



REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George

BEAR LAKE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

B.A. Blackwell and Associates
October 2007

The following is a list of the recommendations that were presented to the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George by B.A. Blackwell and Associates for the long term protection of the community of Bear Lake from the threat of wildfire. These recommendations, and the issues that arise from them are to be the subject of the Public Meeting in Bear Lake. A copy of the entire Plan may be viewed at the Bear Lake local Community Commission office. Please attend the session scheduled for:

Saturday, December 1st, 2007
At the Bear Lake Community Hall located at
461 Hart Lake Road, Bear Lake, BC

Recommendation 1:

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the community of Bear Lake should submit an operational fuel treatment application (Appendix B) to the UBCM in order to obtain funding for the development of a fuel management program. A number of high hazard areas immediately adjacent to or embedded in the community have been identified as part of the wildfire risk assessment. These high hazard areas should be the focus of a progressive thinning program that is implemented over the next one to two years. Thinning should be focused on the highest priority areas of C3 and C4 fuel types (priority 1 and 2) as identified in Map 6.

Recommendation 2:

The Regional District Of Fraser-Fort George and the community of Bear Lake should continue to consult with licensees and the public regarding potential commercial harvest within priority 1 and 2 areas. The extent and method of harvest should be considered when determining whether further fuel treatments will be required on commercially harvested areas.

Recommendation 3:

A qualified professional forester (RPF), with a sound understanding of fire behaviour and fire suppression, should develop treatment prescriptions. Any treatments that take place on sloped sites must be prescribed with consideration given to slope stability. Where slope stability may be an issue, a Professional Geotechnical Engineer should review the treatment prescription.

Recommendation 4:

Fuel treatment strategies should target the removal of dead lodgepole pine and the retention of remaining live structure including lodgepole pine that is <15 cm in diameter.

Recommendation 5:

FireSmart priority 1 (10m) and priority 2 (30m) zones should be used when developing fuel treatment prescriptions adjacent to structures. Priority 1 zones should be free of fuels. In priority 2 zones, stocking should be maintained below 400 stems per hectare and provisions for maintenance (e.g., stocking surveys) should be included in treatment prescriptions.

Recommendation 6:

Given the mountain pine beetle outbreak and the significant fire risk that communities will face over the next 25 years, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George must consider enhancing their existing website to outline fire risks, current fire danger and proactive steps individual homeowners can take to make their homes safer within the region. Other information, such as fire danger and FireSmart principles, should be maintained on the regional site

Recommendation 7:

Signage consisting of current fire danger, campfire bans and general warnings regarding fire safety should be posted at the major entrances to Bear Lake (Hwy 97 at the north and south ends of the community) and updated with current fire information as required.

Recommendation 8:

Given that the mountain pine beetle has caused high levels of mortality across the region, the Regional District Of Fraser-Fort George should consider conducting a larger scale risk assessment and Wildfire Protection Plan process for unincorporated communities. A Regional District Wildfire Protection Plan would be more cost and time effective than completing individual plans for each unincorporated community.

Recommendation 9:

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George should investigate the policy tools available for reducing wildfire risk within Bear Lake. These include voluntary fire risk reduction for landowners, bylaws for building materials and subdivision establishment, covenants for vegetation setbacks, incentives such as exclusion from a fire protection tax, education and establishment of Wildfire Development Permit Areas.

Recommendation 10:

Some homes are built immediately adjacent to the forest edge with trees and vegetation in direct contact with homes. The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George should incorporate building setbacks into bylaw with a minimum distance of 10m when buildings border the forest interface.

Recommendation 11:

Given the wildfire risk profile of Bear Lake, an emergency sprinkler kit capable of protecting 50 to 100 homes should be purchased and maintained by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. Bear Lake fire department volunteers, or a designate of the department, should be trained to mobilize and set up the equipment efficiently and effectively during a fire event. This kit should be made available to all communities within the Regional District.

Recommendation 12:

The community of Bear Lake and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George should consider developing an emergency power supply for the Bear Lake Small Waterwork System in the event that B.C. Hydro transmission is disrupted during a wildfire emergency.

Recommendation 13:

The following training should be maintained:

- 1) the S-100 course training should be given on an annual basis;
- 2) the S-215 course instruction should be given to senior officers on an ongoing basis; and,
- 3) incident command system training should be given to all rural fire chiefs.

Recommendation 14:

The Fire Chief and the Regional District Of Fraser-Fort George should meet with the Ministry Of Forests prior to the fire season to review the incident command system structure in the event of a major wildland fire.

Recommendation 15:

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the Fire Department should consider reviewing the existing inventory of interface fire fighting equipment to ensure that items such as large volume fire hoses, portable pumps and firefighter personal protection equipment (PPE) are adequate to resource the interface area. Fire Department personnel should have correct personal protective equipment and wildland fire fighting tools. Hoses, pumps and other equipment should be compatible with Ministry Of Forests wildland fire fighting equipment.

Recommendation 16:

If feasible, given the current level of fuel hazard, mutual aid agreements should be a priority for implementation by the 2008 fire season.

Recommendations on Lessons Learned

- The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George has a lead role to play in the fire protection of small unincorporated communities within the region.
- As a local government, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George needs to address the issue of uncontrolled burning in unincorporated communities within the Region. Development and enforcement of a comprehensive regional bylaw are required to address this issue.
- Recommendations that are most likely to be successfully implemented by the community of Bear Lake include those related to vegetation management and education.
- Recommendations related to structure protection and emergency response may best be managed at the Regional level in cooperation with the community of Bear Lake and the Province.

Bear Lake Community Wildfire Protection Plan

CONSEQUENCE

Component:
Urban Interface



- Legend**
- Railway
 - Highway
 - Public Road
 - Forest Service Road
 - - - Forest Permit Road
 - Stream
 - Lake or River
 - Wetland
 - Park
 - Private Property
 - Study Area



Scale: 1:30,000
0 250 500 1,000 Meters

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N

Drawn by:
B.A. Blackwell & Associates Ltd.
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