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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 34

Hectares burned: 69

Human-caused: 34

Lightning-caused: 0

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: No Ban

Category 2: No Ban

Category 3: No Ban

Forest Use Restrictions: No Ban

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

Coastal Fire Centre Update

Warmer Temperatures Result in Increased Fires

Warmer temperatures over the weekend of May 15-16, 2021, resulted in a series of wildfires suspected to be human caused. Three fires that crews responded to were located on the mainland – Sunshine Coast and Fraser Zones.

Information is up-to-date as of 1600 Thursday, May 20, 2021.

V10520 – 5.5 km Chehalis Forest Service Road

This fire is located approximately 5 kilometres north of Harrison Mills which is directly north of Chilliwack on the north side of the Fraser River. No homes or infrastructure have been threatened. The fire was reported to the BC Wildfire Service late on Saturday night, May 15, 2021. Crews that were initially assigned to this fire, remained overnight.

The fire is mapped as 13 hectares in size. The fire cause is suspected to be human caused and is under investigation. The status of the fire is currently 'Under Control'.



V50530 – 1 km North of McNeill Lake

This fire north of McNeill Lake was reported to BC Wildfire Service on Sunday, May 16, 2021. Located approximately 3 km southeast of the small community of Pender Harbour on the mainland coast it was in a remote area and did not threaten any structures. 18 firefighters were initially assigned to this fire. The status of the fire is now 'Out'. The fire was 2 hectares in size and the fire cause is under investigation.

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Let's talk shop

The BC Wildfire Service provincial depots and warehouses

Flames, uniforms and the spray of red retardant falling to the ground are the common images associated with wildfire season in British Columbia. Behind the scenes, often unrecognized, are the provincial depot and warehouse staff. Though the warehouse staff are not physically on the front lines battling wildfires, their roles are pivotal to BC Wildfire Service fire operations and integral to wildfire season preparedness.



Provincial Depot in Prince George

The Chilliwack depot outsources equipment to the lower half of the province and the Prince George depot covers the upper half. The depots, along with warehouses in each zone, are responsible for supplying crews, incidents and fire camps with essential fire line tools, and consumable supplies for the wildfire season.

Operations at the warehouse are year-round and are vital to fire suppression efforts. During wildfire season, equipment is continuously sent throughout the province and received back to the warehouses. In the winter, the warehouse team is responsible for inventory and the accountability of all equipment. Items need to be inspected to ensure that all standards and specifications are met in order to be ready for use for the following fire season. For example, Mark 3 pumps need to be serviced and tested to ensure they are meeting provincial standards and specifications for pressure and safe mechanical operation.

During inventory times at the depots, teams work through the entire warehouse and fleet of over 100 fire camp trailers containing more than 1,700 line items and count each individual piece. For perspective, currently there are more than 800,000 individual pieces of equipment or supplies at the two depots. Totals are then logged into a spreadsheet and compared to records in the inventory management system; if there are discrepancies, a recount must occur.

“We have a provincial database we use that tracks all the gear,” said Robert Keddie, Manager of the Provincial Fire Equipment Depots. “As soon as November hits and all BC Wildfire Service location inventories are completed around the province, we then see by the end of the year how many write offs were created and how much equipment didn’t make it through the season. Comparing those numbers to the provincial allotments and factoring in historical seasonal trends of the province is how we gauge what and how much we need to purchase for the following season.”

Keddie and other members of staff sit on local as well as national committees through the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre. These committees regularly discuss and determine standards for equipment utilized in the field. Consistency across borders is also an important topic nationally as gear is commonly requested and shared with other provinces in times of extreme activity.

FireSmart BC launches variety of new programs for 2021

2021 is a big year for FireSmart BC, with several new projects, products and partnerships launching across the province.

The work is in an effort to promote this year's FireSmart BC campaign "[The Homes that are Prepared are the Homes left Standing.](#)"

To reach those getting out in their gardens and yards this spring FireSmart have partnered with several Art Knapp locations to launch the new FireSmart BC [Landscaping Guide](#) as well as the fire-resistant plant tagging program. Through the program Art Knapp franchises will use FireSmart signage to tag plants, trees and shrubs which are more fire-resistant, making the information more accessible to shoppers. The program is available to all nurseries and garden centres across B.C.

In May, FireSmart representatives visited Art Knapp locations in Prince George and Kamloops with local governments and fire departments to promote the program and new guide. The FireSmart BC Landscaping Guide is meant to help British Columbians make informed choices about how to manage their lawns and gardens to increase resilience to wildfire on their properties. The guide recommends species, property layout, and plant care practices that reduce risk to communities from a variety of hazards.

In addition to the landscaping guide a new [Homeowners Manual](#) was launched this year. To make it as engaging as possible it features animated graphics online or an easy to download and save PDF.

A [Get FireSmart Podcast](#) has also launched across streaming platforms to provide information and stories in a new format. The first episode featured HGTV star Bryan Reid speaking about devastating fires in Williams Lake in 2017, highlighting the impact on his business and community.

Future episodes cover a wide variety of topics and expert speakers and can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

For those that prefer reading to listening, the [FireSmart BC Magazine](#) is the place to visit. Designed with homeowners, local governments and first nations in mind the magazine provides the latest FireSmart news, success stories and tips.

As the weather heats up this spring it is the perfect time to take advantage of all the resources available to make your home as safe as possible in case of wildfire. Check out the new [Tips to FireSmart Your Home.](#)

Successful training adaptations for COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit B.C. in the spring of 2020 the BC Wildfire Service was just welcoming new and returning firefighters for the season.

Changes were quickly made to keep communities and employees safe. Self-assessments, sanitization, physical distancing and more were implemented. One year later staff have returned again, and the virtual training offerings are better than ever.

Staff Development Officer Kyle Young, with the help of 13 training analysts, worked throughout 2020 to research and test online education platforms and then upload course material in a way that made sense and was engaging for students.

As a result, the New Recruit Boot Camp has pivoted from in-person classes in Merritt to firefighters completing theory modules online in advance of their start date.



Chapter 3 - Portable Pumps and Water Delivery is an example of an in-person class that has shifted to an online module

“We started our new recruits on March 25 and each week we sent out four to five modules and let them work through the module,” Young said. “At the end of the week they have a quiz and a question and answer session about the courses they have just taken.”

Over four weeks the recruits completed 17 courses. Delivering this way has taken pressure off resources at the Fire Zone level, which was responsible for much of the training previously. Young said it’s also allowed more flexibility for recruits starting at different times or who may be hired later as needed.

He said in addition to new recruits, returning firefighters and dispatchers have taken advantage of the opportunity to brush up online.

Skills that require hands on training are still being taught face-to face as needed at a regional level, avoiding the typical large annual gathering.

The BC Wildfire Service Crew Leader Camp was also revamped to be safely delivered during the pandemic. Sixty-nine students convened virtually while ten instructors taught from Kamloops.

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Successful training adaptations for COVID-19 continued

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“It makes it a lot better to have stuff like this to engage with students and try to make it as much of a classroom setting as possible,” Law said.

Young said training analysts are putting more courses online and he can see them being used in the future, mixed with in-person learning.

Once everything is in place for BCWS employee training, the team may turn their attention to opportunities for training information to be shared online for external stakeholders.

In the meantime, positive feedback continues to come in from students.

“We have learned a lot,” said Young. “And we’re able to put more people into the training that have been waiting for a long time to get it.”



M-212: Public and Media Relations introduces staff to the tool and protocols in place for interacting with the public and media as a representative of BC Wildfire Service

Chapter 7– Radio Communications is an important module for members of BC Wildfire Service staff to complete, especially if they are working in the field.

Fire Weather Forecast

Issued: 1045PDT Friday 21 May 2021.

SYNOPSIS: (Today-tomorrow) A warmer and drier pattern has emerged quite quickly over the last two days and will continue well into the weekend. An upper ridge is building overhead today bringing sunny skies. The surface pattern has also adjusted into a diurnal series with cool dry overnight outflows reverting to sunny warm light inflows for the afternoon. There is also a weak mid-level inversion bringing mountain dryness overnight. The pattern peaks today and tomorrow with some stations reporting afternoon temperatures into the mid 20s and low relative humidity readings in the mid teens. Winds are relatively light but a little gusty in the afternoon. Further north, at the top end of the ridge, a rain band reaches Haida Gwaii this afternoon. The rain band dissipates as it flows over the Mid-coast tomorrow. The warmer temperatures and low humidity mean rising fire weather index values for the weekend. Some initial spread index values reach 10.

OUTLOOK: (Sunday-Tuesday) By Sunday the pattern is starting to weaken. The ridge shrinks allowing high cloudiness to invade, temperatures start to decline, and a somewhat more intense pressure gradient lines up along the coast resulting in stronger inflow winds. Monday afternoon, a weak system drifts through with a few scattered showers and cooler temperatures. Tuesday has more frequent showers.

CONFIDENCE/DISCUSSION: The forecasts are consistently building a stronger ridge so that any bias today and tomorrow will likely be for warmer and drier conditions. The Monday and Tuesday outlooks are now turning wetter and cooler than was previously forecast but with the stronger ridge for the next few days its possible the approaching rain will be less than shown in the current forecast. Short term confidence is ok but longer range is doubtful.

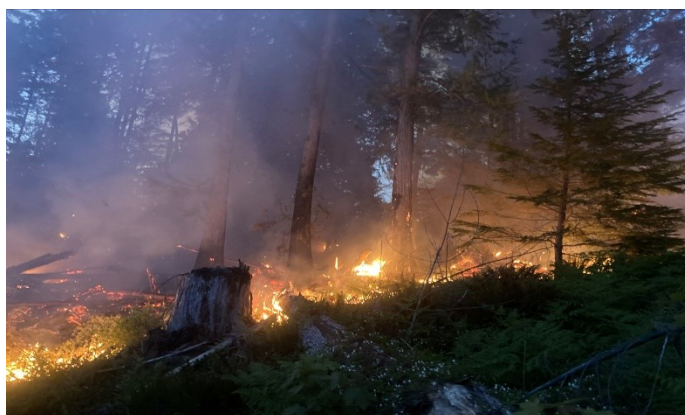
6 TO 10 DAY: (next week) A new series of rain bands starts Tuesday and continues all next week. This is also a change from the previous pattern which showed dry conditions for next week.

At Coastal

Warmer Temperatures Result in Increased Fires cont'd

V10532 – Silver River

The Silver River fire is located approximately 4 kilometres east of the midpoint of Harrison Lake. It is in steep terrain with several danger trees and a lot of rolling debris. The fire was reported late Sunday afternoon, May 16, 2021. BC Wildfire responded with 23 firefighters, 2 helicopters and 1 water tender. The fire has been mapped as 18 hectares in size and is currently deemed 'Being Held'. Crews remained on this fire overnight on Sunday. This fire is suspected to be human-caused and is under investigation.



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

Coastal Information Phone Number: 250 951-4209

Information Officer Email:

BCWS.CoFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca