



Coastal Fire Centre

hot topics in Wildfire on the Coast

Wildfire news

Issue 10

August 28, 2015

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To Report a Wildfire:
1-800-663-5555
Or Call *5555

Of the phone calls we have been receiving this week there are two themes: 'There is a lot of smoke, is there another fire?' And 'Can I have a campfire?'

SMOKE!

So the majority of smoke you are currently experiencing is coming from fires in the Okanagan and in Washington State. One of the most concerning fires for BC is the Stickpin fire which is burning in northern Ferry County, Washington, 4.5 kilometres south of the Canada –US border. This fire is now estimated to be 19,240 hectares in size, with 17% containment.

To gain a better understanding of how this fire is affecting us here in Coastal go to: www.firesmoke.ca.

Several resources from the Coastal Fire Centre have been sent to help out on this fire including: a Unit Crew, numerous single resources including an Information Officer, some finance personnel and an Incident Commander.

For those suffering from respiratory illnesses please go to: www.bcairquality.ca or contact your local health authority.

Campfire Bans

Campfires are currently allowed (within the Coastal Fire Centre's jurisdiction) throughout the Coastal Fire Centre.

<http://bcwildfire.ca/hprScripts/WildfireNews/DisplayBan.asp?ID=448#CampfireBans>

Due to the amount of rainfall and cooler temperatures the campfire ban has been lifted. Please remember that a campfire is 0.5 m X 0.5 m in size. It is built on mineral soil, it is attended at all times and you have a shovel or at least 8 litres of water to put it out.

Category 2 and Category 3 prohibitions are still in effect.

We are asking the public to continue to adhere to the area restriction around the fires which continue to be active. With the rain amounts forecast it is expected that more trees and debris on already comprised ground.

For all those camping this weekend—have a safe weekend.

I Want to be a Firefighter—the Contract Route

We are often asked 'how do I become a fire fighter'? There are a couple of routes you can take. First, by applying directly to the BCWS in the Fall, or secondly, work for a contractor and gain experience and certification and then apply to the BCWS. Either route may work but it is never a bad idea to work with a contract company to find out if this is truly the type of work you want to be doing?

In order to be hired by the BCWS you will need these basic certifications:

- WorkSafe BC OFA Level 1 Ticket (or equivalent *)
- Transportation Endorsement Ticket
- WorkSafe BC OFA Level 3 Ticket (or equivalent *)

Preferred qualifications include: Extensive Resource or Wilderness work experience, Significant Resource training (Post secondary training in Forestry, Resource Management, Earth Science or other relevant training etc.), High level of academics or fitness achievement, WorkSafe BC recognized OFA Level 3 valid through to September of 2016, and a Valid British Columbia Forest Safety Council BC Faller Certification or ENFORM Oil & Gas Faller Certification.

Most importantly you must be able to pass what is called the WFX– Fit Test. The test is a circuit of four different tests completed in 14 minutes and 30 seconds. In order to simulate the weight of gear a weighted belt is worn instead of a chest pack, hard hat and hiking boots.

- Carry a medium pump on back over the ramp 8 times for a distance of 160 metres.
- Carry a medium pump in hands around the ramp a distance of 80 metres (no ramp).
- Carry hose pack on back over ramp 50 times (1km).
- Pull simulated charged hose 80 metres no ramp

Over the summer we have had a lot of requests from the public for work but due to WorkSafe and the stringent requirements around hiring, and the fact that there was simply no time to stop working and screen and train applicants considering the fire load. It is far more efficient to rely on companies who supply, train and certify great people to help on the fireline.

For more information about applying directly to BCWS go to: <http://bcwildfire.ca/Employment/>

To Report a Wildfire: 1-800-663-5555 Or Cell *5555

To Date in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person Caused 132

Lighting Caused 54

Total Number of Fires 186

Fire Danger Rating as of
Aug 28



Current Prohibitions
(within WMB jurisdictional area)

Campfire
(Allowed throughout Coastal)
Category 2 Open Fire
(All Coastal)
Category 3 Open Fire
(All Coastal)

Provincial Service Providers

Some services for fire response are managed by a provincial service agreement. The company will submit a proposal through BCBid, and the successful companies will be used “as and when” through the fire season. The contractor signs a Provincial Standing Offer with the government, which specifies the type of service to be provided, and the compensation rate. These types of agreements are used when it is critical that the service is the same in all parts of the province, are ready to go at a moment’s notice. Often the service delivery has requirements that ensure safe practices.

Examples of these kind of services are Danger Tree Fallers or Assessors, Camp and Catering suppliers, First Aid (like mobile medic vehicles and personnel), and Contract Crews. Each of these resources must abide by the contract, and spot audits are often performed to ensure the company will be able to provide the service to contract specifications. For example, when audits

are performed on Contract Crews, the inspector will check for equipment as well as training records for the crew people. While it might seem odd that catering has a safety component, this contract contains menu detail about quality and quantity of calories for active firefighters, and includes janitorial service specifications.

Local Service providers—Some services are managed locally, and are often resources that will be used by a zone on a fire in their area. Contracts may be initiated for specific services including heavy equipment, security, or water tenders. For example, the local zone will identify types of heavy equipment available in their areas, inspect the equipment to ensure it is functional and has the needed features, and often the rate of pay is set in the “Blue Book”, a book published yearly by the B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation.

Weather

SYNOPSIS: Last night a very active surge of clouds and showers moved up onto the west coast in a strong southwest flow. This system has now moved through after dropping showers across all zones but with varying amounts from less than a millimetre along the east coast of Vancouver Island to over 20 mm on the west coast. Mainland valley stations reports show as much as 19 mm at UBC Research to only 1 so far at D’Arcy. Rain has not yet reached Manning Park. But it will. At the base of the offshore trough a new active wave is forming and will follow the same path last night to bring heavy clouds and rain to the South Coast tonight. And in addition northwest of Haida Gwaii a sharp cold front is charging southeastward such that the two features combine over the coast Saturday afternoon to bring extraordinary periods of heavy rains. The heaviest rains remain on the coast and the highest target looks to be the north shore mountains all along the north side of the Fraser River.

OUTLOOK: (Sunday – Tuesday).. A moist unstable onshore flow continues Sunday through Tuesday with further periods of rain or frequent showers mostly along the immediate coastline. Interior valleys see a few showers but it will not be nearly as wet in the upcountry valleys. But it will be cool or even cold. Once the cold front passes Sunday the daily temperatures drop and by Monday or Tuesday the afternoon highs drop to only the mid teens.

At Coastal

For the most up-to-date information on specific fires please go to: www.bcwildfire.ca, and click on the Fires of Note.

It has been a busy season for the Coastal Fire Centre with a lot of wins, some challenges and some sadness.

The crews have related how many wonderful, and supportive people, they have met over the season. One new crewperson even relating how in one community ‘I could have swam in muffins’ as the whole community had shown up with baked goods.

For the crews, it has been a long season and they must now watch out for what is called ‘cumulative fatigue’. Studies show those who are in good physical shape, who eat well and get the appropriate rest are less likely to suffer from the symptoms of cumulative fatigue which can include memory loss or impairment, mood swings or shifts and general tiredness. Fatigue can result in preventable injuries. Crews on the fireline are warned to watch their fatigue, as well as their crewmembers, as the season continues into September with no end in sight.

While some of our crewmembers are heading back to school next week, crews have been re-formed to continue through the Fall. The work continues.