BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Wildfire Service

August 22, 2020

WILDFIRE UPDATE

FIRE NAME	FIRE SIZE:	FIRE STATUS:
Christie Mountain (K51287)	2000 hectares (estimated)	Out of Control

CONDITIONS: No significant growth to the north overnight. Visibility to the south is poor but it appears there has been some growth, 35 to 40 hectares, as to be expected in the continuous fuels .

OBJECTIVES: Today, 200 firefighters will work on site in conjunction with structure protection personnel and multiple fire departments. They will continue to build upon their progress on the southwest flank of the fire, strengthening control lines for values protection with support from 16 helicopters and six water tenders.

Crews will continue to reinforce control lines at Skaha Bluff Provincial Park and looked for small burnout opportunities. They made great progress on the southwest flank of the fire building and strengthening control lines for values protection.

Structural Protection is continuing to make good progress on assessments and with the northwest winds forecasted additional assessments will be made to the south.

Equipment has started opening up the Old Gillespie Forest Service Road.

Crews are establishing control lines.

Retardant Drop—August 21, 2020

RESOURCES

Firefighters: 200 including 40 assigned to overnight Operations
Helicopters: 16
Water tenders: 6
Structure protection specialists: 142 — representing 40 fire departments

EVACUATION ALERTS AND ORDERS:

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen: https://www.rdos.bc.ca/
City of Penticton: https://www.penticton.ca/
Area Restriction Order: http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Christie Mountain Wildfire Information Section: | Hours: 0800-2000

Telephone: 778 694-3934 | Email: bcws.christieinfo@gov.bc.ca

www.bcwildfire.ca BC Forest Fire Info @BCGovFireInfo **www.firesmartbc.ca**

BC Wildfire Service

Month Date, Year

WILDFIRE UPDATE

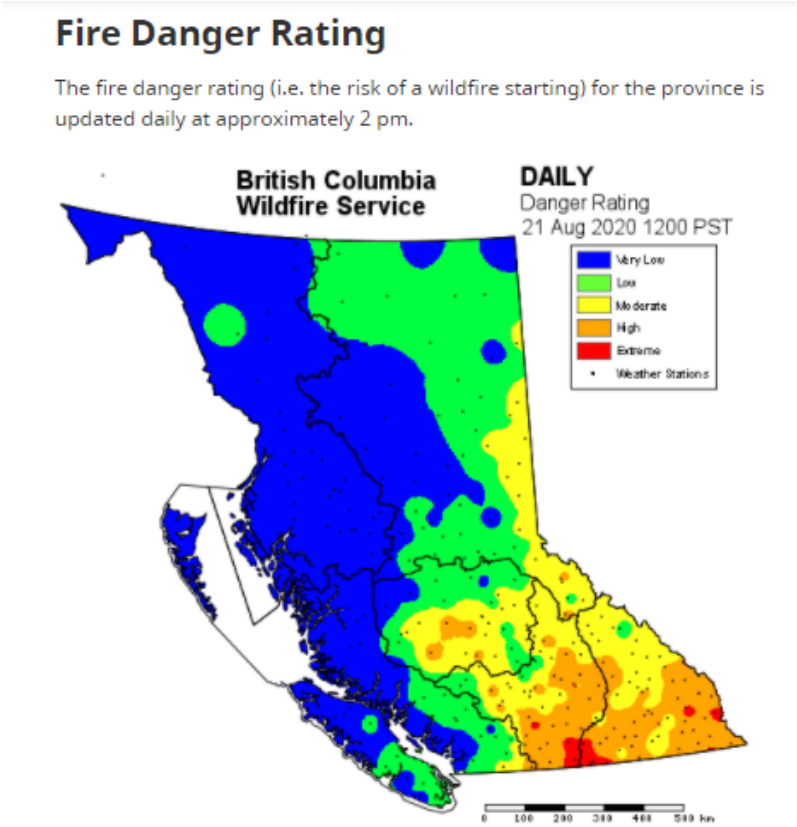
FORECAST:

SYNOPSIS: A cold front will be crossing the area early this afternoon, bringing southerly winds and a risk of thunderstorms. The front will be out of the area by late afternoon, but instability and winds will remain into the evening. Winds will diminish this evening, although lingering showers may still occur. Tomorrow will see an upper trough across northern BC giving the forecast area a drier westerly flow with lighter winds and slightly cooler temperatures.

TODAY/TONIGHT/TOMORROW Today: Mainly cloudy with isolated showers or thunderstorms. Winds becoming S 20-30 km/h and SW 30-40 G 60 km/h by early afternoon. Maximum temperature 29 C by early afternoon then falling, and minimum RH 30%.

TONIGHT: Mainly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight risk of an evening thunderstorm. Winds becoming light and variable overnight. Minimum temperature 12 C and max RH 70%.

TOMORROW: Becoming mainly sunny by afternoon. Winds N 10-20 km/h. Maximum temperature 24 C and minimum RH 35%



OUTLOOK: Sunday will see a slight ridge developing with light north winds and temperatures peaking near 25 C. The flow will back to the southwest on Monday as an upper trough digs southward in the Pacific. Winds will be light and temperatures will be near 25 C. An upper low will be in central BC on Tuesday. Conditions will be similar to Monday.

FIRE SIZE

Size of Fire: 2000 hectares. This size is an estimate. A track of the fire is being taken and an updated size will be posted on BC Wildfire News—Fires of Note.

Map of Current Fire Perimeter: http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/!Project/WildfireNews/8222020~84927_20%20K51287%20MAP%20PUBLIC%208.5x11P%2020200821%20v2.pdf

Spot a wildfire, smoke or illegal fire activity? Call 1 800 663-5555 or *5555 on your cellphone.

BC Wildfire Service

The BC Wildfire Service is mandated to fight wildfires, so its crews are not trained or equipped to fight structural fires (i.e. where a building is on fire). In cases where a wildfire impacts structures, the municipal fire service in the affected jurisdiction would conduct fire suppression operations on the burning structures — in many cases with mutual aid assistance.

When a wildfire threatens structures, the BC Wildfire Service can (in some cases) access specialized resources to help protect those structures through a request to the Office of the Fire Commissioner. These additional resources from local fire departments may include structure protection units (SPUs), engines, tenders, structure suppression crews or other resources.

Structure protection units can be effective in reducing wildfire threats to some types of buildings, such as houses, cabins, barns or other outbuildings.

What is a structure protection unit?

- A structure protection unit (SPU) is a cache of equipment stored in a trailer that is used by trained crews to set up sprinklers on and around a structure.
- These crews will also employ FireSmart principles that can be very useful in helping to protect homes and buildings in a wildfire's path.

How does an SPU help reduce threats to a structure? How does it work and what effect does it have?

- Crews working with an SPU set up sprinklers on structures and use portable pumps, hoses and various water sources to create a "humidity bubble" (streams of water) around the structure.
- The water streams moisten roofs and other surfaces on and around a structure. This application of water is also effective in extinguishing airborne sparks and embers from a wildfire.
- A single Type 1 SPU contains 390 sprinkler heads and can help protect 70-80 structures.
- A Type 2 SPU unit carries 130 sprinkler heads and (depending on a number of factors) could protect 30-40 structures.
- In addition to setting up a humidity bubble around the structure, crews can use the hoses and sprinklers to set up a "wet line" to slow or stop an advancing ground fire.

What water sources can be used to operate an SPU? Does an SPU also have its own water tanks?

- An SPU does not have its own water supply, but crews will seek out lakes, ponds, creeks, swimming pools, etc. to provide the water necessary to operate the sprinklers

How much water can "Type 1" and "Type 2" SPUs distribute?

- The BC Wildfire Service doesn't rate SPUs this way, since the amount of water that can be put through the system depends on the type of water source being used.

How many SPUs are typically available to the BC Wildfire Service during the fire season? Does the BC Wildfire Service own all of them?

- The BC Wildfire Service owns and operates six Type 1 structure protection units.
- The BC Wildfire Service owns and operates one Type 2 SPU. (In addition to wildfire response, this unit is used to train firefighters and contractors throughout the province in the off season.)
- The BC Wildfire Service owns and operates one Urban Structure Protection Unit.
- Complementing the SPUs owned by the BC Wildfire Service, an estimated 43 additional SPUs are available during the wildfire season in B.C. These units are operated by contractors or local fire departments under standing agreements with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRO).

BC Wildfire Service

What is an urban structure protection unit (USPU)?

- An Urban Structure Protection Unit is a 20-foot enclosed cargo trailer that contains 1,250 sprinkler heads, which are quickly and easily installed on the eavestroughs of a home or structure.
- This unit also carries 1,250 50-foot lengths of 3/4" hose that carry water to the sprinklers mounted on the eavestroughs. The water needed for this type of equipment would most likely be supplied by the domestic water system.
- An urban structure protection unit can be used in a wildland-urban interface (WUI) area where a line of homes may border on a forested area where a wildfire is expected to pose a threat.

Generally speaking, where are SPUs based at the start of the fire season? Are they subsequently moved around the province, depending on fire conditions and anticipated demands for this equipment?

- All of the Type 1 SPUs are initially located and stocked out of the Provincial Equipment Depot in Chilliwack.
- When the wildfire season starts, the BC Wildfire Service strategically positions these units throughout the province in areas most threatened by wildfires.

How are SPUs transported to where they're needed?

- Type 1 structure protection units are deployed to wildfire incidents using tractor units, with the assistance of contracted trucking companies.
- The smaller Type 2 SPUs are owned by fire departments and contractors located throughout the province and can be moved using a 3/4-ton pickup truck.

How many people does it take to set up and operate an SPU?

- Typically, a Type 1 SPU would have two or three five-person crews working with it.
- A Type 2 SPU would usually be operated by one five-person crew.

How does the BC Wildfire Service decide when and where to deploy SPUs?

- A key responsibility of the BC Wildfire Service's Wildland Structure Protection Program (WSPP) is to coordinate the protection of structures during a wildland fire incident. Values are assessed and sprinklers are set up under the direction of BCWS structure protection specialists.
- The availability of SPUs is coordinated by the BC Wildfire Service and its structure protection coordination officer (SPCO).
- Defending structures from a wildland fire will not be possible in every situation. An assessment of several factors (including risks to firefighters, fire behaviour, and the availability of resources) will dictate the strategies that will be used.
- When the BC Wildfire Service determines that there's a need to defend structures from wildfire threats, firefighters will take appropriate, safe and reasonable tactical actions for which they are properly trained and equipped.
- Structure protection specialists at the BC Wildfire Service plan and oversee structure protection strategies and tactics when there's a possibility that a wildfire could encroach into an urban environment. Structure protection units are generally used in high-risk areas.
- Crew members may place standalone sprinklers (fed by one or more portable water pumps) near or on top of buildings if there's a possibility that it could become unsafe for firefighters to remain in the area. If the advancing wildfire hits a pre-determined "trigger point", crew members will start up the pumps and relocate to a safer area.
- Structure protection specialists prioritize the deployment of structure protection units based on:
  - ⇒ assessing how "defensible" a property is (i.e. whether the SPU would be effective if it's deployed there)
  - ⇒ determining where the need for SPUs is greatest (based on anticipated fire growth and activity)
  - ⇒ confirming whether SPU resources are available to be deployed in the area
- The safety of first responders and firefighters is a primary focus of the BC Wildfire Service. Other factors that are considered to determine whether a structure will be assessed for a possible SPU deployment include: the wildfire's rate of spread; the property's location; how easily firefighters can access the property; and the property's proximity to the wildfire.

Why might a structure protection unit be removed from a property after it was deployed there?

- A structure protection unit may be moved from one property and repositioned to another property that is considered to be at a higher risk of ignition.
- If an SPU is relocated, this can be a good sign since it may indicate that the wildfire no longer poses an immediate risk to that particular property.

Are there any plans in the works for the BC Wildfire Service to purchase or gain access to additional SPUs?

- The BC Wildfire Service is constantly assessing its equipment requirements to help protect communities, infrastructure and resources from the effects of wildfires.

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HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- View an interactive map by clicking here.
- **Road Closures:** DriveBC |dial 1-800-550-4997 | https://www.drivebc.ca/
- **Drifting Smoke:** www.bcairquality.ca/bluesky/west/index.html
- **Smoke Health Concerns:** HealthLink BC | dial 8-1-1| www.healthlinkbc.ca/kbaltindex.asp
- For info on **Community Support Services**, click here or visit https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/
- For **damage** to private property and Reserve Lands, please email **BCWSClaims@gov.bc.ca.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES			
BC Wildfire Service	**Emergency Management BC**	**Local municipalities and regional districts**	**First Nations**
- BCWS's jurisdiction covers all BC Parks, Crown and private lands, but does not include the boundaries of local governments that have forest fire prevention bylaws and are serviced by a fire department. - BCWS speaks directly about **wildfires** (i.e. fire status, operations, etc.) and is responsible for disseminating wildfire updates to local governments, stakeholders, First Nations and the public. - BCWS does not announce Strategic Evacuation Orders or Alerts. - BCWS does announce Tactical Evacuations. - In the event of an imminent threat to public safety, BCWS can authorize an immediate **Tactical Evacuation** of the affected area.	- EMBC coordinates communication across all agencies and stakeholders to support communities. - EMBC provides advice to evacuees and support to communities regarding Emergency Operations Centres and Emergency Support Services.	- Local Municipalities and Regional Districts speak directly about **Strategic Evacuation Orders and Alerts in** their respective jurisdictions. - Local Municipalities and Regional Districts do not speak about the status of a wildfire unless the fire occurs within their jurisdiction. For example, if a wildfire starts within the boundaries of a local government, BCWS will often assist the local fire department with suppression efforts. If the fire spreads into Crown land to become a wildfire, BCWS will often assume control.	- On IR lands, Evacuation Orders and Alerts are implemented by a Band Council Resolution or other. - A designated person(s) from the respective First Nations community will speak to Evacuation Orders and Alerts on IR lands.

ACCESSING INFORMATION		
BC Wildfire Service Online Communications	**EmergencyInfoBC EMBC Online Communications**	**PreparednessBC EMBC Online Communications**
@BCGovFireInfo	@EmergencyInfoBC	@PreparedBC
www.bcwildfire.ca	www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca	www.gov.bc.ca/preparedBC
BC Wildfire Service		PreparedBC

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FIRE STAGES OF CONROL:

Out of Control	Describes a wildfire that is not responding (or only responding on a limited basis) to suppression action, such that the perimeter spread is not being contained.
Being Held	Indicates that (with the resources currently committed to the fire) sufficient suppression action has been taken that the fire is not likely to spread beyond existing or predetermined boundaries under the prevailing and forecasted conditions.
Under Control	The fire has received sufficient suppression action to ensure no further spread of the fire.

WILDFIRE RANKS:

Rank	Description
1	**Characteristics:** Smouldering ground fire, no open flame, white smoke, slow (i.e. creeping) rate of fire spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Direct attack with ground crews using hand tools and water delivery systems (i.e. pumps and hose).
2	**Characteristics:** Surface fire, visible, open flame, unorganised or inconsistent flame front, slow rate of spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Direct attack with ground crews using hand tools, water delivery systems, or heavy equipment. Hand constructed control lines and lines that have been cleared of combustible material will likely be successful.
3	**Characteristics:** Organised flame front – fire progressing in organised manner, occasional candling may be observed along the perimeter and/or within the fire, moderate rate of spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Hand constructed control lines alone are likely to be challenged, ground crews conducting direct attack may require air support from fixed-wing air tankers, skimmers or helicopters conducting bucketing or tanking operations. Control lines constructed by heavy equipment will generally be effective
4	**Characteristics:** Grey to black smoke, organised surface flame front, moderate to fast rate of spread on the ground, short aerial bursts through the forest canopy, short-range spotting. **Firefighting tactics:** Ground operations may not be successful at the head of the fire, indirect tactics may be required to bring the head of the fire under control. Parallel attack may be used along the flanks of the fire to direct the head into favourable ground or fuels. Air operations may be required to support ground personnel.
5	**Characteristics:** Black to copper smoke, organised crown fire front, moderate to long-range spotting and spot fire growth. **Firefighting tactics:** The limited options available include indirect attack and planned ignitions to remove fuel in the path of this type of fire behaviour. Ground operations are often restricted to fighting the least active sections of the fire or conducting ground ignition operations from secure control lines with readily available escape routes and safety zones.
6	**Characteristics:** Organised crown fire front, long-range spotting and independent spot fire growth, possible fireballs and whirls, violent fire behaviour probable, a dominant smoke column may develop which influences fire behaviour. **Firefighting tactics:** Firefighting under these conditions is extremely dangerous. Suppression efforts will be well away from active fire behaviour and may include preparing structure protection measures or conducting indirect large-scale ignition operations in an attempt to steer the fire. Often, the safest and most prudent strategy is to pull resources back to safe areas, ensure that personnel and the general public are safe, and wait for fire behaviour to lessen before re-engaging in fire suppression operations.

RANK 1 RANK 2 RANK 3 RANK 4 RANK 5 RANK 6