Alberta FireSmart™ Community Scorecard
Parkland County

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

INTACT CENTRE ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

ALBERTA FireSmart™

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY SCORECARD RESULTS

This section provides a summary of the results from the Scorecard. These results indicate **wildfire preparedness through the adoption of FireSmart best practices** (Figure 1, Table 1) and assess progress through the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle. The purpose of these results is to help communities identify the gaps and barriers to implementation of FireSmart practices. For full Scorecard results see Appendix A.
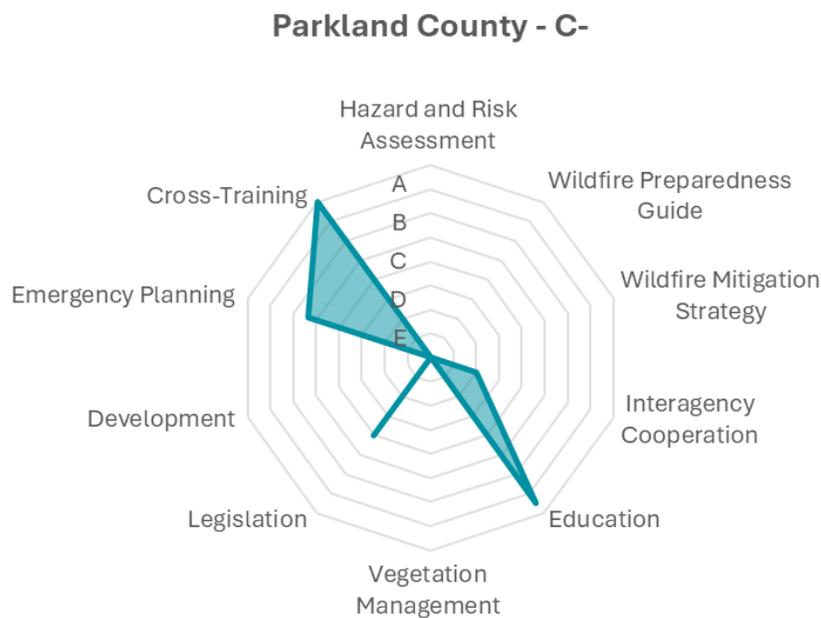
Figure 1: Wildfire preparedness through the application of FireSmart best practices. The blue area represents the preparedness score for Parkland County.

Categories	Number Score	Letter Score
Overall Community Score	**1.3**	**C-**
Hazard and Risk Assessment	0.0	E
Wildfire Preparedness Guide	0.0	E
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy	0.0	E
Interagency Cooperation	1.0	D+
Education	3.8	A
Vegetation Management	0.0	E
Legislation	2.0	C+
Development	0.0	E
Emergency Planning	2.7	B
Cross-Training	4.0	A+

Table 1: Average overall score and for the ten categories of the Scorecard for Parkland County.

INTRODUCTION

The Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation and FireSmart Alberta have collaborated to create a simple community wildfire preparedness self-assessment scorecard tool. The goal of this Scorecard is to help communities assess their current level of wildfire preparedness, identify practical opportunities to strengthen their resilience to wildfires, and track progress over time.

The Scorecard identifies the standardized process that communities follow throughout the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle (Figure 2). It also identifies a holistic approach that communities can take to improve their community wildfire resilience (Figure 3).

About the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation

The Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation (Intact Centre) is an applied research institute with a national focus within the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo. The Intact Centre works with homeowners, communities, governments, and businesses to identify, and reduce, the impacts of extreme weather and climate change.

To this end, the Centre is an incubator of new adaptation ideas, conducting research, knowledge mobilization and promoting initiatives aimed at de-risking the negative impacts of a changing climate and extreme weather, such as wildland-urban interface wildfires, floods, and extreme heat.

The establishment of the Intact Centre was made possible through the leadership, vision, and generosity of Intact Financial Corporation, a long-time partner and donor to the University of Waterloo particularly supporting climate adaptation.

About FireSmart Alberta

Alberta's unique natural landscapes and ecosystems make our challenges in the face of wildfire just as unique. These challenges call for a made-in-province solution for wildfire risk reduction and loss prevention—one that includes resources, tools, and programs that are accessible to everyone.

Founded in 2020, FireSmart Alberta grew out of the top recommendation of the Government of Alberta Spring 2019 Wildfire Review Final Report. Our goal is to foster an all-of-society approach to wildfire resiliency in Alberta. FireSmart Alberta works collaboratively and in alignment with FireSmart Canada as a provincial chapter.

SCORECARD OBJECTIVES

Scorecard Objective	Description	Assessment
1. Improve community wildfire resilience through the Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle.	Support the use of a step-by-step, risk management-based approach to assess and address wildfire risks to improve community resilience.	Evaluate the community's progress through the community wildfire risk management cycle.
2. Support the integration of the whole-of-society approach across all stages of the Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle.	Engage the whole-of-society to develop and implement a plan that addresses the community's unique wildfire challenges and opportunities to improve wildfire resilience.	Assess participation of residents, Indigenous rights holders, local businesses, government agencies, and other interested parties in all steps of the Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle.
3. Support the balanced application of the Seven FireSmart Disciplines in the development and implementation of their Wildfire Mitigation Strategy.	Create and implement Wildfire Mitigation Strategy that includes best practices from each of the Seven FireSmart Disciplines to maximize community wildfire resilience.	Evaluate the degree to which the community has balanced the application of the Seven FireSmart Disciplines in the development and implementation of their Wildfire Mitigation Strategy.
4. Support the implementation of practical actions to improve the wildfire resilience of the community	Implement a community-developed five-year Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, to improve community wildfire resilience. Evaluate progress annually, adjust as needed, and revise the plan every 5 years.	Evaluate the community's implementation of the five-year Wildfire Mitigation Strategy against the Seven FireSmart Disciplines to determine its alignment with best practices for community wildfire resilience.

ABOUT THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The best practices identified in the Scorecard are a user-friendly synthesis of guidance found in the following publications:

1) [National Guide for Wildland-Urban Interface Fires](#)
2) [Wildfire-Resilience Best-Practice Checklist for Home Construction, Renovation and Landscaping](#)
3) [FireSmart Begins at Home: Home Development Guide](#)
4) [FireSmart Guidebook for Community Protection](#)

See the source documents for a full list of all best practices. The source documents may be less applicable to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, which could limit the Scorecard's usefulness in these areas. One of the objectives of this project is to collaborate with these communities to develop best practice guidance and scorecard tools that better assess and address their unique needs.

Voluntary Best Practice Guidance

Canada's National Building Code and National Fire Code do not presently include specific requirements to enhance the wildfire resilience of homes and structures in the wildland-urban interface. Building codes vary among provinces and territories. The best practices outlined in the Scorecard are voluntary. Implementing these best practices should not contradict applicable provincial and territorial codes, acts, or standards.

Assessing Progress through the Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle

Each community faces unique wildfire risks and therefore has opportunities to address those risks. Communities are encouraged to take a stepwise approach to improve their wildfire resilience by following the standardized steps in the **Alberta FireSmart Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle** (Figure 2). These steps include:

1) Assess Risks,
2) Make a Plan,
3) Implement the Plan, and
4) Evaluate and repeat the process.

The guidance in the Scorecard provides *minimum* best practices based on the community's wildfire risk (Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)). To enhance wildfire resilience, low risk communities may follow best practice guidance for high-risk communities.
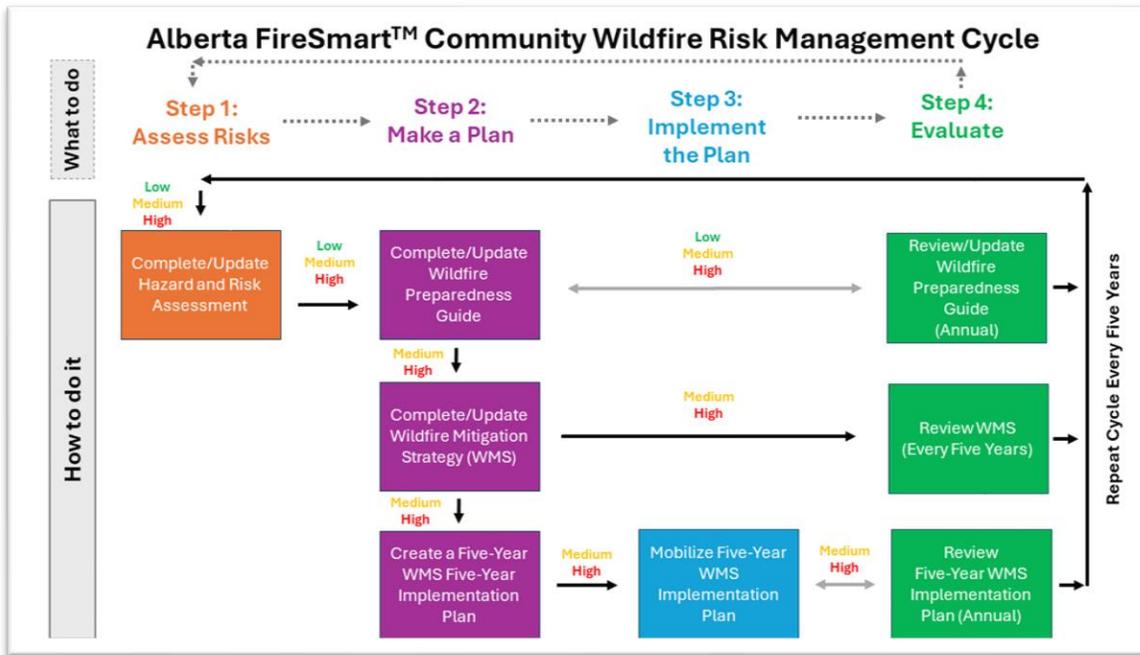
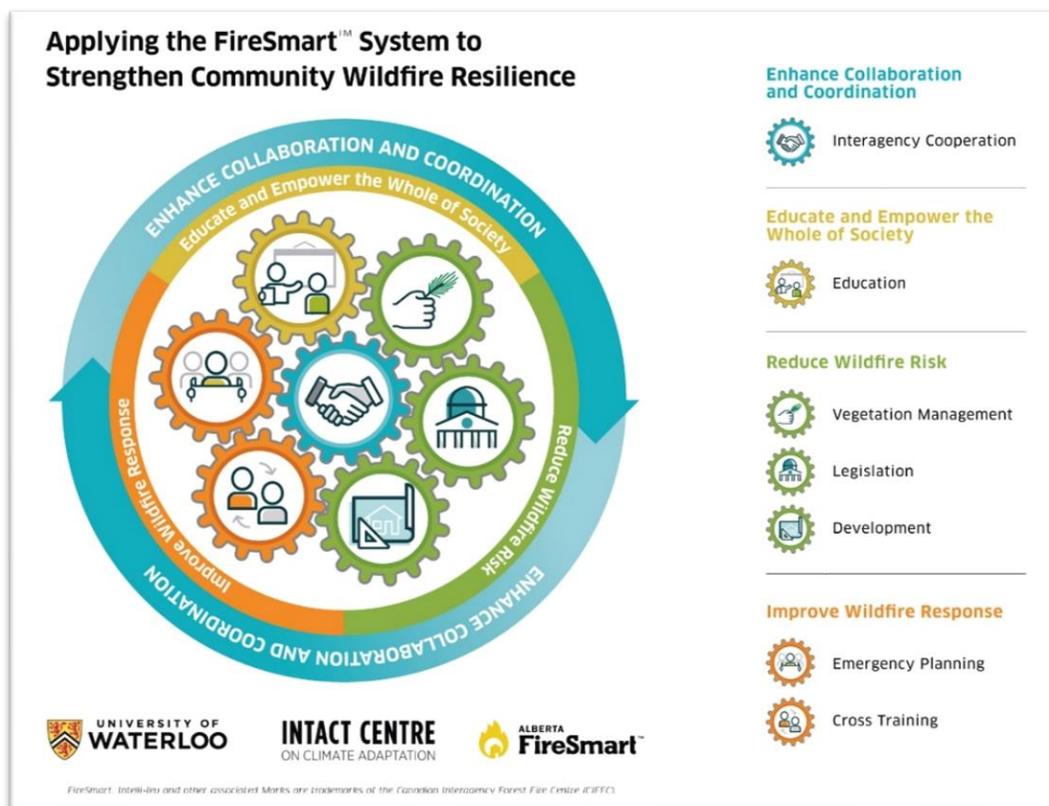**Figure 2:** Alberta FireSmart™ Community Wildfire Risk Management Cycle

FireSmart Best Practices for Strengthening Community Wildfire Resilience

For over three decades, FireSmart has been working with communities to develop a practical, fully customizable, step-by-step system that can be applied by all communities to strengthen wildfire resilience. Recognizing that no two communities are alike, the FireSmart System empowers communities to create and implement a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy that is tailored to address the unique wildfire threats identified in their Hazard and Risk Assessment. By following the **Seven FireSmart Disciplines** (Figure 3), community members can work together to create a unique "local recipe" for community wildfire resilience success, by selecting from a "menu" of practical actions from each Discipline. The Seven FireSmart Disciplines are:

1) Interagency Cooperation

2) Education

3) Vegetation Management

4) Legislation

5) Development

6) Emergency Planning

7) Cross Training

Communities that implement these practical actions in a balanced and coordinated manner will:

- ✓ Enhance collaboration and coordination
- ✓ Educate and empower the whole-of-society
- ✓ Reduce wildfire risk
- ✓ Improve emergency response

Figure 3: Applying the FireSmart System to Strengthen Community Wildfire Resilience

FireSmart Alberta Community Resources

FireSmart Alberta provides a wide variety of resources to help communities strengthen their resilience to wildfires. Please visit firesmartalberta.ca for resources including:

- Manuals
- Checklists
- Funding sources
- Industry resources
- Contact information for additional support

Alberta FireSmart Community Scorecard Best Practices

The Scorecard allows communities to assess the extent of their practical actions in reducing wildfire risks by following Alberta FireSmart community best practices. Each best practice is assigned a score, which is then categorized into ten action-focused practical areas. This categorization facilitates a clear understanding of the community's current wildfire preparedness level, identification of areas for further improvement, and tracking of progress over time. The ten categories are

1) Hazard and Risk Assessment
2) Wildfire Preparedness Guide
3) Wildfire Mitigation Strategy
4) Interagency Cooperation
5) Education

6) Vegetation Management
7) Legislation
8) Development
9) Emergency Planning
10) Cross-Training

Data gathered from the Scorecard will also help inform Alberta FireSmart on the gaps to implementation of best practices, as well as barriers and potential incentives.

Post-Scorecard Survey – Key Barriers and Resources

Following the Scorecard, communities were asked to fill out a survey to identify the key barriers to implementing FireSmart best practices and the resources needed to overcome those barriers. See the Post-Scorecard Survey in Appendix B.

FireSmart Achievements

Communities were asked to share case studies of FireSmart Achievements, including project description, successes, and lessons learned. See FireSmart Achievements in Appendix C.

APPENDIX A – FULL SCORECARD RESULTS

Best Practice Name and Description	Select from the drop-down menu	Number Score	Letter Score
Hazard and Risk Assessment	Response	Number	Letter
1. Status - Do you have a Community-scale Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment completed?	**No**	**0**	**E**
2. Frequency - If yes, when was it last updated? (provide year). **Best practice: review Hazard and Risk Assessment every five years and update as needed.**	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
3. Frequency - Do you review and update the Hazard and Risk Assessment every five years?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Comment: 1. At the community scale (no), however, for summer villages and hamlets, there are Hazard and Risk Assessments completed. This is difficult to do for 2,373 km2. Because of Emergency Management, the Province has a different plan. Wildfire is second.			
Wildfire Preparedness Guide	Response	Number	Letter
4. Status - Do you have a Wildfire Preparedness Guide(s) for your community?	**Not Planned**	**0**	**E**
5. Frequency - Do you review and update your wildfire preparedness guide(s) on an annual basis with AB Wildfire and your mutual aid partners? **Best practice: review with Forestry/Mutual Aid Partners and update on an annual basis.**	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Comment: 4. for the summer villages and hamlets, yes. 5. Because of outside forest protection area, depends on the capacity of AB Wildfire. 361 villages, difficult to do all the times.			
Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS)	Response	Number	Letter
6. Status – Do you have a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy that includes all Seven FireSmart Disciplines (Interagency Cooperation, Education, Vegetation Management, Legislation, Development, Emergency Planning, Cross-training)? **Note: WMS completed by a third-party consultant and funded by the FRIAA FireSmart program.**	**Not Planned**	**0**	**E**
7. Frequency - If yes, when was the WMS created?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
8. Frequency - Are there plans to update the WMS at the 5-year mark? **Best practice: review and update the WMS every five years.**	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
9. Status - Is your FireSmart committee involved in the WMS update?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Comments: 1. mostly vegetation management done so far, but are now building all FireSmart principles into development, in policy now.			

Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) Implementation Includes the Seven FireSmart Disciplines: Interagency Cooperation, Education, Vegetation Management, Legislation, Development, Emergency Planning, Cross-training			
Interagency Cooperation	**Response**	**Number**	**Letter**
10. Status - FireSmart Committee - Do you have a local/regional FireSmart Committee to coordinate the implementation of the WMS following a Terms of Reference (TOR)?	**Planned within 1-5 years**	**1**	**D+**
11. Status - WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan - If yes, has your FireSmart Committee completed a WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
12. Frequency - FireSmart Committee Meetings - Does your FireSmart Committee hold at least one meeting per year to review and support the implementation of the WMS?	**Not applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
13. Frequency - Annual Progress Report - Does your FireSmart Committee prepare an annual WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan progress report (e.g., for council), including both planned and completed actions?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
14. Frequency - Five-Year Summary Report - Does your FireSmart Committee prepare a WMS Five-Year Implementation Plan summary report (e.g., for council), including both planned and completed actions over a five- year term?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Comments: 10. Made ask to Whitecourt to create a FireSmart Committee. 13. No report back to council because this is new. Request has been put into the province to create a WMS for communities outside the Forest Protection Area. No resources to do the WMS implementation Plan.			
Education	**Response**	**Number**	**Letter**
15. Status - Train FireSmart Representatives - Do you train local/regional staff as Neighbourhood Recognition Program (NRP) Specialists and Advanced FireSmart Home Assessors through FireSmart Alberta and FireSmart Canada?	**Complete**	**4**	**A+**
16. Status - Educational Material Distribution - Do you promote and distribute FireSmart Canada approved education resources to residents (e.g., Three Steps to A Cost-Effective FireSmart Home, FireSmart Begins at Home App, etc.)?	**Complete**	**4**	**A+**
17. Status - FireSmart Training Delivery to Residents - Do you deliver FireSmart training and programs to residents (e.g., FireSmart 101, FireSmart Canada Ambassador, Advanced FireSmart Home Assessments, and FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program)?	**Complete**	**4**	**A+**
18. Status - Financial Incentives - Do you provide financial incentives to install fire-resistant building materials, landscaping plants and materials, and complete maintenance activities on private property?	**In Progress**	**3**	**B+**
Comments:			

Vegetation Management	Response	Number	Letter
19. Frequency - Vegetation Management Projects - Do you complete treatment of vegetation management projects prioritized in the WMS and as scheduled in the WMS Implementation Plan?	**Never**	**0**	**E**
20. Status - Five-Year Maintenance Schedule - Do you have a five-year maintenance review schedule to evaluate if re-treatment of vegetation management project areas is required?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
21. Frequency - Project Maintenance - Do you complete re-treatment of vegetation management project areas, as required?	**Not Applicable**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Comments: 19. No vegetation management projects, costly. FRIAA funding not applicable because of the large hazard assessment needed, which itself would cost about $100,000.			

Legislation	Response	Number	Letter
22. Status - FireSmart Bylaws/Plans - Does your community implement FireSmart by-laws/plans, to require the use of fire-resistant building and landscaping materials and FireSmart maintenance practices?	**Planned within 1 Year**	**2**	**C+**
Comments: Planning process that includes FireSmart review of all new subdivisions and development. **Although there are some bylaws that include FireSmart measures, currently the building code does not include fire-resistant building materials. In this case the community received a C+.**			

Development	Response	Number	Letter
23. Status - FireSmart Residential Guidelines and Standards - Does your community include FireSmart best practices in all development guidelines, architectural guidelines, and engineering standards to limit fire ignition and spread (e.g., spatial separation between residential structures, setbacks from slopes, fuel breaks)?	**Not Planned**	**0**	**E**
24. Status - Wildfire Resilient Emergency Service Guidelines and Standards - Does your community include wildfire-resilient best practices in all development guidelines, architectural guidelines, and engineering standards, to guide the provision of emergency services during a wildfire event (e.g., safe access and egress, emergency shelters, minimum water supply for firefighting)?	**Not Planned**	**0**	**E**
Comments: 23. Recommended but not a by-law. It is in the guidelines. 24. Based around building code, so if the building code specifies then only done.			

Emergency Planning	Response	Number	Letter
25. Frequency - Resource Sharing Agreements - How often do you review resource sharing and mutual aid agreements between jurisdictions (e.g., local, provincial government, Indigenous rights holders, etc.)? **Best practice: review Resource Sharing Agreements annually and update as needed.**	**Every Year**	**4**	**A+**
26. Frequency - Government Emergency Plans - How often do you review local/regional government emergency plans and	**Every Year**	**4**	**A+**

procedures? **Best practice: review Government Emergency Plans annually and update as needed.**			
27. Frequency - Structure Protection Plans - How often do you review wildland-urban interface (WUI) structure protection and sprinkler plans on an annual basis and update as needed? **Best practice: review WUI structure protection and sprinkler plans annually, and update as needed.**	**Never**	**0**	**E**

Comments: 27. No formal sprinkler plans, but staff train on sprinkler deployment. In house provincially recognized structure protection specialist.

Cross-Training	Response	Number	Letter
28. Frequency - Firefighter Field Training Exercises - Do you conduct structural and wildland firefighter cross-training field exercises on an annual basis?	**Every Year**	**4**	**A+**
29. Frequency - Community Partner Tabletop Training Exercises - Do you conduct emergency response planning and coordination tabletop exercises between emergency managers and community partners (e.g., telecommunications, transportation, hydro, water, health care, forestry, neighbouring community governments, Indigenous rights holders, etc.), on an annual basis?	**Every Year**	**4**	**A+**

Comments: 28. Not always field exercises, but do cross-training (workshop, etc.)

APPENDIX B - BARRIERS AND RESOURCES SURVEY

Key Barriers		
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		
Barrier to adopting FireSmart best practices	**Agree/Disagree**	**Comments**
1. Community members are not aware of FireSmart best practices	Disagree	Several major wildfires, residents asking for more support
2. Community members see wildfire resilience as a low priority	Agree	Thos impacted by major fires do consider it a priority, those that haven't don't always. Depends on where you are in the county.
3. Wildfire risk awareness in the community is low	Disagree	
4. There is resistance to implementing FireSmart best practices from government, businesses, residents, or other agencies	Agree	Not with residents, primarily from Provincial government
5. There is lack of access to funding to strengthen community wildfire resilience	Strongly agree	
6. There are no staff resources available to engage community members	Agree	Alberta doesn't have a funding program for FireSmart coordinators. Funding to pay for wages.
7. There are no staff resources available to engage neighbouring communities	Agree	
8. There is limited or no access to wildfire hazard and risk data for the community	Strongly agree	
9. There is limited or no collaboration within or between community members (governments, agencies, residents, etc.)	Strongly agree	Some areas have data, but not the entire county.
10. There are a lack of incentives to implement FireSmart best practices (awards, subsidies, discounts)	Strongly agree	
11. There are limited or no clear bylaws to enforce adoption of FireSmart best practices	Agree	
12. There are no staff resources available to enforce adoption of FireSmart best practices	Agree	
13. There is limited or no support from Provincial government to adopt FireSmart best practices	Strongly agree	
14. There is limited or no direction from Provincial or Federal government	Strongly agree	
15. Other: There is a need for provincial legislation/regulation/building code revisions to address WUI	Strongly agree	Need for provincial legislation and building code revisions to address WUI. WUI guide should be implemented into the building code.

Resources Required		
What is the impact your organization would experience if provided with the following resources? Rank based on that resource's ability to support your efforts to adopt FireSmart best practices**.**		
Resources required	**Perceived Impact**	**Comments**
1. More funding needed to adopt FireSmart best practices	Moderate impact	
2. Funding to incentivize resident/business adoption of FireSmart best practices	Moderate impact	
3. Simpler funding application processes	Great impact	
4. Support to complete funding applications	Great impact	
5. Training and user-friendly resources for governments, agencies, and businesses on FireSmart best practices	Moderate impact	At the last LFR course, there needs to be more focused training for other layers of government, like council workshops and land-use planners, etc.
6. Training and user-friendly resources for residents on FireSmart best practices	Moderate impact	Rural access for internet is limited, for gaining FireSmart knowledge. Paper resources are useful here.
7. Strategies for successful community engagement to enable resident and business adoption of FireSmart best practices	Moderate impact	
8. Access to wildfire hazard and risk data to inform target areas within the community on FireSmart best practices adoption	Great impact	Fuel maps from the province are out of date, and not checked via ground.
9. Certification to promote adoption of FireSmart best practices	Mild impact	
10. Financial discounts for resident and business insurance	Great impact	
11. Community achievement awards for local governments, businesses, and residents	Mild impact	
12. Improved bylaws to enforce FireSmart adoption	Little to none	
13. Funding to support enforcement of existing bylaws	Mild impact	Public wants less rules
14. Clear provincial regulations to enforce adoption of FireSmart practices	Mild impact	The public does not respond well to the word "enforcement"
15. Other: Provincial regulation that is adopted prior to even building planning to ensure that the building is in a safe area, and the building is resilient to wildfire.	Moderate impact	

APPENDIX C - FIRESMART ACHIEVEMENTS

Identify examples of a FireSmart accomplishment that your community would like to share with others. Consider including a problem, the solution, the outcome, and any lessons learned.

FireSmart Achievement One

Project Name: FRIAA Grant for FireSmart Coordinator

Project Description: Achieved the FRIA Grant for FireSmart Coordinator for a two-year temporary position. Kyle is very boots-on-the-ground, and grassroots to educate and champion FS with residents. Has 80 assessments in queue and will likely have over 150 this year. This allows us radio spots, billboards, and yard signs to encourage neighbours to sign up for assessments, and advertising on social media and local news. This has helped substantially.

Key Lessons Learned: It is hard to get volunteers for these roles, so having a paid coordinator is a massive help. Residents are happy, learning a lot from Kyle.

For more information, contact:

Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation

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