



BCTS Chinook – Fire Salvage, Hunter Creek

The BC Timber Sales Chinook business area (TCH) newsletter highlights for industry, contractors, Indigenous communities and stakeholders the work we are doing in the forest sector.

It's an opportunity to draw attention to important topics and keep you informed of any updates or changes over the last several months. Should you have any questions, our team is always available. Contact us at:

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The BC Public Service acknowledges the territories of First Nations around BC and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands. We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit - respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.

Early September 2022, a wildfire started outside the town of Hope, in the upper Fraser Valley, along Highway 1. Believed to have started from human causes, the fire escaped up the steep rugged terrain and climbed from the Fraser Valley floor to over 1000 m and into the Hunter Creek drainage.



Flood Falls Trail Fire from Hwy 1, west of Hope.

Referred to as the Flood Falls Trail Fire, it was declared "being held" by mid-September, but not until 850 hectares (ha) of timber was damaged or destroyed. Thankfully, no infrastructure or homes were affected.



Portion of the lightly damaged timber.

The Hunter Creek drainage is over 4,000 ha and is a major operating area for BCTS. A small portion (260 ha) within BCTS' operating area was affected by the fire. With the current government and local First Nations' desires to harvest fire damaged timber, this area was a good opportunity to test the viability of developing a larger stand of timber that could be put up for auction.

In 2023, BCTS and contractors from Chartwell Resource Group conducted a reconnaissance of the burned area to determine if there was an opportunity for any viable timber to harvest. The result was the development of two cutblocks, totaling 24.8 ha, with a volume of 15,746 m³. According to the timber cruise conducted to determine the quantity and the quality of timber, 86% of the timber has some level of fire damage. Due to the difficult, steep terrain and limited road access, the development will be harvested by helicopter. Timber Sale Licence TA2402 is proposed for auction in fiscal year 2025.



Building Wildfire Resiliency in the South Coast Region

Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR) work is funded by BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) and has been delivered by the Ministry of Forests' regional districts in the South Coast Region since 2019. Recently, the CLWRR received official program status, additional permanent staff, and an annual funding budget.

Coastal Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) work focuses on fuel reduction in the highest risk areas – near communities and infrastructure. Unlike land in the interior, where the focus is on large stem harvesting, on the coast, the focus is on ground and ladder fuels. This is done to limit stands from drying due to wind and/or solar infiltration.



In addition to the Ministry's Fuels Management Program, BCWS' Cultural and Prescribed Fire Program has been building momentum since it launched in 2022. Cultural and prescribed fire is an important tool for maintaining the health and safety of BC's forests, communities, and wildlife. The Province is committed to expanding the use

of beneficial fire as a land stewardship tool in partnership with First Nations.

Working together, much progress was made in 2023 – a total of 23 cultural and prescribed fire projects were implemented. Many of these projects were the result of strong partnerships between the BCWS and First Nations to support the use of cultural and prescribed fire in appropriate ecosystems. Prescribed fire methods will also play an increasing role in maintaining wildfire resiliency on sites that have been previously treated.



For the fiscal 2024/25-year, Chinook will continue to address the highest fuel management risks in the region. Additionally, we will initiate work to develop and gain greater clarity on project prioritization through our Wildfire Urban Interface Wildfire Risk Reduction (WUI WRR) Plans.

The goal is to have WUI WRR plans in place for all interface areas of wildfire risk across the Region within the next two years. Furthermore, Chinook Business Area is hiring two permanent staff to coordinate post wildfire rehabilitation across the Coast Area and will continue to increase wildfire resiliency across the wider landscape.



Fiscal 23/24 Accomplishments: South Coast Region

Operational Fuels Management		Hectares (Rounded)
Sunshine Coast	Cranberry Lake	23
Chilliwack	Boothroyd (East)	14
Sea To Sky	Devine (D'arcy)	20
Sea To Sky	Evans Lake	5
Total:		62
Fuels Management Prescription Development		
Chilliwack	Boothroyd (West) (maintenance Rx)	14
Sea To Sky	Devine (D'arcy)	5
Sea To Sky	Birkenhead Lk Estates	36
Sea To Sky	Owl Creek	18
Sea To Sky	Pinecrest Estates	11
Total:		84
Cultural Heritage Impact/ Preliminary Field Recon		
Chilliwack	Post Creek	40
Sea To Sky	Walkerville Estates	5
Total:		45

Fiscal 2023/24 Cultural and Prescribed Fire: South Coast Region

District	Location	Activity	Hectares
Sea To Sky	Tenquille	Burn Plan Development	18.5
Sea To Sky	Tenquille	Prescription Development	18.5
Sea To Sky	Pemberton	Prescription Development	57
Sea To Sky	D'Arcy	Prescribed fire scoping	Large Area+
Sea To Sky	Squamish	Prescribed fire scoping	Large Area+
Total:			94+

For more information on Chinook's Coastal Wildfire Risk Reduction, Fuels Management Program and BCWS' Cultural and Prescribed Fire Program, please reach out to Aaron Smeeth, Regional Integrated Investment Specialist (South Coast Region)
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BCTS Sets Standard for Wet Weather Safety in BC Forest Industry

In a significant stride toward ensuring worker safety in British Columbia's forestry sector, the Woodlot Licence and Community Forest Association (CFA) Safety Committee of the BC Forest Safety Council have introduced new guidelines for wet weather safety practices. Termed the "Rainfall Shutdown Procedure," this initiative aims to mitigate dangers associated with hazardous geotechnical processes, such as landslides and debris flows, which are exacerbated during wet conditions.

The guidelines are featured in the most recent edition of the British Columbia Community Forest Association (BCCFA) newsletter, where wet weather guidance from the Chinook Business Area (TCH) and the Strait of Georgia Business Area (TSG) has been cited as best practice for protecting the safety of forestry workers. It is important for woodlots and CFAs to have wet weather shut down criteria that meets BC Forest Safety Council guidance, and BCTS has once again proven to be a leader in the field by providing best practices to follow.

The Rainfall Shutdown Procedure is designed to equip forestry crews with a comprehensive plan to monitor and respond to adverse weather conditions effectively. It acts as a crucial tool in safeguarding workers against potential risks arising from slope instability and terrain hazards. By implementing this procedure, licensees fulfill their responsibility to ensure worker awareness of risks and preparedness to respond and are supporting a culture of safety within the industry.

In a dynamic environment where weather patterns are evolving, the implementation of proactive safety measures like the Rainfall Shutdown Procedure is not just a regulatory obligation but a vital investment in protecting the lives and well-being of forestry workers. Through collaborative efforts and adherence to best practices, the BC forestry sector reaffirms its commitment to fostering a culture of safety and resilience in the face of increasing environmental challenges. Thank you to TCH and TSG for being leaders in the field and continuing to highlight BCTS' commitment to safety!

See the Rainfall Shutdown Procedures PDF:

[//bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Rain-Fall-Shutdown-Procedures-Pt-2_FINAL_Jan_22_24.pdf](http://bccfa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Rain-Fall-Shutdown-Procedures-Pt-2_FINAL_Jan_22_24.pdf)



NORTHERN GOSHAWK STADS K'UN Implementation Plan: Status Update



Since the Implementation Plan for the Northern Goshawk (NOGO) subspecies (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*) was released in February 2018, BCTS has been working with regional Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) biologists to establish Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHA) and manage breeding areas. BCTS has aided in the identification of candidate breeding areas by reporting goshawk sightings and nests.

South Coast

BCTS wildlife contractors conduct goshawk surveys and annual monitoring of known NOGO territories within the South Coast Region to evaluate occupancy and breeding activity. WLRS also coordinates a field program to look for new territories and to evaluate habitat within breeding areas that are WHA candidates.

Northern Goshawk WHAs South Coast Region

Area	BCTS		Contributing WHAs Established by all licensees
	Proposed	Established	
DSC	2 1/2	3	11
DSQ	1	0	2
DCK	2	0	0

Haida Gwaii

Stads K'un is the Haida name for Northern Goshawk and means *wings brushing boughs*. This likely refers to the the bird's unique and agile hunting behaviour required to soar through the understory in pursuit of prey. In 2017, Stads K'un was voted Haida Gwaii's national bird by the Haida Nation's annual House of Assembly.

Stads K'un management on Haida Gwaii falls under the Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives order, which gives automatic, legal protection of 200 ha around any known or newly discovered Stads K'un nests. For this reason, the WHA targets listed in the Implementation Plan are less relevant on Haida Gwaii than the rest of the region since protections are already in place, even without WHAs.

Haida Gwaii currently has 31 known Stads K'un territories, whose breeding areas are all protected. Nine of these areas overlap or partially overlap with BCTS operating areas.

Video of a goshawk chick in a nest in Haida Gwaii:

[Goshawk Chick on Haida Gwaii\(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



Early identification of Northern Goshawk breeding areas helps us plan for protection during block development.

I saw a hawk – was it a Northern Goshawk? Identification Tips

- Large size, similar to a raven with a long, barred tail.
- Adults – red eyes, distinct white stripe over eye, fine barring on chest, dark back.
- Juveniles – browner overall, coarse barring on chest and belly, eye stripe less distinct.



Northern Goshawk Nests

Most nesting trees are live conifers with sufficiently sized branches or a deformity (i.e. forked top or mistletoe) to support a large stick nest structure. Nests have been found in deciduous trees with large branch forks. Nests are usually located against the tree trunk within the lower 1/3 or 1/2 of the tree height under the canopy.



BCTS

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Identification Resources:

- NOGO Identification training materials for forestry workers FTP site.
- BC iSpecies Goshawk app – free from App Store.
- Audio link to calls: American Goshawk Sounds, All About Birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



If you see a goshawk or a goshawk nest, take photos/videos, record the location, and report the sighting to:

Brittain River Grizzly Bear Cluster Planting - TA0035

Brittain River is in the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District, about a third of the way up Jervis inlet within the shíshálh Nation swiya. During initial planning for TA0035, shíshálh expressed concerns about Brittain River's Grizzly bear population and ensuring appropriate management measures were in place to enhance Grizzly habitat in the Brittain River drainage.

BCTS enlisted contract biologist Wayne Wall, RPBio, to map class 1 and 2 Grizzly habitats based on Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) mapping, LiDAR and field verification. High value Grizzly habitat polygons were centered on Grizzly denning and foraging sites. One polygon overlapped a planned block in TA0035. The Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) amendment for Grizzly stocking standards was approved in 2021. The stocking standard reduces overall stocking density, and BCTS began planning the implementation of the Grizzly stocking standards on any blocks with class 2 Grizzly habitat polygons.

On the planned block in TA0035, BCTS planted trees in clusters, with adequate space between the clusters, to allow for the infill of desirable forage species. In the early spring of 2023, BCTS staked the center of the clusters to ensure proper spacing throughout the block. The target for planting was 600 trees/hectare with 30 trees per cluster at a minimum spacing of 1.5 m between trees. This would leave a gap of 6 - 10 m in the openings between clusters to allow for the infill of forage species. Due to a large resident herd of elk in the valley, seedling protectors were used on all the Douglas-fir and Western Red Cedar seedlings planted on the block. The planting has now been successfully implemented by BCTS planting contractor Rainforest Field Services and will be monitored closely by BCTS staff.



Chinook External SFI and EMS Audit

In August and October 2023, Chinook Business Area underwent a Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Environmental Management System (EMS) external audit. The audit assessed the EMS/SFI 2015-2019 and 2022 standard requirements and the EMS/SFI documentation and records at Chinook over two of our four field units (Haida Gwaii and Powell River). Several positive management practices were included in the audit findings.

The Haida Gwaii audit observed:

- An effectively deactivated borrow pit; the licensee had placed stumps and woody debris on top of exposed mineral soil.
- A well-placed Wildlife Tree Retention Area that contained quality timber but was retained to protect soils with a high-water content.
- The prescription for retaining Pacific Crab Apple trees was found to be effectively implemented on a Haida Gwaii cutblock.

The field audit on the Sunshine Coast observed:

- The Mt. Elphinstone South Watershed Assessment was a noteworthy example of an assessment which was conducted at a level of intensity and rigor that is well above that of most other watershed assessments conducted in the province.
- Noteworthy examples of the implementation of measures to preserve Visual Quality Objectives.

General Comment:

- Chinook Business Area engages extensively with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and resource user groups to better gain an understanding of and reflect their interests where possible in site plans and associated development activities.

Opportunities for Improvement observed by the auditors:

- Two S6 streams had not been cleaned of woody debris to prevent potential blockages and stream diversion.
- In a small cutblock, where harvesting had been completed, accumulations of small sized logging debris were in a stream in the vicinity of a temporary crossing that had been pulled.
- On an active in-block road being built by a licensee, debris (woody and blast rock) was introduced in a stream.

- Single stem retention of western yew tree was not followed as prescribed in the site plan.
- A tidy tank, in excess of 450 liters, did not have a spec plate/or proof of inspection within the last five years.

The overall conclusion for this audit was for Chinook to continue to effectively implement the requirement of the BCTS SFI program.

Licensee and Contractor Information

Guide to Wildfire Hazard Assessment and Abatement

Fire hazard assessments and hazard abatement are key activities in reducing the potential threat of wildfires arising from fuels left on the land base following industrial activities. Under the *Wildfire Act*, a person carrying out an industrial activity or prescribed activity is required to assess and abate fire hazards as necessary.



A [BCTS April 30, 2019, advisory bulletin](#) for BCTS Timber Sale Licence (TSL) holders regarding fire hazard assessment and abatement requirements. The information and links provided in the advisory bulletin, specifically the link to the Guide to Fuel Hazard Assessment and Abatement, are intended to assist those carrying out industrial activities in determining if fuel hazard abatement is necessary, and if so, the threshold necessary to comply with the legislated obligations. The Guide provides step-by-step instruction to enable a person to determine when fuel hazard abatement is needed. It is the TSL holder's responsibility to be familiar with requirements, engage support from a forest professional, complete fire hazard assessments at prescribed intervals,

document and retain records, provide copies to BCTS and to conduct abatement activities. Please contact us if you have questions about fire hazard assessments and abatement requirements.



CTS PROVINCIAL ROLL-UP: SFI AND EMS CERTIFICATION AUDIT FINDINGS

Annual internal and external audits of BCTS operations are required to maintain certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Management Standard. In fall 2023, audits at eight BCTS Business Areas and Provincial Operations demonstrated BCTS' success in meeting the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard. Audit findings did, however, note weaknesses in implementation of certification requirements by timber sale licence (TSL) holders. BCTS staff will be increasing TSL administration efforts to ensure licensees are conforming with TSL requirements necessary to meet the SFI standard. BCTS' SFI certification ensures market access for timber harvested under TSLs. Continued success of the SFI certification program requires active participation by all TSL holders. Thank you to the clients who participated in the audits.

SFI Requirement	Notification to BCTS Clients
<p>Compliance with TSL obligations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSL holders must comply with all TSL and legal requirements. • BCTS staff will be increasing inspection and monitoring frequency and requiring timely action to correct all non-conformances. • TSL holder failure to meet TSL obligations will be managed via escalating enforcement, which could include suspension of the licence and forfeiture of deposit. • TSL holders must monitor their operations and address non-conformances, regardless of whether they are noted during BCTS inspections. • Requirements for TSL self-inspection frequency has increased. • Training is identified as a focus area for 2024 audits. Ensure all supervisors and workers' training is current and training records are on site and up to date. Refer to BCTS Certification website for more information. • Deactivation must be completed in accordance with regulations.
<p>Stop Work Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers must understand stop-work procedures stated in EFPs and when they apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a stop work situation develops, TSL holders must contact their BCTS representative. • Soil disturbance can be considered environmental damage at levels below the limit prescribed in the site plan. If in doubt, stop work in that area and contact BCTS before proceeding with further work. • BCTS may retain a portion of the deposit in any instance where licensees do not follow TSL requirements.
<p>Soil Disturbance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations must avoid excessive soil disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil disturbance may be considered excessive at levels below the legal threshold in the site plan. • Ensure workers are familiar with the plan and any timing restrictions that may apply including practices to minimize disturbance. • Monitor operations for soil disturbance, stop work and contact BCTS if rutting or compaction is occurring.
<p>Fuel Handling / EFP 06</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers must be familiar with EFP 06 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent inspections of fuel storage and transportation facilities are recommended. A new Fuel Handling Checklist is now available for use. • Spill kits must be inspected, and contents replaced as needed. • Tanks must be labelled as per TDG requirements. • Slip-tanks must be adequately secured. • Non-conformance with EFP-06 may result in escalating actions up to and including TSL suspension.

For more information visit our website: [BC Timber Sales Forest Certification - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/timber-sales-forest-certification/)