



## Coastal Fire Centre

ISSUE 8 | 14.08.2020

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### CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 72

Hectares burned: 277

Human-caused: 56

Lightning-caused: 16

### BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

**Campfire:** No Ban

**Category 2:** In Effect

**Category 3:** In Effect

**Forest Use Restrictions:** No Ban

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

## Lightning Fires in the Coastal Fire Centre (CoFC)

Crews at the Coastal Fire Centre responded to 20 fires between Thursday, July 30, 2020, and August 4, 2020. Of these 20 fires it has been determined that 15 of these fires were caused by a lightning band that struck the evening of Thursday, July 30, 2020, two of the fires' causes are still undetermined, while the remaining 3 were suspected to be human-caused.

Below is a snapshot of the lightning fires reported to the Coastal Fire Centre between these dates and the status of each as of August 4, 2020, at 1000 hours. For the current status of these fires go to: <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/>

Inc #	Geographic	Discovery	Size	Cause
V50743	Brem River	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V50747	South Gate River	2020-07-31	3.2	Natural
V50869	Barkshack Lake	2020-08-02	0.009	Natural
V60740	Green Mountain	2020-07-31	16	Natural
V10744	Spuzzum Creek	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V10745	Anderson Creek	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V50735	Little Toba River	2020-07-31	0.01	Natural
V50748	Homathko River	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V50831	Deadly Cone Mountain	2020-08-01	0.1	Natural
V60733	Teal Jones Creek	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V60804	Green Mountain 2	2020-08-01	0.009	Natural
V70920	Craig Creek	2020-08-03	0.009	Natural
V50736	Wilde Creek	2020-07-31	0.009	Natural
V50737	Atwood Bay	2020-07-31	0.03	Natural
V80837	Clear Lake	2020-08-02	0.7	Natural

The Fire Weather Forecast provided to crews forecast the lightning through the region and crews were prepared and on standby waiting for the storm to strike. Originally the forecast called for lightning to go through the Centre much earlier, but the Forecaster was able to update crews throughout the day on Thursday as conditions changed.



## Lightning Fires in the Coastal Fire Centre (CoFC) cont'd.

Fortunately, when the lightning did strike late Thursday night, it was accompanied by showers in some areas, which reduced the impact of the storm.

In anticipation of this weather event crews were prepositioned, assigned to seasonal bases where necessary, standby hours were increased, and crews were consistently updated on any changes to the forecast. Once the storm passed, air patrols were conducted in areas indicated by the BC Wildfire Service's lightning maps. When air patrols discover fires, they are marked using a Global Positioning System (GPS) tool and crews are assigned to that fire.

The BC Wildfire Service uses data from The Canadian Lightning Detection Network (CLDN), which is provided by Environment Canada. This system consists of a network of direction finders and each direction finder consists of antennas and microcomputers to detect the electromagnetic pulse generated by a lightning strike. Lightning data is then triangulated, and the exact location of the lightning strike can be determined. After the triangulation is completed, the data is sent to a large, mainframe computer. The system can record a lightning strike in just 60 milliseconds. An example of a lightning tracker can be found on the Environment Canada website here: [https://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/lightning/index_e.html).

Holdover fires are not uncommon, and it should be noted that a thunderstorm doesn't have to be dry to cause problems. A storm will often pass through a region without starting a detectable fire, because of the associated rain. However, if conditions are drier in the days following the storm, a "holdover fire" can occur. Lightning strikes can penetrate deep into the soil, smoulder and then during hot, dry periods begin to burn more freely and visibly. It is only when these fires become visible that they are spotted, reported and can be responded to.

When a lightning storm occurs BCWS relies heavily on the help of stakeholders, First Nations communities and the public for the early detection of these fires.

Check out the forecast in this issue for the possibility of more convective activity!

**Holdover Fire**  
A fire that remains dormant and undetected for a considerable time after it starts (particularly lightning-caused fires).  
Also known as Overwintering Fires.  
~CIFCC Glossary

**If you see fire or a column of smoke, please report it to 1-800-663-5555.**

## Fires in Coastal

**Green Mountain Fire (V60740)** – this fire was reported midday on July 31, 2020. Some of the factor's crews had to work through were accessibility to the fire, as it was largely situated in unworkable terrain. Firefighters have had to contend with steep and rocky cliffs; an area largely inaccessible for air tankers to drop retardant on. Despite the slow going, by August 2nd, crews were able to lay hose and establish fuel free breaks and achieve 40 per cent containment. The fire status by August 4, 2020, was 'Being Held'.

Fire crews deal with many unknowns when arriving on a fire such as watersheds, cultural sites, land trust areas, and generally take it in their stride. In this case, however, is relatively unique as the fire is adjacent to the Vancouver Island Marmot Wildlife Management area.

On Green Mountain there is a 300-hectare area containing critical habitat for this highly endangered mammal. To learn more about the marmot and its habitat go to: <https://marmots.org/>. The area was reserved on May 30, 1991. For more information about the reserve go to: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/wildlife-habitats/conservation-lands/wma/wmas-list/green-mountain>.

**Southwest Harrison Lake (V10874)** – This fire was reported to the Coastal Fire Centre in the late evening of August 4, 2020. The fire is suspected to be human-caused and is under investigation. Fortunately, there are no recreation areas, or other known values at risk in the vicinity.

Fires that burn in slash are always difficult fires to fight and generally take a lot of work on the part of crews to fight. The Coastal Fire Centre initially responded to this fire with 3 helicopters, 30 crew persons and 1 water tender. For the updated status of this fire go to: <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/f0ac328d88c74d07aa2ee385abe2a41b>

Slash is defined as 'debris left as a result of forest and other vegetation being altered by forestry practices and other land use activities (e.g. timber harvesting, thinning and pruning, road construction, seismic line clearing). Slash includes material such as logs, splinters or chips, tree branches and tops, uprooted stumps, and broken or uprooted trees and shrubs.'





## The Role of a Fire Camp Coordinator

### Introducing Kris Rodin

This week we are highlighting the important role that Fire Camp Coordinators play for the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS). There are two full-time fire camp coordinators in British Columbia, each located at one of the Provincial Equipment Depot locations. Kris Rodin in Chilliwack and Malachi Moriarty in Prince George.

The Fire Camp Program is part of the Provincial Equipment Depots and the broader Cooperate Wildfire Services (CWS) with both Fire camp coordinators reporting to the Superintendent of Provincial Equipment Depots.

Fire camps play a unique role in the BCWS fire suppression process. Mobile Fire Camps consist of a variety of trailer modules designed to provide accommodations and administrative support to project fires and/or fire complexes. Standard camps are configured to support 150 to 300 person incidents (approximately 25% female/75% male) but modules may be reconfigured to effectively service camps ranging from 50 to 400 people or larger if required.



Kris Rodin has been with BCWS for over 21 years. Most of which has been in service as a Fire Camp Coordinator. The fire camp coordinator position is unique in that it requires a very specific skill-set in order to do it. Most coordinators have experience or background in construction, carpentry, plumbing, electrical and gas systems.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED

- What are fire camps?
- How are fire camps responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- How long have you been doing this for?
- What is your role as the fire camp coordinator?
- How do you and your staff set up a camp?



## The Role of a Fire Camp Coordinator Cont.

We spoke to Kris Rodin, Fire Camp Coordinator for Chilliwack to learn more about the Fire Camp deployment process:

### **Q: What are fire camps?**

A: “Fire camps” are camps that are temporarily established near a wildfire to provide food, accommodation and personal hygiene facilities for staff who are responding to a wildfire.

You can think of camps like small self-contained towns, complete with food services, showers, toilets, laundry. Staff for meal preparations for responders are available. Laundry and cleaning services are hired each year. Each camp is usually made up of 9 or more trailers.

### **Q: How are fire camps responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic?**

A: The BCWS has created five-person crew kits that enable it to deploy a fire camp in smaller formats. This is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic along with the BC Wildfire Service’s ongoing focus on managing firefighter fatigue and supporting the health and well-being of staff while they’re deployed on a fire.

Prior to COVID-19, the BCWS purchased 24 portable, heated handwashing stations for use before staff members go into kitchen units to get food. Along with shifting away from large, multi-person ranger tents to individual, cabin-style tents. These actions will help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in fire camps, but they were in progress well before this pandemic began.

### **Q: What is your role as the fire camp coordinator?**

A: As the fire camp coordinator, I am responsible for the maintenance, repair and deployment of mobile infrastructures that form the fire camps across the fire zones in B.C. This includes the planning, layout and design of fire camps. All requests for Fire Camps are placed through the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre (PWCC). Information such as site location for the camp deployment, approximate length of the deployment, number of people in the camp are required to support water source availability (municipal, well, trucked in, etc.) and the availability of other local infrastructure such as hydro, septic and so forth.

### **Q: How do you and your staff set-up a camp?**

A: Once deployed, my role is to organize transport, dispatch set-up crews and assist the fire center with locally supplied resources. As the coordinator, I must have the camp in-route within three or four hours after being dispatched. The set-up crew usually consists of a six-person crew trained at setting up camps. Crews provide their own transportation. Upon arrival, it is important for myself and the Incident Management Team to communicate to see what the needs are and for my team to relay what is attainable. When deployed to incidents we work very closely with the logistics chiefs, fire centres, and contractors to prepare these mobile facilities for occupancy. Several of the set-up tasks happen simultaneously and priorities may change. For example, the kitchen would be the priority for the morning arrival whereas wash and sleeping facilities may be the priority for the afternoon or evening arrival team. While circumstances may vary the average time between arrival and completion of set-up is between 48 and 72 hrs. While camps are activated, we have a fire camp operator on site to take care of the day to day operational duties such as water testing and equipment maintenance. The fire camp operator reports to the Facilities Unit Leader under the Logistics Section Chief, and may or may not have 2, or more people reporting to them depending on the complexity of the setup and types of infrastructure on site.



### How to Report a Wildfire?

If you have ever reported a fire to the wildfire reporting line, also known as the 1-800 line, you have spoken to a dispatcher working at the centralized call centre in Victoria. These seasonal dispatchers are available 24/7 during the fire season to take valuable wildfire information from you and get it into the right hands at the appropriate fire centre.

All of the information that you give the dispatchers is valuable information, but the geographical data is the most important as they are responsible for inputting the phone report into the Dispatch Map application.

This map displays where all reported wildfires are located, similar to the [BC Wildfire Service interactive map](#), but with additional features to assist with response. Once a phone report is submitted by the call centre dispatcher it will then be transferred to the respective fire centre. If a suspected wildfire is reported to the call centre outside of a fire centre’s operational hours, they then call the regional wildfire coordination officer (RWCO). During peak fire activity the RWCO will be on standby 24/7; however, these hours are reduced when fire activity is minimal. To learn more about the RWCO’s responsibilities, refer to Issue 7 that was distributed on August 4, 2020.

The phone report is utilized by the Regional Wildfire Coordination Officer (RWCO) and fire centre operations personnel, who will evaluate the information and determine the appropriate level of response required.

Information contained within the report, particularly the geographical data (e.g. landmarks and smoke) is critical for our staff to respond appropriately, this means any information callers can provide is extremely valuable. In some cases, the individual who reported the wildfire will be called back and asked for further details to ensure a swift and accurate response.

Typically, a response officer or initial attack crew will be deployed by the RWCO or centre operations to investigate the report on the ground. Upon arrival, the responding official will develop a plan of action and relay their plan back to the fire centre.

#### The information a dispatcher collects is very important and includes:

- geographic location
- direction you are seeing the smoke
- colour of smoke and if there are any visible flames
- approximate size

Initial Phone Report ID: 174330  
(Ask @ 22665020-15:00:20)

Event Number:	Latitude/Longitude: 52° XXXX / -123° XX.XXX	20 Minutes: Yes
Entered By:	Caller's Name:	
Phone Information:	Geographic: Alexis Creek	
Relative Location: 1km W of Alex creek and HWY 20		
Directions to the Fire: TYPE: GENERAL alexis creek hwy 20 1 km W of alexis lake road/turnoff seeing smoke and open flames, white, open flames right of hwy side size: about 50ft 20ft, smaller than football wx: windy, lx on weekend values: homes far away, fence fuel: grass and small trees spread: yes, slowly resp: no kelly 250.384.4467		
WEATHER: windy, lx on weekend		
Fuel: Grass, Trees,	Smoke Colour: White	
Fire Size: house	Is Anybody Fighting: unk	
Rate of Spread: Slow	Values Threatened: unk, homes a ways away	Interface: No

Example of phone report.

# Resource Strategic Wildfire Allocation Process Explained

## RSWAP

The BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) follows a clearly defined system for prioritizing its response to incidents. The Resource Strategic Wildfire Allocation Process (RSWAP) ensures a transparent process to prioritize incidents and allocate resources when the province is facing a heavy fire load and resources are, or could become, strained. RSWAP provides a consistent framework to make difficult decisions on where to focus fire suppression resources.

RSWAP is only activated when fire activity reaches a level where one or more fire centres, or Regional Wildfire Coordination Centres (RWCCs), can't meet their needs locally. When that occurs, the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre (PWCC), which oversees fire suppression across the entire province, steps in to manage resources, shifting crews, aircraft and equipment around the province to the areas of highest priority and need. RWCCs must submit their regions' wildfire priorities to the PWCC within the same day and the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer (PWCO) determines provincial priorities and resource allocations.

Those decisions are based on RSWAP, which prioritizes based on the degree of risk posed to values, ranked in order of importance: human life and safety; property; high environmental values; and resource values.

Each of the values above are broken down even further. For example, when it comes to property, infrastructure related to public health and safety has a higher priority than a residential area. When considering environmental values, a community watershed is prioritized over wildlife habitat.

There are many variables that are considered in determining the degree of risk a fire poses to values, including timing (when a fire is likely to reach a value), current and forecast weather conditions and anticipated fire behaviour. The PWCO also considers other factors, such as crew safety, local fire management plans, locations of fire suppression resources, potential of smoke and other public health impacts, local knowledge and probability of success.

Once the PWCO has finalized priorities, a report is distributed to all the fire centres and resources are mobilized. The PWCO stays in constant communication with each fire centre to ensure resources are assigned appropriately as provincial and local needs constantly change. In the event of disagreements about priorities, other senior BCWS staff and/or a multiagency team can help make determinations of priority and resource allocation.

Thankfully, during the 2019 wildfire season, which saw average fire activity in most of the province, there was no need for RSWAP. In the 2017 and 2018 wildfire seasons—the worst in the history of the province—RSWAP was enacted to support officers who had to make these difficult decisions about where to allocate resources.

### Acronym List

**BCWS:** British Columbia Wildfire Service

**PWCC:** Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre

**PWCO:** Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer

**RSWAP:** Resource Strategic Wildfire Allocation Process

**RWCC:** Regional Wildfire Coordination Centre

**RWCO:** Regional Wildfire Coordination Officer

### Fire Weather Forecast

**SYNOPSIS: (Today-tomorrow)** A strong jet stream lying over Haida Gwaii and the northern Mid-coast brings periods of rain today and tomorrow with likely amounts more than 40 mm. Over southern zones an upper ridge is slowly building bringing sunshine and warmer temperatures to all areas south of the northern tip of Vancouver Island and across to Homathko. The ridge continues to build Saturday developing warmer temperatures and lower humidity but also as the ridge grows it pushes the northern rain band further up the coast. There are likely to be a few pockets of isolated instability Saturday afternoon and evening especially over Vancouver Island and perhaps in the Whistler area.

**OUTLOOK: (Sunday-Tuesday)** The ridge peaks Sunday afternoon centred over Coastal zones and allowing afternoon highs to reach the high 30s with even a chance of a 40-degree reading. Along the west side of the high an unstable trough digs into the high and cruises northward to reach southern zones late Sunday or early Monday. This feature may well bring a few showers and or overnight thunderstorms. The most likely area appears to be the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, but convective activity may also reach northern Vancouver Island by day break Monday. The trough moves through and by Tuesday the weather returns to sunshine and warm.

**6 TO 10 DAY:** (next week) By Wednesday the ridge is collapsing and a series of wet systems are approaching. A few showers reach the outer coasts late Wednesday and periods of rain follow for Thursday and Friday.

### COVID-19—Lessons Learned from Others

Lump Gulch Fire Type 3 IMT COVID-19 Mitigation Lessons (2020) - [Lump Gulch Fire COVID-19 Mitigations RLS.pdf](#)

Sand Creek Fire COVID-19 IMT Lessons (2020) - [Sand Creek COVID19 IMT Lessons.pdf](#)

### Coastal News

The Fire Centre responded to 3 new human-caused fires in the last week. Temperatures are expected to rise by Sunday so please remember to be diligent with any campfires you may have, and please put them completely out when you are not able to monitor them.

There are currently 3 fires burning in the Coastal Fire Centre. Two of the fires are in the Sunshine Coast Zone and one in the South Island Zone. All are 'Under Control'.

Crews continue to work on prevention projects when not assigned to fires.



On Holiday Monday, August 3, 2020, a group of Whistler residents, from the Smoketree neighbourhood, got together (while socially distancing) to FireSmart their community. Twenty residents took the day to clear and prune underbrush. The group was supported by the Regional Municipality of Whistler.

### 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](mailto:BCWS.CoFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca)**