

Through Fire & Smoke

Practical Actions to Build Wildfire Resilience

Wildfires are becoming more frequent, severe, and longer-lasting due to a changing climate, creating increasing risks for communities across Ontario.

Small and rural communities face unique wildfire challenges where limited capacity, dispersed populations, aging infrastructure, and constrained resources can make preparedness, response, and recovery more difficult. Practical, low-cost actions can strengthen wildfire resilience by improving community preparedness, enhancing communication, strengthening early-warning systems.

How to Read Cost and Effort Scales

\$	In-Kind/Staff Time	⚙️	Implement through routine operations
\$\$	Cover within existing budgets	⚙️⚙️	Some dedicated coordination required
\$\$\$	Additional resources required	⚙️⚙️⚙️	At the upper-end of a quick-win action

Educate Through FireSmart Canada

Host a one-hour workshop, leveraging FireSmart Canada resources to increase wildfire preparedness among municipal staff or community residents.

When to Get Started: Schedule an annual FireSmart session before wildfire season.

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Emergency Management
- 💡 Access ready-to-use trainings, checklists, and manuals from FireSmart

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Potential Partners

- Communications
- Fire Department
- FireSmart Canada

Key Metric

% of attendees reporting increase in wildfire preparedness knowledge

Host Wildfire Community Preparedness Days

Mobilize volunteers to thin vegetation, clear debris and deadfall, and create defensible buffer zones using FireSmart and Indigenous fire stewardship principles. Use signage to educate on undertaken actions.

When to Get Started: Submit an application in Fall to FireSmart Canada's [Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#) fund.

- 👤 Recommended Leads: Indigenous Knowledge Holders & Emergency Management
- 💡 Discover [Sunshine Valley's Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#)

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Potential Partners

- FireSmart Canada
- Aviation, Forest Fire & Emergency Services

Key Metric

of of properties/public areas improved

Promote Household Evacuation Plans and Kits

Encourage residents to build an evacuation plan and 72-hour emergency kits through outreach across social media, websites, local radio, in-person events, and bulletins.

When to Get Started: Integrate into existing community outreach channels during Emergency Preparedness Week (early May).

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Emergency Management
- 💡 Get inspired by [Huron Shores' emergency kit campaign](#)

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Potential Partners

- Communications
- Community Services

Key Metric

of residents reached and % reporting having a evacuation plan/ 72-hour kit

Enhance Wildfire Communications

Collaborate with community partners to identify barriers and strategies to improve delivery of wildfire alerts, preparedness information, and smoke advisories for vulnerable residents.

When to Get Started: Host a pre-wildfire season partner session to identify communication needs, clarify roles, and strengthen outreach.

- 👤 Recommended Leads: Emergency Management & Community Services
- 💡 Access [standard health messages from Ontario's Ministry of Health](#)

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Potential Partners

- Social Service Agencies
- Housing Providers
- Public Health

Key Metric

of communication barriers identified and addressed

Host DIY Air Filter Building Workshop

Host a DIY air filter/cleaner building workshop and offer information on cooling/cleaner-air spaces, wildfire smoke health risks, and heat safety.

When to Get Started: Partner with an existing regional program or group, rather than building from scratch.

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Emergency Management
- 💡 Discover how [Simon Fraser University's](#) has helped build over 500 DIY air filters for the community.

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Potential Partners

- Public Health
- Provincial Lung Association
- Neighbourhood Groups

Key Metric

of households with DIY air filters

Your dedicated partner in climate adaptation

Working on a climate-related project? Our ORCCA Support Desk can help with:

- Accessing Climate Information
- Adaptation Planning
- Finding Tools and Resources
- Building Capacity and Advancing Action
- Making Connections



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