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Deployments

The BC Wildfire Service was challenged this year with what is being called *“the worst fire season in the Province’s history”*. For the Coastal Fire Centre this meant an unprecedented number of deployments.

From mid-May to mid-September, the Coastal Fire Centre’s 20-person Unit Crews were deployed an average of 69 days. This does not include days of work in their own fire zone just those days they were deployed out of the Coastal Fire Centre and working on the fireline.

Over about the same period our Initial Attack crews were deployed out of the Coastal Fire Centre roughly 26 days. Initial Attack crews, however, were kept busy with fires within the Centre. Some Initial Attack crews were also attached to Unit Crews to make up a full complement after some staff returned to school.

When a fire season impacts the province and crews are deployed to other fire centre's, we are

often asked if enough resources remain in place to manage an emergency here. The answer is—yes, with a little help. We have a very strong contractor firefighting industry and we were able to pull resources from the private sector. The contracting community provided firefighters, first aid workers, falling co-ordinators, danger tree fallers and assessors.

Added to the mix was a large number of other employees from our Ministry of Forests, Lands, Resource Operations and Rural Development, and those who came to assist from other ministries. Over 167 people were deployed from the Coastal Fire Centre to support firefighting efforts. Some assisted with a single deployment while others completed multiple deployments to assist in BCWS firefighting efforts.

We would like to thank everyone who helped the BC Wildfire Service during this historic fire season.

Rehabilitation

The government may, by legislation, rehabilitate sites where fire control or fire suppression operations have been carried out. Once a BC Wildfire Service official has declared that the fire is under control, there are four distinct impacts that may have to be addressed as a result of a wildfire:

1. Damage from fire control operations on Crown land.
2. Damage from fire control operations on private land and other land.
3. Wildfire damage on private land and other land.
4. Wildfire damage on Crown land.

There are three main components in fire rehabilitation:

1. **Fire control damage from disturbance created by fire suppression operations.** The primary responsibility to address this component is assigned to BC Wildfire Service. This type of damage includes machine and hand guards, fire access roads and trails, breached barriers, stream crossings, staging areas and sumps. The activities to address this damage is covered by the Wildfire Act and Regulations and is funded from the direct fire budget.
2. **The potential impact to public safety, buildings and infrastructure from post-wildfire natural**

hazards. These are natural hazards created by the combustion of forest and rangeland fuels. The primary responsibility to address this component is assigned to the appropriate government ministry and may involve the BC Wildfire Service, regional and district specialists and local governments.

3. **The impacts to resources and improvements from the burning wildfire.** The primary responsibility to address this component is assigned to the appropriate land manager. These impacts include but are not limited to, damage to merchantable timber, destruction of silviculture investments, damages to range, recreational or other improvements, damage to soils and forest cover, damage to community watersheds and other detrimental wildfire effects.

Once an area has experienced a wildfire, one individual is assigned to coordinate all rehabilitation work that is deemed to be the result of fire control operations and not the wildfire. Damage due to the wildfire is not within the control of the BC Wildfire Service since it is natural, and is therefore not subject to be rehabilitation by the BC Wildfire Service or any other government entity. The land manager, however, does conduct an assessment to make sure that any damage does not pose a danger to the public.

For detailed weather information go to page 2

To Date
in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person
Caused **92**

Lighting
Caused **9**

Total
Number
of Fires **101**

Fire Danger Rating today



Current Prohibitions
(within BCWS
jurisdictional area)

Category 2
Category 3
Throughout with the
exception of the
'Fog Zone' and
Haida Gwaii.

At Coastal

With a downturn in the weather throughout the province, crews are slowly returning to their home bases. Firefighting responsibilities in other fire centres are being turned over to local crews and crews that are no longer needed are returning home.

In the Kamloops, Cariboo and Southeast fire centres there is much work ahead as rehabilitation begins, fires are scanned and hotspots are attacked, monitoring of the various fires continues and the mountain of paperwork associated with this fire season is dealt with.

In the Coastal fire centre, crews work to complete the many projects that were started in the spring before some went off to the Okanagan (to fill sandbags due to flooding) and then immediately went to the Cariboo to deal with some of the 207 lightning fires that burned an estimated 871,011 hectares of land.

In Coastal, 101 fires burned 7798 hectares.

We would like to thank everyone for their cooperation this fire season by respecting the prohibitions that have been in place and for continuing to be cautious.

V72176—A couple was camping alongside a trail in Stamp River Provincial Park near Port Alberni. They built a small campfire (not in an established campfire ring) and when they finished using it, they carefully put it out. They even activated an alarm on one of their phones to check it again in 30 minutes. After checking the fire again, they went to sleep. When they got up in the morning, however, they were alarmed to find that the fire had moved underground (a subsurface fire) and by 5 a.m., the fire was already becoming visibly active on the surface.

The Coastal Fire Centre received a call reporting the fire near Stamp Falls off the main trail. The caller noted that the fire had moved through the roots of up a tree and appeared to be climbing up a tree turning it to "coals" as it rose. The caller was moving gear from the vicinity of the fire, had only two water bottles on hand, and noted that a road was within a kilometre and a campground in the area.

The caller reported the incident immediately, stayed on hand to relay any pertinent information and did what they could to deal with the fire. Once firefighters arrived on scene they were able to control the fire and were able to stand down before the day's end.

Weather

ISSUED: 11:45PDT Tuesday September 26, 2017

SYNOPSIS: Limited moisture pushing through a dominant upper ridge maintains variable cloud throughout each zone today while a fairly stable airmass downplays the likelihood of showers south of the Mid Coast. Temperatures should warm above seasonal normals in those areas that do see more prolonged sunny periods through this afternoon. A weak outflow pattern sets up overnight tonight, helping give tomorrow a head-start to the day's heating. Expect unseasonably warm and dry conditions throughout the majority of the region Wednesday afternoon with generally light winds. Outflow winds increase again in many areas Wednesday night.

OUTLOOK: Thursday should be the warmest and driest day of this week with outflow winds continuing in many areas into the afternoon (peak speeds near or slightly above 20km/hr in some mainland valleys likely occurring before noon), while more sheltered

locations are at risk of patchy fog Thursday morning followed by generally light & variable winds Thursday afternoon. Temperatures should warm to the mid-twenties in many areas on Thursday as humidities dip to or below 25%. The leading edge of the next Pacific frontal system should bring occasional rain or scattered showers to western sections of the Mid Coast and Vancouver Island beginning Thursday night with increasing cloud expected inland. Scattered showers or occasional rain should bring at least a few mm to most areas on Friday with mainly cloudy skies and increasing winds (generally E or SE in the morning becoming W or NW in the afternoon/evening). An upper trough that follows Friday's frontal passage should maintain cool and unstable conditions with isolated showers on Saturday – expect temperatures near or slightly below seasonal values (low to mid-teens), gusty W or NW winds, sunny periods, and moderate to high humidities.