

MEDIA RELEASE

City of Williams Lake



For Immediate Release

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450 Mart Street
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 1N3

FireSmart Fuel Mitigation Resumes Ahead of Wildfire Season

The City of Williams Lake will start the second phase of its FireSmart planning and fuel mitigation this spring in an effort to protect high risk areas and homes around the City ahead of the wildfire season.

The project, headed by Ken Day, of KDay Forestry Ltd., and funded through the UBCM's Community Resiliency Investment program, aims to increase community wildfire preparedness through activities such as fuel and vegetation management, FireSmart initiatives and education, and planning.

"We've seen the devastation caused by the previous wildfires in 2017 and 2018 and it's important that we take measures to protect our community going forward," Williams Lake Mayor Walt Cobb said. "One of the best ways to mitigate this potential damage is through proactive FireSmart activities and fuel treatment on both private and public property."

The project, initiated last April, has identified 10 separate public buildings for assessment of FireSmart status and a plan for each site. Funding is also in place for an estimated 24 private home assessments. The City will reach out to homeowners within select neighbourhoods to arrange assessments in a way that maintains physical distancing practices.

Work has also begun to remove excess vegetation and fuel from green spaces within Williams Lake, and the Community Forest and Cariboo-Chilcotin Resource District are planning treatments outside the City. Fuel treatments reduce the intensity of a fire and increase the effectiveness and safety of firefighting efforts. When fuel treatments are ready to start, nearby residents will be advised in the media and by direct mail.

"Fuel treatments within the City can help to protect the community but FireSmart efforts by private property owners are the ultimate defence against the threat of wildfires," Day said. "We strongly encourage FireSmart efforts at the neighbourhood level, with neighbours working together to make Williams Lake a FireSmart Community."

As Fire Smart activities continue, the City will inform residents through its media channels where possible. For more information on FireSmart initiatives, see <https://firesmartbc.ca/>

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