



DISTRICT OF TUMBLER RIDGE

STAFF REPORT

Date: July 2, 2024
To: Mayor & Council
Re: BC Wildfire Service - Controlled Burns

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report on collaboration with BC Wildfires Services for controlled burns be received for information and discussion.

ISSUE/PURPOSE:

To provide information on collaboration with BC Wildfire Service for controlled burns within the District of Tumbler Ridge.

BACKGROUND:

At the May 6, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council, a motion was passed to direct staff to reach out to BC Wildfire Services about control burns with support of the DTR Fire Department within the municipality.

Director of Protective Services/Fire Chief Dustin Curry contacted BC Wildfire Service and the information gathered is detailed in the attached memo.

In summary, BC Wildfire Service does commonly support local governments in planning, training and depending on the scope and availability of staff, assist with the actual burn itself.

While some smaller controlled burns may be able to happen later this year, it is anticipated that the timeframe needed for proper planning and permitting will push any larger controlled burns into 2025.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- BC Wildfire Act - Open Burning Regulations
- District of Tumbler Ridge Fire Protection Bylaw No. 680, 2019

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS:

Costs to the District in relation to hiring a FireSmart Coordinator and completing these controlled burns will be offset by the funding received through the UBCM Community emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). These costs have been included in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

COMMUNICATION:

Staff will ensure continued communication with BC Wildfire Service, and that any burns are registered on the Provincial Open Burning Tracking System.

The general public and any identified stakeholders will also be notified prior to any controlled burns.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

As per the November 2023 Strategic Directions report prepared by Gordon McIntosh, FireSmarting was listed as a priority for Public Safety under Operational Initiatives.

GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Tumbler Ridge Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2014

ATTACHMENTS:

[Controlled Burning Memo - 20240617](#)

Submitted by:	Lisa Scott, Chief Administrative Officer
Concurrence:	Natalie Wehner, Chief Financial Officer Dustin Curry, Director of Protective Services/Fire Chief



DISTRICT OF TUMBLER RIDGE

TO: Lisa Scott, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Dustin Curry, Director of Protective Services/Fire Chief
DATE: June 17, 2024
RE: Controlled Burns within the District of Tumbler Ridge

At Council's request, I have met with the BC Wildfire Service to discuss the possibility of conducting controlled burns as a wildfire mitigation tool within the municipal boundary. Enrico Fionda, the Chief Wildfire Prevention Officer for the Prince George Fire Centre, stated that these types of activities are common in communities such as Tumbler Ridge and that they indeed could be completed as a means to prevent the ignition and transmission of wildfires however, considerable planning goes into these activities well in advance of any planned ignition event. Planning can take up to a year depending on the scope of the project, and any controlled burn event would be classified as a category 2, 3 or 4 open burns subject to the requirements/limitations under which the permit is pulled. These types of open burning are subject to the prohibitions currently in effect at any given time. As such, many of these types of events are completed in the late fall and winter months.

The most common activities that the BC Wildfire Service engages with Fire Departments on are surface fuel management along roadsides and open spaces such as fields. Prescribed fire events that incorporate standing timber over large, forested areas are outside of the scope of training for municipal fire departments and require subject matter expertise from BC Wildfire personnel.

In short, the BC Wildfire Service has recommended that the District of Tumbler Ridge identify a variety of potential areas which lay inside the municipal boundary and in consultation with the BC Wildfire Service, being the applications process so that they made be acted upon when condition permit. It is foreseeable that the identification of these potential areas will occur during the Community Wildfire Resiliency Planning process once a FireSmart Coordinator has been hired.

Please let me know if you require any further clarity.

DC/