

WABASCA-DESMARAIS COMMUNITY

Wabasca-Desmarais, located in Alberta's Municipal District of Opportunity No. 17, is home to around 3,300 residents, including members of the Bigstone Cree Nation. Surrounded by dense forests and nestled between North and South Wabasca Lakes, this community is rich in Indigenous culture and natural beauty. However, its remote location and limited access routes heighten the risk of wildfires, making resilient infrastructure and emergency preparedness a priority.



CHALLENGES IN FIREGUARD PLANNING FOR THE PROTECTION OF CRITICAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Wabasca-Desmarais faced an urgent challenge: protecting its community and critical infrastructure from wildfires. The surrounding forests presented significant fire hazards, demanding a robust mitigation plan. The complexity of this effort was compounded by environmental concerns, such as managing wetlands and riparian areas, community interests, and the need to navigate a web of regulatory requirements.

KEY CHALLENGES INCLUDED:

Wildfire Mitigation Planning: Determining optimal fireguard locations based on fuel types, potential fire behaviour, and previous wildfire occurrences.

Regulatory and Approval Processes: Securing multiple environmental and public lands approvals to comply with regulations.

Stakeholder Engagement: Effectively communicating with First Nations, local land users, government agencies, and community members to ensure successful project outcome.



Silvacom's support on the FireGuard project has made a real difference for our community. Their knowledge of wildfire mitigation, navigating approvals and attention to our local environment helped us put strong protections in place. We're glad to have this added safety for our infrastructure and residents.



To tackle these challenges, Wabasca-Desmarais partnered with Silvacom Energy & Environment Group, leveraging their comprehensive wildfire mitigation expertise. Silvacom guided the community through the entire process, **transforming the concept of a fireguard into a functional, protective barrier.**



RESULTS

The construction of the fireguard has **helped fortify** Wabasca-Desmarais **against wildfire threats**, fulfilling key objectives:

Enhanced Protection: The fireguard significantly reduced the community's vulnerability to wildfires, safeguarding critical infrastructure and essential services.

Economic and Community Benefits: The project created local jobs and strengthened local expertise in fire management.

Increased Resilience: Community education and engagement led to greater awareness of wildfire risks and improved response preparedness.

Regulatory Success and Stakeholder Satisfaction: The project successfully navigated complex regulatory landscapes, resulting in strong support from stakeholders.

SILVACOM'S APPROACH



Turnkey Expertise: Delivering end-to-end services across all phases of fireguard construction—planning, approvals, implementation, and maintenance.



Proposal Development and Funding Facilitation: Managing the end-to-end activities including proposal and securing funding from the Community Fireguard Program administered by FRIAA, while providing the technical expertise to execute the project.



Advanced Technology: Using remote sensing and advanced analytics to develop the fireguard strategy.



Multidisciplinary Project Management: A skilled team of environmental professionals, foresters, GIS specialists, and project managers ensured smooth execution.



Regulatory Compliance and Stakeholder Engagement: Silvacom handled regulatory requirements and engaged stakeholders—First Nations, government agencies, utility companies, and local residents—throughout the process.

ABOUT SILVACOM LTD. Founded in 1983, Silvacom Ltd. leads in natural resource management consulting, offering solutions in forestry, environment, and remote sensing. Our services include land use planning and wildfire mitigation, supported by analytics and project management. We emphasize compliance, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability while focusing on corporate social responsibility to deliver tailored, cost-effective solutions.

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To learn about safeguarding your community



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