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CURRENT STATISTICS

Fires to-date: 404

Hectares burned: 335,173

Human-caused: 147

Lightning-caused: 124

BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

Campfire: In Effect

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

IMT's And What They Mean

With increased fire activity in the Kamloops Fire Centre since the end of June, the use of Incident Management Teams (IMTs) has become crucial. Using the Incident Command System, these teams are brought in to handle larger or complex incidents, sometimes comprised of multiple fires.

A team of 10-20 trained personnel working in a variety of disciplines allow for operational flexibility, and delegation of responsibility on a specific incident level. These teams provide a more focused framework for safe and effective mobilization and operation of resources assigned to an incident.

There are currently five IMTs assigned to fires within the Kamloops Fire Centre. There have been teams from within BC Wildfire Service, but also teams from Alberta, Parks Canada, and as far away as Australia that have come to help.

For connect with the relevant Incident Management Team on a fire near you, please visit our [Wildfires of Note](#) pages.



Day in the Life of an Air Attack Officer

No two days are the same

Those who fly for the BC Wildfire Service have some of the most visible jobs in the organization. Whether training or actioning a fire they can be seen, and heard, for kilometres.

For Jeff Austin it may be just another day on the job, but the excitement has yet to wear off after 28 years in the air.

Forty-three years ago, Austin started as a crew member with two boots planted firmly on the fireline. Fifteen years into his BC Wildfire Service career, he was drawn towards the excitement of flying due to his experiences in helicopters at work.

One flight through a tight canyon sparked his interest.

“My coworker was puking in the back seat, and I had a very large grin on my face in the front seat. I was realizing that this flying stuff is a lot of fun. That was my first flight in a helicopter and I was hooked after that.

“I also wanted to make the transition because I realized if I learned the air attack role it would make me a better firefighter on the ground,” he said.

“Of course, adrenaline is very addictive and flying in fast airplanes around the province and seeing different countries, different states, other places and



Jeff Austin, Air Attack Officer with BC Wildfire Service.

being exposed to a lot of fire. It’s very addictive. I do both now.”

For Austin, doing both means taking part in an Incident Management Team in addition to his work as an air attack officer.

As an officer he works with a pilot, flying side by side in a bird dog, a small but powerful airplane, to assess proposed airtanker runs and assess airtanker drops for accuracy.



Turbo Commander 1000 is the best bird dog aircraft, according to Air Attack Officer, Jeff Austin.

While no two days are the same, an air attack officer's regular tasks include monitoring weather, staying up to date on fire activity, inspecting their aircraft, daily briefings and of course being deployed to fires.

The plane Austin flies in is a Turbo Commander 1000.

"In my estimation it is the best bird dog aircraft we've ever had...lots of power, it's quite comfortable, it's very fast, has good duration, holds lots of fuel, has

very good visibility, it flies very fast (350 mph), or it flies very slow, it is an all-around beautiful aircraft.

"The air attack officer is ultimately responsible for the fire attack plan, doing most of the communications to ground crews, headquarters, fire departments, the provincial airtanker centre, back to the fire centre and crew leader or incident commander on the ground."

It's that direct involvement with fire that Austin said brings him satisfaction on the job.

"That direct control you have on the outcome of the fire by using retardant with air tankers, you affect control of the fire so much faster than you can from the ground. You see the fruits of your labour very fast. It's a very fast moving, dynamic, adrenaline filled environment and that is addictive."

In addition to the fulfilment from working on a fire, Austin said stunning views from the cockpit are indescribable.

"This province is so amazing. If you end up on a bluebird day flight from Dease Lake down to Abbotsford down the spine of the Coast Range, it is an absolutely mind-boggling flight it is so beautiful. I know airtanker pilots have got 20,000 plus hours and they still can't get the grin off their face. That flight is something to behold."

Support from all over added fuel to firefighting efforts

Over 350 fires burned in Kamloops Fire Centre, over 1,100 across BC in 2021 so far



BC Premier John Horgan and Ministers Katrine Conroy and Mike Farnworth travelled to the Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre.



The Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre welcomed representatives of the First Nations Emergency Services Society.



Firefighters from New Brunswick debrief.



Water-skimmer aircraft—Air Tractor AT-802F—provide critical prepare to support crews on the ground.



BC Premier John Horgan boards a helicopter at the PWCC.



Firefighting crews from New Brunswick arrive in Kamloops. More than 3,000 firefighters and support staff are on the fire lines, including crews from Alberta, New Brunswick and Quebec—with more on the way.



La Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU) arrived from Quebec to support firefighting efforts in BC.

Partnerships and Teamwork Key to Success in Research and Innovation

The BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) Research and Innovation team has been working to improve and modernize all aspects of the organization. The priorities and objectives of the team are reflective of the organization's commitment to wildfire management and the ongoing shift towards becoming a multidisciplinary organization dedicated to the all-hazards response.

The success of much of the work is based on collaboration and relationships with local, national and international partners. Research and innovation staff work as liaisons between the academic and the operational worlds of wildland firefighting. They also work closely with crews and other response staff to understand the challenges firefighters face and collaborate with researchers and academics to find creative and innovative solutions.

When the team was developed in 2018, four main areas of focus were established according to organizational needs: health, safety and well-being of staff, wildland fire science, equipment and technology research and social and behavioural science.

Currently underway is a collaboration with UNBC and Canada Wildfire to develop a five-year worker health research strategy based on research review,

consultation with experts and stakeholder engagement. In addition, the development of a psychosocial health program for all BC Wildfire Service staff is underway. The BC Wildfire Service has also partnered with FP Innovations, a Canadian non-profit research and development organization dedicated to supporting the Canadian forest sector. Establishing the partnership was a catalyst for several ongoing equipment and technology studies. A total of twenty-seven projects are planned, five have been completed, two are in the proposal stage, and the remainder are planned or underway. Completed projects include the BC Wildfire Service Mobile App, which launched in 2020, testing and acquisition of infrared smartphone camera technology, and the assessment of resistance to wildfire damage to bridges on forest service roads.

BCWS recognizes that to continue being a world leader in wildfire management and fulfilling our commitment to the people of British Columbia, we need to continually assess and improve our practices. The development of the research and innovation team and its work exemplifies the prioritization of development and continual improvement of our practices and operations.

Wildfire NEWS

Kamloops Fire Centre

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August Outlook

Early August is forecast to see widespread rainfall throughout B.C. Though the rain will help moderate fire activity for the short term, a ridge is forecast to settle over the province bringing another period of warm and dry weather. As the month progresses, current Wildfires of Note are expected to grow with potential for big spread events being when winds increase over 20 kilometres per hour.

Weather models are indicating that temperatures will remain normal to above normal and precipitation levels will be normal to below normal. These conditions will continue to support new fire starts and sustained fire development. The wildfires burning across the province require a large number of wildfire personnel and will continue as such until extended periods of precipitation are received across the province.

Wildfires & Air Quality

Forest fire smoke is a complex and dynamic mixture of gases and very small particles that can irritate the respiratory system and cause systemic inflammation.

Advice to minimize health effects:

- If you have a chronic condition, have rescue medication on hand at all times and a plan to follow if your rescue medication cannot bring your condition under control.
- Look for indoor environments that might be less smoky, such as shopping malls, community centres and libraries.
- Avoid physical exertion because the amount of smoke you breathe increases as your breathing rate increases.
- Keep hydrated as it helps your body deal with inflammation.

If you are feeling unwell, remember you can call [8-1-1](tel:8-1-1), a free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia. If you or a loved one is experiencing a medical emergency, please call 9-1-1.

For more information visit:

HealthlinkBC.ca

[Wildfire Smoke: FAQ's](#)

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

Kamloops Fire Centre Information Team

Public/Media Phone: 250-554-5965

Email: KFCINFO@gov.bc.ca