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Public Information Session #64

August 24, 2017: 6 to 8 p.m.

Here for You: Syncrude Athletic Park

Public Participation: 38 Residents

Internal Participation: Wood Buffalo Recovery Task Force (RTF)

Background:

- Work is now under way to rehabilitate firebreak areas created to support firefighting efforts during the 2016 Horse River Wildfire and to restore all trails that were damaged or destroyed at the time.
- This session provided an update to Timberlea and Eagle Ridge residents about the work that's expected to be completed in 2017 and 2018.

Feedback:

- Some residents asked questions about the details of the firebreak rehabilitation and firebreak restoration projects.
 - Residents were told firebreak rehabilitation work will include grading and adding topsoil and grass seed in the first 30 metres beyond the end of residential property lines. Approximately 30 per cent of the firebreak areas beyond the first 30 metres will receive the same treatment and the remaining firebreak areas will regenerate naturally.
 - The rehabilitation work will also include the restoration of the trails damaged or destroyed during the wildfire. All trails will be restored to their previous condition. For example, paved trails as paved trails and gravel trails as gravel trails.
 - In some cases, trails will be moved further from the property line and closer to the tree line.
 - Both projects will implement FireSmart guidelines, which identify tree species and spacing. Grass in the firebreak areas will be maintained and added to the Municipality's mowing and maintenance program.
 - Firebreak rehabilitation and trail restoration is expected to be completed in 2017 in firebreak areas near Walnut and Fireweed Crescents and on the north side of the Birchwood Trails in Eagle Ridge and in Timberlea.
 - The remaining work in Abasand, Anzac, Dickinsfield, Parsons Creek, Stone Creek and Thickwood will be completed in 2018.
- Some residents asked about what is being done to address off-highway vehicles (OHV) from using the newly created firebreak areas.
 - Residents were told that signs and fencing will be in place to address any illegal OHV use in the rehabilitated areas. Residents are asked to report those riding illegally to RCMP by calling 780-788-4000.



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- Some residents suggested that in addition to members of the RTF, members of bylaw, the RCMP and Regional Emergency Services should attend future sessions about firebreaks and trail restoration to provide information about what can be done to mitigate all OHV use in the rehabilitated areas.
- Some residents suggested options for increasing privacy behind homes such as planting trees in front of the pushed back trail if it is beyond the 30 metre buffer.
- Some residents asked what types of trees will be replanted in areas beyond 30 metres and what kind of grass is being planted within the 30 metres.
 - Residents were told that only native species of trees will be replanted and that the species selection and spacing will follow FireSmart guidelines.
 - Residents were also told the grass being seeded within the 30 metres is a fire resistant grass mix that has low growth and holds moisture well.
- Some residents said they are concerned about drainage issues behind their homes since the creation of the firebreak areas.
 - Residents were told that they can report any drainage issues to the RTF by emailing recovery@rmwb.ca or calling the PULSE Line at 784-743-7000.

Next Session:

Here for You: Urban Market

Wednesday, August 30: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topic: General Recovery Update

