

IN THIS ISSUE

- Fire Centre Update
- Preparing for the 2020 Wildfire Season
 - Intro to Predictive Services
 - Spring 2020 Seasonal Outlook
 - COVID-19 Adaptations
- Latest News
- NWFC Update
- 2020 Contact Information

CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 14

Hectares burned: 48

Human-caused: 11

Lightning-caused: 0

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.](https://bcwildfire.ca/prohibitions)

Fire Centre Update

Greetings from the Northwest Fire Centre

This is the first issue of what will be a bi-weekly newsletter aimed at building awareness of wildfire and the work that the B.C. Wildfire Service does. Each issue will contain educational information and updates from the Northwest Fire Centre (NWFC).

The theme of this newsletter is how we use predictive services information to prepare for the upcoming fire season. Although fire severity and day to day fire behaviour is driven by short-term weather patterns, we do have many tools and models available to help us anticipate what kind of a summer we will have.

If you have questions, feedback, or wish to submit a request for future articles, or if you would like to unsubscribe or subscribe, please contact the NWFC Communications team at BCWS.NWFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca



Air Tanker drop on the Bish Creek Fire. May 11, 2020

Preparing for the 2020 Wildfire Season

Introduction to Predictive Services

The Predictive Services unit (PSU) is a growing business area within the BC Wildfire Service. It is a multi-disciplinary team of fire behaviour specialists, weather forecasters, and information technology and data analysts working to deliver information and intelligence in innovative and practical ways. The PSU helps with risk-based decision making for wildfire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery through information and analysis using best available science, technology and human expertise.

Wildfire preparedness and response products provide valuable information for forecasting fire behaviour in different fuel types, terrain and fire weather conditions in British Columbia. The PSU prepares several products that provide timely advice to provincial, regional and incident management teams to support decision making before, during and after a wildfire event. Some examples of these products include:

Product	Description
External seasonal update	A summary of proceeding conditions and forecasted fire weather conditions for the short-term, current season and long-term outlook.
Fire growth maps and reports	Short-term (one to three days) reports and long-range fire growth projections. The maps and accompanying reports document the process (assumptions, weather, fuel types, etc.) used to derive the products.
Fire behaviour forecast	The fire behaviour forecast provides information regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forecasted weather;• actual and forecasted fire weather indices values;• fire behaviour general and specific information; and• safety messages as they pertain to fire behaviour.
Weather values maps	Maps include: temperature; relative humidity; wind speed ; wind direction; and precipitation.
Climatology reports	Graphs mapping historical records of the values recorded at weather stations. Each weather station has its own set of graphs. The current year is tracked along with percentile figures from the historic records for comparison.

Preparing for the 2020 Wildfire Season

Spring 2020 Seasonal Outlook

Toward the end of 2019, some areas of the province experienced persistent and extended drought conditions. However, the snowpack in those areas (the far north, northwest, far southeast and the Okanagan) are now at or above normal levels. As a result, wildfire fuel conditions are near normal throughout the province this spring.

B.C. has started to experience grassfire activity. These fires are occurring in valley bottoms where light fuels, such as grasses, can dry out quickly in sunny or windy conditions. This is a typical pattern for this time of year. The BC Wildfire Service is expecting wildfire activity to increase in snow-free areas where these light fuels (grasses and needles) are present. Current fire suppression tactics are successfully holding most of these wildfires to a small size.

Seasonal temperature forecasts for May indicate a moderate probability of normal temperatures for this period. Precipitation patterns are more difficult to predict. Current forecasting data indicates that May will experience “normal to dry” weather patterns.

Considering the current forecasts and fire activity levels, the BC Wildfire Service expects a spring wildfire season that will be consistent with long-term patterns in B.C.

SEASONAL OUTLOOK

Find the latest seasonal outlook on our BC Wildfire website at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/wildfire-situation>.



Preparing for the 2020 Wildfire Season

COVID-19 Adaptations

The COVID-19 situation remains dynamic in British Columbia and elsewhere around the world, and the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) is continually adapting to changing conditions. BCWS has implemented appropriate measures to protect its employees, while ensuring that it [remains prepared to deal with whatever this year's flood and fire seasons may bring](#).

The BC Wildfire Service has a first responder mandate to address natural hazards (first and foremost, those related to wildfire) and it supports the government's emergency response efforts in many other ways. When planning for operational continuity, BCWS staff look at how the organization as a whole should be managed in light of the COVID-19 situation.

The BC Wildfire Service has established an Adaptation and Continuity Team (ACT) to ensure continuity and to expedite decision-making related to COVID-19. This team meets regularly and is divided into four subgroups: Operations; Government Support; Communications and Secretariat; and Business and Workforce.

Their work includes the review and adaptation of training methods, fire crew response, staff travel, fire camp accommodations and hygiene protocols, resource tracking systems, wildfire prevention and related prohibitions, and more.

They are considering all guidelines and recommendations made by the Provincial Health Officer.

The BC Wildfire Service's goals related to its staff and COVID-19 include:

- keeping staff members informed;
- reducing the risk of staff exposure to COVID-19;
- maintaining a supportive, healthy and resilient workforce; and
- adapting our operations and our response to risk, as necessary.

As a result of the COVID-19 situation, some project and public engagement work that BCWS had committed to complete in 2020 may:

- proceed using a different method;
- be postponed or re-scheduled; or
- be halted for the foreseeable future.

Details of any changes to project and engagement work will be provided to affected groups. The BC Wildfire Service remains focused on ensuring it's ready to respond to wildfires and other land-based emergencies, while maintaining the safety and well-being of firefighting crews and all other staff members.

Northwest Fire Center Update

Crews, training, COVID19 measures, and spring prevention projects.

Despite the unique challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the B.C. Wildfire Service is pleased to report that our crews are ready to respond to wildfires, floods and other emergencies.

There have been some notable changes to our standard preparation as we follow the guidelines from B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer. We have developed protocols related to physical distancing and other precautions to support crews while they respond to wildfires. A few examples include: modifying training and orientation, such as the annual New Recruit Boot Camp; postponing face-to-face meetings within our organization and with our external partners; and adjusting workspaces to minimize contact between staff members.

We are fortunate in the Northwest Fire Centre, that the bulk of our new hires have come from our Junior Forest Worker program and have already received most of the basic training. We are implementing alternate ways to deliver training where possible and taking extra precautions when physical interaction is required.

The Zones in the Northwest Fire Centre have had to postpone much of the spring prevention work they had planned for crews, including several prescribed-burn projects.

In coordination with broader provincial government, the B.C. Wildfire Service has prohibited open burning activities except for campfires. The following activities are prohibited, and these restrictions will remain in effect until the public is otherwise notified:

- Category 2 open fires
- Category 3 open fires
- Resource Management Open Fires
- Use of fireworks
- Use of sky lanterns
- Use of burn barrels or burn cages of any size or description (except when used for a campfire)

These restrictions will aid in minimizing human-caused wildfires as well as preventing our staff from deploying to 'false-alarm' reports of wildfires. They will also combine with the restrictions put in place by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategies to manage poor air quality that could have negative health implications and increase susceptibility to COVID-19.

To help limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and well-being of employees and the public, reception areas and in-person services at all BC Wildfire Service office locations are temporarily closed

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

NWFC Information Officer :

Phone: 250-847-6639

Email: BCWS.NWFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca



New Mobile App Now Available

The official BC Wildfire Service mobile app is now available, providing real-time wildfire information and an interactive map that users can customize to display a variety of fire related data. It is free to download in the App Store and Google Play.

For further details about the BC Wildfire Service mobile app, refer to the online reference guide: <http://ow.ly/dZkr30qDdfM>



FireSmart BC

To effectively reduce wildfire risk, it is important that the public gain a better understanding of what it means to be FireSmart. Check out FireSmart BC's amazing resources online:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/firesmartbc/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCFireSmart>

Website: FireSmartbc.ca



Livelt

The BC Wildfire Service has partnered with [Livelt](https://www.liveit.earth/firesmart-week) for [#FireSmart Week](https://www.liveit.earth/firesmart-week)! Re-live this amazing event and check out their website to learn about forest ecology and how to increase the resiliency of your home in the event of a wildfire.

<https://www.liveit.earth/firesmart-week>



Interactive Map Updated Symbolology

On April 15, 2020, the BC Wildfire Service made changes to how wildfire information is displayed on the Public Interactive BC Wildfire Dashboard. Fires will now be displayed on the map by their stage of control.

[Interactive Map Reference Guide.](#)

[Interactive Map.](#)