

Rocky Mountain Natural Resource District

Wildfire Recovery Working Group

Terms of Reference

September 16, 2022

Purpose

The Wildfire Recovery Working Group (WRWG - B.C. Ministry of Forests - Kootenay-Boundary Region) is an effort to integrate management objectives for a broad range of resource and cultural values into individual Wildfire Recovery Plans. The WRWG is directed by the District Manager (Rocky Mountain Resource District). The working group will operate in collaboration with First Nations that have territorial overlap in the Rocky Mountain Resource District (DRM).

The Wildfire Recovery Working Group will provide management recommendations for areas that are significantly affected by wildfire in the DRM. The WRWG will coordinate recovery goals, objectives, and actions in recovery plans. Through a collaborative, consensus-based approach, plans can be developed to address both short-term (0 – 5 years) and long-term (> 5 years) recovery goals, objectives, and actions for identified values and desired outcomes.

Scope

The Wildfire Recovery Working Group is assembled to manage the recovery of wildfires in the DRM. The scope of the WRWG may include the recommendation of goals, objectives, and actions for the recovery of landscapes within the DRM impacted by wildfire. Recovery plans will be developed for significant wildfires as determined by the WRWG, the District Manager (DM) or the Regional Management Team (RMT). The recovery plans may address any or all the following values and issues (*denotes a FRPA Resource Value):

- Access Management
- Biodiversity*
- Cultural Heritage / Archaeology*
- Fish / Riparian*
- Forage & Associated Plant Communities*
- Hydrology
- Invasive Species Management
- Recreation *
- Resource Features*
- Soils*
- Terrain Stability
- Other values as identified by the WRSC
- Timber*
- Visual Quality
- Water Quality*
- Wildlife*

Appointment

Provincial Government members are appointed to the WRWG by their program managers. First Nations representatives are appointed by their respective Nations. The DM will appoint a WRWG chair from DRM Stewardship.

Membership

Regular attendance and participation in the wildfire recovery planning process is expected to vary depending on the issues and stages of discussion. Members of the WRWG may include:

Ministry of Forests

- DRM Stewardship (1)
- DRM Wildfire Rehabilitation (1)
- DRM Tenures (as needed) (1)
- DRM Range (as needed) (1)
- RMT (as needed) (1)

Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

- Resource Management (1)

First Nations

- Shuswap Band (1)
- Little Shuswap Band (1)
- Ktunaxa Nation Council (1)

Key support for the working group will come from subject matter experts and specialists, from Provincial Government or First Nations and may provide information, expertise, and professional advice for the group. These include:

- Kootenay – Boundary Regional Management Team
- Geomatics
- Strategic Initiatives
- First Nations Relations
- Archaeology
- Cumulative Effects Management
- Species and Ecosystems at Risk
- Regional Operations
- Other subject matter experts as required

Stakeholders and Public

Stakeholders and the public will not normally attend regular meetings of the WRWG, unless a specific agenda item would benefit from their participation. Once recovery plans are in place for identified wildfire recovery areas, input from specific stakeholders or the public may be solicited as needed.

Responsibilities

The District Manager provides direction to the WRWG as needed and is responsible for reporting to the RMT. Individual members of the WRWG will be responsible for communicating recovery plans and working group outcomes to their respective programs or groups. Individual members will be expected to report on the progress of recovery actions that are the responsibility of their program or group. The WRWG will try to achieve consensus for the disbursement of any annual budget that is provided to the fire recovery program, with final approval remaining with the Expense Authority.

Dispute Resolution

Where decisions are required to manage resource conflicts, the WRWG will provide written recommendations to the DM for consideration. When differences occur at the WRWG meetings, efforts will be made to resolve differences at the meeting (or subsequent meetings) by achieving consensus, facilitated by the chair. If the group cannot reach agreement on a recommendation, the matter will be recorded in the minutes and referred by the chair to the DM and First Nations representatives for resolution.

Meeting Arrangements

The group will meet as required, with a minimum 10-day notice. Meetings will be scheduled and organized by the chair (considering advice from the members) and will be held during regular business hours in the offices of FOR, unless otherwise specified. Draft agendas will be provided at least 2 days prior to meetings with an opportunity for members to add items. Minutes will be taken by FOR staff and distributed to members in electronic format as soon as possible.

Reporting

Activities and deliverables of the working group will be reported to the chair. Reporting to members will be on request, and through the distribution of meeting minutes and information, and deliverables. Members will be individually responsible for keeping their represented constituents informed of working group recommendations, activities, and outcomes.

Resources and Budget

Administrative support and facilities for working group meetings will be supplied by FOR. Provincial budget and resources available for the project will be determined by the DM, who will assign an Expense Authority to oversee expenditures. The working group may develop and propose specific project and administrative tasks that support plan development, including site assessments, filling key information gaps, synthesising information, and reasonable meeting and support costs. All other necessary resources will be the responsibility of the individual members of the Working Group, unless otherwise arranged through the DM.

Deliverables

The deliverables include the following:

- a wildfire recovery plan template to serve as a guideline for existing and future wildfire recovery needs;
- recovery plans for identified wildfires, which include implementation responsibility, estimated costs, and completion dates; and,
- periodic updates to the DM (on request).

Review

Once approved by the DM, these Terms of Reference will be reviewed and amended as needed, as determined by the WRWG or the DM.

Limits of These Terms of Reference

Nothing in these Terms of Reference limits or abrogates the responsibilities or duties assigned to individual ministries under their own ministry legislation. First Nations' participation in the working group does not constitute the full level of engagement that may be required to address asserted aboriginal interests. Statutory decision-makers will have to assess the adequacy of aboriginal consultation undertaken on a case-by-case basis.

Approval

Appendix A. Membership (June 2022)

WRWG Membership	Representative	Alternate
Ministry of Forests		
DRM Stewardship	Pierre Johnstone (chair)	Scott Hicks
Range	Todd Larsen	Shawna Larade
Timber Tenures	Tim Larade	TBD
First Nations Relations	Dexter Kotylak ?	TBD
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship		
Resource Stewardship	TBD	TBD
BC Wildfire Service		
Southeast Fire Centre	Quintin Balfour	Darren Quinn
First Nations		
Shuswap	TBD	TBD
Ktunaxa Nation Council	TBD	TBD
Little Shuswap	TBD	TBD