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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: **424**

Hectares burned: **492,314**

Human-caused: **152**

Lightning-caused: **138**

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: In Effect

Category 2: In Effect

Category 3: In Effect

Forest Use Restrictions: Some restrictions, please visit bcwildfire.ca

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

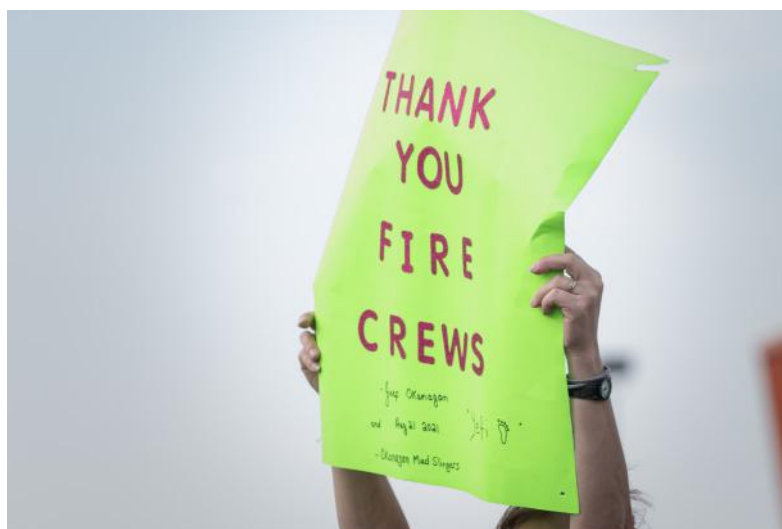
August Update

With weather conditions at the end of August trending towards fall, including lower average temperatures and increased precipitation, fire activity in Kamloops Fire Centre has decreased as well.

In the last two weeks, four Wildfires of Note in the Kamloops Fire Centre have been downgraded to “Being Held” or “Under Control” status. This includes the Thomas Creek wildfire and Brenda Creek wildfire in the Okanagan and the Embleton Mountain wildfire.

The change in weather has been a welcome break to both fire crews as well as the public, with numerous Evacuation Alerts and Orders being downgraded in many communities. These cooler conditions have also reduce fire activity, creating safer conditions for ground crews to work.

As we approach September, a portion of our seasonal staff will be returning to post-secondary institutions. We would like to thank these seasonal staff members for their continued service and dedication this summer.



A day in the life of a Fire Origin and Cause Investigator

Wildfires in British Columbia are ignited either by humans or natural causes. Quite literally, if it's the other; but determining the ignition source is a job best left for the experts—'Provincial Fire Origin and Cause (PFOC) Specialists'.

FOC Specialist Nicholas Hamilton is one of five people trained to conduct these investigations for the BC Wildfire Service.

PFOC specialists are required to take Origin and Cause Investigator 2 certification. As they gain more experience they take the Origin and Cause Investigator 1 certification.

Further national courses are developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and endorsed through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC).

The Origin and Cause Investigator 1 training includes courses from BCWS and courses from the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC).

Origin and Cause Investigator 2 Training

- FI-210 – Wildland fire Origin and Cause Determination
- Two Day Report Writing Session by PFOC Specialists
- S-211 – The Fire Environment for Firefighters and Dispatchers
- S-212 – Fireline Communications
- I-100 – Introduction to ICS



Origin and Cause Investigator 1 Training

- FI-310 - Wildfire Investigation Case Development
- S-390 - Intermediate Fire Behavior
- I-300 - Intermediate ICS
- JIBC or Equivalent Courses
- INVE 1003 – Introduction to Investigative Skills and Processes
- INVE 1004 – Enhanced Investigative Interviewing
- INVE 1005 – Report Writing for Professional Investigators
- INVE 1008 – Testifying in Legal Proceedings and Hearings
- INVE 1013 – Forensic Digital Imaging – Documenting and Presenting Visual

The training gives Hamilton the tools to assist him in determining the origin and cause of a wildfire.

BC Wildfire Service staff conduct wildfire origin and cause determinations in accordance with internationally recognized scientific standards and protocols. Each one of the general wildfire causes listed below requires the specialist to apply specific investigative techniques to include or exclude them as a potential fire cause.

- Lightning
- Campfires
- Category 2, Category 3, or Resource Management Open Fires
- Incendiary
- Equipment Use
- Railway Operations
- Utility Transmission Operations
- Discarded Smoking Materials (matches, cigars, pipe tobacco, cigarettes and/or marijuana).
- Miscellaneous

If a wildfire is suspected to be human caused, then there are several factors to take into consideration when dispatching a PFOC specialist. The Initial Wildfire Cause Assessment form (FS1405) is a tool that the Fire Centres use to decide if a specialist is needed for a particular wildfire. The Regional Wildfire Coordination Officer (RWCO) or designate considers the following when requesting a PFOC specialist:

Initial Consideration for Dispatching a PFOC Specialist

- If there is significant or political interest
- Claim for losses expected
- Significant damage to crown or private assets

- Originates on private land and damages third party assets
- If an enforcement agency requests or incident commander requests an investigation
- A criminal offense is suspected
- Suspected arson caused wildfire
- Suspected railway caused wildfire
- Significant fire suppression costs

When the PFOC specialist arrives at the wildfire they check in with the Incident Commander (IC). The PFOC specialist speaks with the IC and gathers details concerning the location of suspected general origin area (GOA) and if the IC ensured it was protected. The PFOC specialist confirms with the IC if there were any witnesses onsite upon arrival and if the IC observed any potential evidence at the wildfire scene. The PFOC specialist will ask for the IC's initial photographs of the wildfire and if onsite weather was recorded prior to the specialist arriving. The PFOC specialist will confirm the location of the GOA by observing the advancing macro-fire burn pattern indicators, reviewing the witness information and photographs, the IC's information and photographs and the Air Attack Officer's photographs.

If the BC Wildfire Service FOC specialists conclude that a wildfire was human caused, the file is then referred to Natural Resource Officers from the Compliance and Enforcement Branch.

What is the best thing about his job? Hamilton says, "that each wildfire is different and challenging in its own way, but the scientific process that I have learned is always the same and I can trust it to show me where and how the fire started."

The Go-Getters

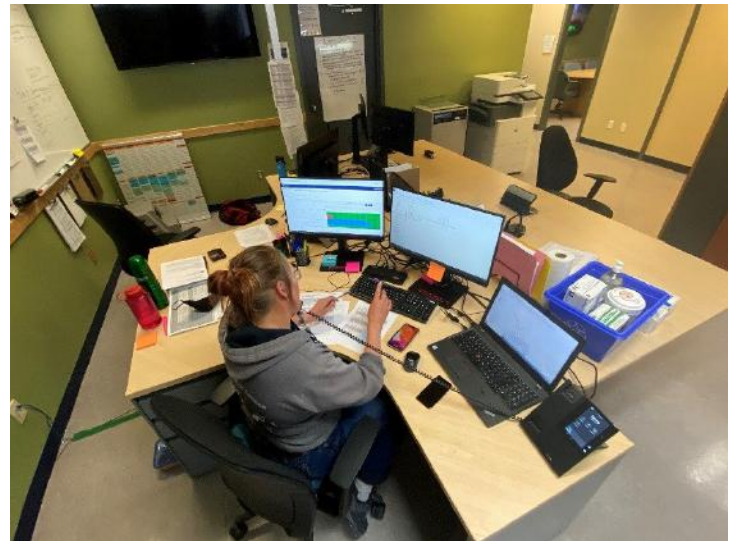
The unsung heroes in logistics at the fire centre

In its simplest form, the logistics section of the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) are the ‘getters’ of the organization. From firefighting equipment, fire camps, hotels, food, vehicles, radios, personal protective equipment, contractor support and even port-a-potties—you name it, logistics knows what crews need and how to get it.

Logistics is not a job profile, it is a function of the Incident Command System. This means that the people who are keeping the fireline going are rostered positions, or in simpler terms, they are wildfire employees that step out of their regular day jobs and step up to fill the logistics role on a rotating basis.

Planted squarely in the middle of the organization, the Fire Centre logistics team has to have their finger on the pulse of the business. They receive and coordinate requests from the provincial level right down to the crews in the field. Essentially, logistics officers juggle fire and spin plates on their head, all while hopping up and down on their left foot.

“The most challenging part about logistics is when you’ve got that many needs or demands from the province, incident management teams, and the zone coming into you at once,” says Toni Large, Operations Specialist and often a logistics section officer for the Southeast Fire Centre.



Toni Large, Operations Specialist, is also often a logistics section officer for the Southeast Fire Centre.

It’s a sentiment echoed by David Michael, Wildfire Assistant for the Regional Wildfire Coordination Centre and a new logistics officer. “Fire response comes first, it doesn’t matter what you’re doing, you drop it to help support the crews who are fighting the fire and all the other parts of BCWS that need it,” he says.

Being on the logistics team takes a certain kind of person. Ideally, it is someone that has significant firefighting experience, can see both the big picture as well as the details, thinks strategically and is

nimble enough to adapt to changes quickly. “I think about the program, I think about the province. I think about others and the connections of what I am doing,” Toni explains. “The connections and the effects our actions, or lack of action, has on everyone involved, from the headquarters levels down to the incident.”

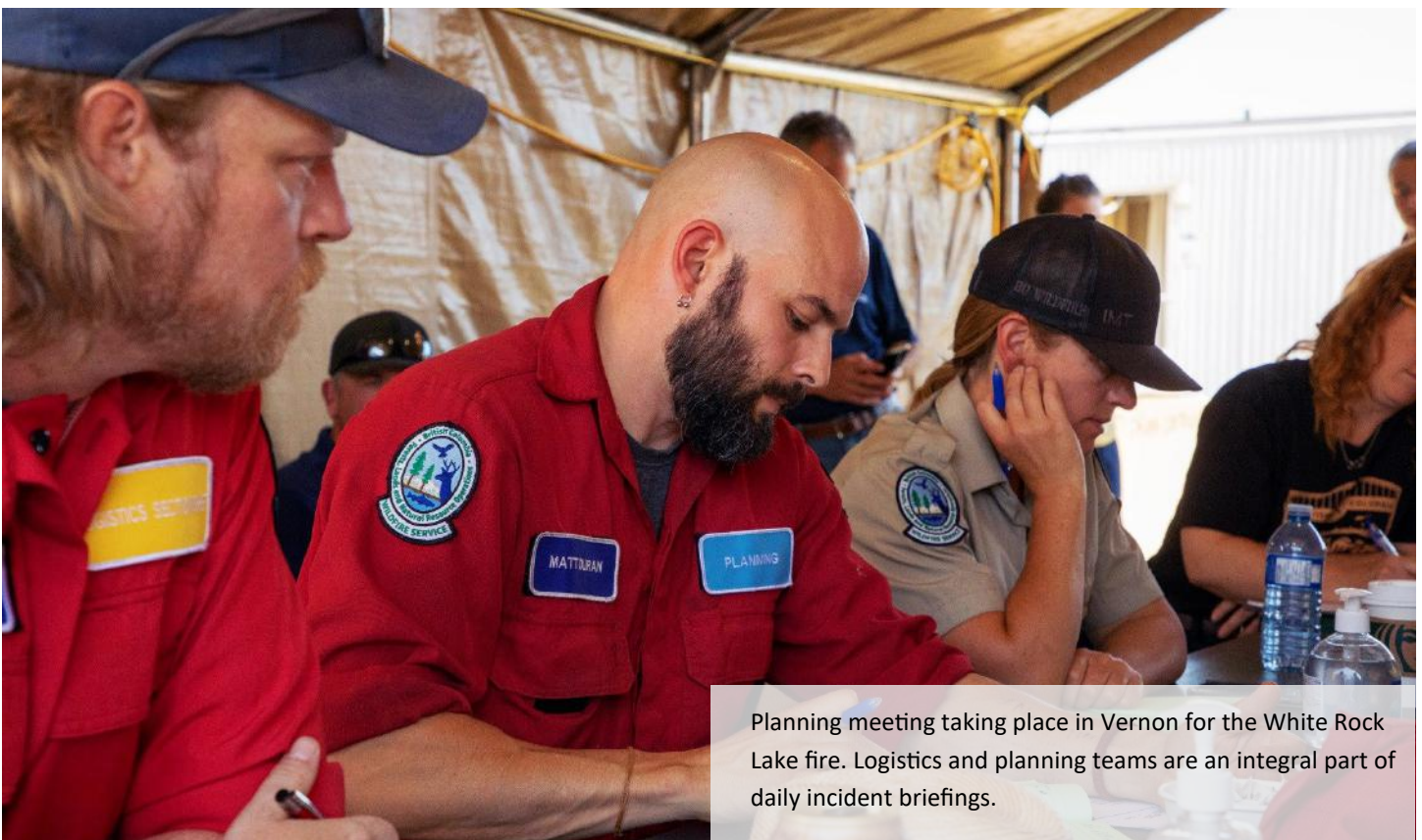
For the firefighters on the line, a strong logistics team can really make or break the day’s work, and it isn’t always a comfortable job. The logistics section on incident management teams sometimes have to juggle a variety of demands from a trailer in the middle of the wilderness, like David Michael experienced as a crew leader.

“We were in the Yukon on an incident and it was incredible to see the logistics team get their work done,” David says. “We were in the middle of nowhere, we would request something and that

afternoon it would show up. I have no idea how they got it, but it was pretty impressive to see them work and just get it done. It’s cool that now I get to be a part of logistics.”

Logistics may not always be sunshine and lollipops, but for the people that join the team, it can be very rewarding work.

“Having 28 years in fire, I am no longer that frontline fire fighter, but to see those new people getting those experiences is pretty cool—just to be a part of it,” reflects Toni. “You may not get the glory of going to the fire. You don’t get to be seen on the news going off to deployment on a plane . . . but you were part of getting those people there and making sure they have all the stuff they need. You know, that’s pretty rewarding for me to know that we just got our resources out the door where they were needed.”



Planning meeting taking place in Vernon for the White Rock Lake fire. Logistics and planning teams are an integral part of daily incident briefings.

New scholarships available for Indigenous forestry students

Thinking about a career in forestry? Additional scholarships are now available for First Nations, Inuit, or Métis Descent students enrolled full-time in forestry programs due to a new partnership between BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) and the BC First Nations Forestry Council's Indigenous Forestry Scholarship Program (IFSP).

Heather Fehr, First Nations Engagement Officer with the BC Wildfire Service, said, "This is a great opportunity for our organization to learn from students with emerging concepts of land management and increase Indigenous involvement with wildfire prevention and operations."

For those who are considering a forestry career, the timing is right. The 2018 Ministry of Advanced Education Skills and Training Labour Market Report identified over 2,000 forest technician and administrative positions requiring replacement by 2028. The BC First Nations Forestry Workforce Strategy was also developed as a long-term initiative to increase First Nations participation and success within the B.C. forest sector.

The scholarships support recipients' education and living costs, including books and field supplies. Successful candidates are required to participate in

paid summer work placements. BCWS will also provide a mentor throughout the school year.

Joe Daniels, a student from Gitxsan Nation and the 2019 recipient of the Indigenous Forestry Scholarship hopes to see more opportunities awarded to Indigenous students in forestry:

"In realizing the potential for conflict between traditional knowledge holders and industrial professionals, I feel like it is my duty to develop the skills necessary to bridge the gap between those two worlds by increasing the capacity of Indigenous leadership in land and resource management."

Applications are now open! For more information, please visit: www.forestrycouncil.ca/cpages/IFSP



Salish Unit Crew. The crew was founded in 1990 out of the Coastal Fire Centre on the territory of the Coast Salish. The Indigenous Unit Crew Program has been a part of BC Wildfire Service since 1988.

Faces of the White Rock Lake Wildfire



This fire season, BC Wildfire has called on the skills and expertise of many contractors for firefighting resources. At the White Rock Lake wildfire, a variety of personnel, including contract crews and out of province crews, work side by side.



BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

There are a number of resources available to assist you in planning for an emergency. Visit any of the sites below for more information:

BCWildfire.ca

PreparedBC.ca

FireSmartBC.ca

EmergencyInfoBC.gov.bc.ca

GENERAL FIRE INFORMATION

1-888-3FOREST

1-888-336-7378

For the most up-to-date information, please visit the [Wildfires of Note](#) page.

REPORT A WILDFIRE

1 800 663-5555

*5555 on a cell

KFC CONTACT INFORMATION

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