Wildland Fire Assessment

PURPOSE:

This document provides guidance for the preparation of a Wildland Fire Assessment which may be required for the submission of an application under the *Planning Act*. Wildland Fire Assessments shall follow the guidelines referenced in this document.

A Wildland Fire Assessment provides information to determine the presence or absence of hazardous forest types associated with an elevated risk of wildland fire. The goal of a Wildland Fire Assessment is to reduce wildfire risk to development by avoiding development within high-risk areas and/or implementing appropriate measures to mitigate risk.

A Wildland Fire Assessment may be required where proposed development is adjacent to, or within, forested areas, to ensure that provincial policies are addressed. Policy 5.2.9 of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) requires municipalities to direct development to areas outside of lands that are unsafe for development due to the presence of hazardous forest types for wildland fires unless the risk is mitigated in accordance with wildland fire assessment and mitigation standards.

PREPARED BY:

A Wildland Fire Assessment must be prepared by a qualified expert, with expertise in fields relevant to the natural environment and/or wildfire management (e.g. forest fire ecology, forestry), such as an environmental consultant.

CONTENTS:

The need for a Wildland Fire Assessment will be confirmed by Natural Heritage staff as part of the formal consultation process. Not all development adjacent to or within a forested area will require a Wildland Fire Assessment.

A Wildland Fire Assessment must follow the standards outlined in the *Wildland Fire Risk Assessment and Mitigation Manual* from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time. A pre-study consultation with staff may be required to confirm the terms of reference for the assessment. This assessment may be coordinated with other studies such as an Environmental Impact Statement.

Development proposals in forested areas shall include an assessment of the forest fuel hazard to determine the risk that those forest fuels represent should a wildland fire occur. An assessment should include a review of Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) wildland fire hazard mapping available from Land Information Ontario (LIO).

If an assessment determines that hazardous forest types for wildland fire are not present on, or in, the vicinity of proposed development (i.e., generally, within 100 m), it can be concluded that Policy 5.2.9 of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) does not apply to that situation and mitigation measures are not required.[1]

If an assessment determines that hazardous forest types for wildland fire are present, then planning and implementation of mitigation measures are needed to reduce the fire risk to moderate or low before development can be considered.[1]

OTHER INFORMATION:

Wildland Fire Risk Assessment and Mitigation Reference Manual | ontario.ca

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

Natural Heritage, Planning and Economic Development Department.

A Wildland Fire Assessment may also require a peer review.

CONTACT:

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