

WILDFIRE Seasonal Outlook



BC Wildfire
Service

MONTHLY UPDATE

July 5, 2021

RECENT CONDITIONS

The first half of June delivered relatively normal precipitation to the Northern half of the province while the Southern half was drier than normal. By the end of the month, the Southern Interior only received 30% of normal June rainfall. Temperatures climbed steadily throughout the month culminating with a historic heatwave that affected the entire province. The dryness and extreme heat raised fire dangers to critical levels which resulted in several large fires in Northeastern B.C. and the Central Interior. Burning conditions across much of the province are currently three to four weeks ahead of schedule and more typical of average mid-July or August conditions.

Furthermore, select areas within the Kamloops Fire Centre are experiencing record moisture deficits. Widespread thunderstorms recently delivered more lightning than rain with the only significant rainfall amounts being confined to the northeast corner of B.C. Delayed lightning starts from dry lightning are anticipated in the coming weeks.

So far this year B.C. has had 689 fires, with roughly 318 occurring the week of June 28.

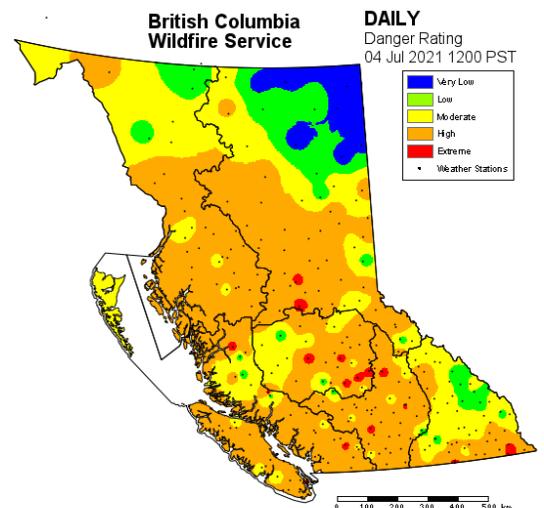


Fig. 1: Wildfire Danger Rating refers to the potential for wildfires to start and grow. High and extreme hazard means fires will start easily, burn deep, and grow quickly. More information can be found [here](#).

SUMMER OUTLOOK

The latest monthly forecasts for July indicate a strong likelihood of warmer and dryer than normal conditions persisting across much of B.C. Grass and other surface fuels have been drying quickly, meaning that seasonal “green up” is over for most parts of the province. With fine fuels now well cured, wildfire behaviour will be more typical of mid-July or August conditions.

The dry fuel conditions, lack of June precipitation, and record-breaking heatwave have also created the necessary environment for very large fire growth. Long range signals for near normal precipitation are confined to the northern third of B.C. Heightened wildfire activity is therefore expected to persist well into July. Recent weather and fuel conditions have made initial attack challenging, meaning large fires will likely be occurring throughout the province. The Okanagan and southern Cariboo regions are showing very high hazard. Significant rain is required to reduce the hazard however none is forecast in the foreseeable future.

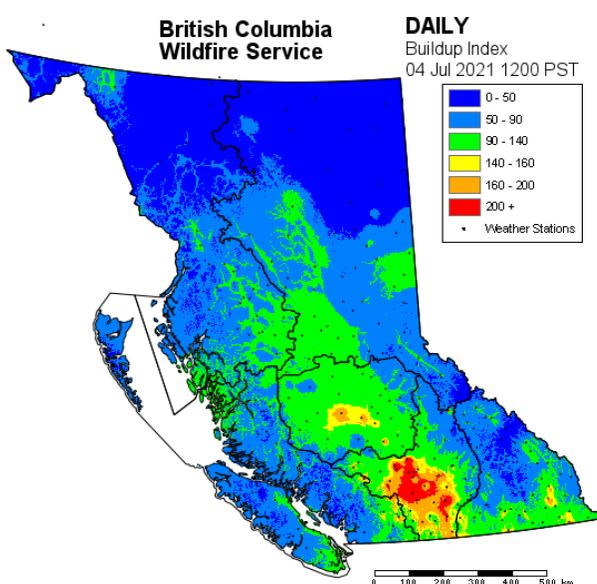


Fig. 2: Build-Up Index shows the total amount of fuel available for combustion.

HOW DOES FUEL DRYNESS AFFECT FIRE BEHAVIOUR?

The [Buildup Index](#) (BUI), one of the six standard components, is a numeric rating of the total amount of fuel available for combustion on the landscape. The BUI takes into account the moisture content of medium to large-sized woody materials, as well as seasonal drought effects on forest fuels. It helps to determine how volatile forest fuels are, how intensely and deeply they will burn and how difficult it might be to suppress a fire in a given fuel type. As the amount of fuel available for combustion on the landscape increases, fire behaviour becomes increasingly more volatile and, as a result, makes it increasingly more difficult for crews to successfully contain a wildfire. BUI values are substantially higher than seasonal averages for much of the Okanagan and parts of Southern BC.

For more information on how to establish wildfire resiliency in our forests and communities, visit:



bcwildfire.ca



firesmartbc.ca



[BC Wildfire Service](https://bcwildfireservice.ca)



[BCGovFireInfo](https://bcgovfireinfo.ca)