

Strategies for Improving Wildland Fire management in Canada

The Wildland Fire Management Working Group / Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre partnership

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The Wildland Fire Management Working Group (WFMWG)

Responsibilities

The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers' (CCFM) Wildland Fire Management Working Group (WFMWG) is charged with:

- providing strategic advice and policy guidance on wildland fire management issues to the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers who comprise the CCFM
- improving the structure, delivery and understanding of wildland fire management across Canada
- supporting and sustaining the implementation of the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy (CWFS)

Membership

The WFMWG is comprised of Assistant Deputy Minister-level representation from the twelve provincial and territorial ministries/departments with responsibility for wildland fire management and Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service (CFS).

The WFMWG is co-chaired by CFS and a rotational position from one of the provincial or territorial agencies. The WFMWG is supported by a Secretariat position and a part-time Project Implementation Coordinator.

Annual Planning

The WFMWG annual workplan is developed in consultation with the wildland fire management agencies, reflects strategic objectives identified by the CCFM, and addresses the ongoing implementation of the CWFS. The annual workplans are approved and funded through the CCFM on a fiscal year basis.

Current members of the WFMWG

Agency	Representative
CFS	Tim Sheldon (Federal Chair)
YT	Rick Smith (Agency Chair)
BC	Gary Townsend
AB	Bruce Mayer
SK	Mart Wittrup
MB	Bruce Bremner
NT	Ernie Campbell
ON	Tracy Mill
QC	Paul Laminrande
NB	Julius Tarjan
NS	Julie Towers
PE	Kate MacQuarrie
NL	Jim Evans



The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)

The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) is a not-for-profit federally registered corporation that is owned and operated by the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Responsibilities

CIFFC coordinates the exchange of wildland firefighting resources and information among its member agencies, and internationally. CIFFC manages daily fire situation reporting, monitors resource demand and availability, and facilitates the sharing and exchange of fire management resources among its members and with international partners. This exchange of resources is governed by a series of Mutual Aid Resource Sharing (MARS) agreements that describe resource exchange procedures and cost-recovery mechanisms.

Management and operations

CIFFC is governed by a Board of Trustees as well as a Council of Directors. The Board of Trustees is responsible for strategic planning and financial governance, and is comprised of Assistant Deputy Ministers from the CFS, and the twelve provincial and territorial agencies.

The Council of Directors, comprised of the Directors of the thirteen wildland fire management agencies (the ten provinces, two territories and Parks Canada), the Director of CIFFC Inc., and a senior representative of CFS. The Council of Directors provides oversight and direction to CIFFC's ongoing operations and meets regularly to share ideas and enhance national cooperation in resource and information exchange.

CIFFC also manages a series of Working Groups, Task Teams and Communities of Practice, with representatives from its member agencies and in some cases academic and operational partner organizations that undertake projects to address improvements to operational procedures and practices on a national basis.

WFMWG and CIFFC: A Strategic Partnership

In 2010, WFMWG and CIFFC developed a working partnership where the WFMWG's strategic objectives and financial resources have been integrated with CIFFC's operational mandate and access to staff expertise to undertake the projects outlined in the WFMWG's annual workplan.

The WFMWG and CIFFC have strong parallels in membership, governance, goals and objectives.

- The WFMWG is focused on national fire management strategy and policy
- CIFFC is focused on coordinating effective mutual aid resource sharing, improving operational practice, and promoting information exchange among its Canadian member agencies, and internationally.
- Both organizations ensure that Canada's wildland fire management agencies have the most effective preparedness and response capabilities possible, and have a parallel governance structure at the Assistant Deputy Minister level.

Roles and benefits

The WFMWG provides strategic direction, project oversight and financial resources allocated to it through the CCFM.

CIFFC provides a project management framework through its Working Groups and Communities of Practice, and provides staff resources made available from its member agencies for project delivery.

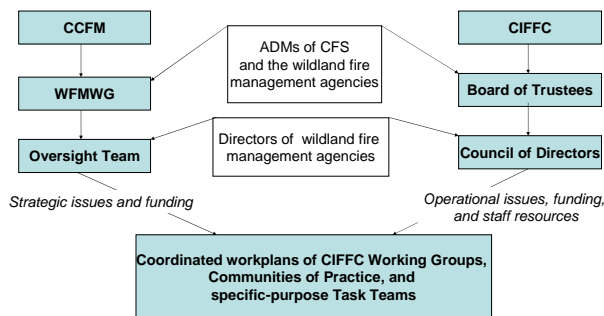
Activities within the WFMWG workplan are integrated within the annual workplans for CIFFC's Working Groups and Communities of Practice where appropriate; in some cases, special purpose Task Teams have been formed within the CIFFC framework to address specific requirements within the WFMWG workplan.

Current Activities

WFMWG and CIFFC are undertaking work that builds on previous initiatives, new initiatives, and furthering the goals of the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy by:

- Improving data availability and accessibility
- Addressing findings from the resource capacity and fire load survey
- Developing a national strategy for improved information management and decision support systems
- Developing an action plan to address findings of the national fuels survey, and a strategy to expand best practices and develop alternative fuel treatments
- Refining the FireSmart expansion strategy and developing a partnership-based implementation plan
- Developing approaches to measuring resource sharing effectiveness, and assessing and managing risk in the future resource sharing environment

WFMWG and CIFFC Strategic partnership governance and project delivery



Recent Accomplishments

The WFMWG/CIFFC strategic partnership has made progress on the following initiatives since 2010:

- Completed a status report and renewed implementation plan for the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy
- Commissioned a report on the state of wildland fire resource sharing in Canada (Stocks, 2010)
- Commissioned a National survey on resource capacity and fire load trends
- Commissioned a National survey on the state of hazardous fuels and fuels management programs
- Supported a series of FireSmart Community Recognition Workshops, in cooperation with Partners In Protection Canada.
- Developed a national strategy to expand FireSmart programs for community wildfire protection (being reviewed at this Conference)

Future Outlook

The WFMWG and CIFFC have benefited from the working partnership developed over the past several years, and are committed to delivering sustained results to Canada's wildland fire management agencies. Both organizations remain committed to:

- Continuing to address fire management issues of strategic national importance, as directed by the CCFM
- Furthering the implementation of the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy
- Enhancing the successful delivery partnership achieved between the WFMWG and CIFFC
- Building recognition of this role into the renewed CIFFC Strategic Plan now in development

