
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
April 29, 2021

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
& Rural Development
BC Wildfire Service

Prescribed fire planned for Burns Lake Community Forest to reduce wildfire risk

BURNS LAKE—To reduce the risk of wildfire impacting the community of Burns Lake, the BC Wildfire Service and Burns Lake Community Forest, with support by Shifting Mosaics Consulting and Northern Fire WoRx, will be conducting prescribed fires beginning as early as May 5th in the Burns Lake Community Forest.

The Burns Lake Community Forest has identified four prescribed fire units (PFU), totalling 675 hectares, located south of Burns Lake on the west side of Highway 35. The first PFU is approximately 225 hectares and the targeted priority unit for Spring 2021 ignition. PFU two (150ha), PFU three (190ha) and PFU four (110ha) will be targeted in Fall 2021.

Applying prescribed fire to these areas will remove residual slash left over after harvesting and reduce fuel load that, in the event of a wildfire, could lead to more intense fire behaviour and added difficulty and danger to suppression efforts. Fuels that were able to be utilized by the pellet plant have been transported off location.

Putting fire back on the land in a good way is important for ecological health and function particularly in fire driven and maintained ecosystems. Re-introducing fire in a prescribed manner allows land managers to practice good stewardship for present and future natural resource management. The planned prescribed fire has the added benefits of improving access for re-planting to some sections and providing opportunities for training and development in planning and implementing prescribed fire—skills that will be applied on future wildfire risk reduction projects.

Burning will only occur when conditions are appropriate to ensure safety, meet objectives and allow for adequate smoke dispersal. BC Wildfire Service personnel will monitor the fire at all times. Smoke may be visible from Burns Lake and surrounding areas.

This project is part of the Province's Economic Recovery Initiative to create jobs and help communities deal with the impacts of COVID-19. The funds are allocated through the Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) stream of the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program, and coordinated by the BC Community Forest Association in partnership with the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS).

About prescribed fire:

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Prescribed fire is the planned application of fire to a specific land area and is one of the most ecologically appropriate and relatively efficient means for achieving planned public safety and resource management objectives – for example, enhancing habitat, preparing an area for tree planting, disease eradication, etc. These operational fires can take many months to plan and are managed in such a way as to minimize the chance of escape and emission of smoke while maximizing the benefits to the site.

This prescribed fire is a resource management open fire as defined by the BC Wildfire Regulation. These fires require the completion of a prescribed fire burn plan, which provides an overview of the project and its objectives. As well, the prescribed fire burn plan identifies potential human, land and resource values that could be affected, and mitigation actions are prescribed. Burn plans also specify the resources, weather and fuel conditions for the project to be safe and successful. Specific ignition, control, mop up and patrol actions are prescribed to prevent the fire from escaping. Post-fire monitoring and actions are identified to ensure no long-term negative impacts to values and site safety.

For more information about prescribed fire, please visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/vegetation-and-fuel-management/prescribed-burning>

The BC Wildfire Service has implemented safety protocols and strategies while conducting its operations to minimize COVID-19 exposure risks to its personnel and communities.

- All BCWS personnel conduct daily COVID-19 self-assessments before going to worksites and are required to report any symptoms to their direct supervisor.
- Staff members are required to physically distance, sanitize, and wear masks in all indoor areas. Groups sizes are limited in accordance with provincial directives.
- Staff members share information electronically whenever possible, instead of in person.

BC Wildfire Service personnel adhere to COVID-19 public health orders and guidelines to ensure that operations can continue safely throughout the province.

To report a wildfire, unattended campfire or open burning violation, call 1-800-663-5555 toll-free or *5555 on a cell phone.

Learn More:

People can follow the latest wildfire news:

- on the free BC Wildfire Service public mobile app, available for Apple (iOS) and Android devices
- on Twitter: twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo

INFORMATION BULLETIN

- on Facebook: facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo

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