

Community Preparedness



Managing Forest Fuels: Reducing Wildfire Risk Near Northern Communities



Living in Saskatchewan's forested regions means living with wildfire as a natural part of the landscape. Forests grow, weather shifts and conditions can change quickly. While wildfire cannot be prevented entirely, thoughtful planning and hands-on work can lessen its impact when it occurs.

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) carries out wildfire fuel management projects on Crown land within and around communities identified as being at higher wildfire risk. While the influence of weather and topography on fire behaviour cannot be controlled, this work focuses on one of the few factors that can be influenced before a fire starts: the amount and arrangement of vegetation on the landscape. Fuel management involves carefully changing how trees, shrubs and other vegetation are arranged so fire is less intense, spreads more slowly and is easier to control during response operations.

Across Saskatchewan, SPSA crews carry out this work by thinning dense forests, maintaining fire guards and managing vegetation in strategic locations near communities. This work does not eliminate wildfire risk, and it does not guarantee that fires will stop at treated areas. However, it greatly improves the chances that homes, infrastructure and community spaces will experience less damage when wildfire occurs.

Fuel mitigation projects have been completed in communities and recreation areas across the province, including Bear Creek, Black Point, Candle Lake, Crutwell, Cypress Hills Provincial Park, Dore Lake, Garson Lake, Greig Lake, Howe Bay, Hudson Bay, Jan Lake, Jeannette Lake, La Ronge, Little Amyot Lake, Lower Fishing Lake, Matheson Lake, Napatak, Prince Albert, Sandy Bay, Tobin Lake, Uranium City and Waterhen.

In 2024-25 alone, more than 359 hectares of Crown land were treated. As of March 31, 2025, a total of 1,463 hectares had been completed, representing nearly 60 per cent of the province's 2028 target of 2,464 hectares of treated Crown land adjacent to at-risk communities. Progress continues each year, guided by careful planning and local risk information to ensure work is completed where it can provide the greatest benefit.

Total hectares of Crown land with completed fuel management work ¹	
Date	Total hectares
2020	87
2021	242
2022	518
2023	834
2024	1,103
2025	1,463 ²
2028 Target	2,464

¹ updated to actual hectares covered compared to the previously reported projected hectares

² as of March 31

Program highlight: Reducing wildfire risk in First Nations communities

Since 2015, collaborative work between the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, First Nations and Indigenous Services Canada has resulted in fuel mitigation projects being completed in most First Nations communities across Saskatchewan. This partnership approach respects local knowledge, supports community safety and reflects shared responsibility for wildfire preparedness. The success of this work has informed similar efforts elsewhere in Canada and continues to serve as a model for how targeted, community-focused fuel management can reduce wildfire risk while strengthening long-term preparedness.

Why It Matters

Wildfire fuel management strengthens community safety by reducing the intensity and speed of wildfire near populated areas. Treated landscapes provide safer conditions for firefighters, create more effective anchor points for suppression efforts and help slow fire spread at critical moments. This work also helps reduce the need for large-scale evacuations, lowers the risk to people and emergency responders, and helps manage the significant economic and social costs associated with severe wildfire seasons. By focusing work near communities identified through the Saskatchewan Community Wildfire Risk Assessment, fuel management projects are prioritized where they can make the most difference.

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