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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 198

Hectares burned: 798

Human-caused: 160

Lightning-caused: 38

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: Permitted **except** within the South Forest District on Vancouver Island (see link below)

Category 2: In Effect

Category 3: In Effect

Forest Use Restrictions: No Ban

[Prohibitions section of bcwildfire.ca for full details.](#)

FireSmart on the Coast

Work you can do to keep your community safe.

All of us have watched the impacts wildfire have had on communities in B.C. this year. As we start to enjoy lower temperatures, it's a good time to turn our minds to what we can do to be prepared for wildfires in the future.

We'd also like to recognize the great work done by [Coastal communities](#) to make their homes and communities safer from wildfire. The work undertaken by these people will:

- Create a defensible space which will be used by firefighters when they come to protect their home.
- Reduce probability of wind driven embers igniting their home.
- Improve property value while reducing the risk of loss.
- Build neighbourhood relationships with firefighters.
- Encourage "good neighbours" and relationships.
- Offer peace of mind.

The process to become a FireSmart Community starts with a just a few people, and the steps are outlined clearly [here](#).

Within this issue is an article about Structural Protection. The work undertaken by Structural Protection Units is limited by how FireSmart properties are. People like Larry Watkinson are inevitably firm advocates of FireSmart principals for properties and neighbourhoods, and encourage people to prepare their property and neighbourhoods prior to the fire season.





Penticton Fire Chief wants to protect your house

Education and relationships key to improving structure protection efforts

Fresh out of high school, Larry Watkinson joined the Big White Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter, launching what has become a dynamic, rewarding career. Watkinson now serves as Penticton's Fire Chief and is leading the way in advocating for continuous improvement in structure protection.

"I was born and raised in Kelowna, so I'm very familiar with wildfires—2003 had a massive impact on me and my family," he says.

After the 2017 wildfire season, Watkinson felt an urge to integrate structure protection further into BC's wildland firefighting efforts. He pursued further education through the Federal Emergency Management Agency in California, USA, and was able to apply his knowledge and field experience to build

out a provincial curriculum for structure protection. This training is helping to improve integration and synergy with BC Wildfire Service.

"Everybody's speaking the same language when we talk about strategies and tactics," he said. "People know and understand, and we aren't having to explain jargon in the field."

Watkinson is at the forefront of FireSmart efforts, having received funding to build a team in Penticton that will assess homes, educate homeowners, and complete work to make homes more resilient to wildfire. He aims to FireSmart at least 200 homes this year.

How does he get it all done? According to Watkinson, fire chiefs should invest the time and effort in

What is structure protection?

The BC Wildfire Service is mandated to fight wildfires, so its crews are not trained or equipped to fight structural fires (i.e. where a building is on fire). However, if a wildfire presents an imminent threat to structures, the BC Wildfire Service may deploy structural protection specialists to an incident. Structure protection specialists employ FireSmart principles that can help protect homes and buildings in a wildfire's path.

building relationships with people in their fire zone and fire centre as well as with those focused on prevention.

“If you’re a fire chief and you’re living in a wildland

urban interface . . . the time to do it is not when you have a fire on the landscape, you need to be connected.”



In his spare time, Larry Watkinson is part of an urban search and rescue team with his dog, Sam, who joined him on two international deployments: the Bahamas in 2019 and Nepal in 2015. Sadly, Sam is retiring this year and Watkinson, an avid skier, is setting his sights on avalanche search and rescue next.

A shout out to our Coastal unit crew out of Port Alberni—their laborious work of creating a fuel-free area helped create the conditions for a successful planned ignition on the White Rock fire, which will help bring this fire under control. There is an [awesome video](#) about it here if you want to see the ignition, and [this video](#) covers the thought process and planning.

Planned ignitions reduce risk at

White Rock Lake



The Thunderbirds Unit Crew, Rangers Unit Crew and RAP India worked tirelessly to build a large fuel-free area to support ignitions at the White Rock Lake fire.



How is land rehabilitated after a fire?

The BC Wildfire Service's (BCWS) mandate is to deliver effective wildfire management and emergency response to protect lives and values at risk. When a wildfire is threatening a community or resource, BCWS does everything it can to protect those values. Sometimes, fire response activities include the use of heavy equipment or hand tools for the construction of control lines, establishing safety and staging areas, and providing access. While the use of heavy equipment and hand tools is an important part of wildfire response, it does require additional considerations by fire managers to reduce potential negative environmental impacts, rehabilitate impacted areas, and restore natural ecological functions and features after the threat of wildfire has passed.

What is wildfire suppression rehabilitation?

Wildfire rehabilitation refers to the actions taken to restore the health of land that was disturbed through wildfire suppression efforts. These actions include restoring natural drainages, minimizing soil erosion, managing for invasive species and unwanted access, and conducting hazard abatement activities to reduce the risk of wildfires.

Preventing and minimizing unnecessary environmental impacts

Fire suppression activities are considered emergency response and may not always be able to follow provincial guidelines and best practices. While some exemptions to these guidelines apply, every effort is made to prevent and minimize unnecessary environmental impacts. BCWS' role is to proactively follow the best practices and guidelines where possible. An example of this work includes locating wildfire suppression control lines on the landscape that achieve both wildfire containment objectives and consider cultural heritage values and ecologically



Temporary structure over creek crossing.

sensitive areas. Where these values cannot be avoided, actions can limit impacts. For example, a temporary structure can be installed over creek crossings. This type of work occurs during wildfire response, while the fire is still a threat to lives and homes.

Implementing rehabilitation actions

The wildfire suppression rehabilitation process begins once the fire is at a stage of control where it is safe to do so and can happen while other fire suppression activities are ongoing. The responsibility of this work is then transferred to the Forest, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) Regional Operations Division to lead the project, however BCWS and the resource district work cooperatively to achieve the objectives.

Partnerships with local First Nations are also initiated at the earliest opportunity, as well as gathering input from other professionals including: biologists, agrologists, archeologists, geomorphologists, and habitat specialists.

The rehabilitation work required is dependant on the type of wildfire suppression activities carried out and the impacts they may have had.

In summary

Wildfire Rehabilitation addresses fire control damage from disturbances created by fire suppression operations so that long-term impacts are minimized on the BC landscape. For more information on the actions that can be taken contact your regional [Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Region & District](#).



Before and after an area is rehabilitated following a forest fire.

Current Trends & Weather

The coast has started to receive the first of many bands of moisture that are in the forecast for this weekend and next week. Along with this precipitation are cooler daytime temperatures, higher relative humidity and cooler (and longer) nights. This can be confirmed by the much lower fire behaviour our crews have been reporting, as well as a down turn in new fire starts.

These factors have enabled the Coastal Fire Centre to allow campfires throughout its jurisdictional area **except** for the South Forest District area. This means that campfires are permitted **except** on Vancouver Island south of Union Bay, the southern boundary of Strathcona Park and King passage. A map of the area is available at BCWildfire.ca ([link](#)). Please check with local authorities prior to having a campfire, as the BC Wildfire Service's jurisdiction does not supersede local open fire bylaws.

The management of the Mowhokam Creek fire (V11669) has returned to the Coastal Fire Centre. This Fire of Note has been relatively quiet for the past several days, and a crew and helicopter are responding to a smoke report within the containment line of the fire. This is the only Fire of Note on the coast.

Weather (as of 11:00 Friday)

SYNOPSIS: (Today-tomorrow) The first of two major storms is now crossing central Vancouver Island and radar shows a rainband from Barkley Sound to Nootka, up the Alberni Canal and then north to at least Gold River. Rain is reported on the east coast at Comox and Campbell River as well. Earlier, as the northern section of the front crossed Haida Gwaii, over 20 millimetres fell at Honna, a good indication of the available moisture in this system. Clouds have already reached eastern Vancouver Island but any serious rainfall today south of about Parksville is unlikely both due to the subsidence effect and also because the energy in the flow is pushing directly north without a lot of eastward motion. The

mainland zones southeast of Toba Inlet will be cloudy today but do not see significant rainfall. That changes tomorrow as the second and much more active storm arrives on the coast. All zones will see periods of rain with some western stations likely to see at least 10 millimetres and a few well over 20. Eastern areas see rain arrive Saturday afternoon but amounts will be slight as the system washes out crossing the Coast Mountains. Also, the Gulf Islands and southeast Vancouver Island do not see very heavy rainfalls due to the subsiding southwest upper winds. Winds today along the outer coasts will increase to southeast 25 to 30 km/h this afternoon and then tomorrow further increase to southeast 30 to 40 km/h as the second system reaches the coast.

OUTLOOK: (Sunday-Tuesday) By noon Sunday skies are starting to clear in the west and the few showers continuing over eastern sections are drying out as a ridge develops. By Monday a large strong ridge lies over western BC and conditions return to sunny and warm. By Tuesday as the ridge weakens, a sub-tropical flow appears, and brings convective cloud bands into southwest BC. This may be a thunderstorm pattern.

Contact Information

Report a Wildfire: *5555 on a cell or 1 800 663-5555

Wildfire Information Line: 1 888 3FOREST

Burn Registration Number: 1 888 797-1717

Information Officer Phone Number: 250 951-4209

Information Officer Email:

bcws.cofcinformationofficer@gov.bc.ca