

HIGHWAY 8 INFORMATION & UPDATES

August 2023



Ministry of
Transportation
and Infrastructure

For general enquiries, call 250-378-1452
or email highway8.information@gov.bc.ca

In mid-July, Highway 8 between Merritt and Spences Bridge closed due to debris on the road from multiple mudslides. Crews worked quickly to clear the debris and reopen Highway 8 in both directions by the next day. Work is ongoing between government agencies to develop a coordinated action plan to restore the watershed and limit future erosion.

DEBRIS FLOWS IN THE HIGHWAY 8 CORRIDOR

The Nicola Valley watershed was severely impacted by wildfires and flooding in 2021. Since then, extreme heat and drought conditions, combined with isolated incidents of heavy rainfall, have led to debris flows in the corridor.

These debris flows, or mudslides, have impacted Highway 8 and side roads over the past two years. When this happens, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure District and the maintenance contractor for the region take the following steps:



Assess the impact
on the highway



Remove the debris



Confirm the highway
condition is safe for
the public



Reopen the highway
to traffic

Preventing future debris flows

When highways are built, they are constructed to be resilient to debris flowing over top of the road so they can be cleared and reopened quickly.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is supporting other provincial government agencies to develop a coordinated action plan for restoration of the Nicola Valley watershed.

WATERSHED CONDITIONS

The Nicola watershed has been severely impacted by flood, fire, and recently by post-wildfire debris flow hazards. The wildfire in 2021 burned off much of the forest floor and forest canopy that normally absorb water and protect soil from erosion. As a result, the soils are susceptible to erosion events during heavy rain. The soil water repellency produced by the burn off may still be playing a contributing role in overland flow generation and subsequent erosion. Widespread post-wildfire erosion event risk generally persists for approximately five years or more before diminishing. A technical report developed by the Ministry of Forests can be found at the following link. This resource provides additional detail on post-wildfire erosion events. <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/docs/Tr/Tr030.pdf>

What's a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a specific body of water. The Nicola watershed flows through and over the land in the Thompson River Basin into the Nicola River and the smaller streams and rivers that flow into it.

Be Prepared

Before travelling, visit DriveBC to check the road conditions and events on Highway 8. "Summerize" your vehicle and prepare for potential delays or emergencies by doing regular maintenance, carrying an emergency kit, spare tire, and extra water and snacks, and fueling up at service stations before heading out on rural highways.



COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FUND

Disaster Risk Reduction - Climate Adaptation stream

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding streams intended to enhance the resiliency of First Nations, local governments, and communities to reduce the risks of disasters in their communities through investments in disaster preparedness and mitigation. Funding is provided by the Province and is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). For all funding streams, First Nations (bands and Treaty First Nations) and local governments (municipalities and regional districts) in BC are eligible to apply.

In February 2023, the Province committed a further \$180 million to the CEPF to support projects that help local governments and First Nations prepare communities for the risks of natural hazards and lessen the effects before disasters happen. The new contribution brings CEPF's total investment to \$369 million since its establishment in 2017.

One of the CEPF funding streams is for projects focused on Disaster Risk Reduction - Climate Adaptation (DRR-CA). The intent of the Disaster Risk Reduction-Climate Adaptation funding stream is to support eligible applicants to reduce risks from future disasters due to natural and climate-driven hazards through the development and implementation of:

- Accurate foundational knowledge of the natural hazards they face and the risks associated with BC's changing climate; and,
- Effective strategies to prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to those risks.

For the October 2023 DRR-CA intake, the funding limit for structural projects will be increased from \$2 million to \$5 million.

Applications are currently being accepted for this funding program. The application deadlines for the 2023/24 intake are October 6, 2023, and funding permitting, March 28, 2024. For 2024/25 the intake deadlines are scheduled for October 4, 2024 and March 28, 2025.

Local residents can contact TNRD Electoral Area I Director Tricia Thorpe at director.thorpe@tnrd.ca for more information.

The Highway 8 Team

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We aim to reply within 24 hours.
Thank you for your patience.

