

## HOW FIRESMART TREATMENTS INFLUENCE WILDFIRE SPREAD



# Kelowna Spring FireSmart

FireSmart™ Clifton Highlands



# KELOWNA WILDFIRE MITIGATION PROGRAM

Engage Kelowna Fire Department and the  
FireSmart Neighbourhoods Program to  
mitigate wildfire risks in your neighbourhood.

[firesmart@kelowna.ca](mailto:firesmart@kelowna.ca)

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# Where is the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI)?

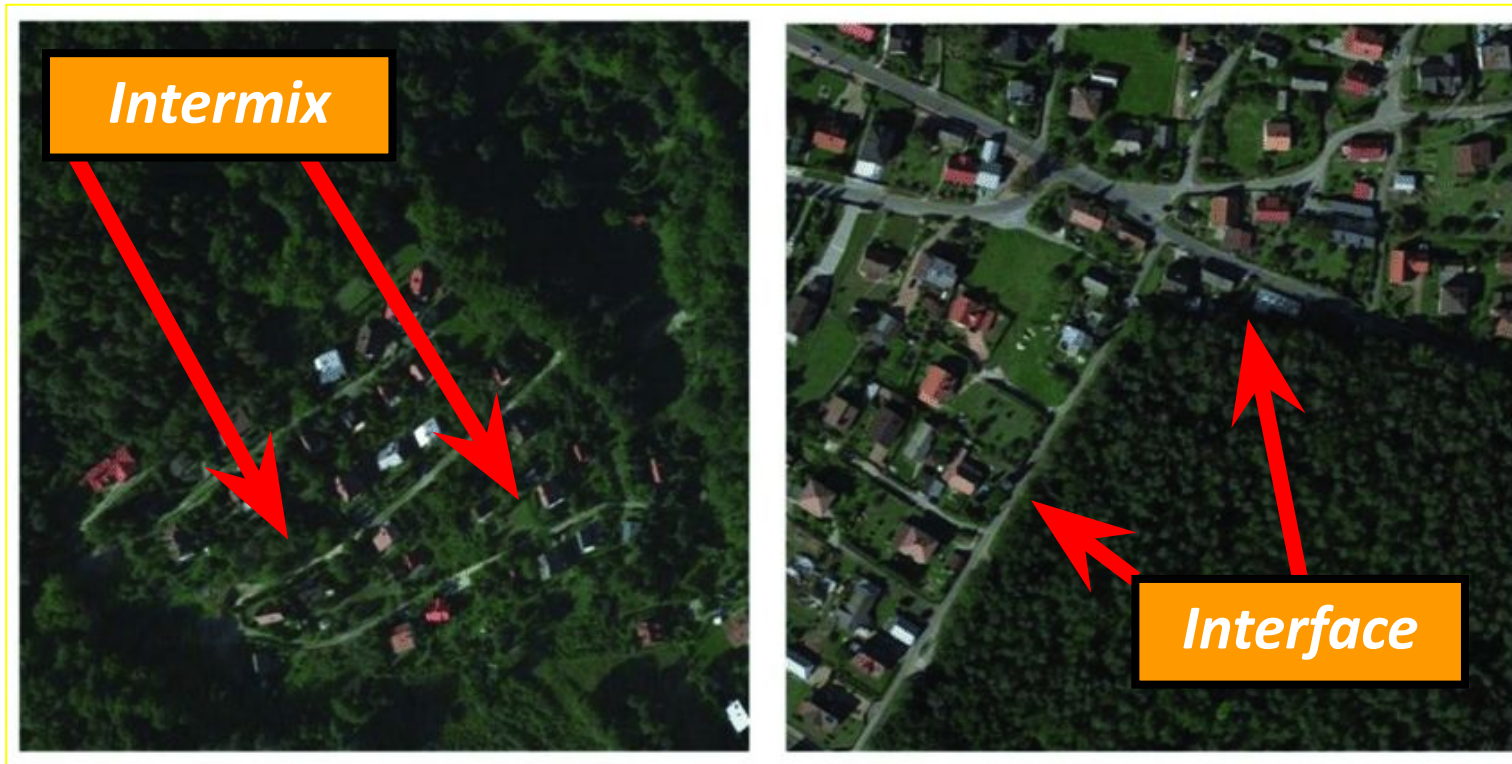


Image: Google Maps

Where the forest meets the community.



Fire spreads in all directions.



# What is a Wildland/Urban Interface Fire?



**A wildfire that has spread into the wildland urban interface that may involve the ignition and burning of structures.**





# Major Issues / Converging Trends



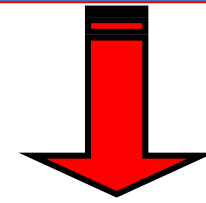
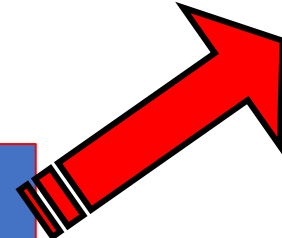
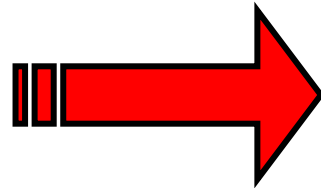
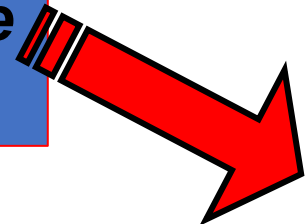
**Climate Change**  
*-increase in extreme fire behaviour*

**Increasing Development**  
*in WUI Areas*

**Forest health issues**  
*-increase in high hazard fuels*

**Response Frequently Overwhelmed**

**WUI Disaster**  
**Evacuation & Lo\$\$es**





*"Fire has been a part of  
the history of BC's Interior  
since time immemorial."*

*"Restoration work comes with a price. It certainly is not  
as simple as lighting a match and letting an area burn."*

*"The fact remains that the best timber ranges  
in interior British Columbia today were made by fire,  
and any comprehensive land use policy for the future*

Nearly 2 centuries of active fire suppression has led to forest health degradation, impacts to wildlife, like Mule Deer, heavy fuel build up threatening communities, and low value suppressed forest stands.

The Okanagan Valley, in its' entirety is a fire dependent landscape.

Restoring natural disturbance is not as simple as putting fire back onto the landscape- restoration comes at a price, and community resilience requires collaboration.







# The Wildfire Disaster Sequence



**How do  
wildland/urban  
Interface fire  
losses occur?**



Slave Lake, AB - May 15, 2011

**Wildfire  
Disaster  
Sequence**

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**

# NEW PERSPECTIVE: BREAK THE WUI DISASTER SEQUENCE

Severe Fire  
Conditions

Fuel, Weather,  
and  
Topography

Wildland Fire

Rapid fire spread  
and/or  
High intensity

~~Urban Fire~~

~~Multiple,  
simultaneous  
ignitions~~

**Wildfire  
Disaster  
Sequence**

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



# The Root of the Problem?



Without appropriate pre-fire mitigation...

**FIRE DEPARTMENT EFFORTS  
ARE FREQUENTLY  
OVERWHELMED**



*Is more fire control the answer?*

# 'If Homes Don't Ignite – Homes Don't Burn'

The main issue is...  
structure vulnerability to  
WUI fire ignition!



If homes don't ignite... homes don't burn...  
If homes don't burn...WUI disasters are avoided.





**EXTENDED ZONE**  
10m to 30m

**INTERMEDIATE ZONE**  
1.5m to 10m

**IMMEDIATE ZONE**  
0m to 1.5m

**HOME  
IGNITION  
ZONE**



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Make your home  
more Wildfire  
resilient

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# How do we reduce the risk of wildfire losses?

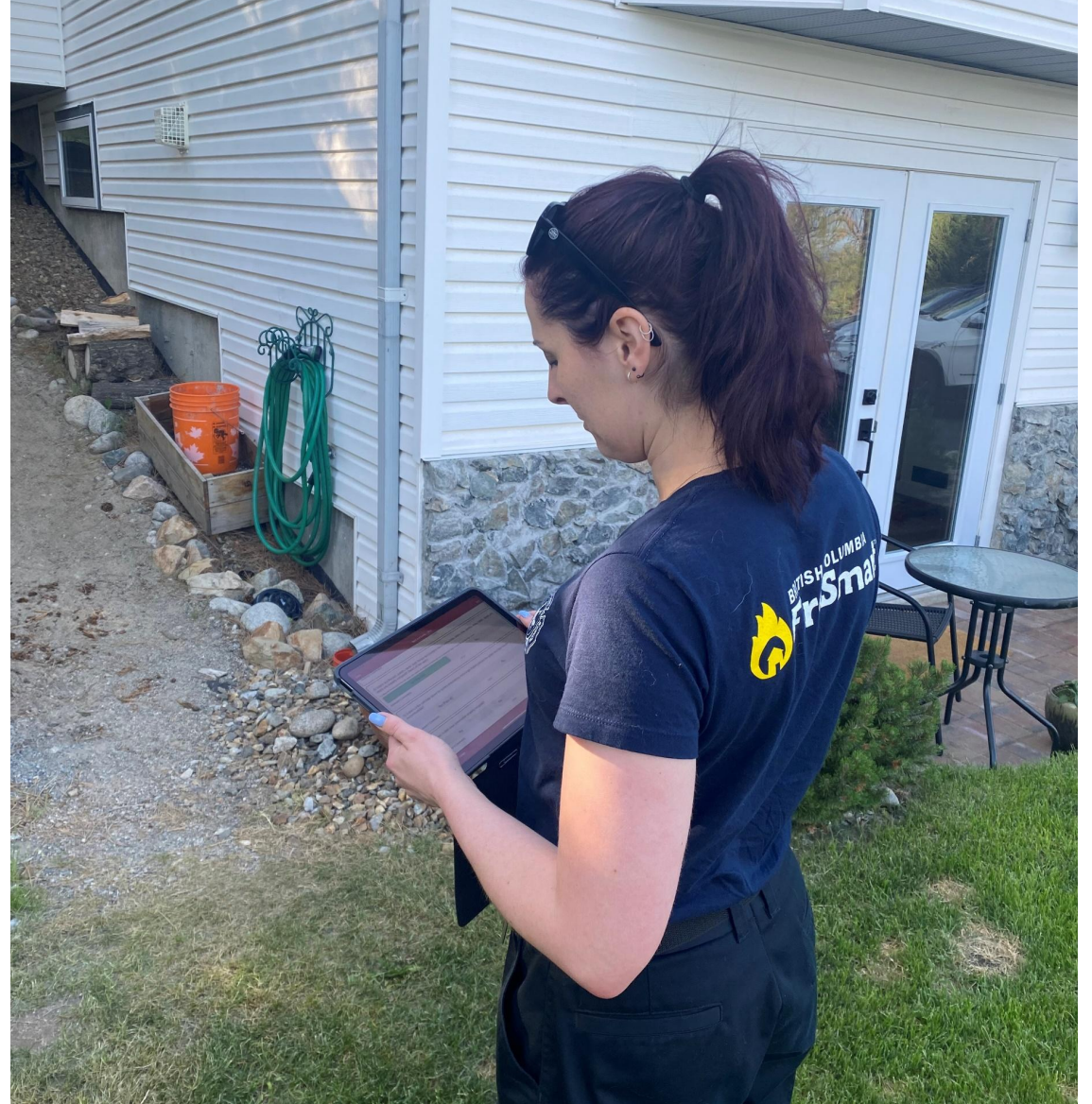
*-Solving the problem depends on what happens before the fire...*



*...on our homes and in the forest beside them...*









# Tips to FireSmart Your Home

Taking action to FireSmart your property will dramatically decrease the risk of wildfire damaging your home. The best part is, it's surprisingly easy to do.

Clean under your deck to remove any combustible material. Establish a 1.5 metre non-combustible zone around the perimeter of the house and deck.

Clean and maintain gutters and roofs. Keep decks and balconies clear of leaves and debris.

Keep grass and weeds cut below 10 centimetres.

Have a **wildfire evacuation plan** and make sure everyone in your household knows what to do.

Download the **FireSmart home assessment** and do a self-assessment of your home and property.

Hold sheds and other structures to the same standards as your home.

Relocate propane tanks 10-30 meters from your home, and keep combustible vegetation a minimum of 10 metres from propane tanks.

Move firewood and lumber 10-30 meters away from home.

Prune trees to create a two-meter clearance from the ground to the lowest branches.

Add non-combustible 3 millimetre screens to external vents (except dryer vents).

Reduce the flammability of your landscaping and plant wildfire resistant vegetation. [Learn landscaping.](#)

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Learn more at [FireSmartBC.ca](http://FireSmartBC.ca)



Make your home more Wildfire resilient

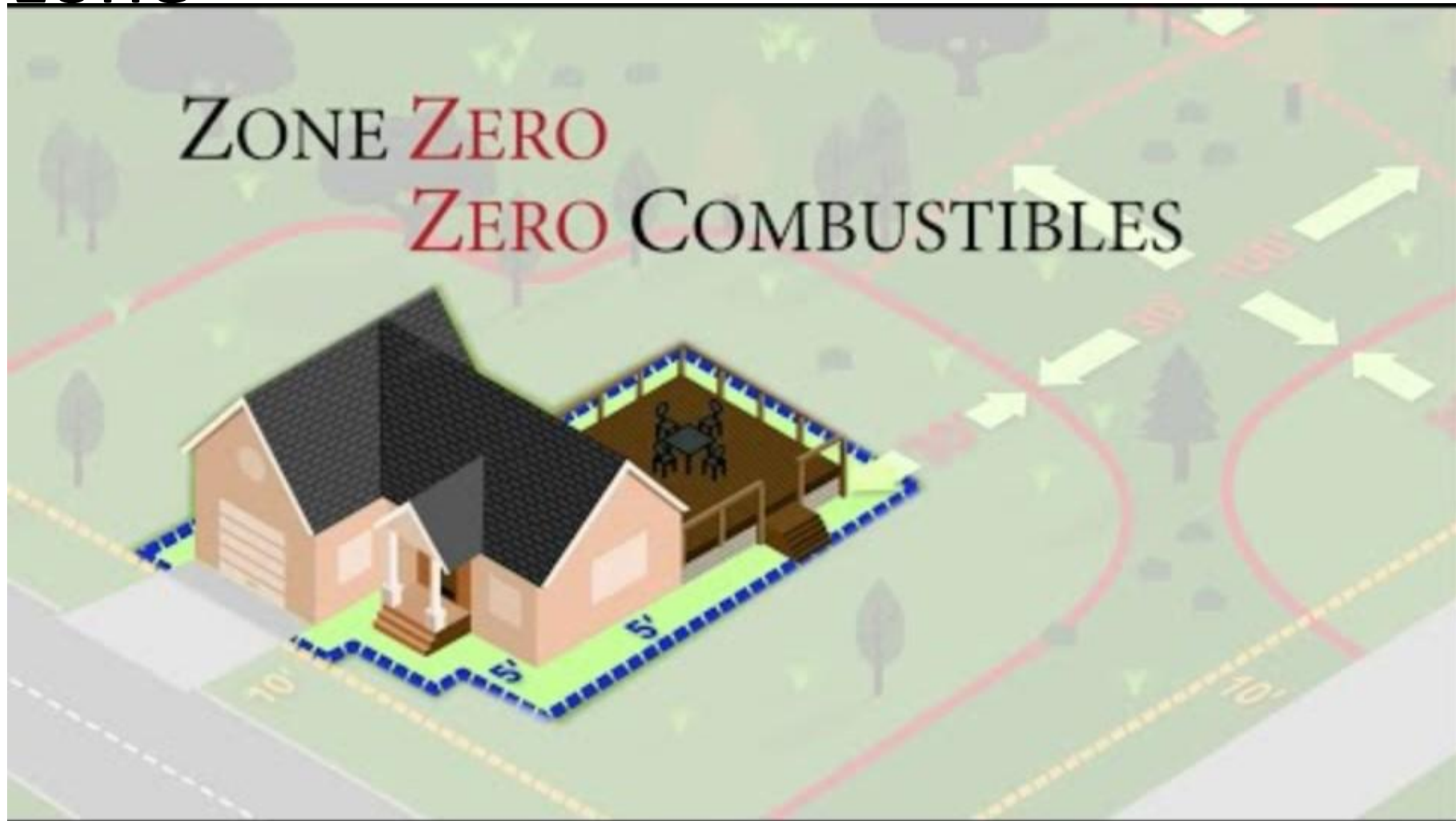
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# What is Defensible Space? Get to know your zero zone





# Fuel Continuity Leading to the Home









Still the biggest challenge with FireSmart is the Public not understanding the home out approach.

- Members of the public are still more concerned about the fuel along the roadways, neighbours' properties, areas beyond the 30-metre distance from their structure.







## Fire department puts out hedge fire near Highway 97 through Kelowna

Kelowna Feb 23, 2024 / 8:25 pm

Large flames were seen from a hedge fire on Friday night, at the corner of Highway 97 and Highway 33. Castanet Reporter Rob Gibson said the fire...



## Fireworks spark hedge fire at Kelowna's Moraine Park

Kelowna Aug 31, 2022 / 7:16 am

UPDATE: 7:15 a.m. The Kelowna Fire Department says the use of fireworks is strictly prohibited in the city following a hedge fire Tuesday night....



## Kelowna Fire Department puts out hedge fire caused by fireworks

Kelowna Apr 4, 2021 / 9:18 pm

The Kelowna Fire Department acted quickly Sunday night to put out a hedge fire that was caused by fireworks. The fire started just before 8:30 p.m. in...



## Fire burns hedge along Harvey Avenue at Barlee Road

Kelowna Mar 7, 2024 / 7:01 am

The Kelowna Fire Department doused a small fire burning along Harvey Avenue early Thursday morning. A Castanet reader sent photos and video showing...



## Kelowna Fire Department douses hedge fire with help from Good Samaritans

Kelowna Jul 21, 2023 / 4:35 pm

Kelowna Fire crews managed to douse a hedge fire that sparked on Kirschner Road Friday just after 4 p.m. Clarence Johnson tells Castanet he drove by...



# Recent Kelowna Cedar Fire – April 2024





# West Kelowna Hedge Fire – Early Spring 2024







# Questions from the Clifton Highlands:

- What are the top 3 things a community and homeowner should do to reduce their risk of wildfire
  - Concentrate on the Immediate Zone (0-1.5m)
  - Disrupt the fuel continuity in around our homes
  - Reduce the surface and ladder fuels
- Are there any subsidies or rebates related to FireSmart activities?
  - The funding for the Community Resiliency Investment program (CRI) has been submitted for 2024. The Kelowna Tree Chipping Program operates within this program and has been for the past 2 years. Individual or community rebates will be explored for 2025.
- Are there any planned fire mitigation activities for Knox mountain - specifically on the side closest to us
  - An excerpt from the Knox Mountain Park Management Plan 2022 - OP 7: Undertake Annual Wildfire Mitigation Activities  
Objective: Environmental Protection Annual wildfire mitigation will be undertaken within the park, as required to protect both park users and the natural ecology. This may include fuel reduction treatments within natural areas to meet wildlife needs but also reduce wildfire risk
- What do most people forget about in creating their emergency preparedness plan?
  - Leaving the emergency kit at home when leaving for work or going on vacation
  - Developing a planned muster point and/or calling a pre-determined point of contact.
  - FireSmart Evacuation Plan - open cedar fence gate, bringing in deck chair cushions, removing natural fibre mats from decks/doorways
- What is the best way to know about a fire nearby? (Central Okanagan emergency operations?)
  - BC WildFire App – this is the most up to date/time application we have. A geofence can be created around your home so you will be notified as soon a BC WildFire receives a confirmed wildfire threat within your pre-determined location.
  - Central Okanagan Regional District (CORD) - [www.cordemergency.ca](http://www.cordemergency.ca)





Thank you!



[FireSmart@kelowna.ca](mailto:FireSmart@kelowna.ca)