



FROM RISK TO READINESS: ENHANCING ALBERTA'S WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS THROUGH THE FIRESMARTTM SCORECARD (XX) **Average Score**

of Community Preparedness:

In partnership with:



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The Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation (Intact Centre) is an applied research institute at the University of Waterloo. Since its founding in 2015 with a gift from Intact Financial Corporation, Canada's largest property and casualty insurer, the Intact Centre has developed numerous guidelines to mitigate extreme weather risk. It collaborates with residents, communities, governments, and businesses to identify and reduce risks associated with climate change, such as flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat. The Intact Centre is frequently quoted in the media, consistently emphasizing the urgent need to address the impacts of climate change and extreme weather. For additional information, visit: **www.intactcentreclimateadaptation.ca**.

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Founded in 2020, FireSmart Alberta emerged as the top recommendation from the Government of Alberta's Spring 2019 Wildfire Review Final Report. It's our goal is to promote a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach to wildfire resilience across Alberta. As a provincial chapter, FireSmart Alberta works collaboratively and in alignment with FireSmart Canada.

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All findings and recommendations of this study are those of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation.

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Average Score of Community Preparedness:



to FireSmart™ Implementation



Funding constraints



Staffing limitations



Lack of enforceable bylaws for resilient buildings

Enablers

of FireSmart™ Success



Financial incentives motivate community engagement



Interactive FireSmart Home Assessments boost participation and build long-term awareness



Neighbour-to-neighbour collaboration fosters a more resilient and proactive community

Executive Summary

The 2023 and 2024 wildfire seasons in Alberta underscored the **increasing severity and frequency of wildfires** across the province, driven largely by climate change. In 2023, 1,088 wildfires burned approximately 2.2 million hectares in Alberta—the largest area recorded since tracking began and nearly five times the 10-year average. These fires caused mass evacuations, with over 100 homes destroyed, and widespread air quality issues.

The 2024 season saw an early onset, with 1,184 wildfires, including the significant Jasper Wildfire Complex, which forced the evacuation of an estimated 25,000 residents and tourists. Parks Canada was the lead agency for the Jasper Wildfire Complex, with Alberta Wildfire providing support throughout the response.

As Alberta faces rising direct and indirect costs associated with wildfire suppression, property damage, and health impacts, adopting a proactive approach to wildfire resilience is urgent. According to the World Resources Institute (2019), every dollar invested in adaptation yields a return of \$2 to \$10, underscoring strong economic case for early action.

To support wildfire preparedness and resilience, the Alberta FireSmart[™] Community Scorecard was developed in partnership with FireSmart Alberta. Until now, there was no standardized way to quantify community-level wildfire preparedness across jurisdictions. **This tool enables communities to assess and improve their wildfire readiness by following a structured risk management approach**, with key areas assessed by the Scorecard that include: Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessments, Wildfire Preparedness Guides, Wildfire Mitigation Strategies, and the Seven FireSmart disciplines such as interagency cooperation, education, and vegetation management (Table ES-1).

The Scorecard also emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive "whole-of-society" approach to wildfire management. Reducing the risk of wildfire is complex and requires a shared responsibility between residents, businesses, all levels of government, and Indigenous Rights Holders.



This Scorecard was launched as a pilot to refine design, implementation, and utility across diverse communities. Ten participating Alberta communities were selected to reflect a range of wildfire exposures, geographic conditions, and resource capacity levels. The pilot allowed for real-world testing of the tool's methodology, data collection process, and usability for municipal and regional decision-makers. It also helped identify key strengths and areas for improvement in both community readiness and refinement of the Scorecard itself.

Barriers to comprehensive FireSmart adoption aross the 10 communities included:

- funding constraints,
- staffing limitations,
- a lack of enforceable bylaws to mandate resilient building practices, and
- limited awareness of municipal authority to regulate spatial separation between homes, setback from slopes, and landscaping materials.

Notably, communities outside Alberta's Forest Protection Area faced hurdles in accessing essential FireSmart funding, hindering their ability to conduct wildfire hazard and risk assessments and implement wildfire mitigation strategies effectively.

Feedback from pilot communities highlighted critical need for increased provincial support, streamlined funding processes, and enhanced guidance on incorporating FireSmart best practices into municipal regulations. In response, the following key recommendations are proposed:

- 1. **Increase Funding:** Explore and expand funding avenues within provincial agencies to support local wildfire mitigation initiatives and improve existing funding programs.
- 2. Insurance-Backed Resilience Grants: Develop grant programs, supported by local government and delivered in partnership with property and casualty insurers, to incentivize wildfire-resilient construction and property

maintenance in high-risk areas.

- **3. Legislative Amendments:** Advocate for changes to the Alberta Safety Codes Act and National Building Code to empower municipalities to enforce wildfire-resistant construction practices within the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- **4. Wildfire Safety Practices:** Improve communication to municipalities regarding their authority to regulate spatial separation between homes, setback from slopes, and landscaping materials.

With province-wide adoption, the Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard can facilitate standardized assessments, prioritize critical wildfire resilience actions, and help communities better allocate resources, ultimately leading to a more resilient Alberta in the face of growing wildfire risks.

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Table ES-1: Criteria used to assess wildfire preparedness of 10 pilot Alberta Communities: Clearwater County, County of Grande Prairie,Lac La Biche County, Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Parkland County, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Town of Banff, Town ofHigh Level, Town of Hinton and the Town of Whitecourt (Government of Alberta and FireSmart Alberta, 2013).

Criteria	Description
Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment	A Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment (WHRA) evaluates wildfire exposure to inform the need for further planning in a community . It precedes and shapes the development of a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. The assessment analyzes local wildfire hazard by examining factors such as fuel type, stand density, blowdown, deadfall, and existing treatments. Additionally, wildfire risk is assessed by considering: • landscape fire history, • values-at-risk and critical infrastructure—such as buildings, developments, or natural resources with measurable or intrinsic value—that could be damaged or destroyed by wildfire, • causal trends, • local weather patterns, • prevailing winds, and • community resources and evacuation capabilities. The outcome of the WHRA informs whether a community requires additional mitigation or emergency planning, or both. Source: <u>FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection</u>
Wildfire Preparedness Guide	A Wildfire Preparedness Guide (WPG) provides essential information for first responders during the early stages of a wildfire event. These community-specific plans should be familiar to local fire departments and provincial wildfire agencies ahead of any wildland-urban interface incident . A WPG typically includes emergency contact numbers, values-at-risk information, predefined evacuation routes, tactical communications, and identification of existing fuel mitigation efforts. Source: <u>Developing a Wildfire Preparedness Guide</u>
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy	A Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) offers a community strategic guidance and recommendations for implementing the FireSmart system. It outlines priority vegetation management projects based on hazardous fuel proximity to values, informed by the WHRA. The WMS also addresses the more challenging FireSmart disciplines, such as development and legislation . It requires extensive consultation with interested parties due to the broad impact of its recommendations. Source: <u>FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection</u>
Interagency Cooperation	Community Wildfire Interagency Cooperation: FireSmart is a shared responsibility. Preparedness requires the collaboration of each group, agency, and organization (i.e., Fire Department, Emergency Management, politicians and residents) that might be affected by wildfire. Strong partnerships and interagency cooperation are essential to an effective community FireSmart program. Through the development of a local community or regional FireSmart committee, communities can coordinate and manage the implementation of their wildfire mitigation strategy .

Criteria	Description
Education	Community Wildfire Education: increases public awareness by engaging and educating communities on wildfire risks. Promotes proactive FireSmart activities that residents can undertake to reduce risk on their properties and enhance overall community resilience .
Vegetation Management	Vegetation Management: involves the removal, reduction, and conversion of hazardous fuels around a community, making it the most costly and visible of all FireSmart disciplines. To ensure its effectiveness, extensive planning and consultation should be conducted before undertaking these projects at both the community and landscape scales.
Legislation	Municipal Wildfire Legislation: encompasses bylaws, plans and policies that integrate wildfire mitigation measures into municipal planning and development, aiming to increase the resilience of communities in the wildland-urban interface from wildfire impacts .
Development	Municipal Wildfire Infrastructure Resilience: incorporates best practices in wildfire mitigation and resilience into municipal development, including structural and infrastructure planning. It also informs architectural and engineering guidelines and standards, to limit home ignition and spread, and to guide the provision of emergency services during a wildfire (for example, access and egress routes, sufficient water for firefighting, etc.).
Emergency Planning	Emergency Planning and Response: enhances wildfire response by integrating wildfire considerations into existing emergency response and preparedness plans . This includes reviewing resource sharing and mutual aid agreements with local, regional, and provincial jurisdictions, and assessing structure protection and sprinkler plans.
Cross-Training	Cross-Training Emergency Crews : provides comprehensive training for emergency crews across all agencies (local fire departments, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, emergency management agencies, and others) on structural and wildland fire management. Additionally, municipal staff receive training on incident management, wildfire prevention, and engage in practice sessions and exercises to strengthen readiness.

Executive Summary



Figure ES-1: The spider diagram illustrates the average wildfire preparedness score of the 10 pilot communities assessed. The communities included in this assessment are Clearwater County, County of Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche County, Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Parkland County, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Town of Banff, Town of High Level, Town of Hinton, and Town of Whitecourt. A higher degree of shading reflects a higher level of preparedness, with scores closer to the centre indicating lower preparedness, and scores toward the outer edge indicating stronger readiness. This visualization highlights areas of strength and opportunities for improvement across the pilot communities.

The diagrams below present the wildfire preparedness scores for each of the 10 pilot communities. The shaded areas represent individual community scores, while the dashed line indicates the average score across all 10 communities, serving as a benchmark for comparison. This visual assessment helps communities identify areas for improvement and measure their preparedness relative to their peers. Categories deemed "Not Applicable" for a given community were excluded from the final score calculation to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Individual scorecard results ranged from A+ to

E, with significant variability across the 10 assessment criteria (Table ES-1). These findings highlight differences in wildfire preparedness levels among the communities, emphasizing that some require additional support to enhance their resilience.

The Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard

is a valuable tool for both local communities and the Province of Alberta, providing data-driven insights to identify and address gaps in wildfire preparedness.

Figure ES-2a: Clearwater County B



Figure ES-2b: Lac La Biche County A-



Figure ES-2c: County of Grande Prairie B





Community Preparedness

Average of 10 Pilot

Communities: B

Figure ES-2d: Municipality of Crowsnest Pass B-





Figure ES-2e: Parkland County C-



Figure ES-2f: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo A-



Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment

Community Preparedness

Average of 10 Pilot

Communities: B

Figure ES-2g: Town of Banff B



Figure ES-2h: Town of High Level A-



Figure ES-2i: Town of Hinton B



Figure ES-2j: Whitecourt B





Introduction

Wildfires are a natural and essential part of Alberta's forest ecosystems, particularly in boreal and montane regions where wildfire disturbances contribute to forest diversity and health. However, recent wildfire seasons have been extraordinary in both scale and impact. The 2023 fire season in Alberta was notably severe, with 1,088 fires burning approximately 2.2 million hectares, including large portions of Wood Buffalo National Park—the largest area burned in the province since record-keeping began, and nearly five times the ten-year average. (Government of Alberta, 2023).

These wildfires led to the evacuation of 38,000 residents, property destruction, and poor air quality that extended hundreds of kilometres (Beverly & Schroeder, 2024). Following this record-setting season, Alberta faced another intense wildfire season in 2024. The season started early, with a notable 9% increase in wildfire occurrences compared to 2023, which recorded 1,184 wildfires.

One of the most significant events of the 2024 season was the Jasper Wildfire Complex, which resulted in 1.1 billion CAD in insured catastrophic losses (Insurance Bureau of Canada, 2025), contributing to Canada's record-breaking total of 9.1 billion CAD in insured damage (Figure 1). This incident required mutual aid, with equipment, personnel, and aircraft shared among local, provincial, and international agencies. The wildfire forced the evacuation of an estimated 25,000 residents and tourists and destroyed one-third of the town's structures (Canada, 2024).

10.0 \$ \$(\$(\$(\$ Toronto, Southern 9.0 \$1 insured \$3-4 uninsured losses Ontario, Quebec Floods; incurred by government, loss Jasper, Alberta business, individuals 8.0 Wildfire; Calgary Alberta Hailstorm 7.0 (XX) ## #\$ Fort McMurray, Canada-wide **Alberta Wildfire** Wildfires & Nova 6.0 Scotia Floods \$ CAD Billion 5.0 *** *** ~* ** Alberta & Multiple Events **Toronto Floods** in Provinces 4.0 W M Eastern Slave Lake, 3.0 Ice Storm **Alberta Wildfire** <u></u> Ontario *** 2.0 Quebec Wind & Rain Estimated Floods Trend 1.0 0.0 '84 '86 '88 '90 '92 '94 '96 '00 '02 '04 '06 '08 '10 '12 '98 '14 '16 '18 '20 '22 '74^{*} Year No major wildfires, 1983-2009 Major wildfires, 2010-2024

Costs of Extreme Weather: Catastrophic Insured Losses

*2024 preliminary values in 2024\$ CAD, corrected for inflation and per capita wealth accumulation.

Source: IBC Facts Book, PCS, CatlQ, Swiss Re, Munich Re & Deloitte

Figure 1: Catastrophic insured losses, Canada 1983 – 2024.

While wildfire management policies have evolved to reduce the threat of wildfires encroaching on communities, wildfires continue to shape Alberta's landscape. Climate change is driving increasingly severe wildfire seasons (Beverly & Schroeder, 2024), and as the climate continues to warm, Canada can expect more frequent and severe wildfires (Wang et al., 2025).

The 2023 and 2024 wildfire seasons underscore the growing threat that wildfires pose to communities, infrastructure, and human health. Direct costs, such as \$1 billion spent annually on fire suppression, along with indirect costs from property loss, productivity declines, and health expenses, are expected to rise across Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2023).

According to the World Resources Institute (2019), every dollar invested in adaptation yields a return of \$2 to \$10, highlighting the strong economic case for proactive resilience measures. As wildfires become more frequent and severe, driven by a warming climate, proactive measures are needed to reduce risks and increase the resilience of vulnerable communities.

The Value of the Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard

The Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard ("**the Scorecard**") was developed as a practical and cost-effective tool to help communities assess their wildfire preparedness and identify areas for improvement. Until now, there was no standardized way to quantify community-level wildfire preparedness across jurisdictions.

The Scorecard outlines a process that communities follow within the framework of the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle (Figure 2). It also highlights a holistic approach to enhancing community wildfire resilience (Figure 3). Designed to assist communities in assessing their current level of wildfire preparedness, the Scorecard helps identify practical strategies to strengthen resilience and track progress over time. Communities can use the Scorecard to:

- Strengthen community wildfire resilience through the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle.
 By following a structured, step-by-step risk management approach, communities can enhance their resilience against wildfires. The Scorecard enables communities to evaluate and track their progress through this cycle.
- 2. Adopt a whole-of-society approach. Engage all parties—residents, local businesses, all levels of government, and Indigenous Rights Holders—in developing and implementing a comprehensive Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. Collaboration ensures a more effective and inclusive approach to wildfire risk reduction.
- Apply the Seven FireSmart Disciplines. Develop a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy that incorporates best practices from the <u>Seven</u> <u>FireSmart Disciplines</u>. Use the Scorecard to assess how well these disciplines are balanced within the strategy's development and implementation.
- 4. Implement practical wildfire resilience actions. Execute a five-year Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, adjusting annually and revised every 5 years. The Scorecard helps evaluate the strategy's alignment with best practices for wildfire resilience.



Alberta FireSmart[™] Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle

Figure 2: Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle.

Enhance Collaboration and Coordination

Applying the FireSmart[™] System to Strengthen Community Wildfire Resilience



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Figure 3: Keys concepts of applying the FireSmart System to Strengthen Community Wildfire Resilience.

FireSmart Success Stories

Whitecourt and AltaLink Vegetation Management Project

Background and Problem

In 2023, the town of Whitecourt faced an increased risk of wildfire due to overgrown vegetation near AltaLink's power lines. Unmanaged tree growth posed a significant threat to power infrastructure and nearby homes, raising concerns about potential fire outbreaks and power outages.

Solution

AltaLink partnered with Whitecourt to proactively address wildfire risk. They launched an awareness campaign that included public meetings, informational signage, and direct communication with homeowners. To encourage participation, they offered free tree removal services on private properties, reducing financial barriers and increasing community engagement.

Outcomes

- **Public Support:** Transparent communication and community involvement led to strong resident buy-in.
- **Risk Reduction:** The removal of vegetation from public and private land significantly decreased wildfire risk and improved powerline safety.
- **Community Awareness:** Educational efforts enhanced long-term understanding of fire prevention strategies.

Key Lessons Learned

- Early and transparent public education fosters trust and participation.
- Collaboration between utility companies and local governments is essential for successful risk mitigation projects.











Vegetation Management



Method: Developing and Testing the Scorecard

The Scorecard was created in partnership with FireSmart Alberta, with oversight provided by an expert wildfire advisory committee (see Acknowledgements). The development process was informed by leading wildfire resilience practices and strategies (Table 1).

The Scorecard criteria are designed to help communities assess their current level of wildfire preparedness, identify practical opportunities to strengthen their resilience to wildfires, and track progress over time. The Scorecard identifies the standardized process that communities follow throughout the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle (Figure 2). It also identifies a holistic approach that communities can take to improve their community wildfire resilience (Figure 3).

The criteria designed to assess wildfire preparedness are presented in Table 2.

The Scorecard criteria are designed to help communities assess their current level of wildfire preparedness, identify practical opportunities to strengthen their resilience to wildfires, and track progress over time.

Table 1: Select wildfire guidance that informed development of the Scorec
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Level of Application	Publication	Date	Content
All Scales	<u>National Guide for Wildland-</u> <u>Urban Interface Fires</u>	2021	Provides strategies to prevent WUI fires from becoming disasters, focusing on improving safety and protecting property by reducing wildfire risks in surrounding areas and strengthening fire protection for buildings.
Communities	FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection	2013	Outlines proactive measures communities can take to reduce wildfire hazard and risk.
Buildings	<u>Wildfire-Resilience Best-</u> <u>Practice Checklist for Home</u> <u>Construction, Renovation and</u> <u>Landscaping</u>	2022	Encourages the adoption of wildfire resilience best practices in home construction, renovations, and landscaping to reduce wildfire property damage in WUI areas across Canada.
	FireSmart Begins at Home Guide	2023	Offers recommendations to reduce wildfire risk to homes and neighbourhoods.

Table 2: Criteria used to assess wildfire preparedness of 10 pilot Alberta Communities: Clearwater County, County of GrandePrairie, Lac La Biche County, Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Parkland County, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Town ofBanff, Town of High Level, Town of Hinton and the Town of Whitecourt (Government of Alberta and FireSmart Alberta, 2013).

Criteria	Description
Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment	A Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment (WHRA) evaluates wildfire exposure to inform the need for further planning in a community . It precedes and shapes the development of a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. The assessment analyzes local wildfire hazard by examining factors such as fuel type, stand density, blowdown, deadfall, and existing treatments. Additionally, wildfire risk is assessed by considering: • landscape fire history, • values-at-risk and critical infrastructure—such as buildings, developments, or natural resources with measurable or intrinsic value—that could be damaged or destroyed by wildfire, • causal trends, • local weather patterns, • prevailing winds, and • community resources and evacuation capabilities. The outcome of the WHRA informs whether a community requires additional mitigation or emergency planning, or both. Source: <u>FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection</u>
Wildfire Preparedness Guide	A Wildfire Preparedness Guide (WPG) provides essential information for first responders during the early stages of a wildfire event. These community-specific plans should be familiar to local fire departments and provincial wildfire agencies ahead of any wildland-urban interface incident . A WPG typically includes emergency contact numbers, values-at-risk information, predefined evacuation routes, tactical communications, and identification of existing fuel mitigation efforts. Source: <u>Developing a Wildfire Preparedness Guide</u>
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy	A Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) offers a community strategic guidance and recommendations for implementing the FireSmart system. It outlines priority vegetation management projects based on hazardous fuel proximity to values, informed by the WHRA. The WMS also addresses the more challenging FireSmart disciplines, such as development and legislation . It requires extensive consultation with interested parties due to the broad impact of its recommendations. Source: <u>FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection</u>
Interagency Cooperation	Community Wildfire Interagency Cooperation: FireSmart is a shared responsibility. Preparedness requires the collaboration of each group, agency, and organization (i.e., Fire Department, Emergency Management, politicians and residents) that might be affected by wildfire. Strong partnerships and interagency cooperation are essential to an effective community FireSmart program. Through the development of a local community or regional FireSmart committee, communities can coordinate and manage the implementation of their wildfire mitigation strategy .

Criteria	Description
Education	Community Wildfire Education: increases public awareness by engaging and educating communities on wildfire risks. Promotes proactive FireSmart activities that residents can undertake to reduce risk on their properties and enhance overall community resilience .
Vegetation Management	Vegetation Management: involves the removal, reduction, and conversion of hazardous fuels around a community, making it the most costly and visible of all FireSmart disciplines. To ensure its effectiveness, extensive planning and consultation should be conducted before undertaking these projects at both the community and landscape scales.
Legislation	Municipal Wildfire Legislation: encompasses bylaws, plans and policies that integrate wildfire mitigation measures into municipal planning and development, aiming to increase the resilience of communities in the wildland-urban interface from wildfire impacts .
Development	Municipal Wildfire Infrastructure Resilience: incorporates best practices in wildfire mitigation and resilience into municipal development, including structural and infrastructure planning. It also informs architectural and engineering guidelines and standards, to limit home ignition and spread, and to guide the provision of emergency services during a wildfire (for example, access and egress routes, sufficient water for firefighting, etc.).
Emergency Planning	Emergency Planning and Response: enhances wildfire response by integrating wildfire considerations into existing emergency response and preparedness plans . This includes reviewing resource sharing and mutual aid agreements with local, regional, and provincial jurisdictions, and assessing structure protection and sprinkler plans.
Cross-Training	Cross-Training Emergency Crews : provides comprehensive training for emergency crews across all agencies (local fire departments, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, emergency management agencies, and others) on structural and wildland fire management. Additionally, municipal staff receive training on incident management, wildfire prevention, and engage in practice sessions and exercises to strengthen readiness.

Pilot Community Selection

The Scorecard was piloted to evaluate and improve its design, implementation process, and practical application across a range of community contexts. Ten Alberta communities were selected to represent diverse wildfire exposure levels, geographic settings, and local capacities. Table 3 outlines the characteristics of each community.



Community	Within Forest Fire Protection Area	Average Community Wildfire Risk	Community Size*	Date of last Major Wildfire	Primary Industries
Clearwater County	Yes	High	Medium urban centre	2023	Oil & Gas
County of Grande Prairie	Yes	High	Small urban centre	None within past 10 years (since approx. 2014)	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, Sand & Gravel
Lac La Biche County	Yes	High	Small urban centre	None within past 10 years (since approx. 2014)	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Transportation, Sand & Gravel, Mining
Municipality of Crowsnest Pass	Yes	High	Rural area	2023	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, Agriculture, Ranching, Transportation, Environmental, Sand & Gravel
Parkland County	No	High	Rural area	2023	Oil & Gas, Outdoor Recreation, Transportation, Agriculture, Ranching, Sand & Gravel
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Mixed	High	Rural area	2023	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism, Transportation, Environmental, Sand & Gravel

Table 3: Characteristics of 10 pilot communities.

Community	Within Forest Fire Protection Area	Average Community Wildfire Risk	Community Size*	Date of last Major Wildfire	Primary Industries
Town of Banff	Yes	High	Small urban centre	2021	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism
Town of High Level	Yes	Medium	Small urban centre	2019	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Agriculture
Town of Hinton	Yes	High	Small urban centre	None within past 10 years (since approx. 2014)	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Tourism, Mining
Town of Whitecourt	Mixed	High	Small urban centre	None within past 10 years (since approx. 2014)	Oil & Gas, Forestry, Tourism, Outdoor Recreation, Other Industry
*Rural = all territory lying outside population centres, Small urban centre = population 10,000 - 29,999,					

Medium urban centre = population of 30,000 - 99,999.

Pilot Community Interviews

To test the Scorecard, we conducted interviews with fire chiefs and wildfire and emergency responders from 10 pilot communities across Alberta (Table 3).

The interviews were designed to evaluate the Scorecard's usability, relevance, and effectiveness as a tool for assessing wildfire preparedness. Each interview followed a structured format, with questions grouped into four key sections:

- **Community Information:** Gathered baseline data on community demographics, geography, and wildfire history.
- Completed the Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard: Discussed and evaluated the 29 questions in the Scorecard (Appendix A) with participants.

- **Barriers and Incentives Questionnaire:** Identified challenges communities face in implementing FireSmart practices, as well as potential motivators or incentives for adoption.
- **FireSmart Achievements:** Explored successful initiatives and best practices already implemented in the communities to better understand what works in advancing wildfire resilience.



The Alberta FireSmart™ Community Scorecard

The Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard is a questionnaire with 29 questions that address wildfire preparedness best practices. Each best practice is assigned a score, which is then categorized into 10 action-focused practical areas (see Table 2 for full description):



1. Wildfire Hazard and Risk **Assessment:** Evaluates wildfire exposure through factors like fuel type, fire history, and evacuation capabilities, shaping the need for

mitigation or emergency planning.



2. Wildfire Preparedness Guide: Community-specific plans offering essential guidance for first responders, including evacuation routes, contact lists, and values-atrisk information.



3. Wildfire Mitigation Strategy: Strategic recommendations for implementing FireSmart, prioritizing vegetation management and addressing development and legislative needs.



4. Interagency Cooperation: Establishes cross-agency FireSmart committees to assign responsibilities, set timelines, and ensure accountability for implementing all wildfire mitigation strategy recommendations across all disciplines to increase resilience.



5. Education: Raises awareness of wildfire risks and encourages residents to take proactive FireSmart actions to reduce risk and enhance resilience.



6. Vegetation Management:

- Reduces hazardous fuels through removal or conversion, requiring extensive planning and consultation at community and landscape levels.
- **7. Legislation:** Integrates wildfire mitigation into municipal bylaws, plans, and policies to improve resilience in the wildland-urban interface.



8. Development: Incorporates wildfire resilience into municipal development standards, guiding structural design and emergency service provision.



9. Emergency Planning: Strengthens wildfire response by incorporating wildfire considerations into emergency plans and

resource-sharing agreements.



10. Cross-Training: Builds readiness by training municipal staff, structural and provincial wildland firefighters, and Indigenous community partners in wildfire prevention, incident management, and coordinated response through joint exercises.



Who should complete the scorecard?

Communities are encouraged to complete the assessment with other interested parties to answer the questions with the best available knowledge. For example:

- Emergency Management (e.g., Fire Chief, Firefighter, Director of Emergency Management)
- Government Administration (e.g., CAO, CFO)
- Government Elected Official (e.g., Mayor, Councilor, Chief, Band Council)
- Public Servant (e.g., Planning, Engineers, Alberta Wildfire, Communications)
- Public Health (e.g., Hospitals, Medical Practitioners, Community & Social Services)
- Industry Representative (e.g., Forestry, Mining, Petroleum, Farming/Ranching, Tourism)
- Critical Infrastructure Manager (e.g., Rail, Roads, Water & Sewer, Hydro, Gas)
- Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g., Canadian Red Cross, Food Bank, Newcomer Organization)

The Scorecard should be completed once a year, following the suggested timeline in the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle (Figure 2). Communities can use the Scorecard to document progress in reducing wildfire risk and identify wildfire preparedness needs. It is important for communities at all levels of risk (low to high), to complete the Scorecard, as risk is not eliminated, and conditions can change through time. Wildfire risk management requires sustained action.



ALBERTA

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Calgary

FireSmart Success Stories

FireSmart Home Assessment and Rebate Program in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Background and Problem

Despite the benefits of FireSmart home assessments, community participation in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) remained low, primarily due to financial constraints and a lack of awareness. Many homeowners were reluctant to remove high-risk trees due to the associated costs, leaving neighbourhoods vulnerable to wildfire threats.

Solution

With a 2023 grant from Intact Financial Corp., promotional efforts increased, and a rebate program was introduced to support home improvement projects. This led to a significant rise in participation, with 619 home assessments completed and 51 home improvement projects funded. Encouraged by these results, RMWB sustained the initiative through self-funding in 2024.





Outcomes

- **Increased Participation:** Home assessments rose from 197 in 2022 to 619 in 2023.
- **Increased Community Collaboration:** The funding encouraged neighbours to work together to mitigate wildfire risks, strengthening overall preparedness.
- **Greater Risk Reduction:** More homeowners took proactive steps to remove high-risk trees, improving neighbourhood safety.

Key Lessons Learned

- Financial incentives are a powerful motivator for community engagement.
- Interactive assessments not only increase participation but also enhance long-term awareness and fire prevention efforts.
- Encouraging collaboration among neighbours creates a more resilient and proactive community.





Insights and Analysis: Lessons from 10 Pilot Communities



Figure 4: Average score of 10 pilot communities, as indicated by shaded area.

The Alberta Community Scorecard pilot enabled real-world testing of the tool's methodology, data collection approach, and utility for municipal and regional decision-makers. It also provided insight into community strengths, readiness gaps, and opportunities to enhance the Scorecard itself.

This section presents an overview of the responses provided by representatives of the 10 pilot communities and provides an analysis of the average score received in each section of the Scorecard.

Overall, communities received an average

score of B (Figure 4). This score reflects intermediate strength in wildfire preparedness and understanding of the importance of implementing all steps of

the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle (Figure 2).

Below is a breakdown of each of the 10 categories of the scorecard, and an analysis of the average score of the 10 pilot communities.



Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment (WHRA) Average Score: A-

Best practice: review Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment every five years and update as needed.

All communities have conducted a wildfire hazard and risk assessment, with one exception. Parkland

County applied to the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (**FRIAA**) for funding but was not approved due to its large geographic size. However, the community has prioritized FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Wildland Fire Hazard Assessments for its hamlets and summer villages.

All but one community, Whitecourt, reported reviewing and updating their assessments within the recommended five-year timeframe. Communities achieve these updates by successfully applying to the FRIAA FireSmart program for wildfire hazard and risk assessments. All communities with a current wildfire hazard and risk assessment have a corresponding Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) or are in the process of developing one. It is important to note that the WMS is completed by a third-party consultant and funded by the FRIAA FireSmart program.

The best practice recommendation is to update the strategy every five years. Six out of 10 communities follow this practice, while others cited funding constraints with FRIAA, or having an informal strategy that is updated as needed. All but two communities involve their FireSmart committee in the WMS updates and implementation.



Wildfire Preparedness Guide (WPG) Average Score: B

Best practice: review WPG on an annual basis with Alberta Wildfire and mutual aid partners.

All but two communities, Parkland County and Grande Prairie, have a Wildfire Preparedness Guide (WPG). Grande Prairie plans to develop its WPG between 2025 and 2030, while Parkland County, due to its large geographic size, has focused on preparing WPGs for its hamlets and summer villages.

For communities with a WPG, annual reviews are conducted as recommended by the province.



Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) Average Score: B

Best practice: review and update the WMS every five years.



Interagency Cooperation Average Score: B-

Best practice: establish cross-agency FireSmart committees to coordinate the implementation of wildfire mitigation strategies. These committees should assign clear responsibilities, set implementation timelines, and ensure accountability across all relevant departments and disciplines.

Only two out of the 10 communities, Whitecourt and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, have a formal FireSmart Committee. Out of the remaining communities, five plan to form a committee by 2030, and three do not plan to have a committee. This indicates room for significant improvement.

The FireSmart Committee plays a crucial role in coordinating and implementing the Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS). Comprised of representatives from local businesses, industry, various departments within a local government, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties, the committee ensures a collaborative approach to wildfire risk reduction. The committee's primary responsibility is to oversee the implementation of the WMS in alignment with the established terms of reference. Additionally, the committee contributes to the development of the WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan.

To ensure continued progress, the committee should convene annually to review the implementation plan and prepare both annual and five-year progress reports. These reports outline the planned and completed actions and can be presented to the mayor and council as part of efforts to secure continued support for WMS implementation.



Education Average Score: B

All communities implement at least one of the four **best practices** for community education:

• **Train local and regional staff** as Neighbourhood Recognition Program (NRP) Specialists and Advanced FireSmart Home Assessors through FireSmart Alberta and FireSmart Canada.

• Promote and distribute FireSmart

Canada-approved educational resources to residents, such as *Three Steps to a Cost-Effective FireSmart*TM *Home* (see page 36) and *the FireSmart Begins at Home* Guide.

- Deliver FireSmart training and programs to residents, including FireSmart 101, FireSmart Canada Ambassador, Advanced FireSmart Home Assessments, and the FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program.
- Provide financial incentives for installing

fire-resistant building materials, using fire-resistant landscaping plants and materials, and performing maintenance activities on private property.

All respondents recognized the importance of community education in reducing wildfire risk. However, they identified lack of funding and capacity as significant barriers to implementing all the recommended educational strategies.



Vegetation Management Average Score: B

Best practice: implement vegetation management strategies that reduce hazardous fuels through selective removal or conversion of flammable vegetation.

Nine out of the ten communities consistently complete vegetation management projects as outlined in their Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) and its Implementation Plan. Parkland County cited a lack of funding as a significant barrier to completing this step.

While many communities rely on FRIAA funding to support vegetation management, larger communities were previously ineligible for this funding due to their

> All respondents recognized the importance of community education in reducing wildfire risk. However, they identified lack of funding and capacity as significant barriers to implementing all the recommended educational strategies.



Figure 5: Three Steps to a Cost-Effective FireSmart™ Home (Intact Centre, 2023).

geographic size. Recent changes have addressed this limitation, expanding access to funding opportunities.

Approximately half of the communities that conduct vegetation management do not perform the retreatment of project areas, which is also hindered by funding constraints and limited staff capacity.



Legislation Average Score: C-

Best practice: incorporate wildfire mitigation measures into municipal bylaws, official plans, and development policies to strengthen resilience in the wildland-urban interface.

None of the communities have implemented FireSmart bylaws or plans that mandate the use of ignitionresistant building materials.

While some communities offer guidance on best practices for wildfire resilient construction, they currently lack the authority to enforce these practices through land-use bylaws due to restrictions under the <u>Safety Codes Act</u>. Section 66(1) of the Alberta Safety Codes Act, renders any municipal bylaw inoperative if it attempts to regulate matters already governed by the Act.

Four communities have enacted bylaws regulating landscaping materials. Under Section 640 of the **Municipal Government Act**, municipalities have the authority to regulate spatial separation between homes, setback from slopes, and landscaping materials. However, this is not widely known.

To address these gaps, a provincial bulletin should be released, providing municipalities with clear, step-by-step guidance on incorporating FireSmart best practices into their land-use bylaws and development requirements. None of the communities have implemented FireSmart bylaws or plans that mandate the use of ignition-resistant building materials.



Development Average Score: B-

Best practice: integrate wildfire resilience into municipal development standards to guide structural design, land use decisions, and emergency service provision.

Four of the communities, Clearwater County, Whitecourt, Lac La Biche County and Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, include FireSmart best practices in some development guidelines, architectural guidelines, and engineering standards to limit fire ignition and spread. These practices include measures such as spatial separation between residential structures, setbacks from slopes, and the establishment of fuel breaks (see Figure 6, the infographic *Three Features of a Wildfire-Ready Community* for examples of these practices). Four additional communities plan to implement these practices, while the remaining communities have no plans to do so.

All communities, except Parkland County, have either implemented or are planning to adopt wildfireresilient best practices in their development guidelines, architectural standards, and engineering criteria to support emergency services during a wildfire event. These practices include ensuring safe access and egress, establishing emergency shelters, and maintaining minimum water supply standards for firefighting.



Emergency Planning Average Score: A-

Best practice: review Resource Sharing Agreements, Government Emergency Plans and WUI Structure Protection Plans annually, and update as needed.

All communities performed well in Emergency Planning. Six communities review resource-sharing and mutual aid agreements annually between jurisdictions, including local and provincial governments, as well as Indigenous Rights Holders. The remaining communities conduct these reviews every two years or more.

Eight communities review their local and regional government emergency plans and procedures annually, while two review them every two years.

Half of the communities review their wildland-urban interface (WUI) structure protection and sprinkler plans every year. The other half review these plans every two to three years, only when new development occurs, or in response to an incident.



Cross-Training Average Score: A

Best practice: once a year deliver cross-training to municipal staff, structural firefighters, provincial wildland crews, and Indigenous community partners.

All communities performed well in Cross-Training activities. All but one community, Town of Hinton, conduct annual cross-training field exercises for structural and wildland firefighters. Town of Hinton opts for training every three to five years.

Half of the communities conduct annual tabletop exercises for emergency response planning and coordination, involving emergency managers and key community partners such as: telecommunications, transportation, hydro, water, health care, forestry, neighbouring communities, and Indigenous Rights Holders. The remaining communities conduct these exercises every two to five years.





Communities can integrate wildfire-ready features into their risk management plans to limit damage and disruption due to wildfire events and strengthen emergency preparedness. By working with Provincial/Territorial wildfire agencies, communities can access available tools, training, and resources to help them assess their unique risks, and create customized action plans.

Feature 1: Wildfire-Ready Structures & Infrastructure



Complete regular maintenance of structures, infrastructure, and landscaping within 10 m to limit accumulation of flammable materials (e.g., leaves, brush piles, stored items, fuel tanks).



Install/replace landscaping with fire resistant materials within 10 m of structures and infrastructure.



Build/update structures and infrastructure using fire resistant building materials (e.g., Class A roofing/metal roofs, non-combustible siding, metal, or concrete hydro poles).



Design/update structures and infrastructure to be ignition resistant (e.g., 5 m distance between vegetation and power lines, power supply lines below ground where feasible).

Feature 2: Wildfire-Ready Community Design



Integrate minimum 30 m wide zones (fire breaks) featuring ignition resistant materials (e.g., mowed grasses, ponds, roads) into community design to limit the spread of fire. Increase minimum to 50 m on steep slopes.



Provide greater spatial separation between structures in hazard areas to limit the spread of fire from one structure to another.



Require minimum 10 m setback from the crest of a hill to limit spread of fire to structures.



Restrict development in hazard areas where mitigation measures cannot meet minimum standards for health, safety, and environmental protection.

Feature 3: Wildfire-Ready Emergency Response



Complete annual emergency planning and cross-training exercises that include multiple agencies (e.g., wildland and structural firefiniters).



Designate at least one emergency shelter per community.



Ensure minimum water supply for firefighting.



Provide two or more access and egress routes.

Note: The guidance in this document is voluntary. Completion of actions should not conflict with applicable building and fire codes. Wildfire-ready communities can reduce but not eliminate risk.







Scan the code or click the link for additional resources at <u>www.intactcentre.ca</u>



Figure 6: Three Features of a Wildfire-Ready Community (Intact Centre, 2023).

FireSmart Success Stories

Strategic Wildfire Assessments in County of Grande Prairie

Background and Problem

In 2013, high-risk areas were assessed to identify wildfire vulnerabilities. While these large-scale assessments proved highly effective in risk mitigation, financial constraints have prevented them from being conducted regularly.

Solution

To address this challenge, two trained assessors evaluated 30 subdivisions across the County of Grande Prairie, using their findings to secure funding from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). This proactive approach significantly improved risk management, however, due to funding and resource limitations, assessments are now conducted only "upon request".

Outcomes

- **Reduced Losses:** In 2023, FireSmart efforts played a critical role in saving 440 homes during a wildfire event.
- **Targeted Funding Requests:** Comprehensive assessment data provided essential insights for allocating resources effectively.

Key Lessons Learned

• Large-scale wildfire assessments are invaluable for risk management but require substantial funding and resources to maintain continuity.



Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment





Post-Scorecard Survey: Emerging Trends

The 10 pilot communities were invited to complete a post-scorecard survey to identify the barriers and enablers to implement FireSmart best practices. Figure 7 illustrates the perceived barriers, while Figure 8 presents the results for perceived enablers.

Perceived Barriers to Adopting FireSmart Best Practices

Perceived Barrier



Figure 7: Post-Scorecard survey results for 10 pilot communities' perceived barriers to adopting FireSmart™ best practices.

Incentives to Enable Adoption of FireSmart Best Practices

Perceived Incentive

70 80 90 10

Figure 8: Post-Scorecard survey results for 10 pilot communities' perceived incentives to enable adoption of FireSmart™ best practices.

What is Working? Insights from the Scorecard and Survey on FireSmart Best Practices

Based on the Scorecard and post-Scorecard survey findings, we identified four areas that are working well to facilitate wildfire protection:

• **Community Knowledge of FireSmart:** Five out of 10 of the respondents reported that their community members are aware of FireSmart best practices.

- **Community Wildfire Priority:** Five out of ten of the respondents stated that their community considers wildfire resilience a high priority.
- **Community Wildfire Risk Awareness:** Eight out of ten respondents indicated that residents have a good awareness of the wildfire risk in their community.
- Incentives for Adoption of FireSmart Practices: All respondents agreed that incentives would be effective for adopting FireSmart practices.



What Needs to Improve? Addressing Barriers to FireSmart Adoption

From the Scorecard and post-Scorecard survey, the primary barriers to adopting FireSmart best practices which limit preparedness for wildfire across communities are:

- **Lack of Funding:** Funding is a key barrier, leading to challenges such as limited staff resources, inadequate hazard and risk data, and insufficient incentives for property owners to take action to reduce their wildfire risk.
 - Nine out of the 10 communities cited a lack of funding for incentives like awards, subsidies, and homeowner grants.
 - Eight communities suggested that insurance discounts could help overcome this barrier.
 For example, some communities secured alternative funding through Intact Financial's Municipal Climate Resiliency Grant Program, successfully enabling them to offer FireSmart home improvement rebates.
- Complex Funding Application Process: Seven communities emphasized the need for a simpler application process for the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart funding program, with timelines better aligned to community needs.
 (for example, awarding funding during the "off season" or winter months).
- Limited FRIAA FireSmart Usability: The FRIAA FireSmart funding program primarily supports communities within Alberta's Forest Protection Area (FPA). Communities outside the FPA, despite facing high wildfire exposure, have challenges accessing FRIAA FireSmart funding. Communities considered in this project, located outside the FPA, applied for FRIAA FireSmart funding to complete Wildfire Hazard and Risk

Eight out of 10 respondents identified a lack of provincial support as a barrier to implementing FireSmart best practices into bylaws.

Assessments but were unsuccessful due to their geographic size and location.

- **Staff Resources:** Limited staff resources, often linked to funding shortages, further hinder FireSmart adoption.
 - Six respondents reported limited staff to engage their communities, enforce FireSmart best practices, or collaborate with neighbouring communities.
- **Support from Provincial Authorities:** Eight out of 10 respondents identified a lack of provincial support as a barrier to establishing FireSmart best practices as bylaws.

County of

Grande Prairie

Calgary

FireSmart Success Stories

County of Grande Prairie Chipping Program

Background and Problem

Wildfire risks in The County of Grande Prairie were exacerbated by the accumulation of woody yard debris around homes. However, initial participation in the chipping and yard cleanup program was low, highlighting the need for a novel motivator.

Solution

To encourage participation, the program launched community events in two target areas, offering free yard chipping services, a BBQ, and FireSmart educational materials. Over the past decade, this event has become a highly anticipated annual tradition, receiving strong community support.

Outcomes

- **Increased Engagement:** Community participation has grown significantly, reducing woody yard debris and improving overall property safety.
- **Expanded Educational Outreach:** The events serve as an effective platform to promote FireSmart home assessments and yard safety best practices.

Education



Vegetation Management

Key Lessons Learned

- Long-term community engagement fosters sustained participation and program success.
- Additional funding could further expand the program's reach and impact.





Conclusions

Based on the application Alberta FireSmart[™] Community Scorecard, there is clear need for provincial authorities and funding bodies, such as Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart, to strengthen community wildfire preparedness and adaptation in Alberta.

The Scorecard provides practical guidance for directing government support and funding toward the areas in need of wildfire protection. This includes expanding funding models to support comprehensive Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessments, offering grants and rebates to incentivize homeowner wildfire preparedness, and reassessing provincial and national policies to incorporate FireSmart recommendations into municipal bylaws.

Key Recommendations

- Enhance FireSmart Funding: Simplify the application process and expand eligibility of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart funding program. Explore and identify additional funding opportunities within provincial agencies to support local wildfire adaptation and preparedness efforts.
- 2. Foster Collaboration with Community

Partners: Collaborate with property and casualty insurance companies to establish grant programs that enhance community resilience and reduce the vulnerability of homes, businesses, and industry within the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

- 3. Update the Alberta Safety Codes Act: Amend the Alberta Safety Codes Act and/or the National Building Code to allow municipalities to enforce fire-resilient development and the use of ignition-resistant materials in housing and commercial buildings located within the WUI.
- **4. Strengthen Wildfire Safety Practices:** Better communicate that municipalities have the authority to regulate spatial separation between homes, setback from slopes, and landscaping materials.

Next Steps

The Alberta FireSmart[™] Community Scorecard can be rolled out province-wide, providing all communities with a standardized tool to assess their wildfire preparedness. This will help communities to limit wildfire risk exposure through practical, meaningful, and cost-effective field-tested actions.

Appendix A - Sample Pilot Scorecard

Key:						
Response	No				Yes	
Number Score	0	1	2	3	4	
Letter Score	E	D+	C+	B+	А+	

Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment						
1. Status - Do you have a Community-scale Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment completed?	Yes	4	A+			
2. Frequency - If yes, when was it last updated? (provide year). Best practice: review Hazard and Risk Assessment every five years, and update as needed.	2020	4	А+			
3. Frequency - Do you review and update the Hazard and Risk Assessment every five years?	No	0	E			
Wildfire Preparedness Guide						
4. Status - Do you have a Wildfire Preparedness Guide(s) for your community?	Complete	4	А+			
5. Frequency - Do you review and update your wildfire preparedness guide(s) on an annual basis with AB Wildfire and your mutual aid partners?	Every 2 Years	3	В+			
Best practice: review with Forestry/Mutual Aid Partners and update on an annual basis.						

Best Practice Name and Description	Response	Number Score	Letter Score
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS)			
6. Status – Do you have a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy that includes all Seven FireSmart Disciplines (Interagency Cooperation, Education, Vegetation Management, Legislation, Development, Emergency Planning, Cross-training)?	Planned within 1 Year	2	C+
Note: WMS completed by a third-party consultant and funded by the FRIAA FireSmart program.			
7. Frequency - If yes, when was the WMS created?	2017	0	E
8. Frequency - Are there plans to update the WMS at the 5-year mark? <i>Best practice: review and update the WMS every five years.</i>	Not Applicable	N/A	N/A
9. Status - Is your FireSmart committee involved in the WMS update?	Yes	4	A+
Includes the Seven FireSmart Disciplines: Interagency Cooperation, Education, Management, Legislation, Development, Emergency Planning, Cross-training Interagency Cooperation	Vegetation		
10. Status - FireSmart Committee - Do you have a local/ regional FireSmart Committee to coordinate the implementation of the WMS following a Terms of Reference (TOR)?	Complete	4	A+
11. Status - WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan - If yes, has your FireSmart Committee completed a WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan?	In Progress	3	B+
12. Frequency - FireSmart Committee Meetings - Does your FireSmart Committee hold at least one meeting per year to review and support the implementation of the WMS?	Every 2 years	3	B+
13. Frequency - Annual Progress Report - Does your FireSmart Committee prepare an annual WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan progress report (e.g., for council) on both planned and completed actions?	Every 3-5 Years	2	С+
14. Frequency - Five-Year Summary Report - Does your FireSmart Committee prepare a WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan summary report (e.g., for council) on both planned and completed actions over a five- year term?	Every 10 years or more	1	D+

Best Practice Name and Description	Response	Number Score	Letter Score
Education			
15. Status - Train FireSmart Representatives - Do you train local/regional staff as Neighbourhood Recognition Program (NRP) Specialists and Advanced FireSmart Home Assessors through FireSmart Alberta and FireSmart Canada?	Complete	4	A+
16. Status - Educational Material Distribution - Do you promote and distribute FireSmart Canada approved education resources to residents (e.g., Three Steps to A Cost-Effective FireSmart Home, FireSmart Begins at Home App, etc.)?	Complete	4	A+
17. Status - FireSmart Training Delivery to Residents - Do you deliver FireSmart training and programs to residents (e.g., FireSmart 101, FireSmart Canada Ambassador, Advanced FireSmart Home Assessments, and FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program)?	Planned within 1 Year	2	C+
18. Status - Financial Incentives - Do you provide financial incentives to install fire-resistant building materials, landscaping plants and materials, and complete maintenance activities on private property?	Planned within 1-5 years	1	D+
Vegetation Management			
19. Frequency - Vegetation Management Projects - Do you complete treatment of vegetation management projects prioritized in the WMS and as scheduled in the WMS Implementation Plan?	Most of the time	3	B+
20. Status - Five-Year Maintenance Schedule - Do you have a five-year maintenance review schedule to evaluate if re-treatment of vegetation management project areas is required?	Complete	4	A+
21. Frequency - Project Maintenance - Do you complete re-treatment of vegetation management project areas, as required?	Most of the time	3	B+
Legislation			
22. Status - FireSmart Bylaws/ Plans - Does your community implement FireSmart by-laws/plans, to require the use of fire-resistant building and landscaping materials and FireSmart maintenance practices?	Not Planned	0	E

Best Practice Name and Description	Response	Number Score	Letter Score
Development			
23. Status - FireSmart Residential Guidelines and Standards - Does your community include FireSmart best practices in all development guidelines, architectural guidelines, and engineering standards to limit fire ignition and spread (e.g., spatial separation between residential structures, setbacks from slopes, landscaping materials)?	Not Planned	0	E
24. Status - Wildfire Resilient Emergency Service Guidelines and Standards - Does your community include wildfire-resilient best practices in all development guidelines, architectural guidelines, and engineering standards, to guide the provision of emergency services during a wildfire event (e.g., safe access and egress, emergency shelters, minimum water supply for firefighting)?	Complete	4	А+
Emergency Planning			
25. Frequency - Resource Sharing Agreements - How often do you review resource sharing and mutual aid agreements between jurisdictions (e.g., local, provincial government, Indigenous Rights Holders, etc.)?	Every 2 Years	3	B+
Best practice: review Resource Sharing Agreements annually, and update as needed.			
26. Frequency - Government Emergency Plans - How often do you review local/ regional government emergency plans and procedures?	Every 2 Years	3	B+
Best practice: review Government Emergency Plans annually, and update as needed.			
27. Frequency - Structure Protection Plans - How often do you review wildland-urban interface (WUI) structure protection and sprinkler plans?	Every 3-5 Years	2	С+
Best practice: review WUI structure protection and sprinkler plans annually, and update as needed.			

Best Practice Name and Description	Response	Number Score	Letter Score
Cross-Training			
28. Frequency - Firefighter Field Training Exercises - Do you conduct structural and wildland firefighter cross-training field exercises on an annual basis?	Every Year	4	А+
29. Frequency - Community Partner Tabletop Training Exercises - Do you conduct emergency response planning and coordination tabletop exercises between emergency managers and community partners (e.g., telecommunications, transportation, hydro, water, health care, forestry, neighbouring community governments, Indigenous Rights Holders, etc.)?	Every 2 Years	3	В+

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