



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE # 61

WHITE ROCK LAKE FIRE – PLANNED IGNITION UPDATE

Monday, August 30, 2021 – 10:00 Hours
Spallumcheen, BC

LOCAL WILDFIRE – WHITE ROCK LAKE WILDFIRE (K61884)

BC Wildfire has announced that conditions are favourable and they will be starting the planned ignition along the north east section of the fire this morning. The burn will be low intensity with low tree mortality. The identified burn area from site assessment today is ~3000 hectares.

Planned ignition operations are critical to achieve containment in areas where the fire perimeter is inoperable and unsafe for ground crews and heavy equipment to work. Planned ignitions are the safest way to remove fuel that can burn well into fall and winter by the wildfire. In 2018, fires that occurred in severe drought areas burned underground over winter and started burning in the spring again.

Given the extreme drought over the wildfire area, the large scale ignition in the Irish Creek Rd area is critical to ensure that the fire perimeter is secure as possible with no fuel available for further growth. Without these ignitions, the wildfire will continue to burn out of control into fall in heavy fuels with the potential to impact Hwy 97 and the surrounding interface.

The ignitions will occur in three phases and are further broken down into three sections. First, a heli-torch machine is used to build heat and create a column within the burn area. This draws the main ignition up and into the column well within established control lines. Second, a Plastic Sphere Dispenser will be used to conduct the main ignition in each section to manage fire intensity and utilize terrain to draw fire into the column. Third, ground crews will ignite from control lines using drip torches to bring fire right to the guards in a controlled manner.

A large fuel free guard has been constructed over the last two weeks by Unit Crews and heavy equipment that will act as the containment line for the ignition. Hose lays are completed along the guards that the ignitions will occur from.

Support Resources for the Planned Ignition:

- 2 helicopters with PSD machines
- 1 helicopter with heli-torch
- 40 BCWS Type 1 firefighters to conduct hand ignitions
- Structure protection task forces
- 6 heavy helicopters for cooling support
- 2 mobile retardant pits
- Additional air support is available, as needed

- Local Armstrong Spallumcheen fire crews will be patrolling the sections of the community near to the planned ignition on a 24 hour basis
- Crews and mutual aid partners remain ready to respond to other emergencies in our community should it be necessary during this time

Please note that you will likely see significant smoke as this planned ignition is carried out. We ask that you remain aware of your surroundings and ensure that if you are in a motor vehicle you are not causing a traffic hazard by suddenly stopping or slowing to view the resulting smoke and fire activity. Significant smoke in the atmosphere may cause air quality concerns. Please [monitor air quality in the North Okanagan](#) and plan your activities accordingly.

Residents are asked to avoid use of back country areas, stay alert for sign of wildfire and report any signs of wildfire in back country areas to 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 from a cell phone. In addition, please make sure that you are prepared for quickly changing situations by having an emergency plan and be prepared to leave your home or business with short notice. Resources are available on our [Emergency Information page](#) regarding what to do to prepare for an evacuation and what to pack in your 72 hour grab and go bag.

The next scheduled update for the Township of Spallumcheen is on Monday, August 30, 2021 at 12:00 hrs.

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