BC Wildfire Service

August 24, 2021

WILDFIRE UPDATE

White Rock Lake	FIRE SIZE	FIRE STATUS
K61884	80,951 hectares (estimate)	Out of Control

This fire was first discovered on Sunday, July 13, 2021 and is approximately 10 kilometres west of Vernon. The cause of this wildfire is lightning.

CONDITIONS:

TODAY: Maining cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Temperatures remain unseasonably cool today with highs into the mid-teens. Winds will ease slightly today compared to yesterday, but will remain fairly high and gusty throughout the day northwest 10 to 20 km/h, gusting 30 km/h. Fuels continue to dry, especially with recent elevated winds, and fire behaviour is expected to increase into the afternoon as winds pick up.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE:

Conditions on-site of the White Rock Lake wildfire were favourable for small-scale planned ignition operations along the eastern flank of the fire perimeter, north of Newport Beach towards Irish Creek Road. The objective was to remove approximately 150 hectares of fuels between the established control line and the fire, which was burning in steep, inaccessible terrain. Low intensity aerial ignitions were carried out using Plastic Sphere Dispensers and ground crews used hand ignitions off the control line to ensure containment. Hose lay had been established along the control line where ground crews were actively patrolling for any spot fires. As shown in the photo below, Increased smoke was highly visible to nearby communities.

Ignition operations on the northeast flank successfully brought the fire perimeter down to pre-established control lines where personnel could effectively apply water directly to the fire's edge.

RESOURCES:

Wildland Firefighters – 264

Heavy Equipment – 56

Danger tree assessors/fallers – 13

Helicopters – 12 assigned

Incident Management Team

AREA RESTRICTION ORDER:

The BC Wildfire Service has expanded the Area Restriction Order in the vicinity of the White Rock Lake wildfire. The size of the Area Restriction Order reflects the need to protect the public in areas where there are ongoing fire suppression activities. For more information, please review the White Rock Lake Area Restriction Order information bulletin and map.

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

White Rock Lake Information Section

Telephone: 778-694-8325 | **Email:** BCWS.WhiteRockInfo@gov.bc.ca

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

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LARGE SCALE IGNITION OPERATIONS PLANNED FOR NORTHEAST FLANK:

The BC Wildfire Service is preparing to conduct a large-scale planned ignition operation on the northeast flank of the White Rock Lake wildfire. Forecasted weather conditions have changed and the current forecast is not expected to be favourable for the ignition. Crews will continue to wait for favourable conditions and expect that this ignition will occur later in the week. Significant planning, forecasting, and data analysis has been completed and will continue to be assessed prior to the ignition operation.

Today, August 24, conditions were favourable to conduct a portion of this planned ignition, approximately 350 hectares. Low intensity aerial ignitions were carried out using Plastic Sphere Dispensers and ground crews used hand ignitions off the control line to ensure containment. Hose lay had been established along the control line where ground crews were patrolling for any spot fires. Helicopter water bucketing supported ground personnel throughout the duration of the ignitions.

Due to steep and inaccessible terrain in this area of the fire, BC Wildfire Service personnel have determined that a planned ignition is the most favourable tactic to gain control while also maintaining an appropriate safety margin for firefighters. Over the past 72-hours, heavy equipment operators have been working to complete a machine guard along Irish Creek Road, working north towards Irish Creek and then west towards Six Mile Creek. The ignition operation will be completed using a combination of hand and aerial ignitions to remove fuels that currently lie between the control line and the advancing fire. Ground crews and hose lay will be ready to patrol and monitor for any spotting across the constructed machine guard between Westside Road and Irish Creek.

The planned ignition area is upwards of 3,000 hectares in size. During the ignition operations, significant amounts of smoke will be visible from nearby communities, including Vernon, Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Glennema, and Falkland. The ignitions will only occur under very specific site conditions and further updates will be provided prior to commencement.

This photo shows the area that is being prepared for a large planned ignition operation. Steep, hazardous terrain makes it unsafe for crews and heavy equipment to work in the area, so an aerial ignition is the safest and most effective tactic to gain containment in the northeast flank of the fire.

EVACUATION ALERTS AND ORDERS:

The following government authorities have implemented Evacuation Alerts and Orders. Please contact the applicable local authority for more details.

Thompson-Nicola Regional District / 250-377-7188
Columbia-Shuswap Regional District / 250-833-3350
Regional District of North Okanagan /250-550-3700
Okanagan Indian Band/ OKIBEOCInformationOfficer@okanagan.org/ 250-241-5809
Regional District of Central Okanagan / 250-469-8490 (local) or 1-877-569-8490 (toll-free)
Splatsín First Nation
The City of Vernon
Township of Spallumcheen

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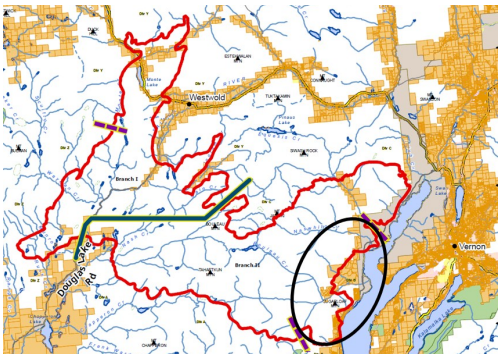
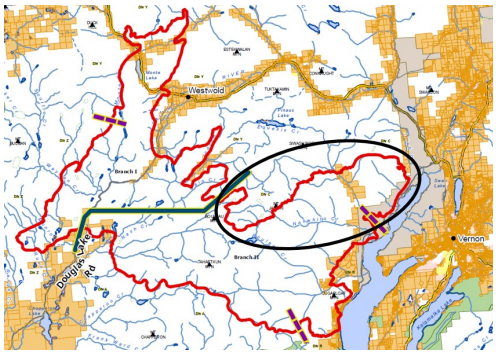
OBJECTIVES:

Division Bravo (east flank): 127 wildland firefighters, heavy equipment, aerial support



Crews and equipment will continue to defend pre-established containment lines above communities and protect structures. Structure protection personnel are continuing to action hot spots and mop-up around impacted interface areas. The Drought Code in this area of the fire is resulting in incredibly deep burning forest fuels making it difficult to bring this area to full extinguishment. Heavy equipment has completed a guard previous used on the Terrace Mountain fire (2009) and tied into the pre-established guard at Stuart Lake. Crews are beginning preparation work on the southeast flank for a potential ignition operation to remove unburned fuels between this guard and the fires perimeter to gain containment in this area .



Division Charlie (northeast flank, south of Glenemma): 50 wildland firefighters, heavy equipment, aerial support

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Structure Protection Branch:

The structure protection branch consists 87 structure protection personnel from various fire departments. Two Type 1 Structure Protection Unit (SPU) trailers, seven Type 2 SPU trailer, eight engines, five mass-water delivery systems, one water boat and ten water tenders are also assigned to the structure protection branch. Structure protection personnel are continuing to action hot spots and mop-up around interface areas of Killiney, Okanagan Indian Band IR #1, and Six Mile Road. Structure protection apparatuses will continue to be demobilized and re-allocated to areas where the wildfire is of greater threat. Structure protection specialists are continuing to assess and triage structures around Irish Creek and Okanagan Indian Band IR #1, north of Newport Beach .

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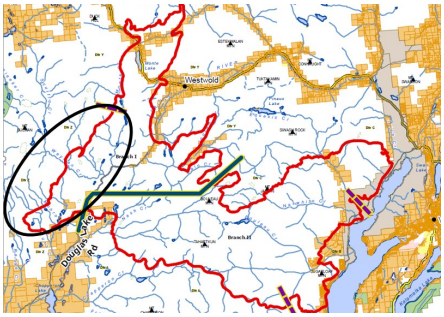
OBJECTIVES:

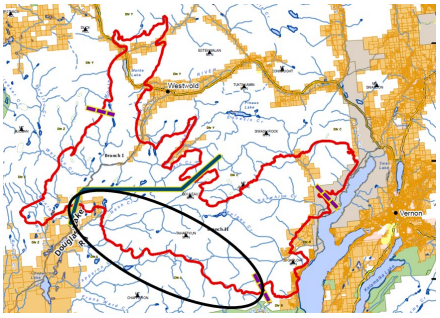
Division Yankee (north flank): 59 wildland firefighters, heavy equipment, aerial support

Today, crews focus is to complete mop-up along the Ingram Forest Service Road and work on actioning hot spots. There continues to be no growth along all fire perimeters of the northern finger north of Highway 97 and down towards Woods Lake. A unit crew continues work on a contingency fuel-free buffer zone from the west side of Pinaus Lake working south towards established containment lines .



Division Zulu (west flank): 28 firefighters. Heavy equipment, aerial resources

This flank of the fire continues to be observed by aerial resources. No growth has been observed along this flank over the past week. Crews will be working on mop-up and patrol from Torch Road to Monte Pratt today .



Division Alpha (south flank): aerial resources

Aerial resources continue to monitor this flank of the fire. A 52-kilometre contingency guard has been established south of the fire perimeter from Chapperon Lake moving eastward towards Fintry Park .

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