



Okanagan Indian Band

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MEMBER BULLETIN

July 26, 2021

Update on the White Rock Lake Fire

This is an update from the OKIB Fire Department Operations Manager

The White Rock Lake Fire continues to grow, and has moved westerly and with increased winds has produced more smoke, which was visible from IR#1 yesterday.

An additional 100 firefighters have arrived yesterday, July 25, 2021 for a total of 139 firefighters, which is good news. Although at this present moment, there is no immediate danger to OKIB, it is still recommended that you prepare in the event of an evacuation. A short infographic poster regarding evacuations and what to do will be released later today. Please go to okib.ca and click the emergency tab for further information.

For any further questions or concerns, please contact Fire Department Operations Manager Garrett Lawrence at 250-306-8477, or Fire Chief Dave Lawrence at 250-306-7027.

Below is more specific information regarding the White Rock Lake Fire.

White Rock Lake (K61884)

Last updated: Monday, July 26, 2021 at 8:44 AM

Location: 56 km northeast of Merritt

Discovered: Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Size: 12,500.0 hectares (estimated)

Status: Active. This fire is classified as out of control.

BC Wildfire Service personnel and aerial resources continue to work with industry partners on site this incident.

Interface: Interface Fire

Evacuation Order is in effect.

The Thompson-Nicola Regional District has issued an evacuation order for several properties in electoral area "L" and an evacuation alert for several properties in electoral areas "L" and "M" Please contact [Thompson- Nicola Regional District](http://Thompson-Nicola Regional District) /250-377-7188 for more information.

More information

Fire behaviour increased significantly yesterday due to elevated temperatures and increased southwest winds. This aggressive fire behaviour caused growth to the northwest in the sawmill

lake and Jimmy lake areas, and produced a large column of smoke. This elevated behaviour is occurring again this morning in the same areas. Extensive smoke and more growth is occurring.

This increased fire activity is expected to continue in the coming days as hot, dry and windy conditions will persist. No precipitation is anticipated in the near future. These conditions will continue to challenge fire suppression efforts and cause additional growth on this fire.

More structural protection units have been requested. A task force of fire engines will be patrolling and actioning hotspots in an effort to protect properties and high value assets.

Heavy equipment is being used to construct large, cleared areas at regular intervals along the guard lines. These areas are known as "safe zones", and provide crews and equipment a safe place to take shelter in if the fire behaviour should suddenly increase.

Air tankers may continue to be used to apply retardant to the fire if conditions allow. This is done to help slow the spread of the fire and create time and space for equipment and crews to safely build guard lines ahead of the fire.

A ground-based retardant unit is being used to reinforce guard lines. This unit is a large truck that can apply the same type of retardant used by air tankers.

6 helicopters were bucketing water on to the fire today. This tactic is used to cool and slow the spread of the fire so that ground crews can safely continue their suppression efforts.

A structural protection specialist is on site, assessing and prioritizing critical infrastructure and properties.

Planning and construction of contingency lines continues.

A fire camp is now set up at the Salmon Lake Resort. This will allow firefighters and support staff to be closer to the fire, which will reduce travel time and maximize their working and resting hours.

100 firefighters and 12 support staff from Quebec arrived at the Okanagan Complex yesterday. They will be staying in the camp that is now set up at the Salmon Lake Resort and are assigned to this fire. They were briefed and oriented yesterday and will be working on the fire today.

There have been smoke impacts to the hydro line in the area, with multiple outages occurring due to the smoke.

This fire is being managed by a BC Wildfire Service Incident Management Team as part of the Okanagan Complex. Aircraft and other resources may be reallocated from day to day within the complex as priorities shift.

For more information please contact the Okanagan Complex Information Team:
BCWS.Okanagan.Complex.Info@gov.bc

Cause: Under Investigation

Resources

- 139 firefighters
- 6 helicopters
- 35 heavy equipment

139 firefighters and 43 support staff, including a BCWS Incident Management Team are assigned to this fire. Crews are being supported by 6 helicopters and 35 pieces of heavy equipment.

Structural Protection: 1 structural protection specialist, 1 structural protection unit (5 staff), 2 structural protection trailers and 6 firefighters from 2 fire departments are on this fire.