

Williams Lake Community Forest LP

Site Visit with BCCFA Recipient
BCCFA Crown Land Wildfire Risk
Reduction Program

Report date: December 15, 2022
Site visit: September 28, 2022



British Columbia
**Community
Forest
Association**
local people, local forests, local decisions



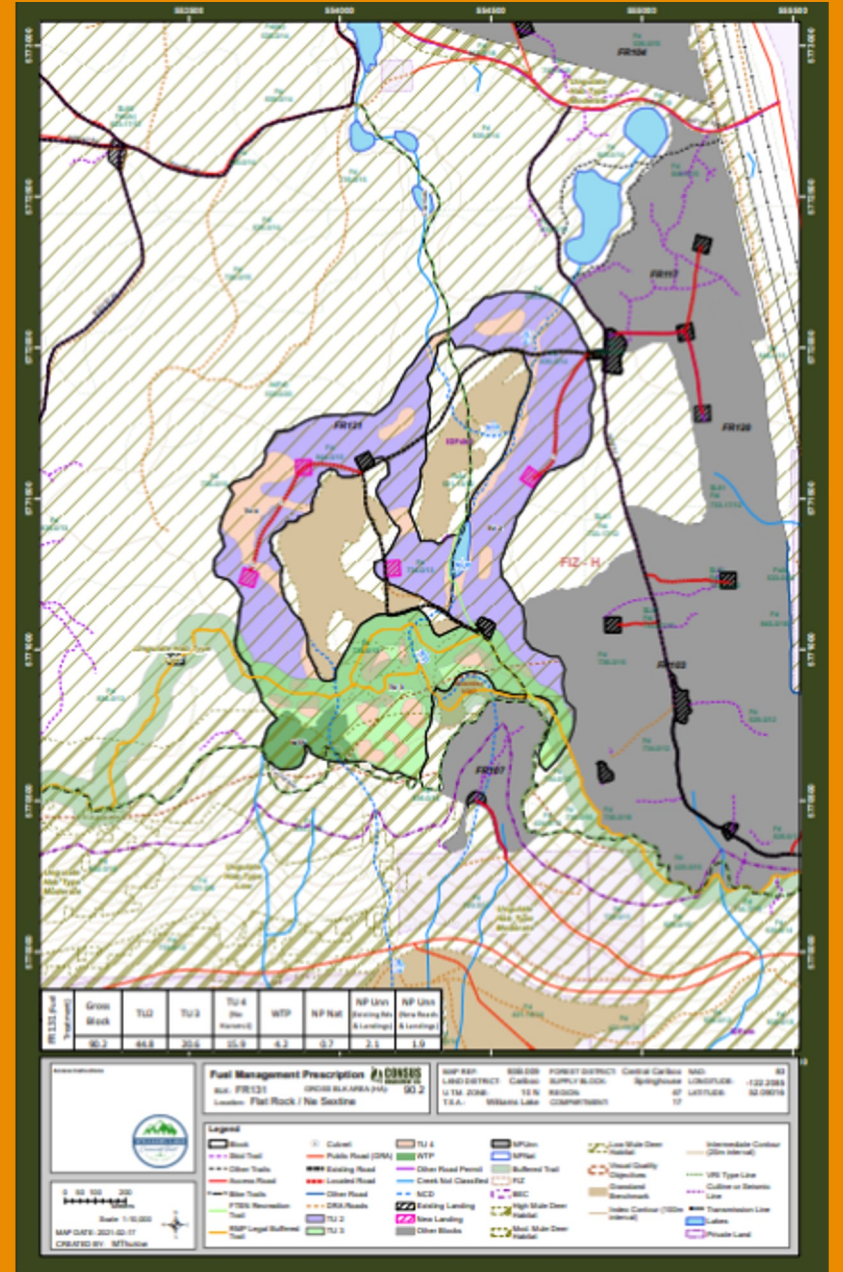
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Key information

Recipient	Williams Lake Community Forest LP
Main contact	Kent Watson, General Manager, Williams Lake Community Forest
Responsible WPO	Matt Lees, Cariboo Fire Centre
District manager	Harold Stolar, DCC
Site visit date	September 28, 2022
Site location	Flatrock Block
In attendance	Kent Watson (WLCF), Hugh Flinton (WLCF), Andrew Flockhart (BCWS), Peter Holub (BCWS), Matt Lees (BCWS), Jennifer Gunter (BCCFA), Colin Campbell (PwC)
Investment schedule	<u>CA00000006</u>
Project plan	<u>TX00000003</u> (Flatrock Fire Hazard Reduction Treatment)
Authorizations	Cutting Permit as part of the WLCF K3A license.
Estimated total person days	TX00000003 (1221 person days)
Comments	This project is located on a slightly southern aspect fully within the WLCF Flatrock Block, near the City of Williams Lake. Treatments were adjacent to grassland benchmark areas, within Mule Deer Winter Range areas, within a recreation trail buffer area and adjacent to identified archeological sites. This area was identified as an extreme fire threat class and is within a class 1 WUI. Primary harvest completed in the winter of 2021. BCCFA CLWRR funding utilized to reduce the ladder fuels by thinning and pruning the understory. Surface fine fuels were further reduced through piling and burning.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a camera lens. The lens is held in a way that its front element is visible, showing a circular view of a sunlit forest with tall trees and green grass. The background of the entire image is a blurred forest scene, creating a sense of depth and connection to nature. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of the hand and the metallic details of the lens.



Our observations related to the implementation of the project

Higher level planning



HLP for unit FR131 included:

- WLCF LP Forest Stewardship Plan
- Williams Lake & Area CWPP
- Unit is located within Mule Deer Winter Range GAR Order area (Moderate and Low Stand Structure Habitat Classes)
- Trails: Cariboo Chilcotin Legal Buffered Trails (Ye Old Box trail located in TU 3). Bike trail in TU2.
- Prescription consistent with WLCF LP FSP and Williams Lake & Area CWPP
- High Archeological potential area. Williams Lake First Nation is a partner of WLCF.
- Prescription was shared with DCC and BCWS, and input from both was incorporated into prescription
- Other stakeholders included Range tenure holder, Williams Lake Cycling Club, local community.

Fuel management prescription



FMP for unit FR131 completed by Consus Management Ltd. Specs included:

- 65.4ha within 2 treatment units (TU 2 and 3). 90.2 ha gross area.
- TU 2: previously mechanical harvesting treatment to thin-from-below. Manual treatments to reduce surface fuel loading/ladder fuels.
- TU 3: Manual treatments to reduce fuel loading/ladder fuels only. Rec trails precluded mechanical harvesting.
- Basal Area: Pre-treat: TU2 (34.2 m²/ha); TU3 (23.0 m²/ha). Retain BA to meet MDWR GAR order
- Surface fuel loading: Pre-treatment 0.7kg/m² to 7.6kg/m²; Post treatment <2.0kg/m²
- Head Fire Intensity: Reduce surface fuels to achieve HFI of <4000kW/m

Unit costs



BCCFA provided funding for pre-treatment assessments, thinning, piling, burning, post treatment survey, administration:

- Pre-treatment WR Assessments: Migratory bird survey; Stakeholder engagement; final Fuel Management Prescription = \$91.7/ha. Portion of FMP was contributed (in-kind) WLCF (field evaluations, threat plots, cruise data, layout)
- Manual Thinning = \$1644/ha; Manual Piling = \$2114/ha; Manual Burning = \$1422/ha
- Manual treatments completed by Alakali Resource Management (First Nations contractor). This work was direct awarded to ARM.
- Post-treatment assessment: fine fuel loading survey, forest cover survey; final report = \$37.5/ha
- Administration = \$37/ha
- Overall costs = \$5,614/ha

Opportunities and challenges



WLCF has successfully built on previous WR projects (FESBC funding) completed already taken place using mechanical and manual fuel management techniques:

- Multiple years of WR funding in the Region has allowed local contractors to gain experience working on both mechanical and manual treatments..
- Ability to utilize WLCF Cutting Permit (one CP) streamlined implementation of implementation (no requirement to apply for Sec 52.1).
- Multiple FLNRORD reviews of FMP are required (BCWS, Stewardship and Wildlife). This process could be streamlined.
- The mountain bike trails (Cowtrails and Ye Old Box) located within block was protected during operations
- Future funding for maintenance treatments: what will be the frequency and type of treatments?

Overall project impression

Implementing important wildfire risk reduction treatment adjacent to the community of Williams Lake, as part of the Williams Lake Community Forest BCCFA CLWRR Program

FR131 represents a portion of a proposed Primary Fuel Break (PFB) and is located west of BC Hydro's 500KV Transmission Line. This treatment is designed to modify fire behaviour and create defensible fire suppression opportunities.

- Treatment was direct awarded to First Nations companies however rates were in line with typical wildfire projects in other parts of the cariboo, \$5,180/ha which included manual thinning, piling and burning
- Recreation is of significant concern when implementing a project like this in the WLCF as this area is used extensively by mountain bikers.
- Extreme care was taken to protect mountain bike trails which cut directly through this area (Ye Old Box and Cowtrails).
- The WLCF has developed significant wildfire risk reduction expertise since 2016. With several successful WR projects completed to date, the WLCF has had the opportunity to test a number of different mechanical and manual WR treatment methods. Funding has also built capacity within the local contractor community through regular projects (Alkali Resource Management now has a specialized WR crew that can provide up to 40 people to work on these projects; local logging contractor Borland Creek Logging has gained experience completing mechanical WR treatments).
- The 2017 evacuation of the City of Williams Lake highlights highlighted the importance of these treatments for the local community

Actions going forward:

- Consider at continuing these types of treatments with existing and new funding sources



Field pictures



Fully burnt pile in treatment area.



Post treatment surface fuel loading. GAR order for MDWR limits basal area removal.



Regeneration retained in MDWR clump.

Field pictures



Remnants of mulched material from adjacent FESBC WR treatment area (2019). Small mulcher capable of working around residual trees and stumps treated surface fuels post thinning. Approximate cost \$1000/ha. BCWS currently does not support mulching treatments.



Active range use in WR treatment area. Range, recreation and wildlife values were key components considered in this treatment.



Surface fuel loading in post treatment stand. Relatively high basal area retention to meet Mule Deer Winter Range objectives.

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