

Wildfire Risk Reduction presentation at September 27th NE Roundtable meeting

Question:

What efforts are being undertaken to coordinate projects that are being undertaken independently by local governments, tenure holders (CFs), First Nations, and the province. Seems effectiveness and efficiencies could be increased if we worked on projects that complement each other and are planned at a landscape level.

Response:

Much of this coordination should occur during the initial planning phase when fuel treatments are first identified. There are two primary planning documents that guide wildfire risk reduction right now: Tactical Plans (for crown land) and Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans (CWRP) (for work completed by local governments and First Nations). During the development of either a Tactical Plan or a CWRP, all existing wildfire related plans in the area must be reviewed as part of the planning process. The intent is to ensure that any proposed work is coordinated and is consistent from a landscape level perspective regardless of land ownership.

For example, the standards for developing a Tactical Plan state:

“ Where CWPPs/CWRPs or other existing fire and fuel management planning exists (such as fuel treatment opportunity maps and older landscape fire management plans etc.), all relevant data should be examined to determine linkages, avoid redundancies, and fill in any data gaps...”

That said, there certainly needs to be communication between the various proponents undertaking wildfire risk reduction work in the community. Community FireSmart committees can help with this coordination – especially in communities where members of the committee are also working in the forest industry, local government, and provincial government.

Proponents are also required to discuss their CRI projects with either their WPO or FNESS mitigation specialist during the application phase. If there are opportunities to coordinate projects with other proponents or initiatives, it is often discussed at this time.

Finally, I will add that many of the fuel treatments we are seeing are still quite small – making it a challenge to see the big picture and how these units play into a larger plan. It is important to recognize that there is a learning curve associated with conducting fuel treatments. These smaller units provide proponents with an opportunity gain knowledge and experience conducting fuel treatments effectively, educating the community on wildfire risk reduction, and navigating the funding processes - before taking on larger landscape level treatments.