develop a collective implementation plan to guide CCFM activities and leverage the efforts of other implementation partners.
- Indigenous communities and organizations are already taking the lead in reducing the risk of wildland fires and adapting to the effects of climate change. CCFM will coordinate additional dialogue with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to co-develop meaningful targets related to this Strategy.
- The active involvement of industry, private sector and local governments as implementation partners is crucial to build a more wildland fire resilient Canada. The CCFM will facilitate further discussions to foster new relationships and strengthen current partnerships, aiming to collaboratively establish impactful targets.
- 2024 and 2025 will be focused on developing and establishing training opportunities; developing a risk-assessment framework; increasing public awareness; and understanding of wildland fire prevention and mitigation; and bringing people together to support whole-of-society in reducing wildland fire risk.
- In 2026 and beyond, efforts will be focused on providing tools for wildland fire risk planning, as well as the introduction of new or enhanced investments and incentives that support wildland fire prevention and mitigation efforts across whole-of-society.

“The mitigation worked”: FireSmart measures successfully protect Rainbow Lake, AB in 2023

A 2023 wildfire that might have otherwise burned straight through the community of Rainbow Lake, Alberta, was instead mitigated thanks to years of FireSmart preparations.

Collaborating with Alberta Wildfire, forestry companies and the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta, the town began systematically mitigating wildfire risks and potential impacts in 2013. Over ten years, FireSmart projects focused on fuel mitigation measures including strategic harvesting, thinning trees, mulching, removing ladder fuels¹⁸ and installing two fire breaks. Rainbow Lake contracted Tall Cree First Nation mitigation crews for this work.

Due to the town being located in a fire-prone area, community leaders knew it was inevitable that a wildfire would ignite nearby one day. Using mitigation techniques, their goal was to buy time by slowing the fire down.

In May of 2023 a wildfire ignited near the community and made it past both fire breaks. However, the mitigations allowed plenty of time for residents to safely evacuate. Fire crews held the fire in the mitigation zone until it burned out. With very little damage to the town itself, the FireSmart preparations had been successful.

Going forward, Rainbow Lake officials will continue to work with homeowners, industry and Alberta Wildfire to implement FireSmart mitigation measures for enhanced community resilience.

“Given the changing conditions over these last few years, given the prevalence of fire on the landscape, these types of initiatives are no longer a theory – they need to be a must-have for any community like ours in a forested area.”

– Dan Fletcher, Director of Emergency Management

“The FireSmart measures helped us to keep the fire out of the community and slow it down. It dropped the fire down to the ground which allowed our wildfire crews to get in and knock it flat. It also kept the embers from getting pushed into the community.”

– James Barnhill, Fire Chief



Fuel mitigation work, which helped protect the Town of Rainbow Lake, Alberta from wildfire in 2023.

Top: Before

Bottom: After

¹⁸ According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre Glossary, ladder fuels are fuels that provide vertical continuity between the ground surface fuels and crown fuels, thus contributing to the ease of torching and crowning.

Measuring progress

Implementation of the Strategy and progress towards achieving the goals and commitments will be monitored, assessed, and reported on regularly by the CCFM. To effectively measure progress towards achieving the Strategy's goals and commitments, the establishment of baseline measurements is needed. In some cases, it has been identified as an important step of this Strategy's implementation plan. Initial targets have been developed that support varying states of baseline information and individual programs.



Wildland firefighter in Prince Edward Island.

Targets

The following initial targets have been chosen to help measure progress towards achieving the commitments within this Strategy. Additional targets may be added following further engagement with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, and other stakeholders.

- In 2024, a Canadian Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation group is established and includes representation from whole-of-society partners.
- In 2024, public awareness campaigns aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of wildland fire prevention and mitigation are launched, including mechanisms to measure public understanding and campaign effectiveness.
- In 2025, all CCFM jurisdictions establish dedicated prevention and mitigation governance structures which includes opportunities for whole-of-society leadership.
- In 2025, targeted training across jurisdictions, sectors, industries, and communities to strengthen expertise in prevention and mitigation are developed and made available.
- In 2025, a Wildland Fire Risk Assessment Framework to inform future risk planning and mitigation activities is developed in collaboration with whole-of-society partners.
- In 2026, toolkits and other wildland fire risk planning resources are developed and are easily accessible to support all communities in reducing wildland fire risk.
- In 2026, whole-of-society partners increased investments in prevention and mitigation activities and incentive programs; and have begun tracking and reporting investments annually.



Prescribed burn in Forillon National Park, Québec.

A Shared Pathway to Resilience – Connections to the National Adaptation Strategy

The NAS outlines a shared vision for a more climate-resilient Canada to help communities and residents of Canada better adapt to and prepare for the impacts of climate change. **Recognizing the interconnected nature of wildland fire prevention, mitigation, and climate adaptation, this Strategy will be implemented in close coordination with the implementation** of the NAS. Implementation includes leveraging foundational science and data, applying insights gained to guide investments and prioritize actions, and developing tools to effectively manage risks. Together, these efforts strive to build a more wildland fire resilient society.

The implementation of this Strategy will directly help Canada advance certain long-term transformational goals, medium-term objectives and near-term targets included in the NAS related to wildland fires. As well, implementation of the Strategy may indirectly support and contribute to the goals, objectives, and targets of other NAS systems such as health and well-being, and nature, and biodiversity.

The Strategy will actively contribute to the following NAS Disaster Resilience System wildland fire targets:

- **Wildfire Risk Awareness:** By 2025, 60 % of Canadians in areas of high wildland fire risk are aware of the risks facing their household.
- **Proactive Measures:** By 2025, 50 % of Canadians have taken concrete actions to better prepare for and respond to climate change risks facing their household.
- **Community Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Plans:** Communities in zones of high-risk develop community wildland fire prevention and mitigation plans by 2030, with up to 15 % implemented by 2028.

Annexes

Annex A: Additional Resources

Across Canada, there are numerous sources of strategic direction that address the management of wildland fires, emergencies, and disaster response. While not a complete list, this annex highlights several CCFM key plans, documents and strategies that provide additional direction for Canadian jurisdictions, and other partners. This list of additional resources will expand as whole-of-society partners continue to shape the Strategy and as new information becomes available. All efforts have been made during the development of the Strategy to align with, and build upon, the purpose, goals and varying actions outlined within these documents. These include:

CCFM Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy: A 10-year Review and Renewed Call to Action (2016)

This report provides an update on the progress made on the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy (2006), outlines required next steps and serves as a renewed call to action. The purpose of this report was not to rewrite the strategy or revisit its goals or objectives as they remain as relevant in 2016 as when written. Rather, the purpose of this document was to reengage senior officials, identify priorities for a renewed emphasis on implementation and enhance horizontal integration and collaboration to reinvigorate the strategy, and further realize its goals and objectives.

[A Shared Vision for Canada's Forests: Toward 2030 \(2019\)](#)

This document outlines a refreshed strategic direction for the forest sector based on collective ambitions vetted through a public engagement process in 2018. It recognizes the diverse ways we treasure our forests and the global benefits of maintaining forest ecosystems. The CCFM is championing the Vision as a foundation for collaborative action that draws on strengths of one another.

CCFM WFMWG Action Plan 2021-2026 (2021)

This Action Plan details the steps to achieve a bold, new future for wildland fire management in Canada. By 2030, communities and infrastructure across Canada will be more resilient to the threat and impacts of wildland fire. This increased resiliency will be achieved by transforming the focus of wildland fire management from forestry centric to a whole-of-society perspective. All governments, Indigenous Peoples, sectors, and individuals can participate and coordinate efforts to effectively live with wildland fire through prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Annex B: Prevention and Mitigation Activities in CCFM Wildland Fire Management Agencies

To find the most up-to-date information on CCFM wildland fire management agencies' prevention and mitigation initiatives, please consult each jurisdiction's respective website below:

- **Alberta:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Alberta's website](#).
- **British Columbia:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of British Columbia's website](#).
- **Manitoba:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Manitoba's website](#).
- **Newfoundland and Labrador:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website](#).
- **New Brunswick:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of New Brunswick's website](#).
- **Northwest Territories:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Northwest Territories website](#).
- **Nova Scotia:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Nova Scotia's website](#).
- **Ontario:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Ontario's website](#).
- **Parks Canada:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Parks Canada Fire Management website](#).
- **Prince Edward Island:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Prince Edward Island's website](#).
- **Québec:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Québec's website](#).
- **Saskatchewan:** for the current status of initiatives visit [Government of Saskatchewan website](#)
- **Yukon:** for the current status of initiatives visit the [Government of Yukon's website](#).

Annex C: Photo Credits

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	Top Right:	Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
	Bottom Left:	Photo courtesy of FireSmart BC
	Bottom Right:	Kaslo FireSmart Committee – Lardeau BC Clean-up Event
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