

Views about wildfire prevention and fuels management in the wildland-urban interface

Description

Wildfire in the wildland-urban interface is an increasing problem facing communities in British Columbia. The purpose of this survey is to better understand the views of municipalities, regional districts, First Nations communities and reserves regarding plans and actions toward wildfire prevention. We are interested in the perspectives of decision makers, planners or managers (e.g., Chief Administrative Officers; public safety or emergency services coordinators, foresters, land managers etc.) working at the level of individual communities (e.g., within regional districts, one survey should be completed per community or for a representative community).

The survey is organized into 5 sections:

1. Community characteristics
2. Community issues and priorities
3. Wildfire risk and hazard
4. Wildfire prevention and fuels management
5. Planning and reducing wildfire risk

Completing this 25-question survey will take approximately 30 minutes. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. We do not ask for your name. The survey uses IP addresses to keep one set of responses separate from another set. At no time will this information be included in the data or in any publication. Only anonymous, aggregate results will be analyzed. We use FluidSurveys which is licensed to the University of British Columbia and hosted in Canada. Data will be stored electronically in password-protected files. Potential benefits of participating in this survey include opportunities to reflect on the challenges of wildfire prevention and fuels management in your community and provide insights that may lead to improved community action to reduce fire risk.

Your participation is completely optional. By completing the questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in this research.

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

For more information about this project please feel free to contact the principal investigators:

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Thank you for your time!

Community characteristics

1. Which of the following best describes your professional role as it relates to wildfire prevention in your community? (select one)

- Elected official (i.e., mayor, chief councillor, municipal or band councillor, regional board member)
 - Chief Administrative Officer (or delegated representative)
 - Public safety or emergency services coordinator (or representative)
 - Fire Chief (or representative)
 - Forester or land manager (or representative)
 - Private-sector fire management practitioner or consultant
 - Other (please indicate below)
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2. Which of the following best describes your level of experience as it relates to wildfire prevention? (select one)

- Less than 4 years
- 4 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

3. How long have you lived in the community you represent? (select one)

- Less than 4 years
- 4 to 10 years
- More than 10 years
- I do not live in the community I am representing

4. Which of the following best describes the type of community you represent? (select one)

- Municipality
- Regional District
- First Nations Community
- First Nations Reserve

NOTE: For all subsequent questions, “your community” refers to the community you represent for the purposes of this survey.

5. Which of the following best describes the population size of your community? (select one)

- 500 people or less
- 501 to 2,000 people
- 2,001 to 5,000 people
- 5,001 to 50,000 people
- 50,000 people or more

6. Which of the follow best describes the change in population size of your community over the past decade? (select one)

- Decreased by >20%
- Stayed about the same
- Increased by >20%
- Not sure

7. In which of the six regional fire centres in BC is your community located? (select one)

- Cariboo
- Coastal
- Kamloops
- Northwest
- Prince George
- Southeast

8. When was your community *last* on wildfire evacuation alert or order? (select one)

- Within the past 12 months
- Within the past 2 years
- Within the past 5 years
- Within the past 10 years
- Not at all in the past 10 years
- Not sure

Community issues and priorities

NOTE: For the following questions, “your community” refers to the community you represent for the purposes of this survey.

9. What are the most urgent issues facing your community today? Please list your top three, even if not related to wildfire.

10. What are your views about the relative urgency of the following issues facing your community *today*? (Rank each issue using the following scale)

Scale:

Extremely urgent – addressing this issue should be our communities’ top priority

Urgent – addressing this issue should be among our communities’ top priorities

Moderately urgent – this issue is important, but other issues should take priority

Not urgent – this issue is not a priority at this time - other issues should take priority

Not at all urgent – this issue is not at all a priority relative to other issues

- Economic development (businesses and job opportunities)
- Health care services and access to providers
- Education and public school funding
- Police, fire department and emergency planning
- Wildfire prevention in the wildland-urban interface
- Access to clean drinking water
- Public transportation and transit
- Infrastructure (local roads, sidewalks and street lights)
- Waste management (sewage, garbage and recycling)
- Parks, recreation, tourism and cultural activities
- Opportunities for youth

Wildfire risk and hazard

11. Have you *personally*, ever been directly impacted by wildfire (e.g. been on evacuation alert or order)? Y/N

12. How important to you *personally*, is improving wildfire-preparedness in your community? (select one)

<extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, not at all important>

13. What is the overall fuel hazard and wildfire risk rating for your community? (select one)

<low, moderate, high, severe, not sure>

14. To what extent do you think each of the following areas will be affected by wildfire within the next 5 years? (Rank each location using the following scale)

<scale: A great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, not at all, not sure>

- My community
- Neighboring communities
- My region
- Other regions of BC

15. Do you think that wildfire in the wildland-urban interface will impact *your community*? (select one)

- Within 5 years
- Within 5-10 years
- More than 10 years
- Not at all

16. Over the next 5 years, how likely do you think it is that wildfire will cause the following in *your community*? (Rank each location using the following scale)

<scale: Very likely, Somewhat likely, Somewhat unlikely, Very unlikely, unsure>

- Loss of structures (homes, community services, infrastructure)
- Loss of local livelihoods (jobs, businesses, access to resources)
- Loss of human life
- Loss of recreational opportunities
- Damage to drinking water
- Loss of biodiversity

Wildfire prevention and fuels management

17. To what extent do *you* agree/disagree with the following statement? “*Fire is an essential component of forest ecosystem function.*” (select one)

<scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree>

18. Overall, to what extent do *you* support the use of prescribed fire (e.g., a controlled application of fire) to reduce fuels around your community to mitigate wildfire risk? (select one)

<scale: strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose>

19. Overall, to what extent do *you* support cutting and removing trees around your community to mitigate wildfire risk? (select one)

<scale: strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose>

20. In general, how *effective* do *you* think the following actions are in terms of mitigating wildfire risk? (Rank each action using the following scale)

<scale: very effective, effective, not effective, not at all effective, not sure>

- Raising awareness of ignition risks (e.g., cigarettes, campfires, ATVs etc.)
- Enforcement of bans, restrictions and fines for violating the BC Wildfire Act
- Livestock grazing to reduce flammable understory vegetation
- Tree pruning to remove low, flammable limbs
- Selective cutting of only small, understory trees
- Selective cutting of small, understory trees and some large, overstory trees
- Selective cutting then wood removal (e.g., use for timber or energy production)
- Selective cutting then chipping and spreading wood chips on the ground
- Selective cutting, piling the wood, then prescribed burning of wood piles
- Selective cutting, leaving wood on the ground, then prescribed burning of wood on the ground
- Prescribed burning of understory vegetation and natural logs on the ground (e.g., without tree cutting)

21. How much do *you support/oppose* these same actions as ways to mitigate wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface surrounding your community? (Rank each action using the following scale)

<scale: strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose>

- Raising awareness of ignition risks (e.g., cigarettes, campfires, ATVs etc.)
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Planning and mitigating wildfire risk

22. Who should be doing more or less to reduce wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface?

(Rank each agency using the following scale)

<scale: should do much more, should do more, doing the right amount, should do less, should do much less>

- Individual homeowners
- Municipal government
- Regional government
- Provincial government
- Federal government
- First Nations government
- Industry and business

23. To what extent do the following factors limit progress towards reducing wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface *in your community*?

(Rank each factor using the following scale)

<scale: Strongly limits, moderately limits, limits only a little, does not limit, don't know>

- Lack of public awareness of wildfire risk
- Lack of enforcement of preventative regulations
- Lack of public support for fuels management
- Negative public response to past fuels management
- Lack of financial resources at the community level
- Lack of funding from provincial and federal governments
- Lack of staff knowledge of fuels management
- Lack of time allocated to staff work loads
- Lack of need – wildfire risk is not a problem
- Other issues take priority although wildfire risk is a concern

24. For which management actions has your community applied for/received funding from BC's Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative or Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's On-Reserve Forest Fuel Reduction Treatment Funding? (Select all that apply)

- Develop a "Community Wildfire Prevention Plan" (CWPP)
- Update an existing CWPP
- Develop a fuel management prescription
- Conduct an initial fuel treatment
- Conduct a maintenance fuel treatment on a previously treated site
- Create a fuel management demonstration project
- Participate in the FireSmart program
- None of the above

25. To what extent do the following factors limit your progress towards engaging with BC's Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative or Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's On-Reserve Forest Fuel Reduction Treatment Funding?

(Rank each factor using the following scale)

<scale: strongly limits, moderately limits, limits only a little, does not limit, don't know>

- Lack of awareness of these funding programs
- High administrative burden (e.g., multiple applications and reports over several years)
- Costs of participating (e.g., requirement for matching funds from your community)
- Lack of continuous or sustained funding from provincial or federal governments
- Lack of qualified practitioners (consultants) to prepare plans and prescriptions
- Lack of qualified practitioners (consultants) to implement fuel management treatments
- Lack of guidelines on best practices for fuels reduction treatments
- Lack of guidelines on appropriate range of treatment costs
- Lack of forest industry involvement
- Lack of evidence that treatments are effective (e.g., benefits not clear)
- Concerns about liability related to management actions or inactions

Please use the space below to add any additional information that you would like us to know.

Wildfire prevention survey – September 27, 2016

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

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