

WILDFIRE Seasonal Outlook



BC Wildfire
Service

MONTHLY UPDATE

April 12, 2021

OUTLOOK THIS MONTH

On October 31, 2020, drought conditions were observed in the far northern regions of B.C. Despite these conditions, the north currently has a snowpack at or above normal levels. As a result, fuel conditions are near normal. The southeast corner of the province and the Okanagan, received below average precipitation over winter and as a result have carried extended drought conditions into spring in valley bottoms and at lower elevations.

B.C. has started to have grassfire activity. These fires have occurred in valley bottoms where light fuels are able to dry out quickly in sunny or windy conditions. This is a typical pattern for this time of year, and B.C. Wildfire Service is expecting wildfire activity to increase in snow-free areas with these light fuels (grasses and needles). This hazard will decrease as grass becomes greener. Current suppression tactics are successfully holding most wildfires to a small size.

Following a warm and dry spell expected from April 11 to 18, seasonal forecasts indicate a moderate probability of colder temperatures in northern regions and along the coast, with normal temperatures elsewhere through April and May. Precipitation patterns are more difficult to predict, but current forecasts indicate a moderate probability of normal precipitation amounts for April.



PREDICTED FIRE CONDITIONS



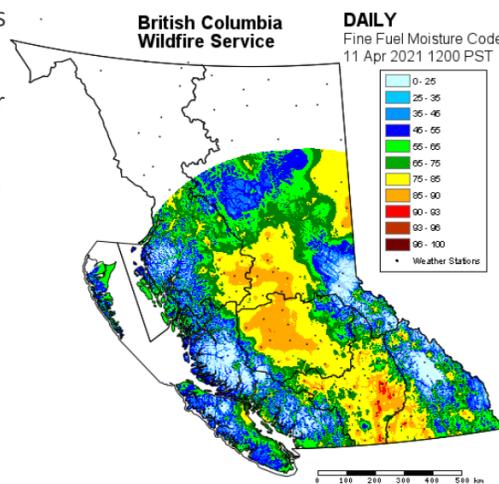
Normal



Above normal

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF FIRES WILL START IN LIGHT FUELS?

BC Wildfire Service uses a numerical value known as the Fine Fuel Moisture Code (FFMC) to represent how much moisture is in forest floor litter and other cured fine fuels. This code is an indicator of the relative ease of ignition and the flammability of fine fuel and ranges from 0-101. As the value rises so does the chance of a wildfire igniting given an adequate heat source. FFMC of 85-88 shows that ignition is probable, FFMC 88-91 signifies that ignition will occur as well as spotting and FFMC 92 and above indicates potential extreme fire behaviour.



PREPARE FOR FIRE SEASON

Consider implementing FireSmart homeowner guidelines. Simple measures, such as clearing leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks, prevents embers from igniting your home. Implementing FireSmart guidelines around the structure ignition zones can make a significant difference to the resiliency of homes and communities when faced with a wildfire event.

PREDICTING FIRE SEASONS

Forecasts are assessed by meteorologists and fire behaviour specialists who consider a range of environmental factors and observed weather data. This includes accounting for conditions that affect soil moisture, fine fuel dryness and vegetation growth which influence the amount of fuel available for wildfires.

The severity of a fire season is highly dependent on local weather patterns such as timing and amount of precipitation, length of dry periods, thunderstorms, and wind events. Long-term weather models are useful to indicate trends and patterns over time, however daily weather cannot be reliably forecast beyond a few days in advance. The BC Wildfire Service maintains its level of preparedness by studying forecasts, using the experience of previous fire seasons, and analyzing trends to give a good indication of what to expect.

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



bcwildfire.ca



firesmartbc.ca



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