

South East Fire Centre & Zones

2020 Recruit Orientation

Southeast Fire Center



Southeast Zones

- Cranbrook N1
- Invermere N2
- Columbia N4
- Arrow N5
- Boundary N6
- Kootenay Lake N7



The Cranbrook Zone is located in the southeast corner of the Fire Centre.

Bordered by Alberta to the east, and America to the south.

Wildfire season typically starts a little later than some places, but in the spring and fall, focus is shifted to grass fires and prescribed burns. Maintaining the natural grasslands of the Rocky Mountain Trench increasingly involves treating and burning large areas, providing valuable opportunities and training for BCWS staff. As you move away from the valley bottom, the grasslands intermixed with pine and fir give way to lodgepole pine, spruce, larch, and even pockets of cedar/hemlock.

CRANBROOK ZONE – N1

Zone Office : Cranbrook

5 Initial Attack Crew

2 Unit Crews (Flat Head & Rocky Mountain)



So, what are the pros and cons?

The pros? The Zone has a lot of staff engaged in all sorts of different activities, with a large natural playground to play in. From the rivers and lakes of the trench to the height of the Rocky Mountains, the terrain is varied and interesting. Fires can be small IA targets to massive project fires that import hundreds of people.

The cons? For some being in the southern most part of the province creates a logistical challenge with travelling on days off. Rentals are sometimes challenging.



Invermere is situated in southeastern B.C., in the heart of the Columbia Valley, between Golden and Cranbrook. It is located on Lake Windermere which is a widening of the Columbia River.

The Invermere Zone boundaries are Wasa to the South, Parson to the North, the height of the Purcell's to the West and the Alberta Border/Kootenay National Park to the East.

Forest fuels vary from open fuel type of Douglas Fir/Ponderosa Pine at valley bottom, transitioning into mixed lodgepole pine, Douglas Fir, Larch and Spruce at middle elevations, and Sub alpine Balsam Fir, White bark Pine and Sub alpine Larch at higher elevations.

Fire Season in the Invermere Zone, like most parts of the Southeast Fire center is typically from July-September. There is spring "grass" fire season typically in April at valley bottom as soon as the snow melts, before green-up happens. This is also the season for prescribed burns, which we usually have 1-2 planned for each season.

INVERMERE ZONE – N2

Zone Office : Invermere
3 Initial Attack Crew



So, what are the pros and cons?

The pros? Situated on Lake Windermere and the Columbia River. Great access to recreational activities; Mountain Biking, Hiking, Swimming/Paddling, Rock-Climbing and golfing. Panorama Mountain Resort is 20 minutes from the base for Skiing as well as a Mountain bike park. The base is located right in town, 5 minute bike ride from the Lake and most local businesses.

The cons? Challenging to find rental accommodations. Resort town, gets very busy in July/August, very quiet in the shoulder seasons. Fairly isolated from the rest of the Province (6 hours from Kamloops, 9 hours from Vancouver, 9 hours from Prince George).



The Columbia Zone is located in the North West corner of the Fire Centre.

Bordered by Kamloops FC to the West, Invermere & the Alberta Border to the East, Arrow & Kootenay Lake zones to the South and even a bit of the Cariboo FC in the North.

Wildfire season typically starts later than most places, but in the spring and fall, we tend shift focus toward project work and training. The zone does export crews often during spring and fall.

Being in an interior wet belt means lots of Cedar and Hemlock for fuel types. These fires present unique challenges that typically last more than one burning period.

COLUMBIA ZONE – N4

Zone Office : Revelstoke

5 Initial Attack Crew

2 Unit Crews (Columbia & Monashees)



So, what are the pros and cons?

The Pros: Like Cranbrook we have lots of ppl in the zone (+65 ppl) to engage in all sorts of things. Lots of community engagement with school and Fire Smart events. Hiking, biking, skiing and all things recreational are all right outside the door step.

The Cons: Like most central interior locations finding a rental poses some difficulty, as prices are quiet high. Turnover within the zone is quiet low so potential for advancement could be limited (within zone). Not as much prescribed fire take place in the zone due to weather limitations.



The Arrow fire zone is bounded by Glacier National park in the north, the Duncan, Slocan and Nelson ranges in the east, The US border in the south and Monashee Mountains in the west. Arrow zone includes the communities of Castlegar, Trail, Fruitvale, Salmo, Montrose, Rossland, Deer park, Winlaw, Slocan City, Nakusp, Burton, Trout Lake, Silverton, and New Denver.

Arrow is the busiest zone in the SEFC. In the busy summer months, crews will get rotated through Nakusp to cover off response in the Northern portion of the zone.

Arrow is a very diverse zone. It's forests range from scrubby grassland with tall Ponderosa Pine trees, to full 'inland rainforest' style sections in the north with massive old growth Cedar and Hemlock trees, with major deep duff.

Fire season can start as early as late May, and often rolls into the fall when the snow flies. As mentioned, this is the busiest zone in the fire centre, and is centrally located. This means crews often are called upon to support surrounding zones when needed.

ARROW ZONE – N5

Fire Centre: Castlegar

Shore Acres: 7 Initial Attack Crews

Shore Acres: 2 Unit Crews (Valhalla & Sentinels)



So, what are the pros and cons?

The Pros:

Kootenay Lake, Slocan River, Restaurants in Nelson, Ski hills and Cat/Heli Ski Operations in every direction, as well as world class mountain biking. Lots of great folks in and around the base and surrounding communities.

The Cons:

Like Revelstoke, finding accommodations can be a bit tricky in the summer months. An advantage is there are several small communities within standby range of the arrow base. Arrow zone has a lot of staff, and is one of the larger bases in the province, so can get a bit crowded on slow seasons.



The Boundary zone is located in the South West corner of the SEFC. The Boundary Zone is bordered by Kamloops FC to the North and West, the Arrow Zone to the East, and the United States of America to the South.

The Boundary zone is within the interior BC dry belt and with an average of 76 days of high to extreme seasonal fire hazard, we have the potential to be very busy. Boundary frequently sees temperatures in excess of 30° C in the summer and our valley bottom snowpack is typically melted by March-April.

Our spring season is quite active with a combination of prescribed fire events and spring grass fires. The summer fire season will find Boundary crews fighting fire in a wide variety of challenging conditions and terrain.

BOUNDARY ZONE – N6

Zone Office: Grand Forks
2 Initial Attack Crews



So, what are the pros and cons?

The Pros: Grandforks has an excellent farming community with local produce being both affordable and easily available. They also have the warmest tree lined lake in the province.

The Cons: Similar to most areas in the South East, finding a place to live in Grandforks can be a challenge. There is limited availability for seasonal rentals. Grandforks is a rural community so perhaps not the best place for those looking for more urban living.



The Kootenay Lake fire zone is bounded by Trout lake to the North, & the Invermere zone to the East. The US border in the south and the Arrow fire zone in the west. Kt.Lake includes many small communities.

The spring season is quite active with a combination of prescribed fire events and project work. In the summer Kt.lake moves into predominately interior cedar hemlock fires. And in the fall its back to prescribed fire.

The fire season typically finds Kt.Lake crews battling in a wide variety of very challenging conditions from the North (Duncan/ Lardeau Valley) which has Cedar trees that are 600-800 year old. To the east side of the zone that boasts big ponderosa pine nestled into the sunny grasslands around Creston. Kt.lake has a great variety of different fuels types!

KOOTNEY LAKE ZONE – N7

Zone Office: Nelson
4 Initial Attack Crews



So, what are the pros and cons?

The Pros: Your living and working with very active folks. Lots of great project work, and a prescribed fire program that is growing each year. Nelson has great restaurants, lots of “close to home” weekend sports and more nightly entertainment than most interior towns.

The Cons: Rentals are costly, and position in the crew ranks are not turned over often. Somewhat remote if trying to travel to the Coast or North of Kamloops on a weekend.