



2017.08.26

Wildfire Newsletter

Southeast Fire Centre

2017: A year for the record books

Wildfires have devastated large areas of the province this summer, forcing people from their homes and destroying property and natural resources.

The numbers tell the story of the record-breaking year. While 1,105 fires have started this summer provincially (that's actually a little under the 10-year average), more than one million hectares of forest and grasslands have burned. That's an area more than 1.5 times the size of the province of Prince Edward Island (see the chart on the right for a list of the top 10 wildfire seasons by hectares burned).

The wildfire situation that we've experienced so far in 2017 has been extraordinary by many measures, including:

- the aggressive fire behaviour that has seen fires growing fast and spreading more quickly;
- the extended period of very dry and hot conditions that much of the province has experienced;
- the large number of fires that started in a 48-hour period in early July

It's been just as hot and dry here in the Southeast

- the number of evacuation alerts and orders that have been put in place

as in the central Interior, but we have not seen the kind of massive wildfires that have occurred in that part of B.C. To date this season the Southeast Fire Centre has experienced 298 fires burn about 19,519 hectares.

Fire year	Hectares Burned in B.C.
1958	855,968
1961	483,097
2014	368,786
1971	351,342
1982	348,695
1950	343,339
2010	337,149
1985	312,757
2015	280,605
2003	265,053

In 2003, 593 fires had burned 44,205 hectares in the Fire Centre at this point.

In fact, 2003 holds the record as the worst year for wildfires in the history of the South-

east region. That year, we experienced a total of 635 fires that burned 88,697 hectares.

Another busy year in the Southeast was 2007. At this time that year, the region had experienced 417 fires that burned 16,084 hectares.

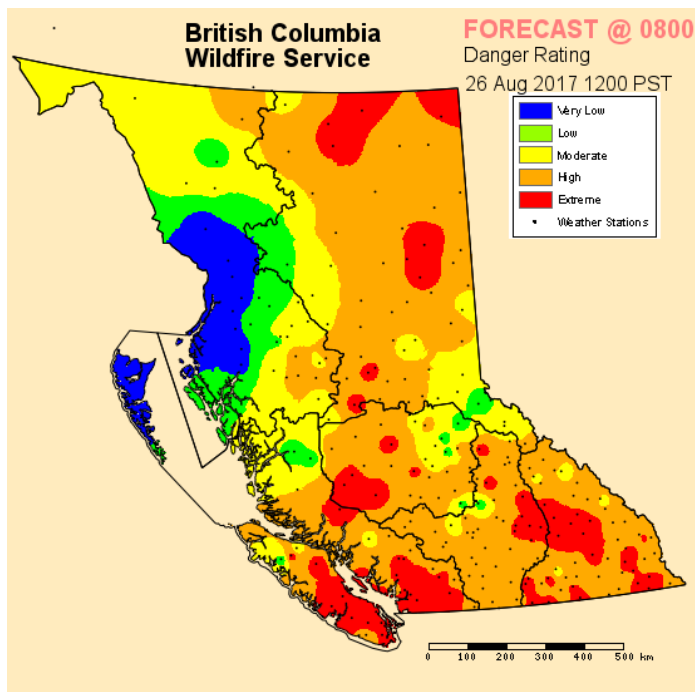
However, it's important to remember that the 2017 fire season is far from over. September (and even October) can be very busy, and the current wildfire situation could get worse before it gets better, despite the incredible efforts made by our crews, contractors and out-of-province resources.

Call 1 888 3FOREST

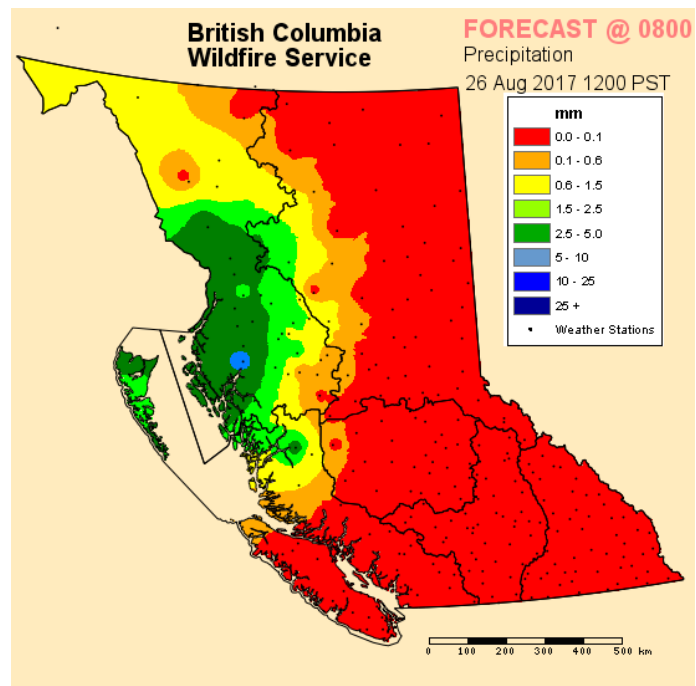
for more information about wildfires and burn prohibitions, or visit:

www.bcwildfire.ca

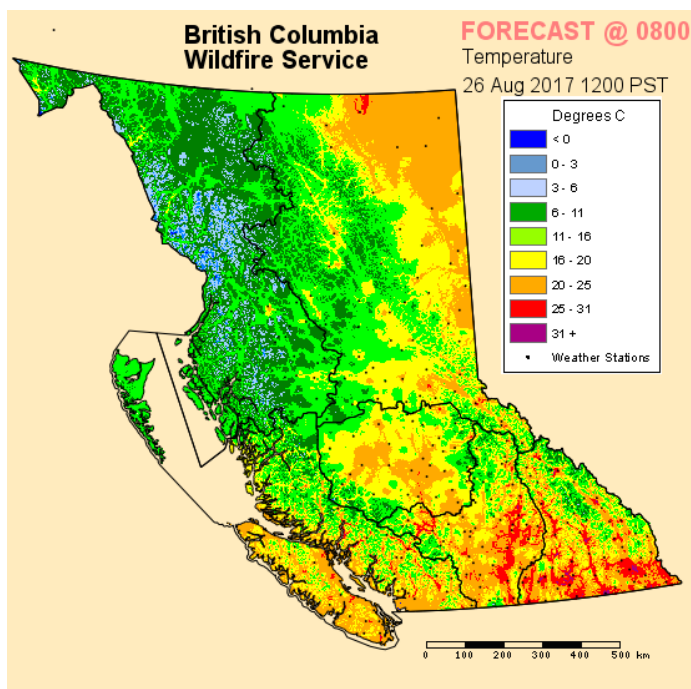
Fire danger rating



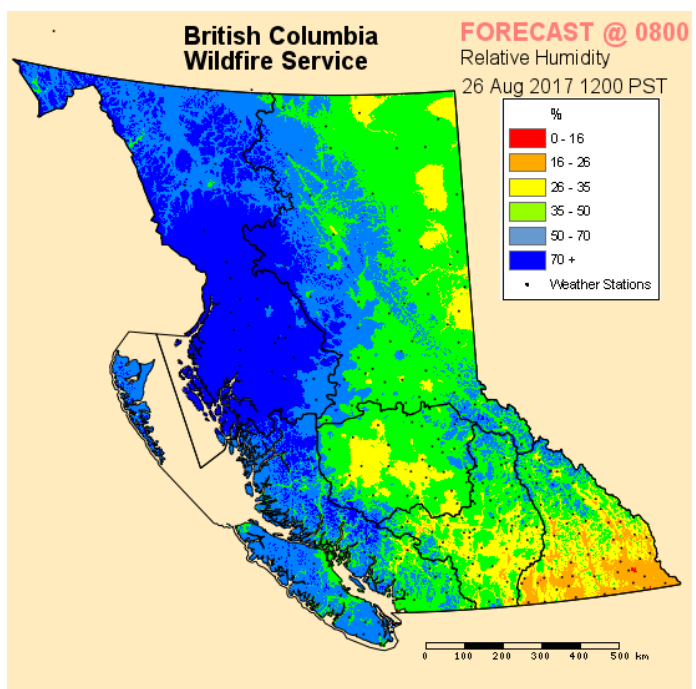
Precipitation



Temperature



Relative humidity



These maps are current for Aug. 25, 2017. For more info, see

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/fire-danger/fire-weather>

These maps are for informational purposes only and should not be used to make operational decisions.

Current bans, prohibitions and restrictions

Southeast Fire Centres Statistics

Totals since April 1, 2017:

Fires to date: 304

Hectares burned: 20,181

Human-caused fires: 73

Lightning-caused fires: 231

2016 at this time:

Fires to date: 154

Hectares burned: 446

Human-caused fires: 49

Lightning-caused fires: 105

2015 at this time:

Fires to date: 559

Hectares burned: 10,951

Human-caused fires: 72

Lightning-caused fires: 473

Current road closures

Travel is prohibited on some roads in the Southeast Fire Centre for public safety reasons and/or to support local firefighting efforts. The following roads are currently closed:

- Harrop Mainline and East Harrop Mainline Forest Service Roads
- Duncan-Glacier Creek Forest Service Road near the Macbeth Icefields turnoff
- White River Forest Service Road starting at the 32-kilometre mark and the White-East Fork Forest Service Road starting at the 60-kilometre mark for non-industrial traffic only.

Off-road travel restricted in Southeast Fire Centre

On Aug. 4, 2017, the provincial government enacted a prohibition on the use of off-road vehicles for recreational purposes on Crown land in the Southeast Fire Centre, the Cariboo Fire Centre, and the Kamloops Fire Centre. In addition, all on-highway vehicles must not go off-road.

This does not apply to private lands or National Parks. It also does not apply to emergency responders or to agriculture or commercial/ industrial users who operate vehicles for farming, emergency response or business purposes.

The ban will remain in place until further notice.

Campfire ban continues

The campfire ban that was put in place throughout the Southeast Fire Centre July 7, 2017 remains in effect. The ban was enacted to help prevent human-caused wildfires and protect public safety. It will stay in place until further notice.

Specifically, prohibited activities include:

- campfires (as defined in the Wildfire Regulation: www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirelegislation)
- the burning of waste or other materials
- stubble or grass fires of any size over any area
- the use of fireworks, sky lanterns, tiki torches, chimineas, burning barrels or burning cages of any size or description
- the use of binary exploding targets (e.g. for target practice)
- the use of air curtain burners (forced air burning systems)

Fire wooding tips in high to extreme fire danger

Many residents of the Southeast Fire Centre are looking to collect firewood to stock up for the winter. Using a chain-saw in our forests is only considered a high-risk activity if operations are carried out in cut block. Operating a chain saw on a road, landing or roadside work area is not considered a high-risk activity. However, it should be noted that section 8 of the *wildfire regulation* dictates that necessary precautions must be taken to ensure the operation of the engine (chain saw) does not cause a fire.



Please remember if you are collecting firewood, that our forests in the Southeast are very dry, and are in a "high" to "extreme" fire danger, so if possible, it is preferred to avoid firewood cutting until the fire danger has diminished.

the person responsible may be ordered to pay all fire-fighting and associated costs.

For guidance on conducting high-risk activities, please visit: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/wildfire-management/>

Remember, that if you cause or contribute to a wildfire,

Firewood permits

Members of the public who wish to cut firewood on Crown land for personal use must have a "Free Use Permit for Firewood" from each Natural Resource District where they intend to cut, signed by the appropriate District Manager or designate.

There is no charge for this privilege, only a commitment to abide by a number of simple rules that are outlined in the permit. Each permittee must:

- Carry the permit at all times
- Read and understand the conditions of the permit prior to signing

Produce the permit at the request of a Natural Resource Officer, Conservation Officer or Peace Officer

Cutting firewood on Crown land without this permit may result in confiscation of the wood and charges. It is up to the permit holder to determine whether they are cutting on "vacant Crown land" and not private land or First Nations reserves. Please note that no cutting of live standing trees is allowed.

A Free Use Permit for Firewood costs nothing and allows an individual to collect and transport firewood from eligible Crown land for their personal use. This permit is available at local natural resource district offices or online at: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/firewoodpermits>



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for more information about wildfires and burn prohibitions, or visit: www.bcwildfire.ca

Hunting in the Southeast Fire Centre

With hunting season almost upon us, many people have asked about current restrictions relating to hunting.

At this time, the use of hunting firearms is allowed within the Southeast Fire Centre in accordance with hunting regulations and seasons.

The use of binary exploding targets are prohibited during the current open fire prohibition.

When the open fire prohibition is lifted, an information bulletin will be posted on our website under “current bans and restrictions.”



For more information on B.C. hunting regulations visit: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/hunting/bc-resident-hunting>

Current backroad restrictions

The off-road vehicle restriction that was implemented on Aug. 4, 2017 is still in place.

This means the use of all off-road vehicles for recreational purposes on Crown land is prohibited. This prohibition covers all forest service roads in the back country. All motorcycles (licensed or not) are also included in this prohibition.

This prohibition states that all on-highway vehicles (trucks, cars and jeeps) are permitted to travel on defined road surfaces. In addition, any Jeeps, trucks or other “on-highway” vehicles must remain on constructed or defined road surfaces. The road surface must consist of a mineral soil or mixed gravel/mineral soil surface that is clear of grass, wood debris or any other flammable organic material from ditch line to ditch line. Drivers are not allowed to go off-road in such vehicles while this prohibition is in effect, and if they do, they could be subject to a fine of \$767. If their activity causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.

This prohibition will remain in place until further notice. This situation is being re-assessed daily and the moment the prohibition is lifted, bcwildfire.ca will be updated to reflect this change.

Road closures in the Southeast

All public travel is prohibited on some roads in the Southeast Fire Centre for public safety and/or to support local fire-fighting efforts. The following roads are currently closed:

- White-Schoefield Forest Service Road at the 78 kilometre point, White-Middle Fork Forest Service Road at the 45.5 kilometre point and the White River Forest Service Road at the 32 kilometre point
- Harrop Mainline and East Harrop Mainline Forest Service Roads
- Duncan-Glacier Creek Forest Service Road near the Macbeth Icefields turnout