

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Building the
Plane as we
Fly it.

WUI in Alberta





- Where were we?
- What did we figure out?
- Where we are now?
- What did we learn?
- Personal thoughts



What do you mean – Build as we fly?



"Great job back there team!"



2011 – When it began

Flat Top Complex Wildfire – Slave Lake

2016 – When we started paying attention

- Horse River Wildfire 2016
 - “Direct agencies and services involved in wildfire suppression in relation to the WUI to establish an SOP for implementation of processes following the model provided by ICS Canada for future incidents like the Horse River Fire”



This was where we were in 2016....

1. From the Horse River Report:

“In the opinion of the Review Team, the connection between the AF organization and the municipal resources never achieved unified command as described by ICS Canada. Connections of AF within the REOC were informal adjustments of the system. The urban firefighting resources were not connected within the AF Incident Command organization.”



What did we figure out? – This is not going away!



We needed to bring everyone together

We needed to co-exist in the same space

It is more than just fighting the fire

There are many people with skin in the game and not everyone has capacity

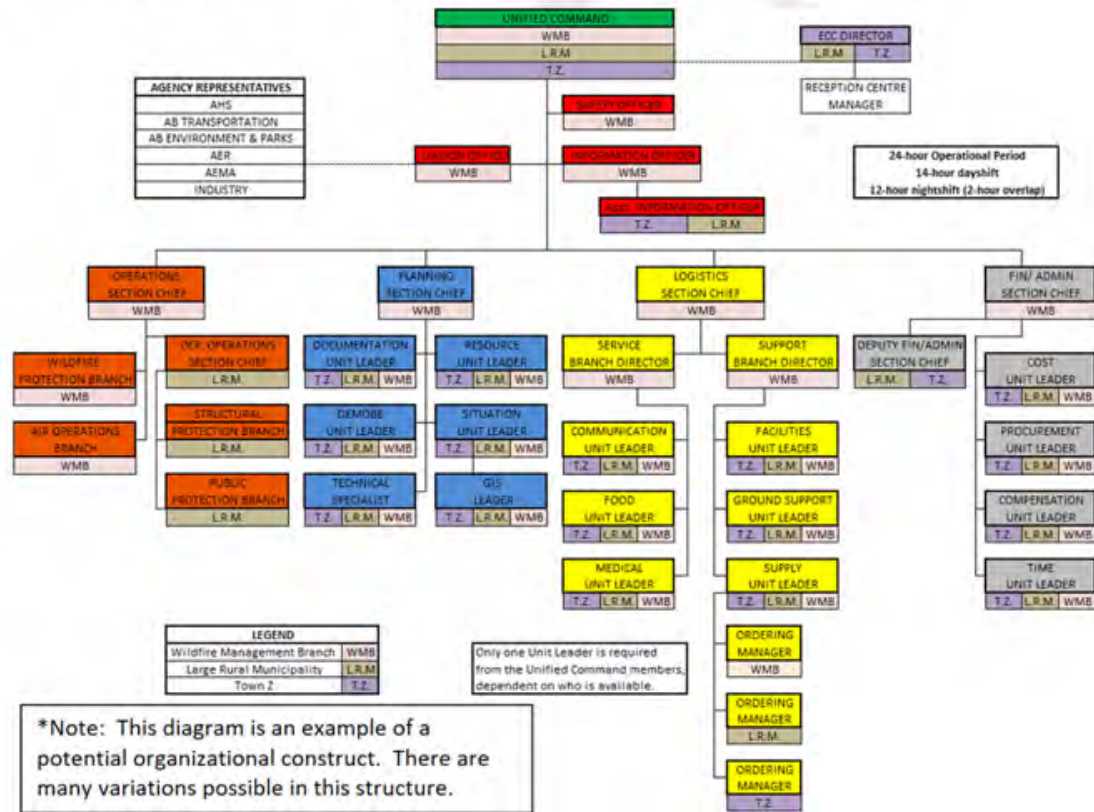
What tools did we already have?

1. AHIMT Pilot
2. WUI Experienced Fire Services
3. Past experiences that worked and didn't work.
4. Grant program



2019 – We finally got our heads together

FIGURE A5-6: SCENARIO 2 – DAYSHIFT



- Unified Command Workshop
- Alberta Emergency Management Agency
- Alberta Wildfire
- AHIMT
- CANTF2
- Municipal DEMS
- Alberta Fire Chiefs

2019 Chuckegg Creek Wildfire



We learned some lessons...



Where are we now?



The WUI Program born

- Grant from the Province
- Two permanent teams – Expanded to 6 in 2025
- Co-managed by AEMA and AB Wildfire
- Integrated operations with municipal WUI Specialists integrated into the IMT
- AHIMT's to support the Municipality
- Training program to train fire services





WUI Program Vision

VISION:

The seamless integration of municipal fire and wildland fire, supported by industry capability, in the conduct of preparedness and response operations, in the wildland and wildland urban interface environments



WUI Program End State

A comprehensive developmental system for structural firefighters to ensure safe operations in the wildland and WUI environments, encompassing individual certification at various developmental levels. WUI will become a standardized, recognized, and common skillset amongst Alberta's municipal fire departments

How did we do it?



Started with two teams

- Built capacity

Built and initial training program

- Tested it
- Refined it
- Built more training programs

Tested the model

Annual review meetings

ALL WHILE WE WERE RESPONDING EACH YEAR

2023 Wildfire Season

- Validated the program
- Confirmed the role of the teams
- Found weaknesses
- Need to accelerate training



What did we learn?



- Drop the egos
- We are all here for the same reason
- We have the same vision
- We complement each other
- Communicate!
- Not going to get it right on the first round.
- Politics get in the way of success

Personal Thoughts



Take care of your crew!

Community First!

Listen to your gut!

Get big quick!

Never saw that before!

After Care.



Thank
you

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