



# Wawanesa

## RM of Lac du Bonnet receives \$20,000 Community Wildfire Prevention Grant from Wawanesa Insurance

**April 15, 2026:** The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet has received a \$20,000 grant from Wawanesa Insurance’s 2026 Community Wildfire Prevention Grant program.

The funds will go toward the development of a comprehensive wildland–urban interface assessment to map hazards, evaluate emergency routes, and recommend vegetation mitigation priorities.

“Being the first insurer on the ground during last year’s wildfire in the Lac du Bonnet area, we saw the devastation and heartbreak directly,” said Mitchell McEwen, Wawanesa’s Director of Sustainability, Climate Resilience & Community Impact. “Those impacts continue to be felt, and with the threat of wildfires intensifying across the province, it’s clear our communities need greater support to build resilience. As a Manitoba-based company, Wawanesa is proud to step up through our Community Wildfire Prevention Grants to invest in the places our people live, work, and play, and help protect what matters most.”



“The RM of Lac du Bonnet is located within a high-risk wildfire zone, surrounded by dense forest, recreational areas, and rapidly growing residential developments,” said Lac du Bonnet

Emergency Management Organization Coordinator John Fleming. “Over the past decade, several major fires have triggered evacuation alerts, road closures, and extensive emergency response operations. The area contains significant wildland–urban interface development, where forested regions meet residential neighbourhoods, increasing structural vulnerability. Provincial FireSmart assessments consistently identify this region as moderate to high risk during peak wildfire season, underscoring the need for detailed mitigation planning and strong community preparedness.”

Compounding these risks are challenges such as limited FireSmart awareness among residents, the need for structure protection plans, review of mutual aid protocols, and updated wildfire response equipment inventory.

“A formal assessment is urgently needed to identify remaining hazards and implement effective mitigation strategies to better protect the community,” said Fleming.

Manitoba has seen a sharp rise in wildfire activity over the last decade, with annual wildfire numbers averaging between 400–600 fires per year. The Lac du Bonnet region has been particularly impacted. Last May, in one of the most severe recent events, 28 properties burnt completely, more than 1000 people evacuated, and more than 4008 hectares of forest burned, demonstrating the community’s extreme vulnerability and the destructive potential of fast-moving wildfires in the area. Manitoba Hydro lost 200 power poles. In addition, the RM of Lac du Bonnet reported rebuilding 1.2 kilometres of heavily-damaged municipal roads and more than \$1 million in damage.

Since its launch in 2022, Wawanesa's Community Wildfire Prevention Grants have provided over \$660,000 to 46 communities across Canada. The initiative is part of the Wawanesa Climate Champions program that invests more than \$2 million annually to help people and organizations on the front lines who are working to build more resilient communities.

The RM of Lac du Bonnet is one of 11 Canadian communities receiving grants from Wawanesa as part of this year’s program.