Wildfire activity in Bulkley and Cassiar fire zones

SMITHERS – The BC Wildfire Service continues to battle wildfires within the Northwest Fire Centre.

There are currently 12 wildfires burning in the Bulkley Fire Zone and 24 wildfires in the Cassiar Fire Zone. Details about some of the fires in these two fire zones are provided below.

Fires in the Cassiar Fire Zone have become more active recently, due to wind conditions. Until further notice, the Alaska Highway has been closed down in both directions from Watson Lake, Yukon to Coal River, B.C., due to heavy smoke and wildfire activity.

Lutz Creek fire (Cassiar Fire Zone)

- The Lutz Creek Fire (R92033) covers about 5,000 hectares and is currently burning in and around Lower Post, about 200 kilometres northeast of Dease Lake.
- The community of Lower Post has been evacuated and an evacuation order remains in place. Evacuees are being asked to check in with Yukon Emergency Social Services at the Watson Lake Recreation Centre.
- The BC Wildfire Service has deployed 33 firefighters, heavy equipment, and air support to this fire.
- Structural protection units are in place and operating in Lower Post to help prevent wildfire damage.

Blue River fire

- The Blue River Fire (R91647) is about 12 kilometres southwest of Lower Post and covers about 60,000 hectares.
- This fire is creating a large amount of smoke that is visible from nearby communities.
- This fire is being closely monitored by the BC Wildfire Service and is mainly moving toward the east.

Nilkitwa Complex (Bulkley Fire Zone)

- The BC Wildfire Service is responding to several fires in the Babine River Corridor that are now known collectively as the Nilkitwa Complex.
- Grouping these fires together for response purposes allows for easier resource sharing, more efficient fire management and better communications with nearby communities.
- The Torkelsen Lake Fire (R32182) is 20 kilometres south of Fort Babine and covers about 1,330 hectares. An evacuation order has been implemented by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for the 5 Mile cabin colony and has been extended to include Smithers
Landing. Smithers Landing is about six kilometres southeast of the Torkelsen Lake fire. For information about evacuation orders associated with this wildfire, visit the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako website at: https://rdbn.bc.ca/

- The **West Babine River fire** (R41913) was caused by lightning and covers about 8,000 hectares. It is about 40 kilometres northwest of Fort Babine and about 50 kilometres northeast of Hazelton. The Silver Hilton Lodge is under an evacuation order and is receiving structural protection.

- The **Nichyeskwa Creek fire** (R32009) is about 20 kilometres northwest of Fort Babine and covers about 350 hectares. Nineteen personnel, supported by two helicopters and five pieces of heavy equipment, are engaged in mop-up efforts on the east side of 457 Road and building guards south of the fire. An area restriction order is in effect for this wildfire and the Babine Steelhead Lodge and Norlakes Lodge are currently under an evacuation order. The community of Fort Babine is not under an evacuation alert at this time.

- Information about the evacuation order is available online: http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/
- Information about the area restriction order is available online: http://ow.ly/ZRav30lmRkG

When smoke levels increase significantly and result in poor visibility around active fires, firefighting aircraft cannot always assist with fire suppression efforts. Wind activity caused thick smoke to build up recently in many areas within the Northwest Fire Centre. For safety reasons, airtankers and helicopters also cannot fly at night to assist firefighting crews.

Although airtankers provide valuable support, it’s the ground crews that extinguish the fires. Crew shifts are staggered so that firefighters can work on wildfires 24/7, as resources allow.

To report a wildfire or open burning violation, call 1 800 663-5555 toll-free, or *5555 on a cellphone. For the latest information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions, road closures and air quality advisories, go to: http://www.bcwildfire.ca

You can also follow the latest wildfire news on:

- Twitter: http://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo
- Facebook: http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo

**Contact:**
Carolyn Bartos
Fire Information Officer
BC Wildfire Service
Northwest Fire Centre
250 847-6639