
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests
BC Community Forest Association

Partnerships in northern B.C. reduce wildfire risk in community forests

SMITHERS – People in northern B.C. will have greater protection from wildfires through a provincial investment in a series of community-led projects.

The BC Community Forest Association co-ordinated with 15 community forests on 48 Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) projects, including 10 within the Northwest Fire Centre region. These projects are part of the ongoing work to adapt and better prepare for climate change.

“Managed by local communities and First Nations for the benefit of the entire community, community forests are key partners in our work to reduce wildfire risks across the province,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests. “Along with the historic investments in Budget 2022 to transform the BC Wildfire Service into a year-round service and double funding for proactive wildfire prevention, these new projects will help build communities that are safer and more resilient to climate change.”

Completed or underway projects within the Northwest Fire Centre region are:

- Wetzin’kwa Community Forest: \$571,272 for three prescription development projects and three operational treatments near Hudson Bay Mountain and Seymour Ridge.
- Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.: \$420,000 for two operational treatment projects and one prescribed fire project.
- Terrace Community Forest LLP: \$95,000 for risk reduction tactical planning near Terrace and Kitimat.

Community forests led \$5 million in CLWRR projects to increase wildfire resiliency for communities and critical infrastructure. These projects include cultural burning and prescribed fire, hazard reduction, tactical planning, fuel treatment and prescriptions, and other actions.

“Community forests are important partners in managing forested land near communities,” said Jennifer Gunter, executive director, BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA). “By partnering with the BC Wildfire Service, community forests are demonstrating an effective and efficient path forward to address wildfire risk, while also supporting local employment opportunities.”

These projects are part of the Community Resiliency Investment Program administered by the BC Wildfire Service. It supports wildfire risk reduction treatments on provincial Crown land near communities, around critical infrastructure and in areas facing a higher wildfire risk. Year-round action is required to reduce the risk and severity of wildfires by promoting local leadership in building local networks for training, planning, and implementation.

Quotes:

Doug Routley, Parliamentary Secretary for Forests –

“Community forests are an innovative form of forest management that generate economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for local communities, the province and environment. These 48 projects help support forest resiliency to the impacts of climate change and gives local communities the opportunity to become leaders in wildfire risk reduction.”

Nathan Cullen, MLA for Stikine –

“The past couple of years have shown us all just how devastating the effects of wildfires can be on a community. With this new funding, communities here in northern B.C. will be able to better prepare to reduce and handle the risks associated with wildfires.”

Quick Facts:

- The 48 Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction projects align with the largest investment in B.C.’s history in wildfire protection.
- Community forestry is a forest operation managed by a local government, community group, First Nation or community-held corporation for the benefit of the entire community.
- Wildfire risk reduction treatments include:
 - Fuel-management planning, including tactical planning, as well as prescription development prior to initiating operational treatments that focus on provincial Crown land located around communities that identify how to reduce wildfire risks in particular areas;
 - prescribed fires (including planning and operational treatments) to remove flammable material and reduce hazard; and
 - thinning of forest fuels and cutting back underbrush and low branches (ladder fuels).

Learn More:

To view all projects, visit: <https://bccfa.ca/wildfire-risk-reduction/>

Community Resiliency Investment program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/funding-for-wildfire-prevention/crip>

BC Community Forest Association: <https://bccfa.ca>

StrongerBC Economic Recovery Plan: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca>

FireSmart BC: <https://firesmartbc.ca/>

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