

INSTITUTE FOR CATASTROPHIC LOSS REDUCTION

Building Resilient Communities Reducing the Risk of Wildfire Losses

March 20, 2012

Toronto



Partners in Protection
Working Together For Safer Communities in the Wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

INTRODUCTION TO GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- 2-fold purpose of this workshop
- Your contributions are valued, participation is expected
- 3 tasks from our thoughtful hosts
- End product = Position Paper
- Address a series of purposeful questions
- Keep on task – time is short
 - Leave our ideas for others to develop further



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

CAPTURING THE IDEAS

- One big, happy group
- Flip Charts
- E-mail further thoughts to Tracy Waddington
– twaddington@iclr.org



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD...

- Mike Flannigan:
 - The occurrence of wildfires and area burned is increasing, where it increases is a wildcard
 - The WUI problem is likely going to intensify and become more widespread.
 - Climate and fuel conditions conspire against us; fuel part of equation can be “managed”
 - Fire suppression resources stretched to limit
 - There is a need to think, plan and act in prevention mode (Can. Wildland Fire Strategy).



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD

- Lessons Learned... and re-learned!



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD....

- Peter Fuglem:
 - Fuel and weather conditions are critical – again!
 - Major losses occurred despite rapid Initial attack and high level of resourcing
 - Case for increased hazard reduction to complement response capability
 - Communities need to be part (more) of the solution
 - Need to break the disaster cycle through strategic FireSmart investments
 - Home losses are increasing again... Increasing home development in vulnerable areas



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD....

- Karl Brondell: (window on our future)
 - # of claims are small but cost/loss is high
 - Emotional impact of fire losses is particularly high
 - State Farm focus is on driving responsibility for risk mitigation down to homeowner level.... through various means
 - Local agents play key role in raising awareness, educating policy holders, targeted inspection program
 - Focus on pre-event strategies (education, awareness, codes, planning, infrastructure, fuel mitigation, outreach programs)
 - 99% of homeowners responded to hazard recommendations
 - Continuum of information products better impact than “blitz”



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD....

- Insurance Panel Perspectives:
 - Slave Lake was a 1-off, as viewed by others
 - Impact is short-lived as a motivator of risk mitigation
 - Need tools to assess wildfire risk
 - Impacts far outlive simple replacement of homes



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD ... the Slave Lake Experience

- Jamie Coutts and Mark Missal:
 -
 - “Houses are just more fuel,” unless we plan and build neighbourhoods otherwise
 - Rebuilding through efforts of a broad-based partnership



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT SOLUTIONS...

- Adam Gossell and Kelly O'Shea
 - The problems have been analysed
 - Solutions are known – mostly!
 - Many of the tools to empower the public are within reach
 - There is a rocket on the launch pad...
 - FireSmart Community Recognition Program
 - Comprehensive FireSmart Communications Program
 - Resources are required



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

How Do Structures Ignite

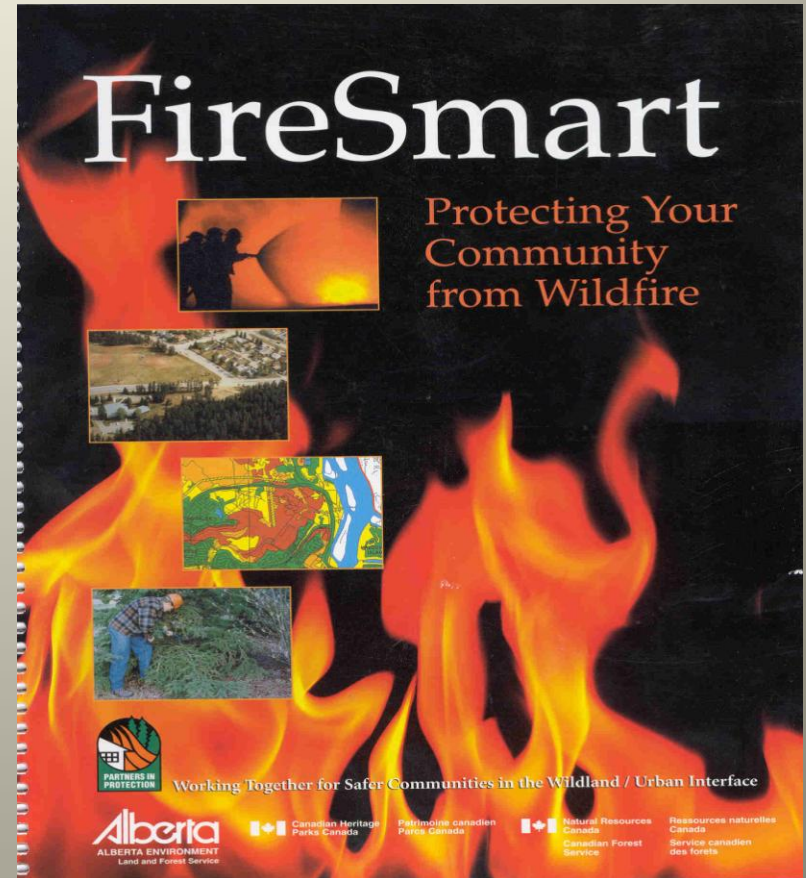
Ignition by Fire Brands:



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface

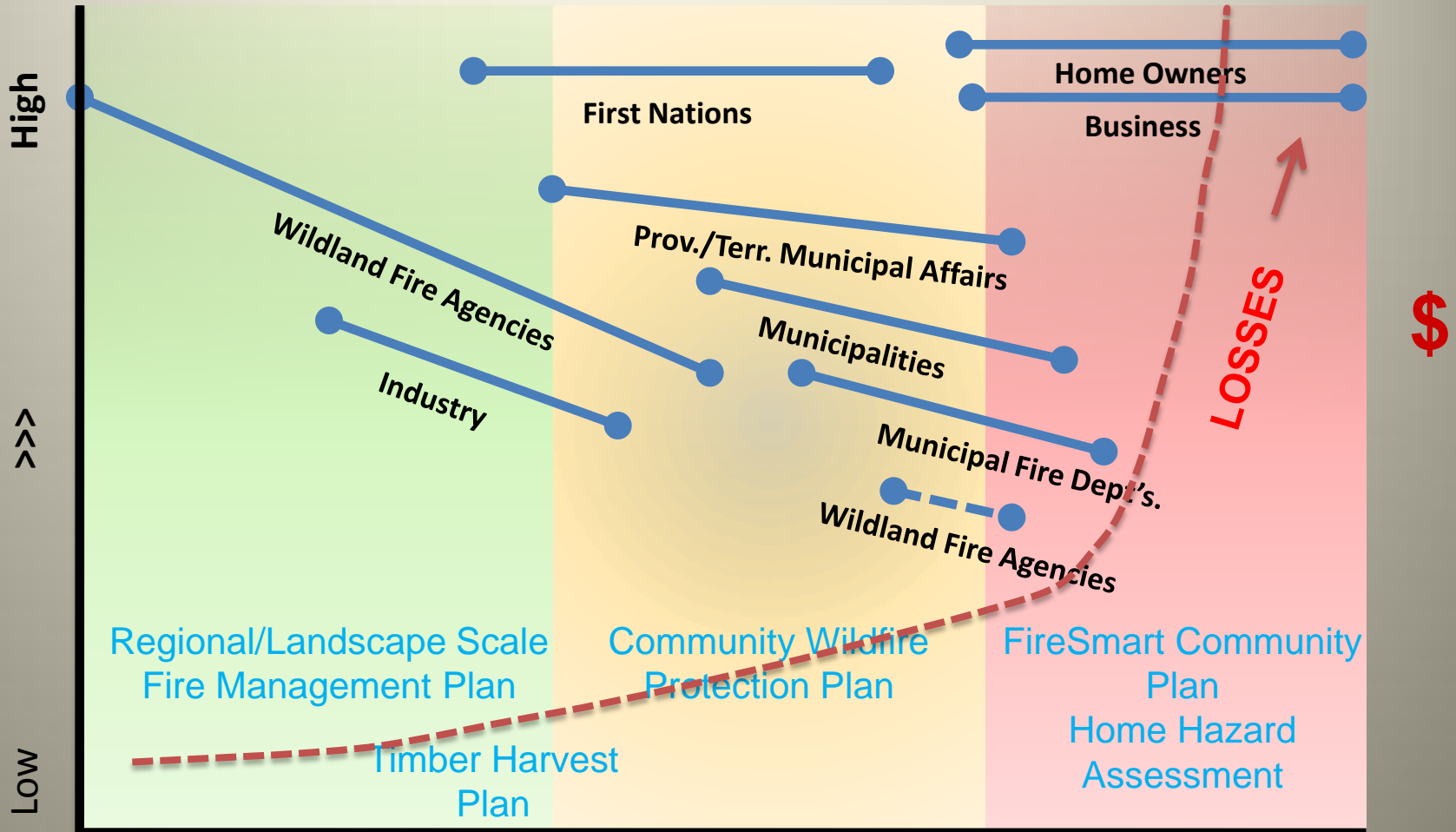
MORE FIRE TRUCKS ARE NOT THE SOLUTION

- Community Wildfire Protection is a **Team Sport....partnerships!**
- Solutions are a **Shared Responsibility.**
- Solutions exist... application is lacking.
- If a home does not ignite, it cannot burn!



GENERALIZED FIRESMART RESPONSIBILITIES BY JURISDICTION WITHIN CANADA

LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY



Province –Territory/
Landscape

> Urban Fringe + Community/
> Municipality + Subdivisions

> Private Ownership
> Home/Structure Ignition Zone

JURISDICTION/LOCATION

Anatomy of an Interface Disaster

Severe Fire Conditions

Fuel, Weather, and Topography

Wildland Fire

Rapid fire spread and/or High intensity

~~Urban Fire~~

~~Multiple, simultaneous ignitions~~

Overwhelmed Fire Suppression

Too much fire and too few resources

Reduced Fire Protection

Lack of resources leads to reduced effectiveness

DISASTER!

Many homes totally destroyed

LESSONS OF THE PAST:



**Reducing
wildfire risk and
losses depends
on**

**actions taken
WELL BEFORE
the fire ignites!**

A swifter, more powerful response is NOT the answer (i.e. more boys and toys)

About Partners in Protection Canada Association

- Non-profit Association with 60+ members representing 11 federal, provincial, and territorial agencies and many associations including NFPA, ICLR & CFFC, and private corporations.
- Mandate: To increase the level of cooperation and promote public awareness and education in order to reduce the risk of loss of life and property from fire in the wildland/urban interface .
- Published FireSmart®: Protecting Your Community from Wildfire
- MOU with National Fire Protection Association and Firewise USA



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

WHAT WE HEARD

- Paul Gray, OMNR + Kim Connors CIFFC:
 - MITIGATE >>adapt or mitigate >> ADAPT
 - Iterative adaptation framework for climate change
 - Get the questions right
 - Adaptation most effective at the community level
 - CIFFC model for Mutual Aid and effective resource sharing in action



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative



CANADIAN WILDLAND FIRE STRATEGY: A VISION FOR AN INNOVATIVE AND INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MANAGING THE RISKS



CANADIAN WILDLAND FIRE STRATEGY: BACKGROUND SYNTHESSES, ANALYSES, AND PERSPECTIVES

K.G. Hirsch and P. Fiegler, Technical Coordinators



A Summary of the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy

Managing the Risk

Each summer the media carry stories of wildfires raging across the Canadian landscape, threatening our communities, existing ecosystems, and at times burning public and private property. This portrayal of fire as a menace to society is often accurate, but it is only part of the story. In Canada, fire is nature's primary way of keeping the wildlands we value and enjoy healthy forests, grasslands, and parkland healthy and productive. As a result, we are faced with the complex and difficult task of managing wildland fires so that their environmental benefits are maintained and simultaneously the risk to people and property is minimized.

A New Approach

Recognizing that the challenges of today and the future cannot be solved by simply using the approach and methods of the past, the provincial, territorial and federal governments have worked together under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) on a new Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy (CWFS). Based on the principles of risk management, the CWFS will address the symptoms and the root causes of wildland fire management by modernizing our approaches and capabilities. It provides a comprehensive vision of integrated activities that will increase public safety, improve the health and productivity of our forests, enhance intergovernmental cooperation, and apply public funds efficiently.

The Role of Fire in Canadian Forests

Fire has been a very dominant feature in Canada's forests since the last Ice Age, particularly in the west based on pine that dominates much of the Yukon in Newfoundland. Many plant species — such as pine, spruce and birch, to name just a few — have not only adapted to fire but rely on it for their renewal. Fire has also created a mosaic of habitat types and ages, which are needed by various animal species. Wildfires burned freely in most of Canada until the late 19th century until European-influenced views of fire and forestry resulted in policies that sought to suppress all fires. In recent decades there has been a growing recognition that the elimination of all fires from our wildlands is neither ecologically desirable nor economically possible.



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface

http://www.ccmf.org/current/cwfs_e.php



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

OBJECTIVE 1:

- RAISING WUI PROFILE WITH GOVERNMENTS
 - WOULD it be helpful if governments became an active partner?
 - WHICH governments need to be reached?
 - HOW do we influence governments in this regard?
 - What are the key messages to be sent?
 - WHAT is needed from gov't. to achieve solutions and effective partnerships?
 - HOW can “we” work with governments?
 - Other questions.....



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

OBJECTIVE 2:

- SHIFTING FOCUS FROM DISASTER RELIEF TO DISASTER PREVENTION.
 - WHERE do losses occur?
 - WHICH stakeholders need to change their behavior?
 - WHO needs to become more engaged?
 - DO we already know the solutions?
 - HOW can insurance companies make a difference?
 - Other questions.....



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative

OBJECTIVE 3:

- DEVELOP PRIORITIES FOR ACTIONS BY ICLR TO PROTECT PEOPLE, HOMES AND COMMUNITIES FROM WILDFIRE.
 - What jurisdictions/audiences should ICLR focus on?
 - What relationships can the insurance industry build on?
 - What actions/results will have the greatest impact?
 - What methods/tools will be most effective (e.g. rate penalties or discounts, support for the PIP FireSmart communication/education program, support for PIP FireSmart Community Recognition Program)?



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative



FireSmart Canada Initiative

Build a single, flexible system that is effective, cost efficient and useful in all jurisdictions.

Key Elements:

1. FireSmart Canada Communications Program + Web Site*
 2. FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program*
 - ❖ Kamloops Pilot Project – spring 2012
 - ❖ Kananaskis National Launch – fall 2012
 3. Supportive Training and Workshops*
 4. National FireSmart Conference and Expo
 5. Other key elements, as identified
- * Facilitated by M.O.U. with and Firewise (USA)***



Partners in Protection
Working Together for Safer Communities in the wildland/Urban Interface



FireSmart Canada
A National Fire Smart Initiative