

Wildfire Mitigation Strategies, Challenges & Successes

29th Annual PNWER Summit

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

July 22, 2019

Presentation Overview

- Mitigation strategies in Saskatchewan
- Challenges faced
- Success stories
- Opportunities
- Questions

Mitigation Strategies

- Education is always the key
 - Presentations
 - Risk assessments and recommendations
 - Training workshops
- Raise awareness and build support

Mitigation Strategies

Once buy-in is achieved:

- Work with stakeholders to develop a mitigation plan
- Complete mitigation project work
 - Forest thinning by hand crews
 - Fire guard construction
 - Strategic forest harvest
 - Prescribed burns

Fuel Management Projects

- Hand crews with chainsaws or mechanical thinning or clearing











Challenges

- Fire seasons getting worse?
- Reduced forest health
- Expanding wildland-urban interface
- Wildfire disaster “cycle”

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

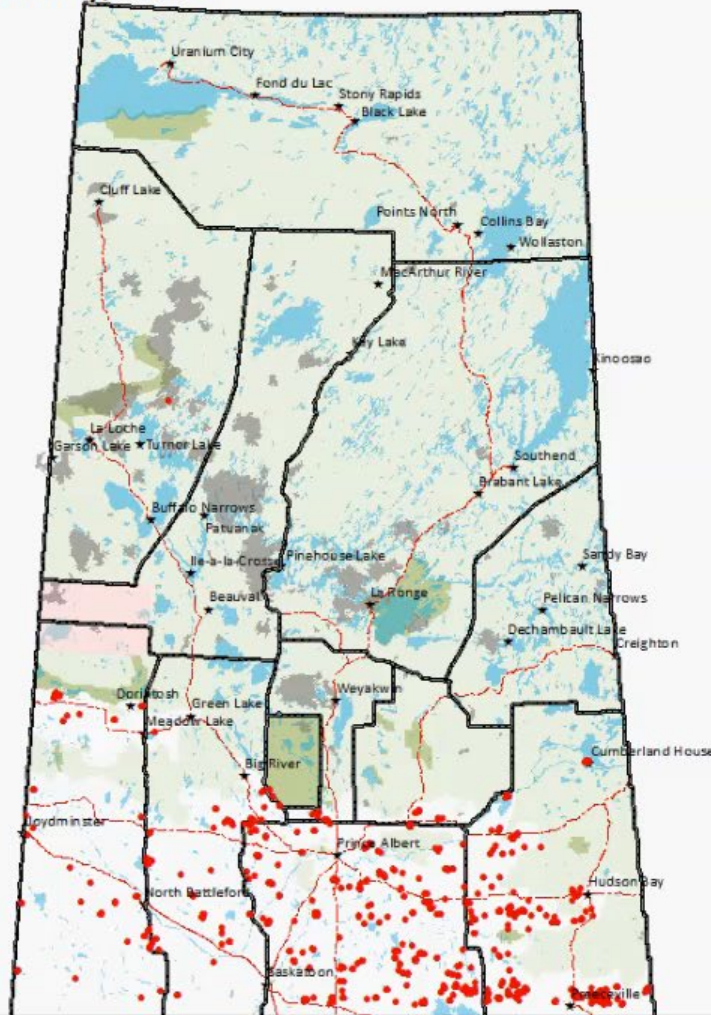
DISASTER!

Many homes
totally
destroyed





MODIS Timeline: 15 May, 2015



Key Challenges

1. Mitigation work is expensive.
2. How do you prove mitigation funding saves money?
 - Overall suppression costs
 - Social costs
 - Economic impacts
 - Insurance costs
3. How do you compete with suppression costs?

Success Stories

- Support for mitigation work
 - ISC since 2015
 - Federal Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund
 - Provincial and municipal matching funding
 - Total in excess of \$35.8 M over 9-year period
- Stakeholder interest
- Relationship building

Relationship Building

- ISC, WFM, PAGC & all provincial First Nation communities
- Project Partnership – Project Success
 - Capacity building
 - Mitigation work
 - Community involvement
 - WIN / WIN

Success Stories at Community Level

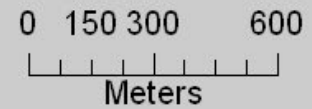
- Local employment opportunities
 - Capacity building (training and work experience)
- Community support and pride
- Making a difference
 - Case studies completed & shared

Lagoon Fire Case Study

Area = 21.4 Ha
Perimeter = 2520 m

Legend

-  14LA-Lagoon
-  Thinned Area
-  Fire Origin



Wildfire Management Branch
Education & Prevention

Disclaimer:
Information contained in this map is provided as a public service by the Government of Saskatchewan, but we cannot guarantee that all information is current and accurate. Users should verify the information before acting on it.





















Measuring Success

Quote from Chief Air Attack Officer when asked if the fuel break contributed to suppression effectiveness:

“From initial observations, I would comment on the success of the fuel break at the SE corner of Jeanette. The community was challenged in a big way, and it was almost inconceivable that residential values were not lost.”

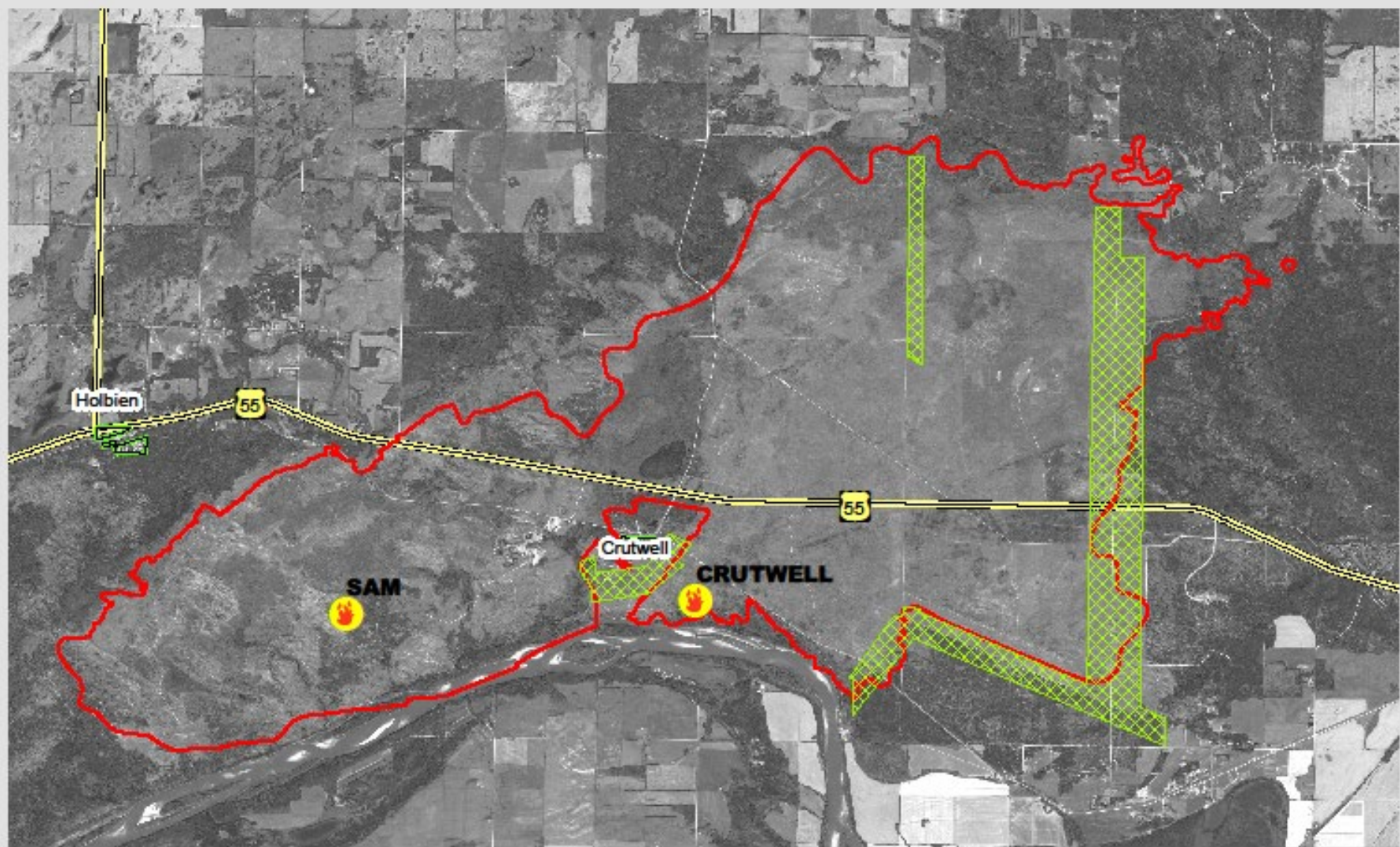
Sometimes, it is easy



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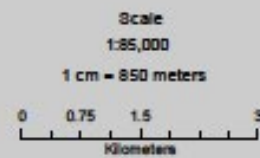


Legend

-  Fire Origin
-  Fuel Break
-  Crutwell Fire Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary



**Crutwell
Fire
June 28th 2002**



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Nisbet Provincial Forest
Fire Break and
Dwarf Mistletoe
Management Area

2015 Fire at Black Lake





Opportunities

1. Expand mitigation to landscape level
 - Working with forest industry
2. Incorporate FireSmart / Firewise principles in new development planning
 - Wildland-Urban Interface Code
3. FireSmart / Firewise Programs
 - Residents owning the mitigation process
 - Create fire resilient communities



WADIN BAY - FIRST RECOGNIZED "FIRESMART" COMMUNITY IN SASKATCHEWAN

**WILDFIRE COMMUNITY
PREPAREDNESS DAY**

Sponsored by FireSmart

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**FireSmart
COMMUNITY
2015**

I AM
FireSmart

NEW PERSPECTIVE: BREAK THE WUI DISASTER CYCLE

Severe Fire
Conditions

Fuel, Weather,
and Topography

Wildland Fire

Rapid fire spread
and/or
High intensity

~~Urban Fire~~

~~Multiple,
simultaneous
ignitions~~

**Stopping the transition of fire from
“wildland” fuels to “built” fuels significantly
reduces the likelihood of a disaster.**

Opportunities

4. Incentives

- Insurance industry
- FireSmart Canada / Firewise recognized communities





Questions?
[Saskatchewan.ca/fire](https://saskatchewan.ca/fire)

saskatchewan.ca