



National Indigenous
Fire Safety Council

Conseil national
autochtone de la sécurité-incendie

NIFSC ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

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Land Acknowledgement

The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC) respectfully acknowledges that our work takes place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island. We honour and recognize the diverse Nations, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis who have stewarded these lands, waters, and skies since time immemorial.

As a national organization committed to advancing fire and life safety in Indigenous communities, our efforts are rooted in respect, cultural understanding, and meaningful partnerships. We acknowledge the profound knowledge, resilience, and leadership of Indigenous Peoples in protecting and sustaining their communities, environments, and ways of life, and we express our gratitude to all those whose wisdom, knowledge and contributions are reflected in our work.



Message from the Board President



Jeremy Parkin, National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC)

It is with great pride and deep gratitude that I share this message on behalf of the Board of Directors for the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC). This past year has been a period of remarkable transformation, milestone achievements, and deepened partnership in our shared mission to protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure across First Nation communities in Canada.

Over the last year, our collective efforts have yielded profound, tangible accomplishments that strengthen the foundation of Indigenous fire safety:

We successfully expanded our youth outreach and fire prevention education through the continued development and impactful presence of our fire safety mascot, Torch the Turtle, bringing vital, culturally grounded safety knowledge to young people and families.

In a historic advancement for our organizational capacity, our training sector officially achieved prestigious Pro Board accreditation. This milestone ensures that the fire and life safety training we deliver meets top-tier global standards while remaining fundamentally rooted in the unique needs of the communities we serve.

These major milestones, alongside our expanded training delivery and strengthened relationships with community leaders, represent significant strides toward greater self-determination, community resilience, and safety equity.

Looking ahead, we remain guided by our values and driven by the knowledge that every community deserves the tools, recognition, and support needed to protect what matters most. On behalf of the Board, thank you for your continued trust, collaboration, and support in this vital work.

Jeremy Parkin

President, Board of Directors

Message from the I / Chief Executive Officer



Arnold Lazare, National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC)

I am deeply honoured to continue serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC). Reflecting on our journey, I remain incredibly grateful for the strong foundation built by our past leadership, which has allowed us to reach new heights over this past year.

Our commitment to innovation and community resilience has truly come to life through major national successes. We have seen our fire safety mascot, Torch the Turtle, grow into a powerful tool for youth education, bringing vital fire prevention awareness directly to the next generation in a culturally grounded way.

Furthermore, our dedication to delivering top-tier, reliable service reached a historic pinnacle with our training sector achieving global Pro Board accreditation. Accepting this accreditation was a proud moment for our entire organization; it proves that we can meet the highest international professional standards without ever losing our identity or compromising on the community-driven values that define us.

As we look to the future, I remain fiercely committed to advancing this essential work alongside our dedicated staff, leadership, and community partners. The NIFSC stays firmly grounded in our mission to address preventable loss of life, property, and infrastructure. This work is far more than a professional responsibility, it is a shared, sacred commitment to protecting our people and supporting the self-determination of Indigenous communities as they build futures of safety, resilience, and wellness.

Arnold Lazare

I / Chief Executive Officer

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Core Funded Activities

Indigenous Public Safety Conference



The national firefighter competition results were as follows

- 1st Place Winners: Sandy Bay Ojibway - Manitoba
- 2nd Place Winners: Enoch Cree Nation - Alberta
- 3rd Place Winners: Tobique First Nation - Atlantic
- Most Sportsmanlike Team Winners: Tobique First Nation - Atlantic
- Fire Department Leadership in Fire Prevention Award: Oneida Nation of the Thames – Ontario

NIFSC Board of Directors Welcomes Two New Members

Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson has accepted the role of Wildfire Management Representative on the NIFSC Board. Dr. Anabela Bonada is Managing Director, Climate Science and Managing Director, Operations at the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo has accepted the position of Director at Large.



Dr. Anabela Bonada
Director At Large

Managing Director at the Intact Centre, Dr. Bonada leads climate adaptation research and national policy initiatives to reduce risks from wildfire, flooding, and extreme heat through practical, evidence-informed solutions.



Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson
Wildfire Management Representative

A Métis Senior Fire Advisor and leading expert in Indigenous fire stewardship, Dr. Cardinal Christianson specializes in decolonizing land management, cultural burning, and advocating for Indigenous wildland firefighters.

1.2 NIFSC Funded Activities

ProBoard Accreditation

The NIFSC was granted approval by the Pro Board's Committee on Accreditation (COA) to deliver the following courses:

- NFPA 470 Hazardous Materials – Awareness, Operations, Product Control, and Personal Protective Equipment.
- NFPA 1010 Firefighter-I
- NFPA 1030 Fire & Life Safety Educator -I (approval granted Q1 2026/27)

Unveiling of Torch the Turtle

A major highlight of the past year was the official unveiling of the NIFSC's new youth mascot, Torch the Turtle, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Torch was formally welcomed into the family of national fire safety ambassadors by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and their iconic mascot, Sparky the Fire Dog. This historic moment marked the launch of a powerful partnership dedicated to promoting youth safety and resilience across Turtle Island.

The launch event was a resounding success, bringing together key national leaders and partners, including the NFPA, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Ottawa Fire Department. Held on October 6, 2025, the event generated significant momentum, positioning Torch as a beloved and impactful figure for Indigenous youth education and setting a strong foundation for our ongoing national outreach efforts.



1.3 NRCAN Funded Activities

Youth Wildfire Training

The Youth Wildfire Training (YWT) project was designed by the NIFSC to provide First Nations youths (aged 15-30) with the foundational skills and certifications needed to support wildfire management efforts.

Over the course of the project, **492 youths (aged between 15-30)** from **25 communities** were actively engaged in the structured training deliveries. Participant demographics show a clear breakdown by gender, with **338 male participants** and **158 female participants**. The training deliveries resulted in

290 Type 3 Certified Wildland Firefighters.

Emergency Management Assistance Program

As part of NIFSC's ongoing EMAP program for delivering Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) Emergency Management training, the IFMS completed the following activities:

- Developed and launched an I-100 Instructor Trainer course, initiating certification of 29 Indigenous educators.
- Certified 266 students across 37 Indigenous communities, covering eight (8) provinces and two (2) territories.
- Delivered 20 I-100 courses.
- Increased our internal I-100 facilitators from three to seven.
- Advanced two staff members to I-200 certification level

2.0 Core Funded Activities and Projects

2.1 Indigenous Public Safety Conference

The Indigenous Public Safety Conference is the first event of its kind focused on enhancing fire safety, operations, emergency preparedness, public safety and climate change in Indigenous communities across Canada. With more than 365 attendees, the event brought together First Nations leaders, youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, fire safety professionals, fire departments, industry experts, and government partners, creating a meaningful space for knowledge sharing and empowerment. Participants had the opportunity to engage in accredited training through pre-conference training courses such as Fire Life Safety Educator, Resilient Minds, and S-100 Basic Fire Suppression and Safety. The conference featured a variety of conference sessions, networking events, and a tradeshow/artisan market.

The 36th Annual National Firefighting Competition brought together firefighting teams from First Nations communities across Canada to compete in a series of challenging, skill-based events. These teams, representing different regions, showcased their expertise in fire suppression, emergency response, and teamwork in a simulated competitive environment. The competition highlighted the high-level of professionalism and dedication among Indigenous firefighters. For many, it is more than just a competition; it is a celebration of cultural pride, resilience, and the critical role firefighters play in keeping their communities safe. During the competition, teams demonstrated their ability to work under pressure, exhibiting the techniques and teamwork that are vital in real world emergencies.

The conference officially opened on Wednesday, October 22nd with opening words and a blessing from revered local elder Chief Lee Crowchild, an environmentalist, writer, hunter, and ceremonialist. The opening ceremonies also included a performance by Chubby Cree, a Cree hand drum ensemble from Edmonton, Alberta whose main members include Noah Green and his grandmother Carol Powder.

The opening ceremony keynote speaker was Dr. Bhiemie Williamson, a Senior Lecturer at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. He leads National Indigenous Disaster Resilience, the only Indigenous led, nationally focused research program aimed at transforming the way disasters are

understood throughout the disaster spectrum. Williamson seeks to embed Indigenous leadership and knowledge in emergency management structures, institutions and processes, as well as foster a larger transformation in understandings of disasters from linear to cyclical processes.

As of October 24, 2025, a total of 365 participants attended the 2025 Indigenous Public Safety Conference with attendees from across Canada, the US (Alaska, Washington and Oregon) and Germany.

The conference webpage was updated to include the presentations from the conference presenters along with their bios, the conference program and the results from the 36th annual firefighting competition.

Impact Stories: Youth Attendance at the Indigenous Public Safety Conference

Amelia Jackson first connected with NIFSC through the Outland Youth Employment Program, where students are introduced to diverse career pathways and opportunities beyond high school. From the outset, Amelia stood out as quiet, capable, and deeply engaged — eager to participate in every hands-on component of the training, from pump operations to hose deployment exercises.

During the 2025 Indigenous Public Safety Conference (IPSC), Amelia participated in the Planning a Cultural Burn course and had the opportunity to connect with Amy Cardinal Christianson for an inspiring discussion about leadership, Indigenous fire stewardship, and future career goals for women in emergency services.

Following IPSC 2025, Amelia, who is from McLeod Lake Indian Band, was selected to represent Indigenous youth within School District 57 — a reflection of her growing leadership and community impact. She now plans to pursue a future as a local Land Steward, helping protect and care for the land while carrying forward Indigenous knowledge and community resilience for future generations.

Pre-Conference Training

As of October 21, 2025, there were a total of 190 people registrations for the pre-conference training courses scheduled ahead of the 2025 Indigenous Public Safety Conference. Of those who pre-registered, 161 students attended their courses. Some courses are still in progress.

Pre-conference training courses included Fire Department Administration – 1 (14 hours in class and approximately 6 hours of assignment preparation completed virtually), Fire and Life Safety Educator (14 hours in-class and approximately 20 hours of assignment preparation completed virtually), Resilient Minds™ for First Responders – Indigenous Adaptation (12 hours in-class), Traditional Fire Knowledge - Planning a Cultural Burn (14 hours in class), Wildfire S-100 Basic Suppression and Safety & S-185 Fire Entrapment Avoidance (14 hours in class), and Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) I-100, I-200 and I-100 Train the Trainer (14 hours in class and 8 hours of virtual learning).

Curriculum for the FLSE-1, I-100 Instructor designation, Traditional Fire Knowledge-Planning a Cultural Burn, and Fire Department Admin-1 courses were adapted to reflect and further explore Indigenous worldviews, culture, and unique challenges facing many Indigenous communities. The NIFSC secured subject matter experts from across Canada to deliver the training. NIFSC provided accredited training for the following courses:

Course	Accrediting Agency
Fire Department Administration - 1	NIFSC – Pro Board Accreditation to follow
Fire & Life Safety Educator -I	NIFSC - Pro Board Accredited
Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) I-100, I-200 and I-100 Train the Trainer	Incident Command Systems Canada & NIFSC
Resilient Minds™ for First Responders – Indigenous Adaptation	Canadian Mental Health Association – Ontario chapter
Wildfire S-100 Basic Suppression and Safety & S-185 Fire Entrapment Avoidance	British Columbia Wildfire Service
Traditional Fire Knowledge – Planning a Cultural Burn	Competency based hours, used the Workbook: “Creating a Cultural Burn Pathway” (developed by Indigenous Leadership Initiative and First Nations Emergency Services Society)

National Firefighting Competition Results

The following regions were represented at this year’s firefighting competition:

- Team British Columbia
- Team Alberta
- Team Saskatchewan
- Team Manitoba
- Team Ontario
- Team Quebec
- Team Atlantic

The competition, which took place on Saturday, October 25, provided teams with a platform to demonstrate their abilities in a series of dynamic, challenging drills known as “evolutions.” Firefighting teams compete in a range of evolutions designed to replicate real-life scenarios and critical tasks performed by firefighters. This year’s evolutions included:

1. Fuel Removal
2. Water Pack Target Throwdown / Showdown
3. Thermal Energy
4. SCBA Wall

Competition Results

- 1st Place Winners: Sandy Bay Ojibway - Manitoba
- 2nd Place Winners: Enoch Cree Nation - Alberta
- 3rd Place Winners: Tobique First Nation - Atlantic
- Most Sportsmanlike Team Winners: Tobique First Nation - Atlantic
- Fire Department Leadership in Fire Prevention Award: Oneida Nation of the Thames – Ontario

2.2 Board Governance

NIFSC Board of Directors Updates

New Board Members

Wildfire Management Representative

Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson has accepted the role of Wildfire Management Representative on the NIFSC Board.

Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson is Métis from Treaty 8 territory in northern Alberta. Her Métis relations are the Cardinal (Peeaysis Band) and Laboucane (Laboucane Settlement) families, who were nîhithawîwin (Woodland Cree) speaking. She now lives near Rocky Mountain House in Treaty 6 territory in central Alberta. She is the Senior Fire Advisor for the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and was formerly a Research Scientist with the Canadian Forest Service and an Indigenous Fire Specialist with Parks Canada. Her work focuses on Indigenous fire stewardship, including cultural burning, and she collaborates with Indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally on decolonizing land management. She also studies wildfire evacuations and advocates for Indigenous wildland firefighters. She is co-author of several books on Indigenous fire stewardship and co-hosts the Good Fire podcast. She also helped create the Thunderbird Collective and serves on several national and international boards.

Director at Large

Dr. Anabela Bonada is Managing Director, Climate Science and Managing Director, Operations at the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo. She leads applied climate adaptation research and tool development focused on reducing wildfire, flooding, and extreme heat risks through practical, evidence-informed solutions. In her operations role, she supports organizational oversight, including budget management, performance tracking, and delivery of multi-year program commitments. Dr. Bonada contributes to national governance and technical advisory bodies shaping standards, codes, and policy related to climate resilience, and is regularly invited to speak publicly and in national media. She is also leading an upcoming initiative with FireSmart Canada to develop an Indigenous Community Wildfire Scorecard to strengthen community-led wildfire preparedness.

Next Fiscal Year – New Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors will meet in Montreal, Quebec for a facilitated strategic planning session from April 25-26, 2026.

2.3 NIRS Year-End Statistics - April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

The conclusion of the reporting year for the National Incident Reporting System (NIRS) provides an opportunity to examine fire activity trends affecting First Nations communities across Canada, with particular attention to structure fire risks and life safety measures.

Throughout the reporting year, a total of 115 structure fires were recorded. Analysis of these incidents highlights a critical trend related to the absence of fire protection systems, such as smoke alarms, within residential structures. The overwhelming majority of fires (100 incidents) occurred




In structures where neither a sprinkler system nor a smoke alarm was present, underscoring a significant gap in basic fire safety infrastructure. Fire incidents in structures equipped with detection or suppression systems were comparatively rare. Only 16 fires occurred in structures with smoke alarms present, while just one fire was reported in a structure with sprinklers, and one fire in a structure equipped with both systems. A total of 20 injuries and six fatalities were recorded over the year. Notably, the highest concentration of harm occurred in structures lacking fire protection systems.

In contrast, structures equipped with smoke alarms reported one injury and two fatalities, corresponding to lower overall incident counts but still demonstrating that the presence of a single safety measure does not fully eliminate risk. No injuries or fatalities were reported in structures equipped with sprinklers alone or in combination with smoke alarms, though the number of such incidents remains very low. These findings reinforce the critical role of early detection and fire suppression systems in reducing fire-related harm. The data clearly indicates that the absence of both smoke alarms and sprinkler systems is associated with significantly higher injury and fatality outcomes.

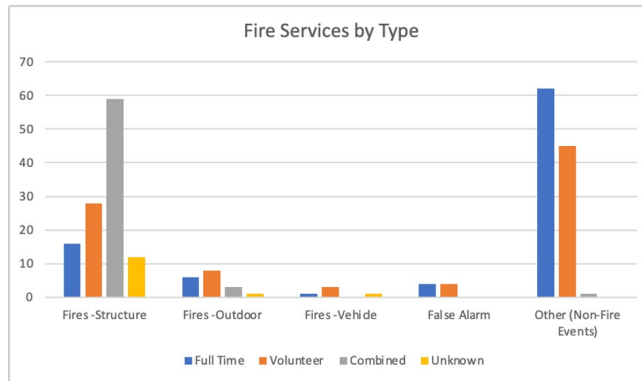
Overall, year-end trends highlight both persistent challenges and clear opportunities for prevention. While the total number of incidents provides important context, the distribution of outcomes strongly emphasizes the need to expand access to and installation of smoke alarms and sprinkler systems in residential structures across First Nations communities. The NIFSC will continue to prioritize fire prevention, public education, and support for community-based fire safety initiatives, with a focus on improving access to life-saving equipment and reducing structural fire risks.

These statistics are based on fire incidents voluntarily reported to the NIFSC by fire prevention agencies, fire departments, and partner organizations. They remain subject to change as additional reports are submitted following the publication of this report.

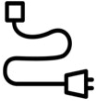



Fire Incidents

		
<p>Structure 115 Fires 6 Deaths 13 Injuries</p>	<p>Vehicle 5 Fires 0 Deaths 0 Injuries</p>	<p>Outdoor 18 Fires 0 Deaths 0 Injuries</p>

Fire Services on Scene by Type



Areas of Interest

	3 Structure fires reported were the result of electrical fires.		15 structure fires reported had a smoke alarm present.
	74 Structure fires reported were the result of exposure to a wildfire.		38 Structure fires resulted in the complete loss of the building. 76 Structure fires burned out before the arrival of a fire department.

Structure Fire Analysis Highlights

Category	Sprinkler Present	Smoke Alarm Present	Sprinkler & Smoke Alarm Present	Neither Present	Total
Number of Structure Fires	1	13	1	100	115
Number of Injuries	0	1	0	12	13
Number of Deaths	0	2	0	3	5
Injury Rate – Per 1,000 Fires	-	1	-	12	113.04
Death Rate – Per 1,000 Fires	-	2	-	3	43.47

Method of Fire Control and Extinguishment

- 37 - Structure fires were extinguished by a fire department
- 69 - Structure fires burned out before the arrival of a fire department
- 4 - Structure fires were extinguished by the occupants
- 14 - Outdoor fires were extinguished by a fire department
- 3 - Vehicle fires were extinguished by a fire department
- 2 - Vehicle fires were extinguished by the occupants

Deaths

There were five (5) deaths reported for this period. The NIFSC will work with the respective authorities to obtain cause and determination reports.

Overview

Key Metrics – Q1-Q4 Comparison:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date Total
Fires - Structure	80	18	10	7	115
Fires – Outdoors	13	4	0	1	18
Fires – Vehicle	1	2	1	1	5
Injuries	12	3	2	3	20
Fatalities	3	0	2	1	6

2.4 IFMS

2.4.1 Committees and Membership

Committee or Membership	Purpose for NIFSC's Participation	Summary of Accomplishments from 2025-2026
Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs	Engagement and advice on all matters related Indigenous firefighting, including but not limited to wildfire, emergency management, structural fire and caners among firefighters.	Provided strategic and Indigenous input to the national fire file including Government Relations week with parliamentarians.
Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police	Participated in research and developing a partnership for incident reporting.	Attended 6 meetings. Stepped back.
Canadian Fallen Firefighters	Make first nations fire services aware of Foundation and eligibility requirements for surviving family members to receive \$300k from Canadian First Responder Memorial Fund	Four (4) BC wildland firefighter families honored. NIFSC selected to be honorary host September 2027 in Ottawa
Council of Canadian Fire Marshalls and Fire Commissioners	Advise CCFMFC members about Indigenous issues. Advocate for CCFMFC to assist with issues.	Acting 2 nd Vice President, Working with Executive Director to help CCFMFC assist with National Smoke Alarm Campaign. Reviewing potential to put smoke alarm requirements on reserve.
National Fire Smart Advisory Committee	Provide strategic input to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre Board of Directors on the National Fire Smart program.	NIFSC co-chairs this advisory group and supports the identification of ongoing gaps of the Firesmart program for Indigenous communities.
Wildfire Resilience	Collaborate with allied Indigenous organizations to create a framework for	First full year of operations <u>required</u> a working Board with roles including sub-
Consortium of Canada	mobilizing Indigenous wildfire resources to meet the needs of CIFFC NIFSC sits on WRCC's Board of Directors and participates on the Indigenous Wildfire Operational Working Group	committee work, development of corporate policies and recruitment committees.

2.4.2 Indigenous Fire Safety Leadership Award (Community Fire Protection Award)

In recognition of the efforts made to install smoke detectors in every home, the NIFSC was proud to recognize the community of Cross Lake with this year's Indigenous Fire Safety Leadership Award (Community Fire protection Award), presented at the 2025 National Indigenous Public Safety Conference.



2.4.3.1 NFPA Fire Prevention Week Campaign / Poster Contest

For this year's Fire Prevention Week, the NIFSC unveiled our new mascot, Torch the Turtle. Torch will be welcomed as a partner to NFPA's own icon, Sparky the Fire Dog.

The NIFSC proudly launched Fire Prevention Week by unveiling our new youth mascot, Torch the Turtle, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Torch was officially welcomed into the family of fire safety ambassadors by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and their iconic mascot, Sparky the Fire Dog, marking an important partnership to promote safety across Turtle Island.



To celebrate this milestone, an event on Parliament Hill took place with the following partners: NFPA, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Ottawa Fire Department. Together, we promoted the 2025 fire prevention theme "Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home". This event took place on Monday, October 6, 2025, in Ottawa, Ontario.

2.4.3.2 National Poster Contest with Indigenous Schools - NIFSC Visits Kikendaasogamig Elementary School

In addition to the unveiling of Torch on Parliament Hill, the NIFSC also visited Kikendaasogamig Elementary School in the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Kikendaasogamig Elementary School is where Torch the Turtle came to life through the amazing kindergarten students who participated in the 2024 National Poster Contest.

NIFSC Board President Jeremy Parkin provided students with an update on Torch the Turtle's journey and presented the school with a commemorative plaque honoring their contribution to creating Torch the turtle and winning the 2024 poster contest. The students will also



receive one of the original Torch the Turtle plushies.



Core Funded Activities and Projects

1. Board Governance

Core Funded Activities and Projects: Continued development and strengthening of the Board of Directors, with the Northwest Territories regional representative anticipated to join in 2026–2027.

What We Delivered / Output Measures: Regularly scheduled Board meetings with participation from regional representatives, partner organizations, and subject matter experts.

Outcomes Achieved: Enhanced national representation and strengthened governance oversight supporting organizational growth and accountability.

Evidence / Indicators: Ongoing governance improvements and strategic planning initiatives, including the development of a new Strategic Plan to be launched in 2026–2027.

2. Indigenous Public Safety Conference

Core Funded Activities and Projects: Delivered a national conference featuring onsite training opportunities, six educational streams, an industry tradeshow, artisan market, and the annual Firefighting Competition.

What We Delivered / Output Measures: 42 conference sessions delivered, with an additional 18 qualified speakers identified as backup presenters; six training courses offered alongside networking and tradeshow opportunities.

Outcomes Achieved: Increased knowledge sharing, professional development, networking, and public education opportunities for Indigenous public safety professionals, communities, and partners.

Evidence / Indicators:

- 365 conference attendees

- 161 training participants
- 43 tradeshow vendors and exhibitors engaged in the event.

3. Fire Prevention Week

Core Funded Activities and Projects: Officially launched Fire Prevention Week with the unveiling of the NIFSC youth mascot, Torch the Turtle, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Partnered with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Ottawa Fire Department to promote fire safety awareness across Indigenous communities and Turtle Island.

What We Delivered / Output Measures: National public education event delivered in alignment with Fire Prevention Week 2025 and the campaign theme “Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home.” Collaborative engagement with national fire safety organizations and public safety leaders.

Outcomes Achieved: Strengthened national partnerships and expanded culturally relevant fire prevention education for youth, families, and Indigenous communities. Increased visibility of Indigenous-led public safety initiatives at the national level.

Evidence / Indicators: Torch the Turtle was officially welcomed into the NFPA family of fire safety ambassadors alongside Sparky the Fire Dog during the Parliament Hill event held on October 6, 2025, in Ottawa.

4. National Poster Contest

Core Funded Activities and Projects: Celebrated the unveiling of Torch the Turtle with a visit to Kikendaasogamig Elementary School in the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation.

What We Delivered / Output Measures: Celebrated the creative vision of kindergarten students at Kikendaasogamig Elementary School who created the concept for Torch the Turtle.

Outcomes Achieved: Successfully established Torch the Turtle as a trusted national brand for Indigenous youth fire safety, expanding the reach of our educational programming through a strategic partnership with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and local fire departments. This initiative successfully moved youth safety education from a standard template to a culturally grounded framework that resonates directly with Indigenous children across Turtle Island.

Evidence / Indicators: Kikendaasogamig Elementary School students, winners of the 2024 National Poster Contest, created the original concept for Torch the Turtle, contributing to the development of the NIFSC fire safety mascot received a visit from Board President Jeremy Parkin and met Torch firsthand.

5. NIRS (National Incident Reporting System)

Core Funded Activities and Projects: Collected, analyzed, and reported national fire incident data from First Nations communities across Canada to support evidence-based fire prevention and life safety initiatives.

What We Delivered / Output Measures: 115 structure fires reported during the 2025–2026 reporting year; analysis conducted on the presence of smoke alarms and sprinkler systems, as well as associated injuries and fatalities.

Outcomes Achieved: Identified significant correlations between the absence of fire protection systems and increased injury and fatality rates, reinforcing the importance of smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, and community-based fire prevention measures. Findings continue to inform NIFSC priorities related to public education, prevention programming, and improving access to life-saving equipment in First Nations communities.

Evidence / Indicators: Of the 115 structure fires reported, 100 incidents occurred in structures without smoke alarms or sprinkler systems. A total of 20 injuries and six fatalities were recorded, with the highest concentration occurring in structures lacking fire protection systems. Structures equipped with sprinklers, either alone or combined with smoke alarms, reported no injuries or fatalities during the reporting period. Statistics were compiled from incident reports voluntarily submitted by fire prevention agencies, fire departments, and partner organizations across Canada.

6. Social Media Campaign

Core Funded Activities and Projects

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the NIFSC successfully expanded its public education footprint through high-impact, culturally grounded safety campaigns and strategic youth outreach. Driven by data and community-led priorities, our communications team successfully executed and delivered the following key milestones:

Launched Torch the Turtle: Formally unveiled our new youth safety mascot on Parliament Hill in Ottawa alongside the NFPA’s Sparky the Fire Dog, establishing a powerful national partnership and a fresh foundation for Indigenous youth outreach.

Deployed Culturally Integrated Education: Designed and executed the national Safe Smudging Campaign, delivering vital fire prevention standards through highly shared digital resources that respect and honor traditional ceremonial practices.

What We Delivered / Output Measures

To evaluate the reach, visibility, and effectiveness of the NIFSC’s 2025–2026 public education initiatives, the Communications department tracks a comprehensive suite of quantitative output measures. These metrics capture the tangible deliverables of our campaigns, evaluating how successfully we developed, distributed, and amplified life-saving fire safety information.

Torch the Turtle Unveiling:

- Over 2500 Social media impressions and views
- Over 20 shares and saves
- Safe Smudging Campaign:
- Over 4600 social media impressions and views

- Over 150 shares and saves

- Outcomes Achieved

The NIFSC's public education initiatives throughout the 2025–2026 fiscal year achieved a lasting strategic impact by significantly elevating the national visibility of Indigenous-led public safety. By prioritizing root-cause prevention and partnering with national safety leaders, the NIFSC established itself as the premier voice for culturally specific fire prevention. The widespread adoption of educational materials that respected and integrated traditional cultural practices broke down barriers to engagement, creating an unprecedented level of community buy-in.

Evidence / Indicators

The evidence and indicators of our public education success are verified through several key data trends and community feedback mechanisms. On digital platforms, high ratios of content “saves” and “shares”, rather than just passive views, indicate that community members found the cultural safety resources valuable enough to retain and distribute locally.

Formal requests from band offices, local fire departments, and Indigenous educators to integrate NIFSC materials into community programming provide concrete evidence of resource adoption. Our elevated national visibility is further proven by formal joint-marketing commitments and continued resource-sharing agreements with national bodies like the NFPA and the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs.

3.0 NIFSC Funded Activities

3.1 Torch the Turtle

The NIFSC has officially launched its official mascot, Torch the Turtle - [Torch the Turtle – National Indigenous Fire Safety Council](#). Empower your home and community with official Torch the Turtle safety resources. These learning materials are designed to provide clear, actionable fire safety education for all ages. From interactive home escape templates, coloring pages, to detailed safety checklists, these vetted resources help translate fire safety theory into everyday practice. Follow the journey of Torch the Turtle as he travels to bring essential fire safety education to communities across the country.



3.2 Pro Board

The NIFSC was granted approval by the Pro Board’s Committee on Accreditation (COA) to deliver the following courses:

- NFPA 470 Hazardous Materials – Awareness, Operations, Product Control, and Personal Protective Equipment.
- NFPA 1010 Firefighter-I
- NFPA 1030 Fire & Life Safety Educator -I (approval granted Q1 2026/27)



The NIFC received the following commendation from the chair of the COA:

Good afternoon, Brett,

We met briefly at the Pro Board conference; I chair the COA. I want to recognize the work you and your team are doing. In 15 years on the COA, the last decade as the chair, I have NEVER seen a new agency have so few comments from the COA on their first extension, nor have I seen most agencies, some long-accredited, have their 1030 application clear the COA with not only so few questions, but with significant compliments from the COA.

Well done!

*-B
Brian R. Brauer, Ed.D.
Chairperson, Pro Board Committee on Accreditation
National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications
www.theproboard.org*

3.3 Wildfire Resilience Consortium of Canada (WRCC)



Core Partners



Foundational Partners



The Wildfire Resiliency Consortium of Canada (WRCC) stands as a vital network of organizations, researchers, and practitioners dedicated to enhancing Canada’s capacity to anticipate, withstand, and recover from the increasing threat of wildfires. Through collaborative research initiatives, knowledge sharing platforms, and the development of innovative tools and strategies, the WRCC fosters a more integrated and proactive approach to wildfire management across the country.

Their work addresses critical areas such as fuel management, community preparedness, climate change adaptation, and the socio-economic impacts of wildfires, aiming to build more resilient communities and ecosystems.

The NIFSC is a key and valued member of the WRCC, bringing its unique expertise and perspective to the table. NIFSC plays a crucial role in ensuring that Indigenous knowledge, priorities, and cultural considerations are integrated into all aspects of the WRCC's activities. Their involvement helps to center the needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, who often face disproportionate risks from wildfires, and to promote culturally appropriate solutions that respect Indigenous rights and self-determination.

Through its partnership with the WRCC, NIFSC contributes to research projects, participates in knowledge sharing events, and helps to disseminate best practices to Indigenous communities across Canada. NIFSC's involvement ensures that the WRCC's work is not only scientifically sound but also socially just and culturally relevant, fostering a more equitable and effective approach to wildfire management that benefits all Canadians. This collaboration strengthens NIFSC's ability to advocate for Indigenous fire safety and resilience at the national level and to empower Indigenous communities to lead in protecting their lands, cultures, and well-being.

4.0 Emergency Management Assistance Program Activities

As part of NIFSC's ongoing EMAP program for delivering Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) Emergency Management training, the IFMS completed the following activities:

- Developed and launched an I-100 Instructor Trainer course, initiating certification of 29 Indigenous educators.
- Certified 266 students across 37 Indigenous communities, covering 8 provinces and 2 territories.
- Delivered 20 I-100 courses.
- Increased our internal I-100 facilitators from three to seven.
- Advanced two staff members to I-200 certification level.
- Incorporated culturally aligned curriculum enhancements based on participant feedback.
- NIFSC participated in national ICS governance meetings and AGM.
- Delivered simulated emergency management exercises.
- Strengthened partnerships with allied emergency management organizations.
- Completed the yearly summary report in Q1 2026/27

Summary of Emergency Management Assistance Program Activities

	What We Delivered	Output Measures	Outcomes Achieved	Evidence / Indicators
Canadian Prescribed Fire Training Program	NIFSC joined the University of British Columbia’s Canadian Prescribed Fire Training Program Advisory Committee	The inaugural meeting will take place in Q1 2026-27.	NIFSC attended the first meeting on May 12, 2026	Participation in the meeting
Emergency Management Assistance Program	Obtained participant feedback on the Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) Emergency Management training. Completed the yearly summary report in Q1 2026-27	Certified five (5) community-based I-100 instructors within NIFSC’s instructor development program	Incorporated culturally aligned curriculum enhancements to the Incident Command Systems Canada (ICS) Emergency Management training	Summary of recommended curriculum enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain standardized ICS I-100 content. • Integrate Indigenous examples, imagery, and activities. • Include addendums addressing small community realities and multi-role staffing. • Emphasize community authority during mutual aid and evacuation scenarios. • Ensure tabletop exercises are facilitated by experienced practitioners. • Use peer teaching, storytelling, and lived experience as core instructional strategies.

5.0 Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) Funded Activities and Projects

5.1 Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System Project

The NIFSC was funded \$72,000 by NRCAN's NorthForM project to deliver three (3) workshops on the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating system (CFFDRS). The aim of the program was to share knowledge of the CFFDRS development and use with northern Indigenous communities while eliciting feedback on community perceptions and suggestions for adaptation to the system. The NIFSC wrote a comprehensive summary report outlining the community's feedback. Program metrics:



Three (3) communities visited (Wunnumin Lake FN, Black Lake FN, Tłı̨ch̓ Community Government of Behchok̓)

- 19 participants
- One (1) facilitated group discussion
- Three (3) facilitator observation forms



5.2 Youth Wildfire Training

The Youth Wildfire Training (YWT) project was designed by the NIFSC to provide First Nations youths (aged 15-30) with the foundational skills and certifications needed to support wildfire management efforts. The project focused on building practical knowledge and safety awareness, as well as establishing pathways to employment for First Nations youths in fire management and public safety sectors.

The NIFSC provided training across 27 distinct communities and locations, spanning multiple provinces and territories, including Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. These locations included 25 First Nations communities, as well as regional training events such as the Indigenous Public Safety Conference and the Outland Youth Employment Program, significantly expanding the geographic reach and accessibility of the project.

Participants received industry-recognized wildfire training, including:

- S-100: Basic Fire Suppression and Safety
- S-185: Fire Entrapment Avoidance and Safety
- Incident Command System (ICS) I-100
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

Over the course of the project, 492 youths (aged between 15-30) were actively engaged in the structured training deliveries. Participant demographics show a clear breakdown by gender, with 338 male participants and 158 female participants. The training deliveries resulted in 290 Type 3 Certified Wildland Firefighters.

As wildfire seasons continue to intensify across Canada, initiatives like the Youth Wildfire Training project play a critical role in strengthening community preparedness. By equipping participants with foundational wildfire response skills, communities are better positioned to respond quickly and effectively to wildfire threats. This increased local capacity and not only supports initial attack efforts but also helps reduce reliance on external resources during peak fire activity.

The project has now been successfully completed. We extend our sincere thanks to the communities who welcomed this initiative and to all participants for their time, effort, and commitment. Their engagement is at the heart of the program’s success. We look forward to the opportunity to deliver this training again in the future and continue building wildfire preparedness across communities.

This project would not have been possible without the support and financial assistance of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), provided under the Contributions in Support of Resilience to Natural Disaster Risks – Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate funding stream.

Project delivery locations Included:

- 2024 Indigenous Public Safety Conference – Vancouver, British Columbia
- 2025 Indigenous Public Safety Conference – Calgary, Alberta
- Beausoleil First Nation - Ontario
- Beaver Lake Cree Nation - Alberta
- Blood Tribe First Nation - Alberta
- Dakota Ojibwa Tribal Council - Manitoba
- Garden River First Nation - Ontario
- Keeseekoowenin First Nation - Manitoba
- Lil’wat First Nation – British Columbia
- Little Red River Cree Nation - Alberta
- North Caribou Lake First Nation (Weagamo) - Ontario
- O’Chiese First Nations - Alberta
- Onion Lake Cree Nation – Saskatchewan
- Outland Youth Employment Program- Birch River First Nation - Manitoba
- Outland Youth Employment Program – Nazko First Nation – British Columbia
- Paul First Nation - Alberta
- Peawanuck First Nation - Ontario
- Saulteau First Nation – British Columbia
- Sipekne’katik First Nation – Nova Scotia
- Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation - Alberta
- Takla First Nation – British Columbia
- Tobique First Nation – New Brunswick
- Tsawout First Nation – British Columbia
- Tulita – Northwest Territories
- Whitehorse – Yukon
- Yorkton Tribal Council – Saskatchewan



The program was highlighted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s Indigenous team who travelled to Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation to witness the training event and discuss the importance of the project with participants and community members. The video can be viewed via the following link:



The written article can be found here: [CBC Indigenous - Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation youth step up for wildland firefighting training](#)

Impact Stories: Youth Wildfire Training Program

The Youth Wildfire Training Program has empowered participants with the confidence, skills, and certifications needed to support and protect their communities. Many youth reported increased self-confidence, leadership development, and a stronger interest in careers in emergency response and wildfire management.

A powerful example of this impact is Nevada Heiney from Nazko First Nation, who will be joining a wildfire crew during the summer of 2026. This reflects the core purpose of the program: creating pathways for Indigenous youth to access meaningful, skilled, and impactful employment while building community resilience and the next generation of emergency response professionals.



5.3 Wildfire Resilient Futures Initiative – Build and Mobilize Foundational Wildland Fire Knowledge Program

Wildfires are becoming more frequent, more severe, and more unpredictable across Canada. Indigenous communities—particularly those located at the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)—face disproportionate impacts due to remote geographies, limited emergency resources, and systemic barriers in accessing fire management supports. These risks threaten homes, cultural sites, infrastructure, health, and the land itself.

To address these challenges, the NIFSC, in partnership with NRCan and the University of Waterloo, is leading a national, multi year initiative to build and mobilize foundational wildfire knowledge rooted in Indigenous leadership, cultural practices, and community priorities. The project aims to

create Indigenous led, community specific wildfire preparedness and mitigation frameworks that blend traditional knowledge with scientific data.

Today, wildfire risk is escalating faster than the capacity of many Indigenous communities to respond. Existing wildfire tools and risk frameworks often fail to reflect Indigenous governance, cultural values, or lived realities. Communities have repeatedly expressed the need for:

- Indigenous led wildfire risk assessment approaches
- Culturally grounded preparedness and evacuation planning
- Community specific mitigation strategies
- Recognition of Indigenous fire stewardship and sovereignty
- Tools that integrate traditional knowledge with scientific analysis

This project directly responds to those needs. The initiative is designed to:

- Produce foundational wildfire knowledge through direct engagement with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- Develop Indigenous inspired WUI risk assessment frameworks that reflect cultural practices, local priorities, and scientific data.
- Mobilize knowledge into practical, accessible, culturally appropriate fire safety programs.
- Strengthen community capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events.
- Support national level wildfire resilience through Indigenous led approaches and community driven insights.

More information on this project can be found on our [website](#).

Summary of Natural Resources Canada Funded Activities and Projects

	What We Delivered	Output Measures	Outcomes Achieved	Evidence / Indicators
Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System	Delivered workshops to communities within the NorthForM project’s geographical operational region and gained important insights to inform the next generation of the CFFDRS	Three (3) community workshops Summary report	Three (3) communities visited (Wunnumin Lake FN, Black Lake FN, Tłıchǫ Community Government of Behchokǫ) 19 participants	Summary report: “Impressions and Use of The Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System in Northern Indigenous Communities”

			One (1) facilitated group discussion Three (3) facilitator observation forms	
<p>Youth Wildfire Training & Capacity Building</p> <p>Funding Source:</p> <p>Natural Resources Canada, Contributions in Support of Resilience to Natural Disaster Risks – Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate funding stream.</p>	<p>Delivered regional training to First Nations youths (aged 15-30), ensuring that they had the foundational skills and certifications needed to support wildfire management efforts. The project focused on building practical knowledge and safety awareness, as well as establishing pathways to employment for First Nations youths in fire management and public safety sectors.</p>	<p>Training delivered across 27 distinct communities and locations, including Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.</p>	<p>Participants received industry-recognized wildfire training, including S-100: Basic Fire Suppression and Safety, S-185: Fire Entrapment Avoidance and Safety, Incident Command System (ICS) 100, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)</p>	<p>492 youths (aged between 15-30)</p> <p>338 male participants and 158 female participants.</p> <p>290 Type 3 Certified Wildland Firefighters</p>
<p>Wildfire Resilient Futures Initiative – Build and Mobilize Foundational Wildland Fire Knowledge Program</p>	<p>A national multi-year wildfire resilience initiative in partnership with Natural Resources Canada and University of Waterloo to develop Indigenous-led wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) risk assessment frameworks. The initiative integrates</p>	<p>Engagement with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to develop culturally grounded wildfire risk assessment approaches, preparedness planning tools, and mitigation strategies tailored to</p>	<p>Strengthened national wildfire resilience through Indigenous-led approaches that recognize Indigenous fire stewardship, sovereignty, and traditional knowledge. Increased</p>	<p>The initiative directly addresses identified gaps in existing wildfire frameworks, including the need for Indigenous-led risk assessment models, culturally grounded evacuation planning, and tools that integrate</p>

	<p>Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, and scientific analysis to support community-based wildfire resilience.</p>	<p>community realities and priorities. Development of foundational wildfire knowledge resources and practical fire safety programming.</p>	<p>community capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events while supporting culturally appropriate and community-specific emergency management planning.</p>	<p>traditional knowledge with scientific analysis. The project supports communities located within high-risk Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, where wildfire frequency, severity, and unpredictability continue to increase across Canada.</p>
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6.0 2025/2026 Financial Summary – Unaudited Financial Statements

<i>25-26 Unaudited Expenditure Report</i>		<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
2005	<i>Corporate Human Resources</i>	\$195,000	\$238,244
2003	<i>Operations Human Resources</i>	\$232,000	\$238,244
2011	Comms Officer	\$90,000	91,221.76
2013	NIRS Coordinator	\$90,000	91,913.47
2004	EMAP FSS	\$60,000	58,824.52
	<i>Corporate Services</i>	\$186,500	\$133,131
1003	Governance	\$15,000	14,420.25
7004	Audit / Legal & Bank	\$48,000	7,244.92
7006	Software/IT	\$32,000	30,883.93
7005	Physical Infrastructure	\$18,000	18,000.00
7002	Telecommunications	\$6,000	8,707.85
7000	Corporate IT	\$50,000	45,229.99
7001	Corporate Equipment & Supplies	\$11,500	8,644.33
7003	Logistics	\$6,000	28,550.16
	<i>Events</i>	\$325,500	\$357,429
1004	Fire Conference / NFC	\$325,500	357,428.82
	<i>Travel Total</i>	\$81,000	\$87,966
4001	Board Travel	\$18,000	19,520.65
4002	Exec Dir	\$12,000	12,492.13
4003	Collaboration	\$15,500	15,944.25
4004	IFMS Delivery Travel	\$35,500	40,008.97
	Total Budgeted Expenses & FTE	\$1,260,000	\$1,296,973

GL	25-26 NRCAN YWT Y2		
6001	Salaries, Benefits and Stipends	\$156,000.00	150,746.13
6000	Professional & Contracting Services	\$10,500.00	11,028.21
6002	Training & professional dev.	\$182,000.00	182,146.17
6003	Materials, supplies and equipment	\$50,400.00	50,865.27
6004	Honoraria and ceremonial costs	\$250.00	250.00
6005	Administration	\$38,100.00	38,327.47
	Total Budgeted Expenses & FTE	\$ 437,250.00	\$ 433,363.25

GL	25-26 NRCAN CWPP Y2		
5000	Salaries, Benefits and Stipends	\$273,780.00	188,159.93
5001	Professional & Contracting Services	\$72,000.00	186,104.14
5002	Training & professional dev.	\$5,000.00	0.00
5005	Travel	\$45,900.00	28,179.38
5006	Conference fees	\$2,100.00	1,132.45
5007	IT	\$2,000.00	2,221.98
5008	Communication tools and services	\$4,320.00	798.11
5009	Administration	\$71,488.24	71,496.72
		\$ 476,588.24	\$ 478,092.71

GL	25-26 NRCAN NorthForm Unaudited Expense Report		
3001	Salaries, Benefits and Stipends	\$46,000.00	56,204.68
3003	Logistics & Equip	\$1,000.00	1,246.44
3004	Travel	\$21,000.00	12,059.00
3005	Administration	\$4,000.00	4,000.00
		\$ 72,000.00	\$ 73,510.12

