

Gameti Community Wildfire Protection Plan



Prepared for:
Government of the Northwest Territories
Environment and Natural Resources - Forest Management Division



With federal support through Natural Resources Canada's Regional Adaptation Collaborative Program



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March 2012

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1 Introduction

The Gameti Community Wildfire Protection Plan was developed to provide practical and operational wildland/urban interface risk mitigation strategies to reduce the threat of wildfire to developments within the community.

The project objectives include:

- Assess and quantify community wildland/urban interface hazard and risk
- Based on interface hazard and risk:
 - Develop and prioritize fuel management and maintenance recommendations and prescriptions
 - Develop a summary of significant factors within the community that would enhance its exposure to wildfire and offer recommendations to reduce that threat.

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan was developed using standardized FireSmart hazard assessment protocols and mitigative measures were developed based on the seven disciplines of wildland/urban interface approach and current research and knowledge in interface community protection.

An implementation plan is included in this Plan to assist stakeholders to budget and complete projects based on the priorities identified.

This plan should be reviewed and updated at **five year intervals** to ensure it is based on current conditions.

2 Planning Area and Stakeholders

The planning area includes all lands within Gameti and a two-kilometre buffer surrounding the community (Map 1).

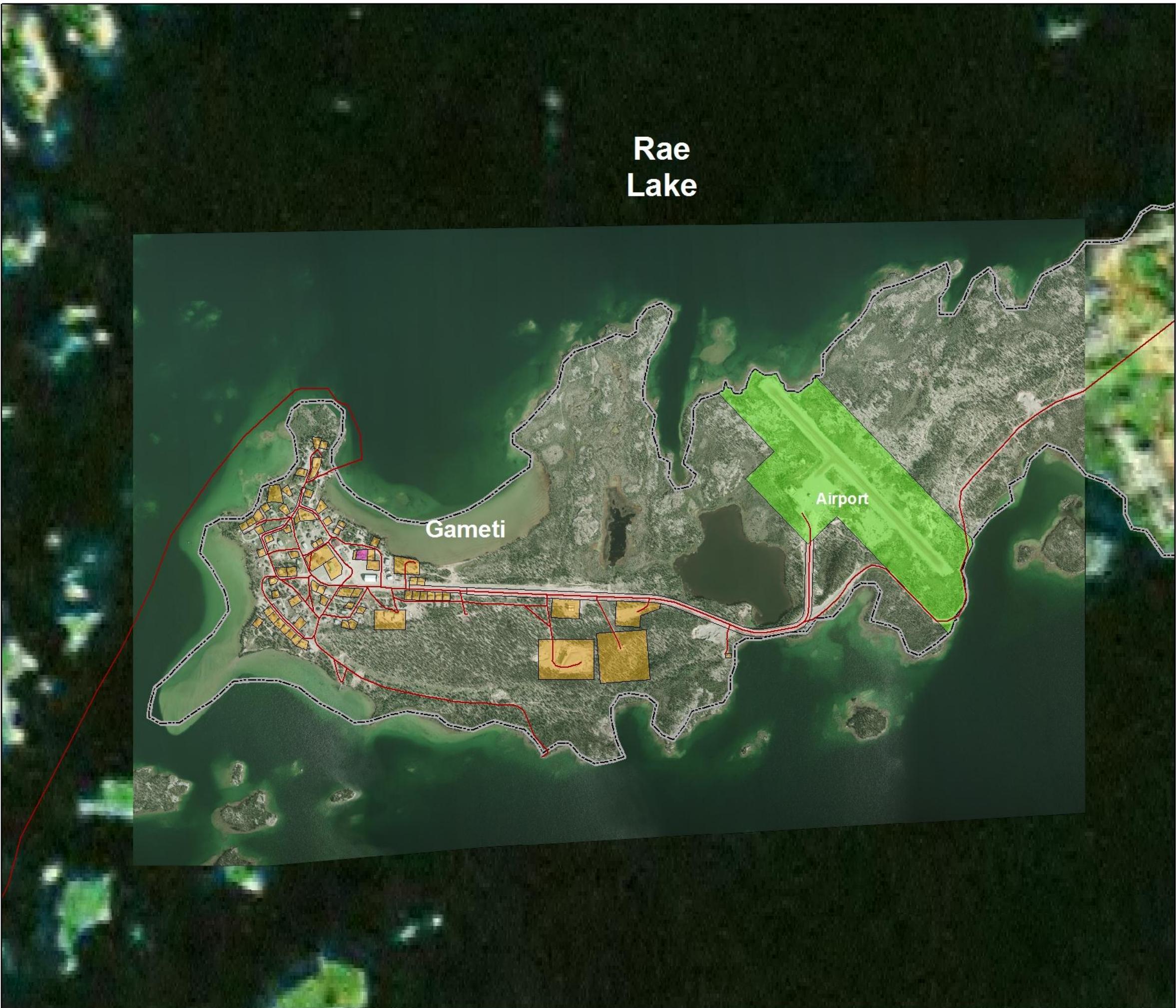
Stakeholders consulted with in the planning process included:

▪ Janice Ziemann, Forest Officer	GNWT ENR North Slave Region
▪ Greg Morash, SAO	Community Govt. of Gameti

All lands are within the Tli Cho Land Claim Settlement. Land status authority is represented by the following (Map 1):

- Commissioner (GNWT MACA)
- Municipal
- Private
- GNWT Crown lands (GNWT ENR)

**Map 1 - Planning Area
Gameti**



- Community Boundary
- Roads
- Cabin Sites

Land Status Authority

- Commissioner
- Federal
- Indian Affairs Branch
- Mixed
- Municipal
- Private



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3 Hazard & Risk Assessment

The hazard and risk assessment process analyses the risk of wildfire ignition through analysis of fire incidence, the wildfire behaviour potential through analysis of fuels and weather data, and the values at risk to wildfire through FireSmart hazard assessments.

3.1 Wildfire Ignition Potential

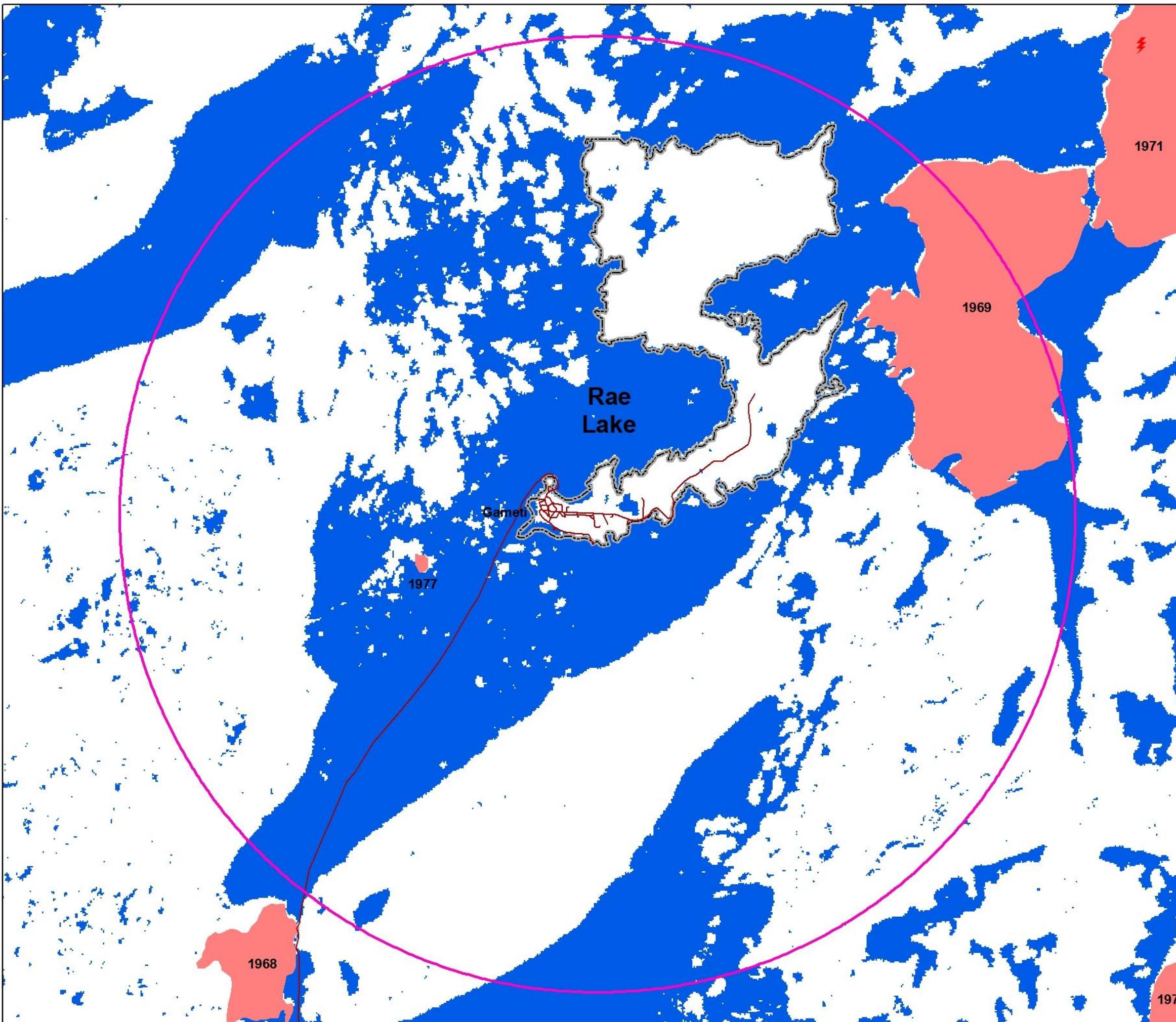
The assessment of recent fire incidence was completed using historical fire data from GNWT Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) for the ten-year period from 2002 to 2011.

Fire incidence data indicates that no wildfires were discovered within a 10 kilometre radius of the community (Table 1). Two larger wildfires in 1969 and 1977, burned to the east and west of Gameti but did not threaten the community (Map 2).

Table 1: Fire Incidence by Cause (2002 – 2011)

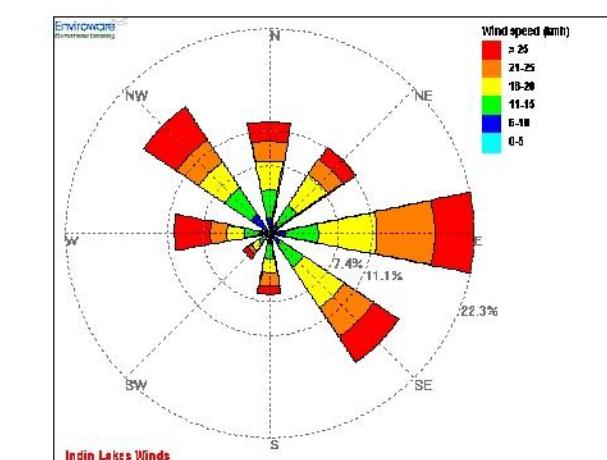
General Cause	Number of Fires	Percent of Total
Human-Caused	0	0
Lightning-Caused	0	0
Totals	0	0

The risk of wildfire in the planning area is minimal based on fire incidence data.



**Map 2 - Wildfire Incidence
Gameti**

- 10 Km Boundary
- Community Boundary
- Roads
- Human-Caused Wildfire
- ⚡ Lightning-Caused Wildfire
- Wildfire > 4 hectares



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3.2 Wildfire Behaviour Potential

3.2.1 Wildland Fuel Types

Fire Behaviour Prediction (FBP) fuel types were used to analyze the fuel types and fire behaviour potential within and adjacent to Gameti (Map 3).

The planning area is dominated with open to moderate density spruce-lichen woodland (C-1) fuels with patches of non-fuel (NF), boreal spruce (C-2), mixedwood (M-1/M-2), deciduous (D-1), and cured-grass (O1). Fuels reduction in the C-2 stand immediately adjacent to the community has reduced the fire behaviour potential of this fuel type.

3.2.2 Fire Weather Analysis

Fire weather data from the Indin Lakes weather station was used to determine the predominant wind directions during the fire season. The predominant and strongest wind directions are from the east/southeast and the northwest (Figure 1).

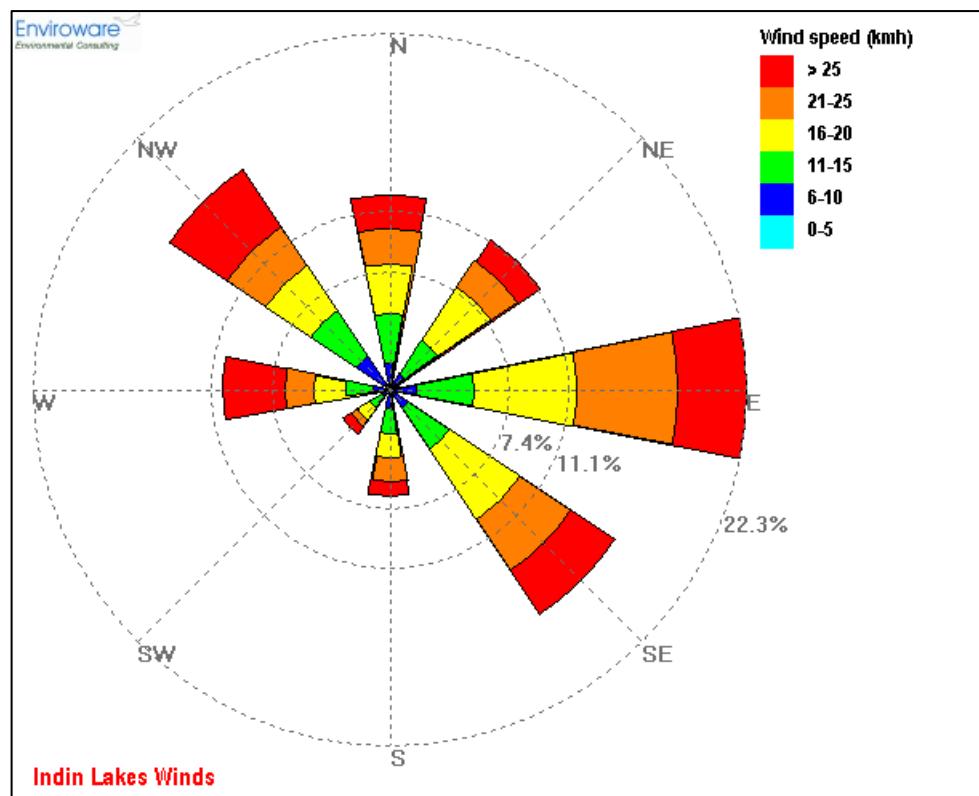
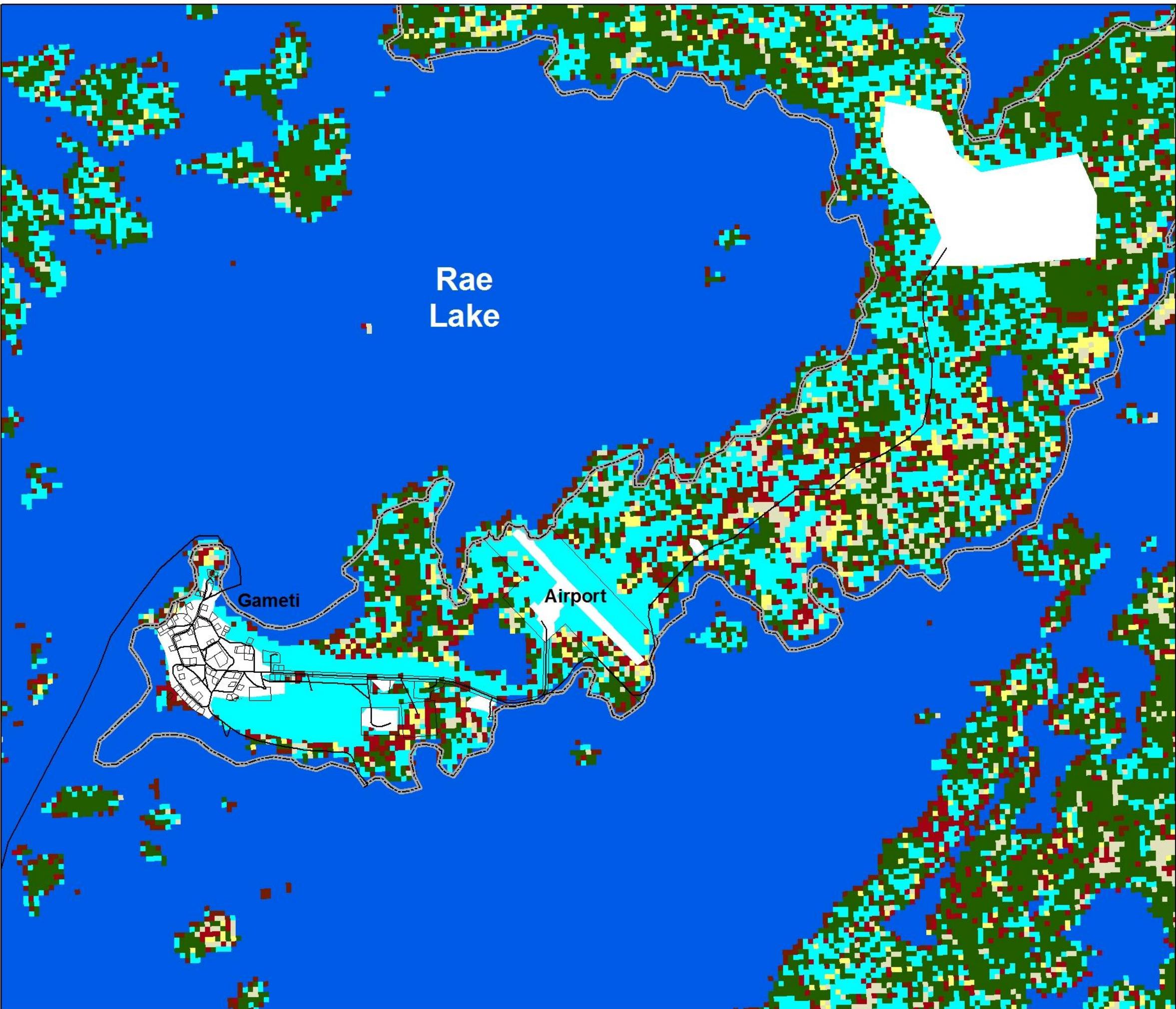


Figure 1 – Indin Lakes Windrose

Wildland fuel types and fire weather data indicates that the potential for landscape-level wildfire spread towards Gameti is minimal.



**Map 3 - FBP Fuel Types
Gameti**

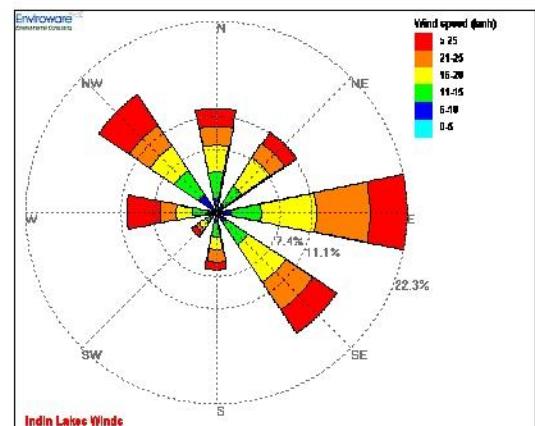
Community Boundary

Roads

Cabin Sites

FBP Fuel Type

- Spruce-Lichen Woodland (C-1)
- Boreal Spruce (C-2)
- Mature Pine (C-3)
- Immature Pine (C-4)
- Deciduous (D-1)
- Mixedwood (M-1)
- Bog
- Non-Fuel (NF)
- Cured Grass (O1)



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3.3 FireSmart Hazard Assessments

FireSmart hazard assessments (P.I.P., 2003) were conducted on development areas and adjacent wildland fuel types within the planning area. All development within Gameti is at minimal threat to wildfire (Table 2 & Map 4).

Table 2: FireSmart Hazard Assessments

Development Area	Structure/Site Hazard (0 – 30m)
Gameti	Low - Moderate
Airport	Low

Hazard factor's for each of the development areas are discussed below.

Gameti

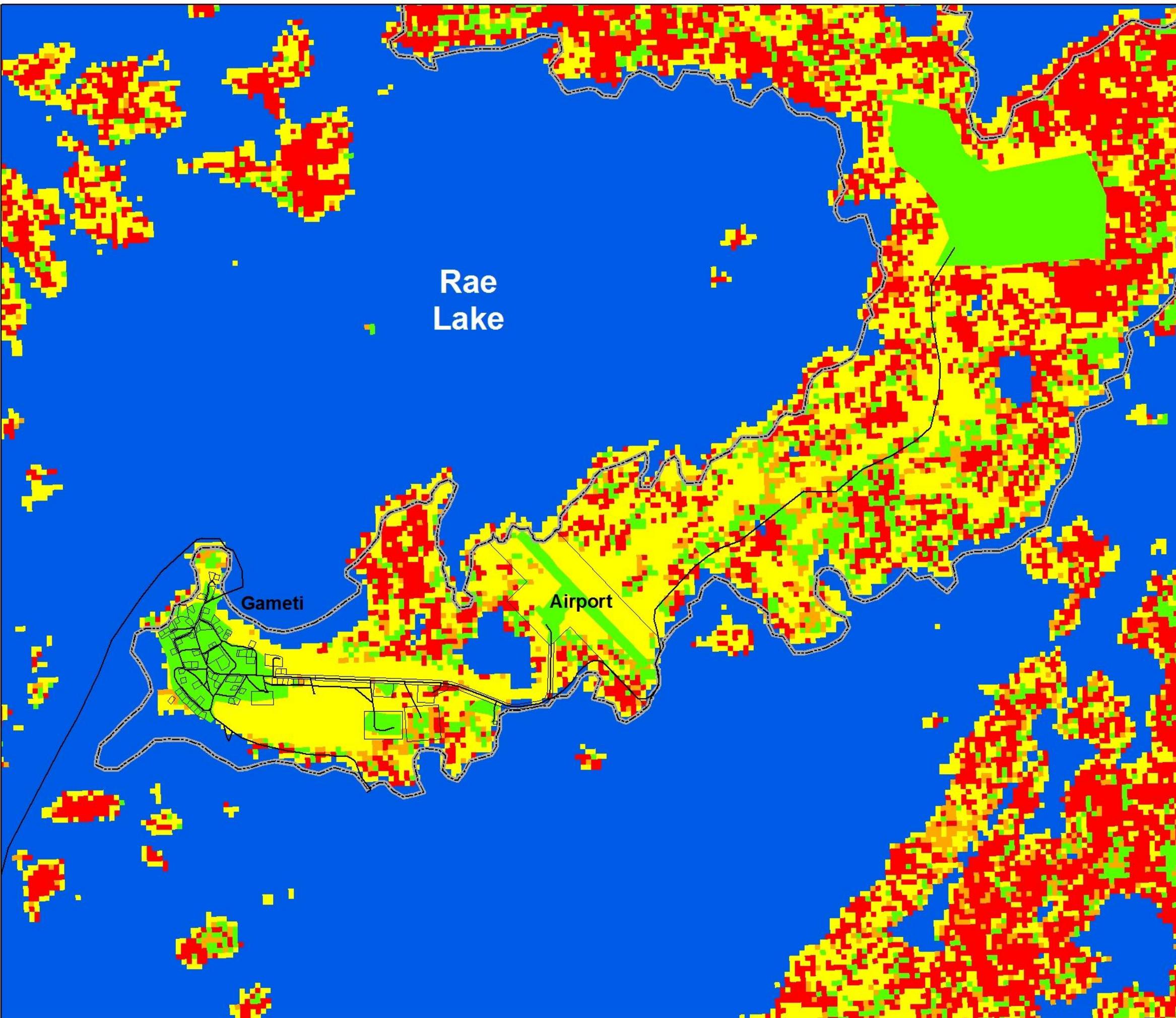
FireSmart hazard for Gameti is rated as **LOW to MODERATE**. Fuels primarily consist of non-fuel, cured-grass, and open spruce. Some perimeter structures have inadequate defensible space from coniferous fuels resulting in increased threat. 2010 fuels reduction in C-2 fuels along the southeast side of the community has reduced the wildfire threat. Exterior structure materials are primarily asphalt shingle/metal roofing and hardiplank siding on newer structures and wood or log siding on older structures. Access roads are all-weather loop design.



Airport

FireSmart hazard for the Airport is rated as **LOW**. Fuels primarily consist of non-fuel and cured grass with significant defensible space between the terminal and wildland fuels. Exterior structure materials are metal roofing and wood siding.

The FireSmart threat for Gameti is minimal based on fuel types, fire incidence, and fuels reduction.



**Map 4 - FireSmart Hazard
Gameti**

4 Vegetation Management Options

The goal of vegetation management is to create a fuel-reduced buffer between structures and flammable wildland vegetation to reduce the intensity and rate of spread of wildfire approaching or leaving the development. Vegetation management options are proposed at the appropriate scale, based on hazard and risk, to reduce the threat of wildfire to developed areas. **While fuel modification projects reduce the threat of wildfire to developments, they do not ensure structure survival under all hazard conditions.**

Vegetation management consists of one or any combination of the following options:

- Fuel removal
- Fuel reduction
- Species conversion

Complete descriptions of the methods included in each of the above options are included in *“Fire-Smart Protecting Your Community from Wildfire”* (PIP 2003).

FireSmart standards refer to three interface priority zones with vegetation management for interface structures recommended in Zones 1 and 2 at a minimum and in Zone 3 based on hazard and risk.

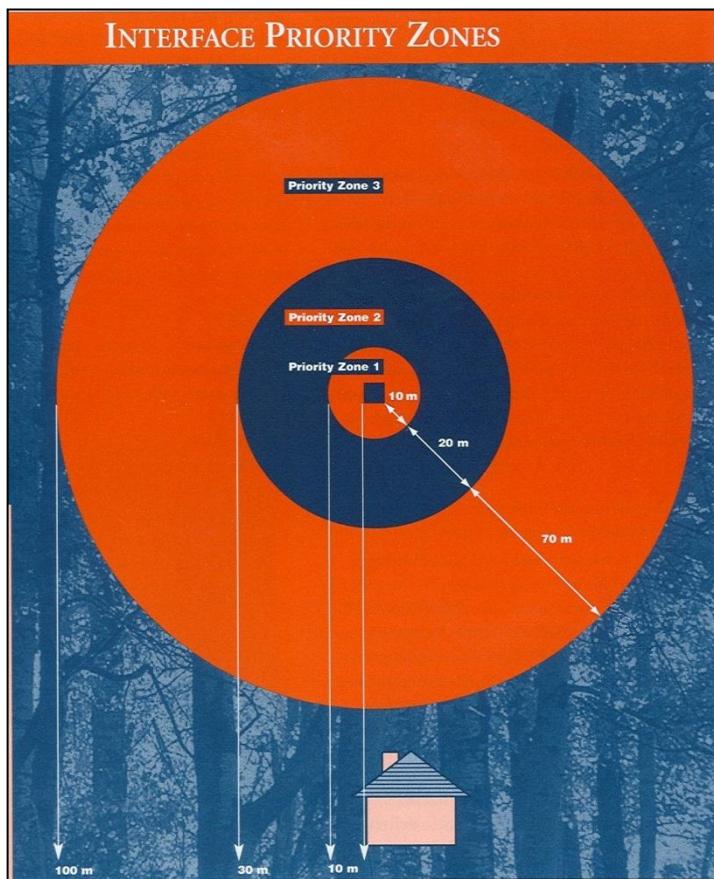


Figure 3 – Interface Priority Zones (PIP, 2003)

4.1 Existing Vegetation Management

Fuels reduction was completed by ENR in 2010 on the southeast side of Gameti to reduce fuel loading in a C-2 stand on the edge of the community (Table 3 & Map 5).



Table 3: Existing Vegetation Management Areas

Name	Area (ha)	Year Established	Agency	Comments
SE Fuels Reduction	23.3	2010	GNWT ENR	

4.2 Proposed Vegetation Management

4.2.1 Zone 1

Zone 1 vegetation management is **inadequate** for several residential structures on the community perimeter, with a lack of defensible space from native grass and spruce fuels.

FireSmart Zone 1 vegetation management options include:

- Removal of flammable forest vegetation within 10 metres of structures.
- Removal of all coniferous ladder fuels (limbs) to a minimum height of 2 metres from ground level on residual overstory trees.
- Removal of all dead and down forest vegetation from the forest floor.
- Increased maintenance to ensure that all combustible needles, leaves, and native grass are removed from on and around structures.
- Establishment and maintenance of a non-combustible surface cover around the structure including the use of FireSmart landscaping species.
- Removal of all combustible material piles (firewood, lumber, etc) within 10 metres of the structure.



For more information on FireSmart Zone 1 standards refer to *FireSmart – Protecting Your Community from Wildfire* (PIP 2003).

Recommendation 1: Encourage residents to establish adequate Zone 1 defensible space around their structures.

4.2.2 Zone 2-3

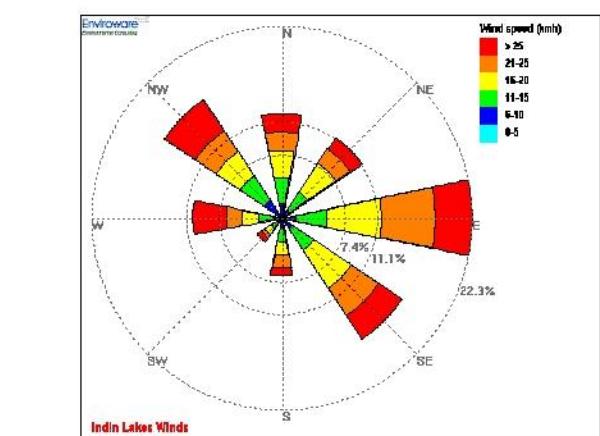
There are no recommended Zone 2-3 fuel modification areas based on the wildfire threat to the community and the existing SouthEast fuel reduction area and the airport runway as adequate community fuelbreaks.

4.3 Vegetation Management Maintenance

Fuel modification area maintenance schedules depend on many factors including fuel type, soil and moisture conditions, and specific weather events. It is suggested that land managers provide periodic inspections of their fuel modification project areas and complete maintenance as required. It is projected that fuel modification maintenance will be required at least each five-year period.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all existing fuel modification projects are inspected on a regular basis and maintained as necessary to ensure fuel modification effectiveness. Maintenance should be the responsibility of the land manager or landowner.

**Map 5 - Fuel Modification
Gameti**



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5. Development Options

Consideration of wildfire at the planning stage of new development is encouraged to ensure that wildfire hazard and appropriate mitigation measures are developed and implemented prior to development.

New developments may overlap or conflict with existing fuel modification resulting in a reduction in fuelbreak effectiveness and an increase in wildfire threat to the new or existing development in the area.

Recommendation 3: If a new development removes or reduces the effectiveness of any existing or proposed FireSmart mitigation measures or introduces new wildfire hazards, the area must be assessed and measures implemented to maintain the community protection standards.

5.1 Structural Options

Structural characteristics that contribute to a structure's ability to withstand wildfire ignition include type of roofing and siding material, and proper construction and maintenance of eaves, vents, and openings that can accumulate flammable debris and allow wildfire to gain entry to the structure.

The most common roofing materials in the planning area are asphalt shingle and metal.



Siding materials vary between non-combustible hardi-plank on newer structures and combustible wood, log, and vinyl on older structures.

Many structures have combustible debris piles (firewood, lumber, etc) immediately adjacent to the structure, increasing the threat of wildfire to the structure. Open decks and undersides are common.

5.2 Infrastructure Options

Infrastructure options include provision of adequate access standards to ensure quick and safe ingress and egress for residents and emergency responders during a wildfire, adequate and accessible water supply for structure protection and suppression, and utility installation standards that do not increase risk to emergency responders during a wildfire emergency.

5.2.1 Access

Access road standards throughout the planning area are mainly adequate for an interface community. Access roads are all-weather loop and dead-end design. There is no summer road access to the community.

5.2.2 Water Supply

Gameti does not have municipal hydrant water-supply. All development areas rely on water-tender supply for structure protection activities. Each home is equipped with an in-house water tank.

5.2.3 Franchised Utilities

Franchised utilities affected by an interface fire include electrical power and heating fuel. Proper installation and maintenance of these services can minimize the risk to residents and emergency services personnel.

Electrical Power

Power distribution and residential service is provided through above-ground powerlines from the NWTPC generation plant.

Heating Fuel

Heating fuel is provided by tank supply.

6. Public Education Options

Public education is a large part of the solution to success. Residents, landowners, municipal administration, and elected officials all need to be aware of the issues related to *FireSmart* development and the solutions to minimizing the risk and need to become a partner in implementation of the solutions in their communities. If stakeholders understand the issues relating to wildland/urban interface hazard they will be more likely to take action on their own property or to support actions taken by other authorities.

Residents and stakeholders can refer to the GNWT ENR, Forest Management Division website at www.nwtfire.com for further information on the GNWT FireSmart program, current wildfire updates, and other wildfire management related information.

Key Messages

FireSmart hazard assessments identified the need for the following key messages to residents.

- Development and maintenance of FireSmart Zone 1 defensible space surrounding the home, including:
 - Grass maintenance
 - Forest fuel removal
 - Firewood and combustibles storage

Recommendation 4: Public education on acceptable FireSmart Zone 1 standards is recommended for all residents.

7. Inter-Agency Cooperation and Cross-Training Options

Interagency cooperation and cross-training between all stakeholders is necessary to ensure cooperative and effective implementation of wildland/urban interface mitigation options and to coordinate an effective response to a wildland/urban interface fire.

Interagency stakeholders within the planning area include:

- Community Government of Gameti
- GNWT Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)
- GNWT Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)

Recommendation 5: Develop a FireSmart Committee, consisting of all relevant stakeholders, to coordinate and lead the FireSmart program for the area.

The Gameti Fire Department is presently not active therefore cross-training would not be effective at this time. Should the fire department become active, cross-training for fire department members and ENR wildfire suppression personnel should include basic wildfire, wildland/urban interface fire, and incident command system training courses. The following cross-training courses are available.

Wildland Fire

- Wildland Firefighter (NFPA 1051 Level I, S-100, or equivalent)

Wildland/Urban Interface Fire

- Structure and Site Preparation Workshop (S-115)
- Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface (S-215)

Incident Command System

- ICS Orientation (I-100)
- Basic ICS (I-200)
- Intermediate ICS (I-300)
- Advanced ICS (I-400)

Recommendation 6: Should the fire department become active, the fire department and GNWT MACA & ENR should partner on cross-training initiatives to ensure emergency responders are cross-trained to the following minimum standards:

- Wildland Firefighter
- Structure and Site Preparation Workshop (S-115)
- Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface (S-215)
- Incident Command System (I-100 to I-400) as applicable

8. Emergency Planning Options

Gameti is presently developing an Emergency Measures Plan with anticipated completion for early 2012.

At present the community does not have a wildfire pre-plan to provide emergency responders with detailed tactical information with respect to values at risk and operational strategies and tactics to minimize losses during a wildland/urban interface fire. A suggested pre-plan outline is as follows:

- Planning Area Jurisdictional Authority
- Values at risk (life, structures, infrastructure)
- Fire operations plan (strategies/tactics, water sources, equipment, communications plan)

Recommendation 7: Develop a Community Wildfire Pre-Plan for the community to provide greater operational detail to emergency responders during a wildland/urban interface incident.

9 Implementation Plan

The goal of the implementation plan is to identify the responsible stakeholders for each of the recommendations and set timelines for commencement and completion based on priorities and funding availability.

Vegetation Management

Issue	Recommendation	Responsible Agency
Zone 1	Recommendation 1: Encourage residents to establish adequate Zone 1 defensible space around their structures.	Comm. Govt. of Gameti GNWT MACA
Maintenance	Recommendation 2: Ensure that all existing fuel modification projects are inspected on a regular basis and maintained as necessary to ensure fuel modification effectiveness. Maintenance should be the responsibility of the land manager or landowner.	GNWT ENR & MACA Comm. Govt. of Gameti Thi Cho Govt.

Development

Issue	Recommendation	Responsible Agency
FireSmart Development Planning	Recommendation 3: If a new development removes or reduces the effectiveness of any existing or proposed FireSmart mitigation measures or introduces new wildfire hazards, the area must be assessed and measures implemented to maintain the community protection standards.	GNWT MACA Comm. Govt. of Gameti

Public Education

Issue	Recommendation	Responsible Agency
Public Education Priorities	Recommendation 4: Public education on acceptable FireSmart Zone 1 standards is recommended for all residents.	GNWT ENR & MACA Comm. Govt. of Gameti

Interagency Cooperation & Cross-Training

Issue	Recommendation	Responsible Agency
FireSmart Committee	Recommendation 5: Develop a FireSmart Committee, consisting of all relevant stakeholders, to coordinate and lead the FireSmart program for the area.	GNWT ENR & MACA Comm. Govt. of Gameti
Cross-Training	Recommendation 6: Should the fire department become active, the fire department and GNWT MACA & ENR should partner on cross-training initiatives to ensure emergency responders are cross-trained to the following minimum standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wildland Firefighter ▪ Structure and Site Preparation Workshop (S-115) ▪ Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface (S-215) ▪ Incident Command System (I-100 to I-400) as applicable 	GNWT MACA & ENR Comm. Govt. of Gameti

Emergency Planning

Issue	Recommendation	Responsible Agency
Community Wildfire Pre- Planning	Recommendation 7: Develop a Community Wildfire Pre-Plan for the community to provide greater operational detail to emergency responders during a wildland/urban interface incident.	GNWT ENR & MACA Comm. Govt. of Gameti