



MEMBER RELEASE

Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative Program Changes

To: Administrators and program staff

From: Local Government Program Services

Date: March 30, 2010

The Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative is a suite of funding programs funded by the Ministry of Forests and Range, administered by UBCM, and managed through the Provincial Fuel Management Working Group (PFMWG). The programs support communities to mitigate risk from wildfire in the wildland urban interface. Funding under the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative is available to local governments and First Nations to support:

- development of a Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP);
- development of a prescription to conduct an operational treatment;
- implementation of pilot projects; and
- operational fuel treatment activities.

The initiative has delivered over \$30 million to local governments and First Nations from its inception in 2005, and it has been instrumental in helping communities manage their wildfire risk. To date, 178 CWPPs have been initiated around the province, and 129 operational fuel treatment projects have been completed or are underway. Some of these treatments were shown in the 2009 fire season to have prevented significant structural loss.

Despite these successes, there is still much to be done, and the funding remaining under the initiative is limited. Given this, it is timely to implement program changes to ensure remaining resources are allocated to the highest priority activities.

The PFMWG's first priority was to ensure that funds continue to be made available for CWPPs and for fuel treatment prescriptions. By completing a CWPP and developing prescriptions, local governments and First Nations can position themselves to take advantage of future funding opportunities that may become available for operational fuel treatment to assist them in achieving their fuel management treatment and community wildfire safety goals.

In keeping with this priority, a portion of the available funding has been dedicated to fund future CWPP applications and future prescription applications.

Program changes are also being implemented to better align funding with program goals and to ensure that projects awarded funding can be completed in a timely manner. Applicants will be asked to limit the work applied for to that which can be completed within one year, and any applications awarded funding will be subject to a completion deadline, which will typically be within one year from date of approval.

Funding for prescription and operational fuel treatments will be limited to areas with significant wildfire threat ratings. Operational fuel treatment applications will also be scored against criteria related to the threat rating, treatment costs and other factors such as the degree to which the applicant is undertaking other wildfire risk mitigation activities.

Operational fuel treatment applications must meet a minimum threshold score, and funding decisions amongst those applications that meet that minimum threshold will be made primarily on the basis of the relative ranking of applications in relation to the criteria. In addition, funding provided for operational fuel treatment for a community will not typically exceed \$500,000 per calendar year.

These changes take effect immediately, and will affect both new applications and in-stream applications (i.e., any application for which a funding decision was not made prior to March 30, 2010).

Changes to the Program and Application Guides and Application Forms for each of the programs are currently being finalized, and it is expected that these will be available soon. Until these are available, applicants may continue to use the existing application forms. Applicants with in-stream applications, or those using existing forms prior to the new forms being made available, will be contacted by a Fuel Management Specialist to discuss any additional information that may be needed to complete the application review.

Funding decisions on CWPP, pilot projects and prescription applications will continue to be made on an on-going basis. However, funding decisions on operational fuel treatment applications will change in order to accommodate the need to consider each application in the context of how well it scores against other applications. Funding decisions for operational fuel treatment applications will be made monthly, with decisions expected shortly after month end.

For your convenience, a detailed listing of all program changes, by program type is presented in the table on the following page. If you have any questions or concerns about the programs or these program changes, please contact the Fuel Management Specialist in the Fire Centre for your area.

A full listing of program contacts is available at:
<https://ground.hpr.for.gov.bc.ca/programcontacts.htm>

The following is a summary of the changes to Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative programs, by program type. All changes take effect immediately.

Program	Program Change
Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Pilot Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All grant approvals will be subject to a completion deadline, which is typically one year from the date of the grant approval.
Prescription Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications are to be for prescriptions that can be completed within one year. • Funding is limited to areas of extreme or high wildfire threat, although areas of moderate wildfire threat may be considered under special circumstances, in which case these should be discussed with your Fuel Management Specialist. Funding is not available for areas of low wildfire threat. • All grant approvals will be subject to a completion deadline, which is typically one year from the date of the grant approval.
Operational Fuel Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications are to be for areas that can be completed within one year. • Funding is limited to areas of extreme or high wildfire threat, although areas of moderate wildfire threat may be considered under special circumstances, in which case these should be discussed with your Fuel Management Specialist. Funding is not available for areas of low wildfire threat. • Funding will generally only be considered where the proposed treatment areas are identified as a priority in a CWPP and a fuel management prescription authorized by a land manager is in place. • Applications will be scored against prioritization criteria, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the wildfire threat rating, ○ the proposed program cost per hectare treated, and ○ other factors, such as the degree to which the applicant is undertaking other wildfire risk mitigation activities in the community. • Applications must meet a predetermined threshold scoring to be considered for funding, and funding decisions will be made primarily on the basis of the relative ranking of applications that meet this threshold. • Total funding awarded for an individual local government or First Nation will be limited to \$500,000 per calendar year, although additional funding may be considered under special circumstances, in which case these should be discussed with your Fuel Management Specialist. • All grant approvals will be subject to a completion deadline, which is typically one year from the date of the grant approval.