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## 2011 Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative

### Questions & Answers

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#### **Q. Why should communities participate in the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative?**

- A.** The Filmon report stated that “governments and individuals share responsibility for fireproofing communities and developments that may be affected by interface wildfires.” As no one agency can resolve all the challenges of wildfire management, a collaborative approach - through partnership building and teamwork and including local governments, First Nations and the Provincial Fuel Management Working Group – is an important foundation for mitigating wildfire risks to communities.

The inclusion of the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS) demonstrates this commitment to collaboration. As Crown lands surround First Nation bands, FNESS works with First Nations in order to lessen the forest fuel management concerns present on these Crown lands.

Ultimately, the safety of communities and the preservation of community values and assets, are objectives that the SWPI shares with all communities in BC.

#### **Q. Why have the funding ratios changed under the various funding streams of the 2011 SWPI program?**

- A.** The 2011 funding ratios have been set with two objectives in mind: to ensure maximum benefit from limited program dollars and to recognize the areas where local governments can contribute to a project without incurring incremental costs. The new funding ratios have been designed to increase the percentage of funding available to local governments as they move through the SWPI process from CWPPs through to prescriptions and operational fuel treatments. The changes are also based on the lessons learned from the 2004-2010 SWPI, which demonstrated that local governments are better able to provide community contributions at earlier stages of the process.

Local governments are well versed in planning processes and may be able to undertake a CWPP at least in part using existing staff resources. In addition, a local government may be able to easily contribute to the project through such things as use of local government facilities to conduct public consultation. Based on this, the 2011 CWPP program can contribute a maximum of 50% of the cost of eligible activities - to a maximum of \$15,000 - and the remainder (50%) is required to be funded through community contributions

As the local government moves to fuel management prescriptions, it may need to rely more on external consultants because the work may involve expertise not available within local government staff. However, the 2004-10 SWPI program also demonstrated that the prescription process still represents considerable opportunity for a local government to contribute its own resources through such things as GIS and mapping expertise, contract management expertise, public consultation and other staff time. In recognition that the development of a prescription may require more external inputs, but still contains the ability for local governments to contribute internal resources, the 2011 Fuel Management Prescription program can contribute a maximum of 75% of the cost of eligible activities and the remainder (25%) is required to be funded through community contributions.

Operational fuel treatments, however, are often outside of a local government's day to day activities, and are more likely to require the engagement of external expertise. Based on this, the program contribution is the highest level of all of the 2011 SWPI funding streams and has been increased in part since the 2004-10 program.

The 2011 program can contribute a maximum of 90% of the cost of eligible activities up to \$100,000 in funding per applicant per calendar year AND 75% of the cost of eligible activities from \$100,001 to \$400,000 in funding per applicant per calendar year

While it would have been ideal to provide an even higher funding percentage, this was not feasible with limited program dollars. However, with the window for the completion of operational fuel treatments expanded to 2 years, there are opportunities for local governments to provide in-kind contributions to the operational fuel treatment projects (tendering process, contract management, administration and finance staff time, supervision while the work is underway, and the development of public information materials and signage) in order to meet the community contribution requirement.

**Q. What are the new requirements for community contributions for operational fuel treatments under the 2011 SWPI?**

**A.** Under the new program, past fuel management projects (including surplus non-UBCM funding) are not eligible as the community contribution for proposed operational fuel treatments. The community contribution must be related to the project (or phase of project) that is being applied for and can be a cash or in-kind contribution. For more information on eligible community contributions, please refer to Appendix 1 of the Operational Fuel Treatment Program & Application Guide.

Community contributions can come from a number of sources, including:

- Cash contribution from local government (e.g. general revenue or reserve funds)
- In-kind contribution from local government, as noted above and including:
  - Staff time directly related to fuel treatment project (e.g. supervision and travel)
  - Use of local government meeting space or other resources
  - Local government administration of the project and/or grant funding
- Cash or other contributions from the community (e.g. volunteer labour or use of equipment, cash donation to the project)
- Other grant funding.
- Revenue derived from the project.

**Q. Why are community contributions required for prescriptions in the 2011 SWPI?**

**A.** The 2011 Fuel Management Prescription program can contribute a maximum of 75% of the cost of eligible activities and the remainder (25%) is required to be funded through community contributions.

The Filmon report stated that project expenses "be cost shared with local governments" and that "the responsibility for action is shared among all levels of government and private individuals." By reducing the community contribution requirement for operational projects to 10% for the first \$100,000 in funding (i.e. from \$25,000 (25%) to \$10,000 (10%)) and requiring a 25% community contribution for prescriptions that generally cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 (\$2,500 to \$3,750 at 25%), costs incurred by local governments have effectively been reduced by as much as \$12,500.

**Q. How are operational fuel treatments on Crown land accounted for?**

**A.** Where work is required on Crown land to support the objectives of a CWPP and protect a community, Crown land may be included as part of the treatment. The new funding ratio for operational fuel

treatments provides opportunities to also treat Crown land where this work is required to protect communities.

**Q. How can fuel management work be accomplished on-reserves with First Nation communities?**

- A.** As band lands fall under federal jurisdiction, the SWPI funds are not available. The responsibility to fund fuel management activities on reserve lands resides with federal agencies.

**Q. How were decisions made to revise the 2011 SWPI?**

- A.** The Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative is managed through the Provincial Fuel Management Working Group – including the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations, First Nations' Emergency Services Society and Union of BC Municipalities.

Since the close of the 2004-2010 program in December of 2010, the working group has been reviewing the successes and challenges of the original program in order to strengthen the transparency, accountability and efficiency of the program. The revisions that were made to the 2011 program were based on the lessons that were learned and the desire of the working group to create a sustainable fuel management program.