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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 25

Hectares burned: 15

Human-caused: 11

Lightning-caused: 11

Undetermined: 3

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: In Effect

Category 2: In Effect

Category 3: In Effect

Forest Use Restrictions: No Ban

[Prohibitions section of bcwildfire.ca](https://bcwildfire.ca) for full details.

Northwest Fire Centre Update

The Northwest has continued to experience warmer and dryer conditions than seasonal accompanied by thundershowers and lightning. These weather conditions are expected to persist over the next few days, with a possible cooling off to more seasonal temperatures by Friday.

In the last two weeks, there have been 11 new wildfires in the Northwest Fire Centre. Five wildfires remain active:

- R11120—Pinkut Creek, Nadina Fire Zone

Reported: June 30th

Status: Under control

Cause: Lightning

Size: Contained at 4.3 hectares



Photo: Pinkut Creek Fire on June 30th, 2021.

Update cont'd on page 6

Women in Wildfire – Introducing Kiah Allen and Alicia Rhodenizer

Two women leading the charge in a male-dominated workforce

Kiah Allen and Alicia Rhodenizer are two of a small (but growing) number of women taking on the role of Unit Crew Supervisor in the BC Wildfire Service. We caught up with Kiah and Alicia before fire season ramps up, to discuss their careers with the BC Wildfire Service, favourite fireline activities, visions for the future and changes that are happening for women in BCWS.

Alicia Rhodenizer, Seton Unit Crew Supervisor

Alicia began her career with the BC Wildfire Service in 2013 through the Junior Initial Attack program. She spent time on both an initial attack crew and unit crew in the Lillooet Zone right out of high school. In 2014, Alicia returned to the Seton Unit Crew as a crew member. She worked her way up the ranks to Squad Boss in 2015 and continued in the leadership role for five seasons. In 2020, Alicia transitioned to Initial Attack as a successional crew leader and a year later, returned to the Seton Unit Crew as the Crew Supervisor.

Over her nine seasons with BCWS, Alicia has been on several out of province deployments to Ontario, Alberta, and most recently to Oregon. Out of province deployments are a highlight for her because they provide an opportunity to see how people in other areas fight fires. Through these experiences, she learned new ways to do the job and has implemented these novel tactics back on home soil. She pointed out that each year has aspects that are incredible. “It’s just a job that you can never get away from, it’s the best job in the world”. Alicia’s favourite fireline task is leading the crew and coming up with operational game plans on the fireline.

There’s no doubt that Alicia’s affinity for leading contributed to her promotion to unit crew leader. As the new leader of the Seton Unit Crew, she is looking forward to learning more about the career aspirations of her crew members and creating opportunities for them to grow and develop. She is also looking forward to creating a space where her crew members feel empowered to ask questions, become leaders, feel safe to be themselves and feel happy to come into work each day.

The biggest change for women in wildfire since she began her career in 2013 is that there are more women around in general and more women represented in higher positions and operational roles. Alicia noted that when she first started in 2013, there were only a handful of women in fire camps. For example, Alicia was deployed as a Task Force Leader to the Big Bar Slide project in 2018. She worked alongside other women in operational roles including Safety Officer and Helibase Manager. Alicia clarified, “it’s not like I don’t like working with men, but it’s really exciting to see women in those roles”.

Women in Wildfire continued

Two women leading the charge in a male-dominated workforce

Kiah Allan, Rocky Mountain Unit Crew Supervisor

Kiah was at UBC Faculty of Forestry completing her undergraduate degree when her friend Elora Van Jarrett, a Rapattack veteran and now Initial Attack crew leader with the BC Wildfire Service, recommended that she apply. After successfully completing the rigorous application process, Kiah began her career with the BC Wildfire Service in 2014 on an initial attack crew in the Cranbrook fire zone. In 2015, Kiah transferred to the Rocky Mountain Unit Crew, where she continued to work during the summers while she completed an undergraduate degree, followed by a master's degree in Forestry.

Kiah thrived in the larger team dynamic of the unit crew and was promoted to Squad Boss in 2018 and to Crew Supervisor earlier this year. In the off-season, Kiah continued to apply her wildfire experience, working on fire rehabilitation and recovery planning for the Northwest Fire Recovery Team, writing Wildfire Risk Reduction guidance for riparian areas and consulting on fire behaviour modelling for Forestry.

Over her eight seasons in wildfire, Kiah has developed skills and certifications in planning and conducting burn-off operations, her favourite fireline task. In 2020 she became certified as a PSD (Plastic Sphere Dispenser) operator. This involves operating a device that dispenses small plastic spheres from a helicopter. The spheres contain potassium permanganate and are injected with glycol to create an exothermic reaction that ignites ground fuels.

Kiah is looking forward to moving into the front 'ignitions' seat for more operations in the future. She is also looking forward to continuing to build her skills as a leader in BCWS, while working alongside the hard-working men and women on the crew.

Since she started her career in wildfire, Kiah has noticed the number of women to men nearly doubled amongst the fire crews on her base in the Cranbrook zone. She also noted that there's been some slow progress in seeing more women represented on IMTs in positions that have traditionally been held by men. For example, she noted that seeing Teresa Milne working in the ICS Position of Type 1 Operations Section Chief trainee was inspiring.

These two unstoppable women are breaking down barriers and setting the example that women can succeed within the wildfire environment. As a crew member, Alicia saw a woman crew supervisor for the first time while firefighting in the Prince George Fire Centre. Seeing a woman in that role, she realized it was something she wanted to do and that it was attainable. Now, she says, women approach her on the fireline and come to the same realization, "women have come up to me and said I've never seen a woman as a crew sup, but now that I've seen you there, I think that's something I would like to do".

The dog days of Dispatch

At the peak of fire season, BC Wildfire Service has hundreds of staff members standing by on alert or actively fighting wildfires. Beyond the individuals on the front lines, there are a few dozen individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to protect the life and landscapes of British Columbia. Those people are the dispatchers of BC Wildfire Service.

Dispatchers work out of each of the six fire centres in B.C. – Cariboo, Coastal, Kamloops, Northwest, Prince George and Southeast. There is also a team of dispatchers in the Provincial Airtanker Centre (PATC) in Kamloops. PATC dispatchers monitor different resources than fire centre dispatchers in that they act as a communication link between Air Attack Officers, coordination centres, and fire centres and they monitor the movement of airtankers and bulldozers.

When someone phones 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cell phone to report a wildfire, they are speaking with the clerks at the Provincial Wildfire Reporting Centre (PWRC) in Victoria. The clerks record everything the caller relays to them about a suspected wildfire. The PWRC clerk then digitally passes the fire report on to the dispatch team at the respective fire centre in which the report geographically resides via a provincially used mapping and tracking system.

On the receiving end is a dispatcher in front of four to five computer screens, donning a headset which allows them to communicate with field staff via radio. The dispatcher becomes alerted once the fire report is entered and then passes the information on to a Wildfire Coordination Officer. The Wildfire Coordination Officer makes wildfire-related decisions within specific boundaries. After being advised of the fire report, the Wildfire Coordination Officer will instruct the dispatcher on next steps. Throughout this process, the dispatcher is simultaneously making record of each conversation they are involved in and each action they are taking by typing into an activity log. They do this for each and every interaction they have in a day.

If resources go out to investigate the report, the dispatcher will create an incident number and monitor the resource's activity from the moment they leave the fire base until they return. The incident number is reflected on the public [B.C. Wildfire Dashboard](#). The dispatchers will check in with field staff and aviation resources on strict intervals for safety purposes and to get operational updates on fire activity and other field work.

In addition to monitoring fire activity and handling radio communications, fire centre dispatchers are also answering or making telephone calls to various groups or people who may be impacted by a fire including other BC Wildfire Service staff, other government agencies, utility companies, rail companies, local fire departments, other emergency services, among many others. On top of that, they may be doing all of these things for multiple fires and crews. It is truly impressive how fluidly and calmly they multitask such responsibilities.



Incident Management Teams (IMT)

The BC Wildfire Service's (BCWS) system of regional Fire Centres and Zones ensures that each area of the province has the resources required to respond to wildfires throughout the fire season. This system consists of a variety of staff, both seasonal and full-time and, of course, firefighters, spread throughout the province. However, sometimes during hot, dry and



windy weather conditions, fires can grow larger than what regional resources can address while still maintaining capacity to respond to new fires. Regional staff can then make the decision to call in an Incident Management Team to take over a particular fire, fire complex or unfolding incident.

An Incident Management Team is comprised of a minimum of nine personnel from across B.C., who step out of their regular jobs and take on highly specialized roles to help bring large wildfires or other emergency incidents under control. Their specialities

stay the same, regardless of the size or complexity of an incident. For example, one member of the team specializes in planning on the incident, while another member's sole responsibility is to ensure responder safety, and yet another team member coordinates all the personnel on-the-ground like firefighters or other responding resources, and so forth.

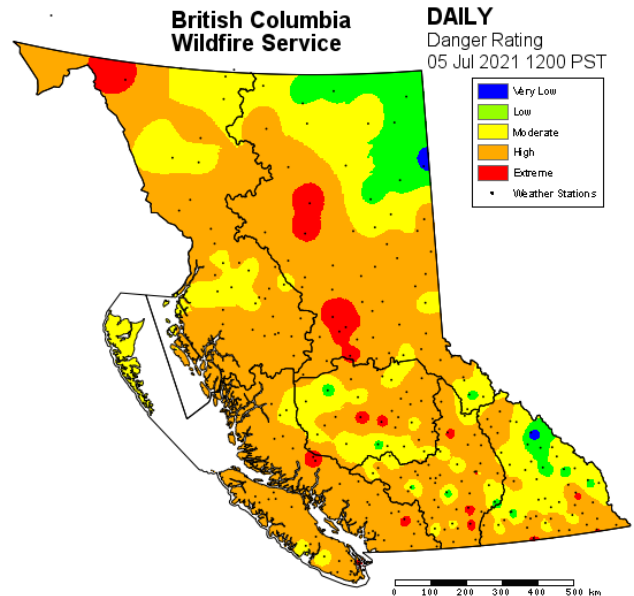
Individuals on an Incident Management Team are often the highest fireline certified and experienced staff. The idea behind the Incident Management Team is to effectively manage the resources on-scene to achieve the incident objectives, such as saving homes from wildfires. By clearly defining each team member's role, they can work efficiently and effectively together under intensely stressful and demanding circumstances.

Due to the demanding nature of the job, a deployment shift lasts a maximum of 14 days before a replacement team will arrive to relieve them, or they turn it back to the local zone.



Northwest Fire Centre Update cont'd

- R51428—Hunter Creek, Skeena Fire Zone
 Reported: July 4th Status: Under Control
 Cause: Lightning Size: 0.002 hectares
- R21410—Tableland Mountain, Nadina Fire Zone
 Reported: July 4th Status: Under Control
 Cause: Lightning Size: 0.01 hectares
- R31444—S of Dennis Lake, Bulkley Fire Zone
 Reported: July 4th Status: Out of control
 Cause: Lightning Size: 0.009 hectares
- R51445—5km N of Bell II Lodge, Skeena Fire Zone
 Reported: July 4th Status: Out of control
 Cause: Lightning Size: 0.2 hectares



Information on active wildfires changes often, please refer to the public dashboard on bcwildfire.ca for the most up to date information.

Prohibitions Remain in Effect

Human-caused wildfires divert resources from naturally-occurring wildfires. Please use caution in all outdoor activities.

The fire danger rating continues to be generally high across the Northwest Fire Centre and prohibitions remain in effect for all open fires. This includes campfires, category 2 and category 3 open fires.

More information about prohibitions, the fire danger rating and fires of note can be found at www.bcwildfire.ca.

**NORTHWEST FIRE CENTRE INFORMATION
SECTION CONTACTS**

Carolyn Bartos: 250-876-7138
Casda Thomas: 250-876-7191
 NWFC Communications email:
BCWS.NWFCInformationOfficer@gov.bc.ca

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