

# WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL CROWN FIRE MODELLING EXPERIMENT HAS MEANT TO NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ITS PEOPLE

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## ABSTRACT

The International Crown Fire Modelling Experiment (ICFME) provided fire research scientists an outdoor laboratory to test a theoretical, physical-based fire model and to conduct a wide variety of concurrent experiments. The crown fire experiments, located 40 km northeast of Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, attracted researchers from Canada, United States, Europe, Africa, and Australia over a 5-year period from 1997 to 2001. The northern boreal forest is characterized by periodic, stand-removing, crown fire—the principal reason why the Forest Management Division of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development supported these experiments. Improved fire behavior models would help managers with day-to-day fire operations and understand the effects of fire on landscapes where the habitat of caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and other wildlife is the main concern. Video clips from the experimental crown fires have been used to promote public education about protecting communities from the threat of forest fire, providing vivid examples of fire in the defensible space, crown fire spread, and short-distance mass spotting. The community of Fort Providence recognized the importance of the research results for community fire protection. The Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary schools in Fort Providence have been utilizing the experimental study area to conduct outdoor classes that combine learning about traditional land management from local elders and scientific methods from the fire research scientists who participated in ICFME.

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