

Community Resiliency Investment Program

FireSmart™ Community Funding & Supports

Additional Information on the Use and Disposal of Wood Chips Generated by FCFS-Funded Projects

Updated June 2021

1. Issue

A small number of approved applicants under the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program have requested the ability to use wood chips generated through approved FireSmart activities for residential areas for landscaping purposes on residential properties or for other uses.

2. Current FireSmart Community Funding & Supports Requirements

Currently, the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program requires that all vegetative debris from residential properties or homeowners who have undertaken their own vegetation management be disposed of off-site.

3. FireSmart Research & Evidence

- [Research](#) into the role that different types of mulch and woody debris (i.e. wood chips) can play when influencing wildfire spread within a community supports a conservative approach to the re-distribution of this material in proximity to structures. For example, in low fuel moisture conditions such as a high or extreme fire danger rating, the low fuel moisture conditions of both mulch and woody debris support a very high probability of ignition potential from fire brands (embers).
- Applying or re-distributing the woody debris within the community to be used around gardens and homes on smaller lots would not be consistent with core recommendations from [Firesmart BC](#). In addition, wood chips dry out faster and stay dryer longer than bark mulch and therefore present a higher threat than bark mulch from a garden centre.
- The threat from embers generated by wildfires may seem small, but they should not be underestimated — 50% of home fires caused by wildfires are started by embers. This [video](#) is a good demonstration of a moderate ember attack. Many wildfires have a lot more embers than this video shows and this does not include the radiant heat factor that will prepare fuel to ignite.

4. Additional Guidance

The CRI Management Committee has confirmed that the requirement should remain that all vegetative debris from residential property or home owners who have undertaken their own vegetation management be disposed of off-site. However, the following additional guidance has been approved:

Residential Uses

If approved applicants wish to allow residential property or home owners to use woody debris generated through approved FireSmart activities for landscaping purposes on residential properties, with the understanding that woody debris plays in a role contributing to fire ignition, this can be allowed [only](#)

[outside of the FireSmart Non-combustible Zone and Priority Zones 1, 2 and 3](#) (i.e. ~100 metres beyond residential structures).

Other Uses

Approved applicants can use wood chips generated from off-site debris disposal for other uses on publicly owned land, First Nations land, or appropriate private facilities that utilize wood chips.

Applicants should work with a qualified professional to determine appropriate uses that are outside of the FireSmart Non-combustible Zone and Priority Zones 1, 2 and 3 (i.e. ~100 metres beyond structures).