

WILDFIRE Seasonal Outlook



BC Wildfire Service

MID-MONTH UPDATE

July 7, 2022

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FIRE SEASON SUMMARY

In June, the southern two thirds of the B.C. received above average amounts of precipitation and temperatures were consistent with seasonal norms. The North, however, received less than normal amounts of precipitation and higher than average temperatures. Despite the drier conditions in the North, the total number of fires and area burnt have been roughly 40% lower than the 25-year average.

Since April 1, 2022, there have been 251 wildfires in B.C.; 158 are attributed to human activity while 73 are suspected to have been caused by lightning. By this time last year, there had been 728 wildfires and 106,720 hectares burned. The lower number of fire starts and minimal growth reported this spring can be attributed to elevated snowpack and green-up across the province.

SUMMER OUTLOOK

According to the latest monthly forecast for July, temperatures are expected to increase to above seasonal by mid-month and remain relatively high through July and much of August. Meanwhile, precipitation is forecast to decrease overall, leading to a drier than normal conditions through to mid-August. The forecast warming and drying trend is likely to result in new wildfire ignitions and larger growth of existing fires.

Initial attack success is still expected to be high for the first half of July, especially in the southern and central regions that had received recent precipitation. In the northern third of the province, the likelihood of wildfires surpassing initial attack capacity is higher due to dryer conditions. Early detection is a critical factor in initial attack success.

WILDFIRE DETECTION

The biggest asset for detecting new fires in B.C. is you! Approximately 40 per cent of wildfires in B.C. are reported by the general public. If you see a wildfire, abandoned campfire or dangerous activity that could start a wildfire, call 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cell phone.



		STATISTICS TO DATE				
2022 WILDFIRE SEASON <i>(April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022)</i>	251 WILDFIRES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WILDFIRES				
		5-YEAR AVG.	10-YEAR AVG.	15-YEAR AVG.	20-YEAR AVG.	25-YEAR AVG.
		431	446	456	515	498
2022 WILDFIRE SEASON <i>(April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022)</i>	7,402 HECTARES BURNED	AVERAGE NUMBER OF HECTARES BURNED				
		5-YEAR AVG.	10-YEAR AVG.	15-YEAR AVG.	20-YEAR AVG.	25-YEAR AVG.
		28,672	34,087	28,258	32,382	26,653

HOW DO RAINFALL PATTERNS INFLUENCE THE WILDFIRE SEASON IN B.C.?

Rainfall patterns during the spring and summer months have a significant influence on the severity of the wildfire season in B.C. In the spring, as snow melts, light surface fuels tend to dry quickly. So, despite cooler conditions and some influence from spring freshet, fires in pine needles and grasses can travel quickly under strong, dry winds. If rainfall is received periodically throughout the spring and into June, larger fuels, requiring longer drying periods, are much less likely to ignite limiting fires to mostly fine fuels.

HOW DOES RAINFALL INFLUENCE LIGHTNING-CAUSED STARTS?

If lightning is accompanied by rain, ignitions are significantly less likely. This is evident when comparing the 2018 and 2019 wildfire seasons. In July 2019, B.C. experienced 160,000 more lightning strikes than in July 2018. However, the 2019 wildfire season had well below the long-term average number of ignitions while the 2018 wildfire season was a record-setting year with many dry lightning ignitions. In June, there were 60,427 lightning strikes across B.C. resulting in 30 wildfires; much lower than the monthly average of 111.

PREDICTING FIRE SEASONS:
 RAINFALL,
 FUEL DRYNESS &
 BUILDUP INDEX (BUI)

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



bcwildfire.ca



firesmartbc.ca



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