



Forest Resource Improvement Association Grant Applications

Electoral Division: All

File:

Table with 2 columns: Field (Date, Presenter, Department) and Value (September 10, 2024, Ken Hubbard, Fire Chief & Director of Emergency Management, Fire Services)

REPORT SUMMARY

Rocky View County is making application for Grant Funding from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) for 2025 Vegetation and Non-Vegetation Management Projects. The Rocky View County Fire Department is actively working with the Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee to implement Fire Smart Principles around the Greater Bragg Creek community and the Rocky View County northwest corner bordering the Forest Protection Area (PTA) by further enhancing wildfire resiliency and emergency management in west Rocky View regions.

The following is summary of the 2025 FRIAA Grant Applications:

- 1. Non-Vegetation Grant: Objective: Update the 2012 Bragg Creek Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. Purpose: Ensure the wildfire mitigation strategy is current and effectively addresses modern fire risks.
2. Vegetation Grant: Objective: Support private landowners in the Greater Bragg Creek Area and west Rocky View County communities with debris disposal. Purpose: Facilitate the removal of combustible debris to lower wildfire risk on private properties.
3. Non-Vegetation Grant: Objective: Develop a Roadmap outlining programs and resources in line with the Rocky View County NW Wildfire Mitigation Strategy to assist with FireSmart education for residents. Purpose: Equip NW County residents with comprehensive FireSmart education and resources to enhance wildfire preparedness.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approves the submission of the following grant applications through the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA):

- Update the 2012 Greater Bragg Creek Wildfire Mitigation Strategy;
Facilitate the removal of combustible debris and support landowners in reducing wildfire risk on private properties; and
Develop a Roadmap outlining programs and resources, in alignment with the Rocky View County NW Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, to assist with FireSmart education for residents.

Forest Resource Improvement Association Grant Applications

BACKGROUND

The Greater Bragg Creek Wildfire Mitigation Strategy (WMS) was approved in January 2012. Wildfire Mitigation Strategy was developed to offer actionable FireSmart recommendations to municipal administration, elected officials, and residents.

In addition to the vegetation reduction strategies previously used, there continues to be a high level of engagement from the community to maintain properties to minimize the risk of wildfire impacts, including an assessment of wildland urban interface hazards, wildfire behavior analysis, and a review of policies and guidelines.

Currently, the Hamlet of Bragg Creek has over 850 structures, and the tenants and property owners' diversity continues to evolve as new residents are migrating regularly. The Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee in June of 2024 directed Administration to apply for FRIAA funding to review the WMS and address outstanding or new recommendations in 2025.

The report identified vegetation management as a high priority and that Rocky View County should consider innovative methods to assist private landowners in the area with debris disposal. With the assistance of the FRIAA grant funding program and Fire Services, this would be the fifth year that the Greater Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee has run the vegetation management project. Working with the Waste and Recycling business unit, Fire Service is looking to expand the opportunities and locations into the west Rocky View County communities in 2025.

In 2016, Rocky View County had a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy completed for the northwest portion of the municipality. The wildfire threat analysis identified a significant portion of wildfire fuels in the project area. However, the majority of the vegetation management and other FireSmart treatments in the area is the responsibility of the homeowner as most of the land is privately owned. The WMS emphasized the importance of providing Fire Smart Education to landowners to ensure mitigation activities are occurring at the homeowner's level.

ANALYSIS

Given that over a decade has passed since the original plan, significant changes in the area necessitate an updated strategy. The 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Strategy will audit the previous recommendations and incorporate updated wildfire analysis techniques, policies, procedures, and FireSmart best practices. The project will rely heavily on the knowledge and expertise of the Bragg Creek Fire Smart Committee to evaluate the completion of recommendations and development of the 2025 plan.

Prior to the 2019 education campaign, the Bragg Creek Waste & Recycling Centre averaged 40 tonnes of branch debris collection. Since the education campaign, the average annual debris collection has doubled to 80 tonnes per annum with a high of 127 tonnes during 2020 collection period.

There is an ongoing high level of community engagement to reduce wildfire risks by maintaining properties and managing debris. Future "chipper day" events, like those planned for 2025, are essential to continue this effort and support Rocky View County in becoming a FireSmart community. Fire Services in collaboration with Waste and Recycling has identified a new strategy for the hosting of multiple day events at various locations within west Rocky View through the summer of 2025 to collect and dispose of organics outside of regular collection operation.

To support homeowners in mitigating wildfire risks within the northwest area, Fire Services and Emergency Management propose creating a Roadmap that outlines current programs and resources available for FireSmart education. This will help ensure that residents are well-informed and engaged in wildfire mitigation activities.

Forest Resource Improvement Association Grant Applications

These updates and initiatives will enhance wildfire mitigation efforts, support resident education, and improve debris management to reduce wildfire risks effectively.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with members of the Greater Bragg FireSmart Committee, and Rick Author, Area Forestry Representative and Forestry and Protection.

Following grant funding approval, the County will communicate the Branch Collection dates and instructions for the 2024 vegetation debris disposal.

IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications at this time. Grant funding covers the costs for the three projects. Updating the 2012 Greater Bragg Creek Wildfire Mitigation Strategy will be completed through the engagement of a Wildfire specialist to include an assessment of the wildfire urban interphase (WUI) hazards, analysis of wildfire behavior, and a review of policy and guidelines. Based on the review, the WMS provides a set of recommendations to help reduce the impacts of wildfire to the greater Bragg Creek area. The project will commence in the winter of 2025 and be completed by July 2025.

The Bragg Creek waste management site continues to see high rates of vegetation disposal at collection sites; this grant funded program will assist with diverting and reducing the volume of regular site collections operation on designated days from June 2025 until October 2025.

As FireSmart Canada and FireSmart Alberta continue to develop and update their educational programs, the County is proposing the development of a Roadmap outlining programs and resources, in alignment with the Rocky View County NW Wildfire Mitigation Strategy, to assist with FireSmart education for residents. The roadmap and presentation will be completed by a consultant versed in the resources and programs delivered by FireSmart Canada/FireSmart Alberta. The roadmap will be presented to County staff who are responsible for implementing the Fire Smart programs in Rocky View County by July 2025.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

| Key Performance Indicators | | Strategic Alignment |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Effective Service Delivery | SD2: Services are resourced and delivered to specific groups as intended, and citizens are satisfied with the outcomes | SD2.1: Citizens satisfied with the range of County services available/delivered |
| Effective Service Delivery | SD2: Services are resourced and delivered to specific groups as intended, and citizens are satisfied with the outcomes | SD2.3: Services achieving defined service level targets |
| | | Citizens will continue to have access to wildfire prevention services, particularly debris disposal services expanding in opportunity and location. |
| | | The grant will help to support Fire Services in achieving wildfire prevention and educational services at the current level of service. |

Forest Resource Improvement Association Grant Applications

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

Administration does not have an alternate direction for Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

APPROVALS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Manager: | Ken Hubbard |
| Executive Director/Director: | Brock Beach, Acting |
| Chief Administrative Officer: | Byron Riemann |

