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## Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative

# FireSmart Planning & Activities Grant Program

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## February 2018 Intake Program & Application Guide

### 1. Introduction

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The [Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative](#) (SWPI) is a suite of funding programs managed through the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group – including the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS), Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (MFLNRORD) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by UBCM.

The initiative supports communities to mitigate risk from wildfire in the wildland urban interface.

The wildland urban interface (WUI) is any area where combustible wildland fuels (vegetation) are found adjacent to homes, farm structures, other outbuildings or infrastructure. For the purpose of the SWPI, the WUI is the area within 2 kilometres of a community with a minimum density of 6 structures per square kilometre.

The 2018 February intake includes the following funding streams:

- Development of fuel management prescriptions
- Operational fuel treatments, including maintenance treatments
- SWPI FireSmart Planning & Activities grants

### FireSmart Planning & Activities

The general goal of FireSmart is to encourage communities and citizens to adopt and conduct FireSmart practices to mitigate the negative impacts of wildfire to assets on community and private property.

Research has shown that communities that implement FireSmart principles have a greater chance of survival during wildfire.

Findings from a study of the 2016 Horse River wildfire in Fort McMurray indicate that FireSmart principles were one of the main reasons why individual homes survived, regardless of the broader wildfire threat surrounding them<sup>1</sup>. This was true in both in the urban and rural areas.

The characteristics of a structure and the immediate surrounding landscapes will determine the ignitability during wildfire events.

The 2018 SWPI FireSmart Planning & Activities grant program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to undertake community-based FireSmart planning and activities, and/or to develop or advance local planning efforts to mitigate risk from wildfire on private lands in the wildland urban interface.

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<sup>1</sup> Westhaver, A. 2016. Why some homes survived: Learning form the Fort McMurray wildfire disaster. Rep. No. 978-927929-04-09

## 2. Eligible Applicants

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All local governments (municipalities and regional districts) and First Nations in BC are eligible to apply.

## 3. Eligible Projects

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In order to qualify for funding:

- There must be credible evidence of an apparent threat to the community from interface fires
- Proposed activities must be new (retroactive funding is not available) and capable of completion by the applicant within one year from the date of grant approval
- The applicant must have a current CWPP<sup>2</sup> as defined by the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group

Please note: Applicants that received funding through SWPI from 2004-2015 are required to submit any outstanding reporting prior to 2018 applications being considered.

## 4. Eligible & Ineligible Costs & Activities

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### Eligible Costs & Activities

Eligible costs are direct costs that are approved by the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group, properly and reasonably incurred, and paid by the applicant to carry out eligible activities. Eligible costs can only be incurred from the date of application submission until the final report is submitted.

Eligible activities must be cost-effective. Refer to Table 1 for FireSmart Disciplines and associated eligible activities.

**Table 1: FireSmart Disciplines & Eligible Activities**

Discipline	Eligible Activities
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertake public education and communications, such as use of local government and First Nation newsletters, websites, social media, etc.</li><li>• Organize and host a community FireSmart day, FireSmart events and workshops</li><li>• Develop FireSmart Community Plans for specific areas</li><li>• Present FireSmart Community Plan to a local government Council, Board or First Nation Band Council</li><li>• Conduct FireSmart home and property assessments, including Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) structure and site hazard assessments (only with private property owners' consent)</li><li>• Apply for FireSmart Community Recognition</li></ul>

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<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, CWPPs should be reviewed every five years to ensure the plan is in alignment with the current PSTA, development, completed fuel treatments and FireSmart activities

Vegetation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide off-site debris disposal for private landowners who have undertaken their own treatments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide a dumpster, chipper or other collection method</li> <li>○ Waive tipping fees</li> <li>○ Provide curbside debris pick-up</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Planning for public spaces and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop policies and practices for design and maintenance of FireSmart public spaces, such as parks and open spaces</li> <li>• Develop policies and practices for design and maintenance of FireSmart public buildings</li> <li>• Conduct site visits and FireSmart assessments for public lands and buildings</li> </ul>
Development considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use landscaping requirements in zoning and development permits to require fire resistive landscaping</li> <li>• Establish Development Permit Areas for Wildfire Hazard in order to require FireSmart exterior finishing</li> <li>• Consider wildfire prevention and suppression in the design of subdivisions (e.g. road widths, turning radius for emergency vehicles, and access and egress points)</li> <li>• Coordinate the reviews of new developments across multiple departments, including the fire department</li> <li>• Amend Official Community Plans, Comprehensive Community Plans and/or land use, engineering and public works bylaws to incorporate FireSmart policies</li> </ul>
Interagency co-operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in regional FireSmart planning tables</li> <li>• Establish a local FireSmart Board</li> <li>• Consider mutual aid agreements</li> </ul>
Emergency planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host seasonal readiness meetings in advance of fire season</li> <li>• Review structural protection capacity</li> </ul>
Cross training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-train fire departments to include structural fire and wildfire training</li> <li>• Provide or attend training for a Local FireSmart Representative(s) and community champions</li> <li>• Training to enable collection of data required for FireSmart HIZ assessments</li> <li>• Learn how Emergency Management BC deploys Structural Protection Units for interface fires</li> </ul>

The following expenditures are also eligible provided they relate directly to the eligible activities identified above:

- Consultant costs
- Applicant staff and administration costs

## **Ineligible Costs & Activities**

Any activity that is not outlined above or is not directly connected to activities approved in the application by the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group is not eligible for grant funding. This includes:

- Operational fuel treatment activities (e.g. pruning and thinning, tree cutting, brush removal, etc.) on public or private land

## **5. Grant Maximum**

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The 2018 SWPI FireSmart Planning & Activities grant program can contribute up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$10,000.

In order to ensure transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds, all other grant contributions for eligible portions of the project must be declared and, depending on the total value, may decrease the value of the grant.

## **6. Application Requirements & Process**

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### **Application Deadline**

The application deadline for the 2018 SWPI FireSmart Planning & Activities grant program is February 23, 2018. Applicants will be advised of the status of their application within 60 days of the deadline.

### **Required Application Contents**

- Completed Application Form
- Detailed budget
- Local government Council or Board resolution, or First Nation Band Council resolution, indicating support for the current proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management

### **Submission of Applications**

Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files. If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: [swpi@ubcm.ca](mailto:swpi@ubcm.ca) Mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8

### **Review of Applications**

The Evaluation Committee will assess and score all eligible applications and consider the location of each proposed project in order to ensure a balanced representation of projects across the province. Higher application review scores will be given to applications that:

- Are from eligible applicants that have not yet received a SWPI FireSmart grant
- Clearly encourage communities and citizens to adopt and conduct FireSmart practices to mitigate the negative impacts of wildfire to assets on community and private property
- Advance a recommended FireSmart activity for a priority area as outlined in the local CWPP
- Are from eligible applicants that have not yet received FireSmart Community Recognition status from Partners in Protection
- Include collaboration with one or more partners (e.g. community or resident organization, First Nation or Aboriginal organization or other local government)
- Demonstrate cost-effectiveness

Please note the following important points when preparing your application:

- The maximum grant is \$10,000 and matching funds and/or cost sharing are not required
- Only one application per municipality or First Nation will be accepted per intake. Up to three applications per regional district per intake can be submitted.
- Funds are for new activities and are not for on-going operations or regular planning activities
- All funded activities are to take place within 12 months of funding approval and final reports will be due within 30 days of project completion.
- The detailed budget must indicate proposed expenditures and align with the proposed activities outlined in the application form
- All application information and final reports will be shared with the Province of BC and the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group

## **7. Grant Management & Applicant Responsibilities**

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Grants are awarded to eligible applicants only. When collaborative projects are undertaken with community partners, the eligible applicant remains the primary organization responsible for completion of the project as approved and for meeting reporting requirements.

Applicants are also responsible for proper fiscal management, including maintaining acceptable accounting records for the project. The Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group reserves the right to audit these records.

### **Notice of Funding Decision**

All applicants will receive written notice of funding decisions, which will include the terms and conditions of any grant that is awarded.

### **Changes to Approved Projects**

Approved grants are specific to the project as identified in the application, and grant funds are not transferable to other projects. Approval from SWPI Evaluation Committee will be required for any significant variation from the approved project.

To propose changes to an approved project, approved applicants are required to submit:

- Revised application package, including updated, signed application form and budget. An updated Council, Board or Band Council resolution may be required.
- Written rationale for proposed changes to activities and/or expenditures

The revised application package will then be reviewed by the SWPI Evaluation Committee.

Applicants are responsible for any costs above the approved grant unless a revised application is submitted and approved prior to work being undertaken.
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### **Extensions to Project End Date**

All approved activities are required to be completed within 12 months of funding approval and any extensions beyond this date must be requested in writing and be approved by the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Working Group.

## **8. Final Report Requirements**

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### **Required Final Report Contents**

Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the complete final report, including the following:

- Completed Final Report Form
- Financial summary
- Copies of any community assessments, FireSmart Community Plans or any other plan that was developed or updated as part of the 2018 SWPI FireSmart Planning & Activities grant.

### **Submission of Final Reports**

Final reports should be submitted as Word or PDF files. If you choose to submit your final report by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit final reports to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: [swpi@ubcm.ca](mailto:swpi@ubcm.ca)      Mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8