BRITISH COLUMBIA

Coastal Fire Centre

hot topics in Wildfire on the Coast

Wildfire news

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Prescribed Fire

On September 27, 2017, the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) took part in a prescribed burn on Federal lands occupied by the Department of Defense (DND) in Metchosin. The property at Rocky Point has one of the last and best remnants of a Garry Oak ecosystem on Vancouver Island.

The property is approximately 440 hectares in size and contains notable populations of rare plants and animals which have attracted researchers from across North America. Historical wildfire suppression has had a major impact on this ecosystem.

Before people began putting out wildfires, lightning-started fires (as well as fires deliberately set by First Nations) periodically swept through Garry Oak meadows, burning off dry grasses, shrubs and immature trees less tolerant to fire than Garry Oaks. These fires would have been relatively low in intensity, since they occurred relatively frequently, preventing fuels on the forest floor from accumulating. Therefore, fire resistant Garry Oaks would have survived, and herbaceous plants would have vigorously resprouted after the burn. Reintroducing fire into this ecosystem will help control future invasive species and conifer encroachment in the area.

The objectives of this prescribed fire are to:

- Kill standing broom, gorse and daphne
- Reduce fuel load
- Create bare soil for the establishment of native seedlings, and
- Incinerate invasive seedbanks

The plan necessitated the creation of a backing fire (a fire that burns into a control line or into an area already burned) to ensure open flame remained on targeted areas for specified durations, achieving significant consumption of fine fuels while limiting smoke. The target was for the sub-surface root systems to be impacted by receiving as much heat as possible without negatively affecting the soil layer. The more depth burn or heat transfer created by the burn, the better.

For safety a fuel break (wetline and a mowed guard) was constructed around the burn area. The burn area was relatively small, one hectare, and the burn was completed by burning off strips of approximately 0.2 hectares at a time. The Garry Oak trees located on the edge of the burn area were protected by spraying a wet guard before ignition operations were undertaken. BCWS and DND staff remained on site during the burn to action any fire escapes and to ensure the fire was extinguished. No safety issues arose from the burn.

For more information about Prescribed Burning go to: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/wildfire-management/prevention/prescribed-burning

To Date in Coastal

Fires to Date

Person Caused	103
Lighting Caused	10
Total Number of Fires	113

Fire Danger Rating today

Current Prohibitions (within BCWS jurisdictional area)

none

At Coastal

In the Coastal Fire Centre we are receiving increased reports of fire due to Fall burning. Rescinding the open fire prohibitions has meant that both industry and homeowners are abating their industrial slash or yard debris. We would like to remind both the public and industry professionals of their obligations if conducting any burning. Know your obligations!

Go to: http://ow.ly/jdO5301kS32

For those who choose not to burn their yard debris there are options. Check with your local municipality or regional district for any pick ups or suggestions offered by your local government of yard waste. Below are a few examples:

Regional District of Nanaimo
http://www.rdn.bc.ca/yard-and-garden-waste

Squamish
https://squamish.ca/our-services/garbage-and-waste-diversion/curbside-collection/organics/

Fraser Valley Regional District (Area B)
http://www.fvrd.ca/EN/main/services/garbage-recycling/facilities/electoral-area-b-curbside-collection-program.html

Are you a good neighbour! Check the venting index for your area before lighting up! Before you burn any yard debris check to see what your local jurisdiction allows and for optimal venting.
http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting/

Current Fires in Coastal

Upper Noomas Creek (V92236) – 3.5 km east of Nimpkish Lake
Size: 4 hectares
Status: Being Held
Cause: Suspected Human-caused, under investigation
Resources: 2 officers, 5 firefighters and water tenders
Conditions: This is an area of Low Fire Danger Rating, Rank 1 to 2. Weather forecast is calling for 4-8 ml of rain today and an additional 1-2 ml on Saturday.
This fire is on a steep slope, at a high elevation in slash. No people or structures are threatened.
This fire has been assessed and some workable ground has been identified but the fire is predominantly on a slope that is difficult and dangerous to work on.

Weather

SYNOPSIS: Winds increase today with the approach and passage of a cold front pushing southeastward across the region. Strong winds (greater than 50km/hr) should be expected at mid & upper elevations as well as in some of the more wind-exposed low-elevation parts of the region today. Scattered showers or occasional rain should develop in most areas through the afternoon while temperatures cool to seasonal normals. A cool and unstable northwesterly flow remains in control over the region tonight and Saturday to maintain isolated convective showers and the potential for gusty northwesterly winds. Isolated thundershowers may be embedded in passing convective cells this afternoon, tonight, and Saturday brining a risk of hail and localized strong downdrafts. A few sunny breaks will likely be seen in most areas by Saturday afternoon while temperatures remain seasonally cool. The upper flow should begin to dry out from north to south Saturday night bringing clearing skies and a good chance of patchy fog after midnight.

OUTLOOK: An upper ridge drifts onshore Sunday and Monday bringing a trend towards sunnier skies, warmer temperatures, and lower humidities. By Monday afternoon temperatures throughout the warmer and drier inland valleys of the southern zones should return to the 17 to 19 degree range with humidities in spots dipping to or below 30%. Winds should remain generally light (less than 15km/hr) each afternoon: Inflow or NW Sunday; Inflow or W Monday. Good chance of patchy fog Sunday and Monday mornings. The next Pacific frontal system should approach from the northwest on Tuesday bringing the next round of increased winds, cooler temperatures, and showers.