

# Prince George Fire Centre

## 2023 Season Summary



BC Wildfire  
Service

The **2023 fire season** started earlier than usual and extended well into the fall as a result of drought conditions. After a late season in 2022, the Prince George Fire Centre experienced **24** significant wildfires of note in 2023 and local hectares burned surpassed past provincial (2018) records.



- The 2023 season has become the most destructive in B.C.'s recorded history with **80%** of the total provincial hectares burned in the PGFC
- The season also proved to be emotionally challenging due to its length and intensity, but also the loss of six members of the wildland firefighting community:
  - Devyn Gale
  - Jaxon Billyboy
  - Zak Muise
  - Blain Sonnenberg
  - Kenneth Patrick
  - Damian Dyson

# Activity by Fire Centre

## Northwest Fire Centre (NWFC)

277 wildfires  
174,796 hectares burned

## Prince George Fire Centre (PGFC)

673 wildfires  
2,276,962 hectares burned

## Coastal Fire Centre (CoFC)

365 wildfires  
89,750 hectares burned

## Cariboo Fire Centre (CaFC)

234 wildfires  
53,613 hectares burned

## Kamloops Fire Centre (KFC)

388 wildfires  
201,276 hectares burned

## Southeast Fire Centre (SEFC)

295 wildfires  
44,013 hectares burned



*\*From April 1 to November 9*



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# 2,276,96

# 2

Number of hectares burned  
in the Prince George Fire  
Centre

(of **2,840,545** province-wide)

# 673

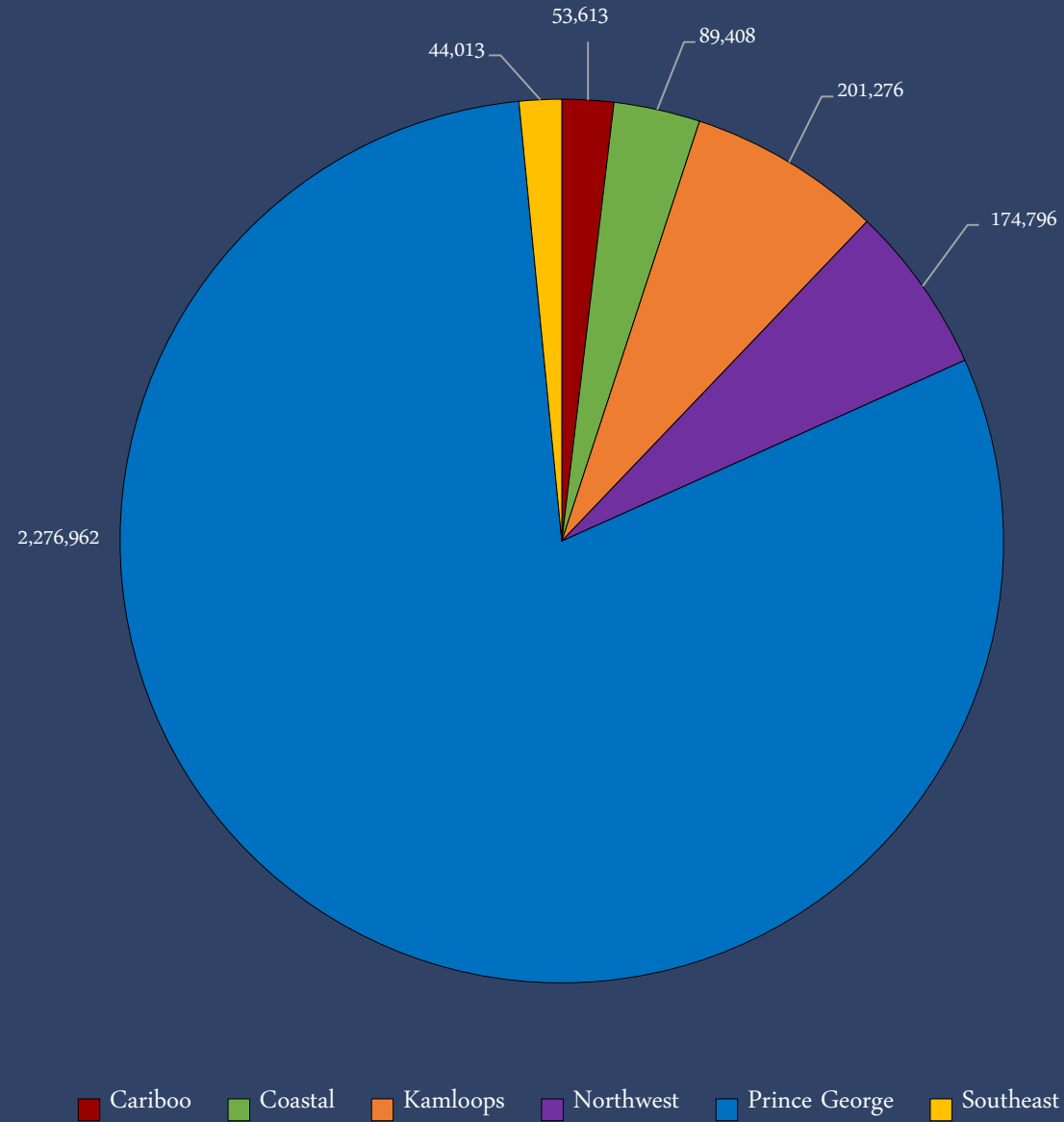
Number of wildfires in  
the Prince George Fire  
Centre

(of **2,245** province-wide)



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# Hectares Burned by Fire Centre



	Total Fires	Lx Caused	Human Caused	Undetermined	Total Hectares Burned
2023	673	540 (80%)	130 (19%)	3 (1%)	2,276,962
2022	247	163 (66%)	81 (33%)	3 (1%)	59,005
10-year avg.	276	170 (62%)	91 (33%)	15 (5%)	88,532

61

Evacuation orders

91

Evacuation alerts

18

Area restrictions

18

SOLE and/or BCR



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# How did we get here?

- May: record breaking heat and active fire behaviour in the north
- June: hot and dry
- July: hot and dry with lots of lightning
- August: hot and windy
- September: ongoing wind and heat in the north
- October: more of the same



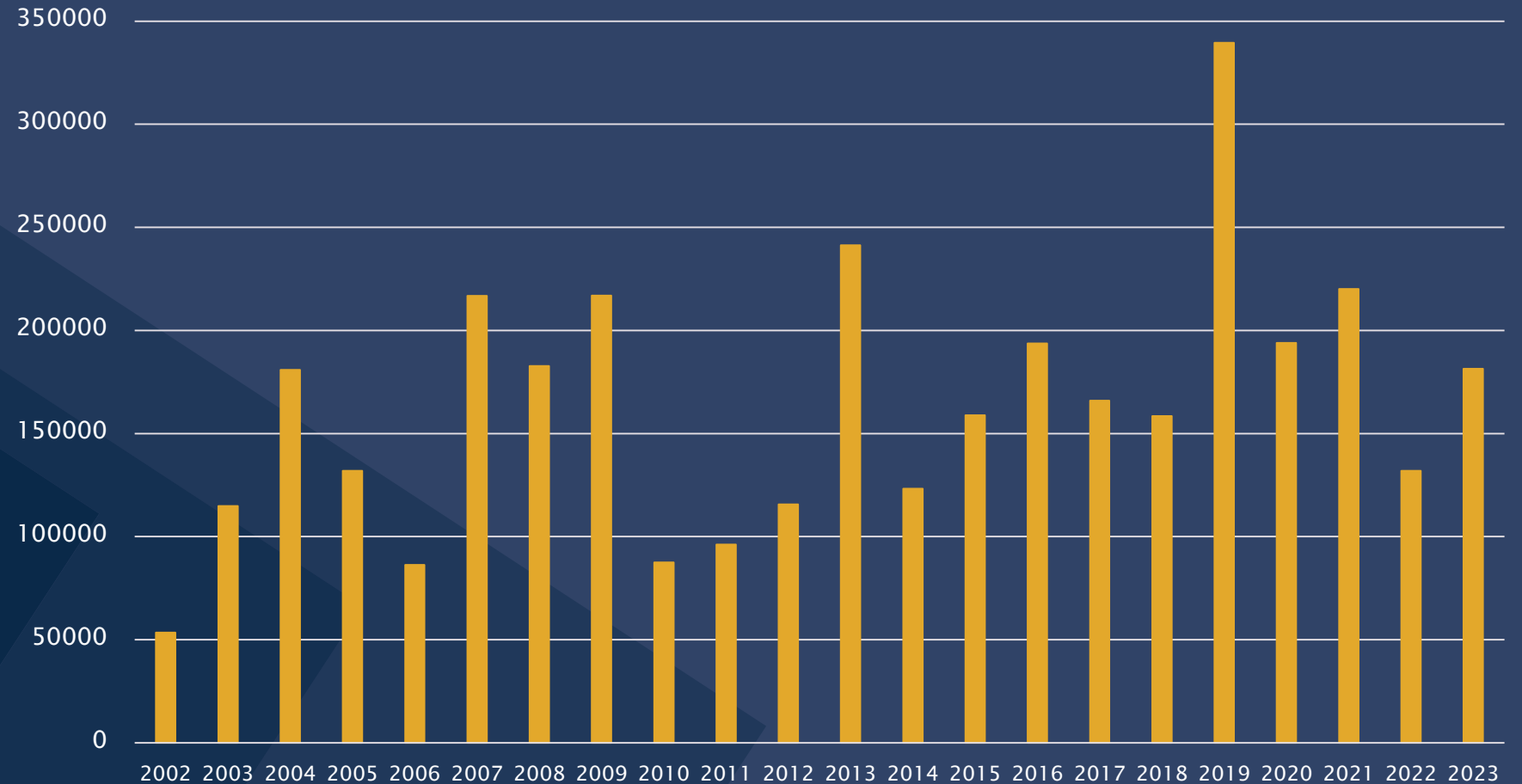
# Lightning Statistics

June through September 2002 to 2023

This season saw significantly average lightning in Prince George.

A total of **181,400** strokes were recorded between April to October.

July alone contributed **115,659** strokes across the Fire Centre.



# Days with ZERO recorded precipitation

## In the northeast

- A total of **166** days at the Fort Nelson station between April 1 – October 31
- At Paddy, that total was **156** days between April 1 – October 31
- Meanwhile at Silver, that was **123** days between May 8 – October 31

May 30

June 30

July 30

## And even in the southwest

- A total of **131** days at Kluskus, **145** days at Chilako, and **144** days at Moose Lake between April 1 – October 31

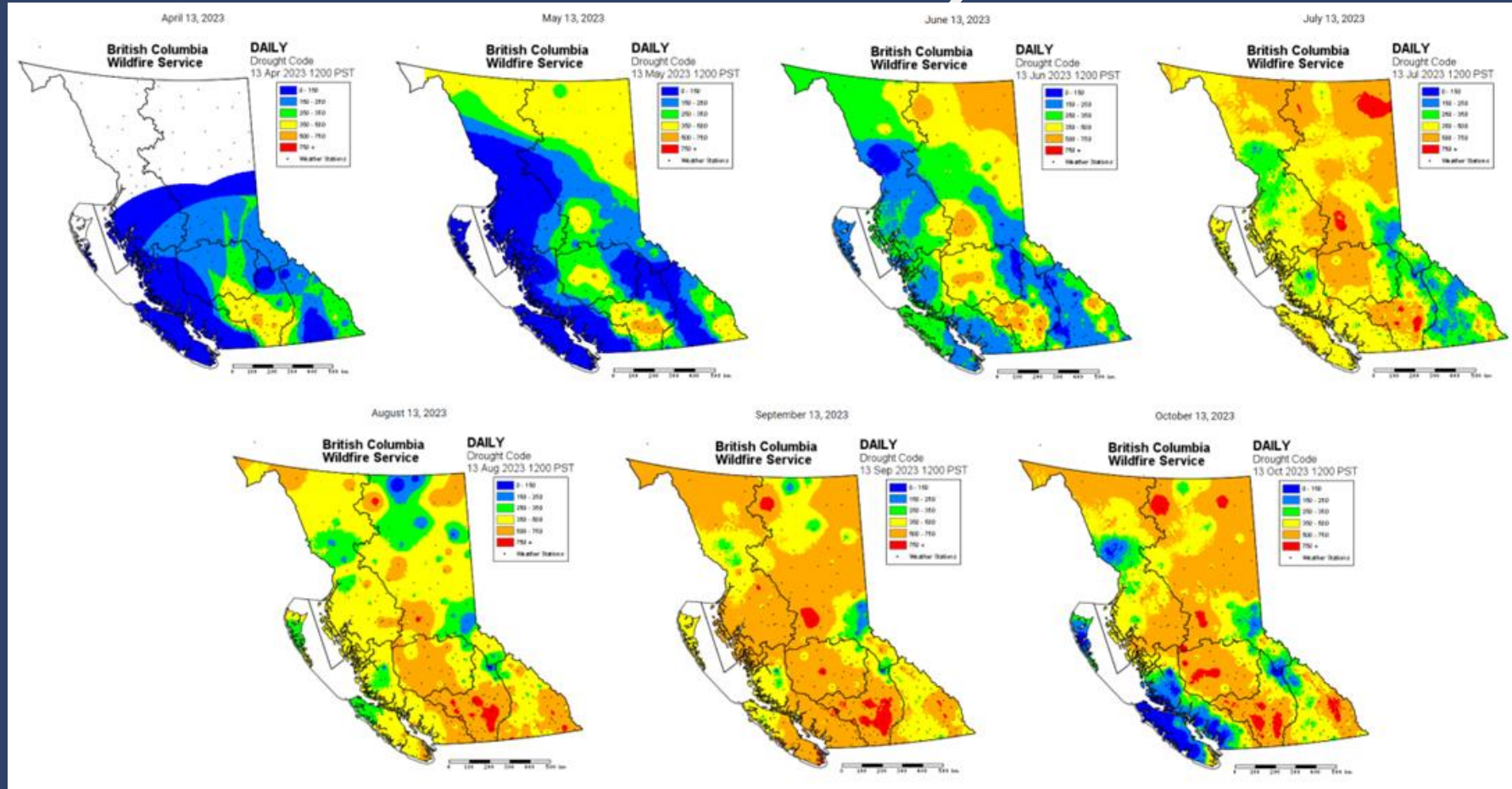
## Everywhere else, too

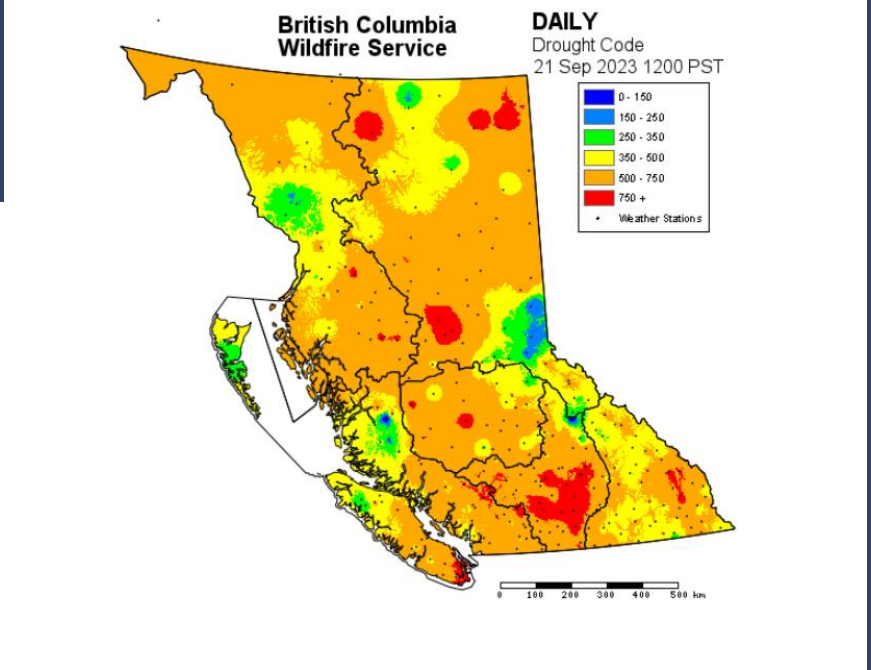
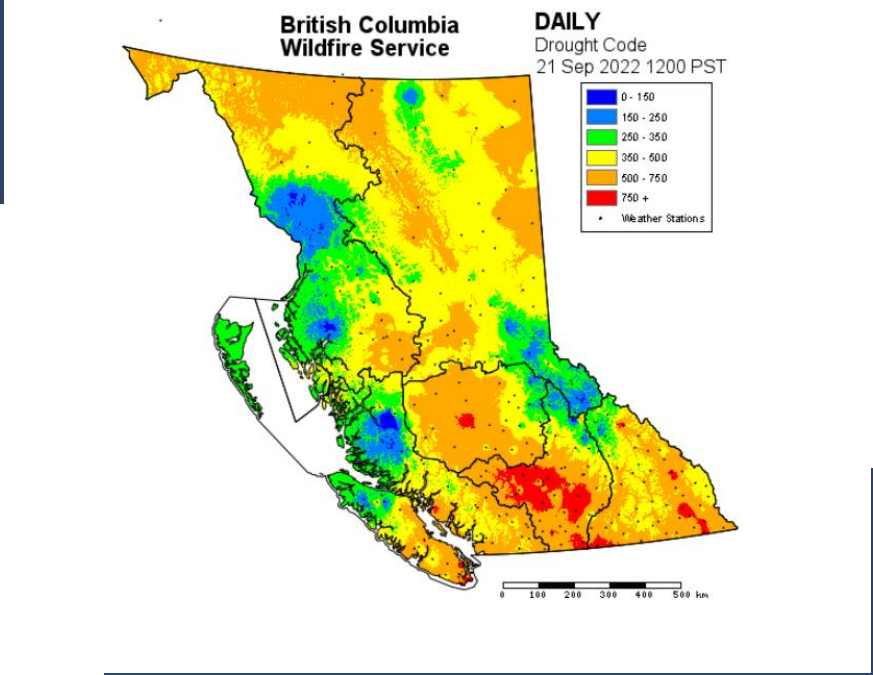
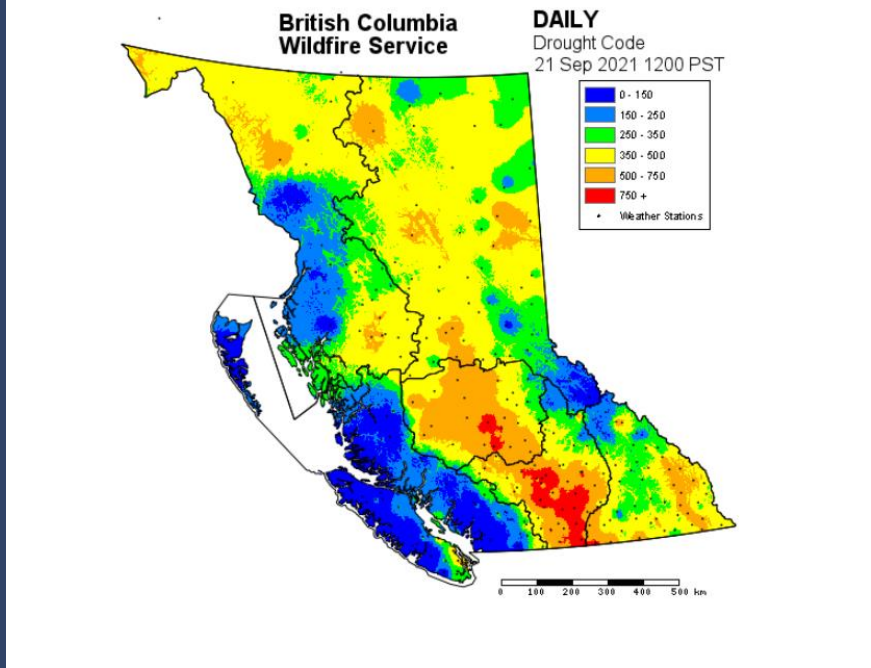
- A total of **111** days at Mackenzie between May 19 – October 31
- At Dawson Creek, it was **162** days between April 1 – October 31
- A total of **156** days at Prince George between April 1 – October 31
- And **141** days at McBride between April 1 – October 31

September 30

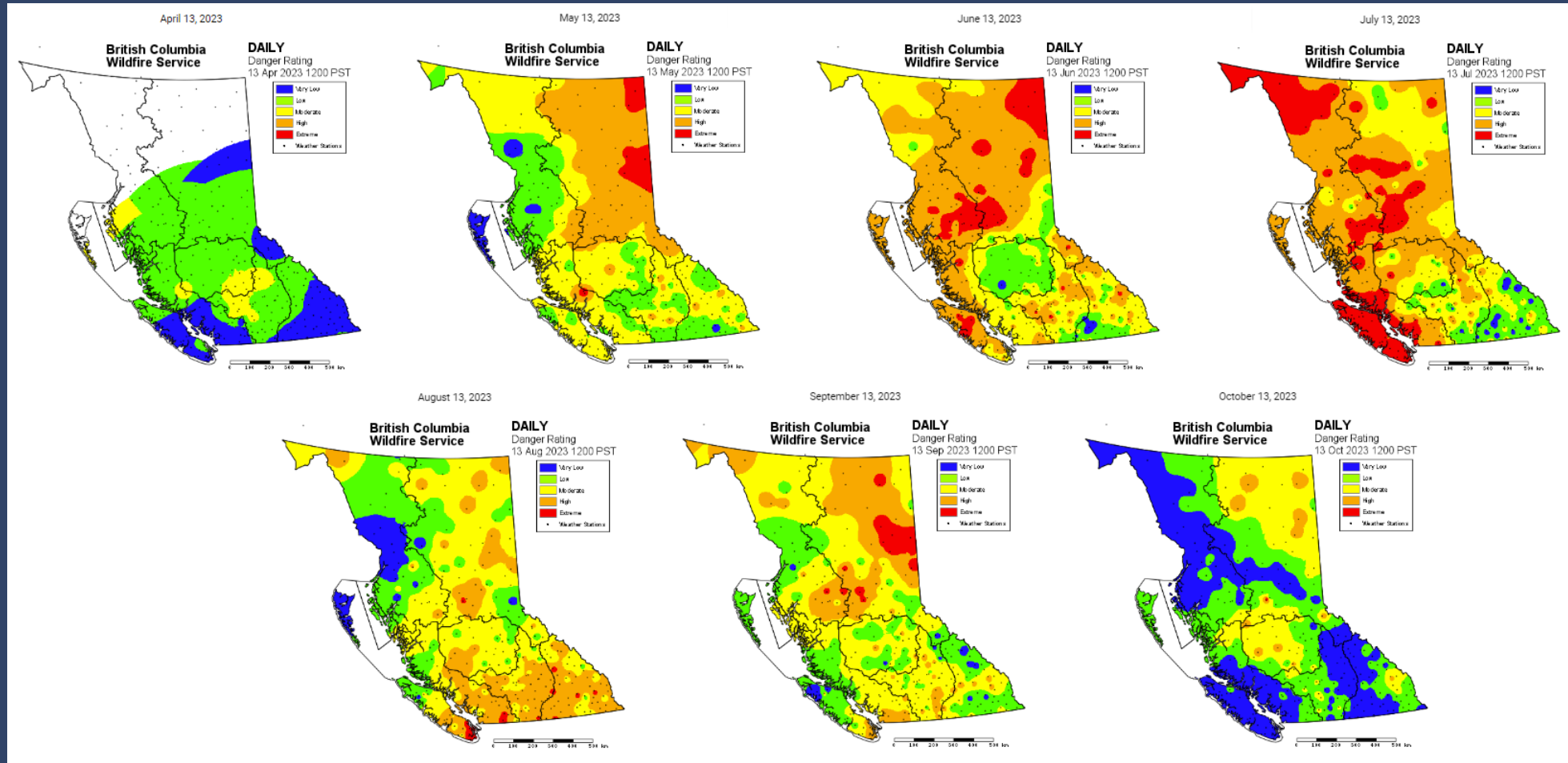
October 30

# Drought Code (April – October)





# Fire Danger Rating





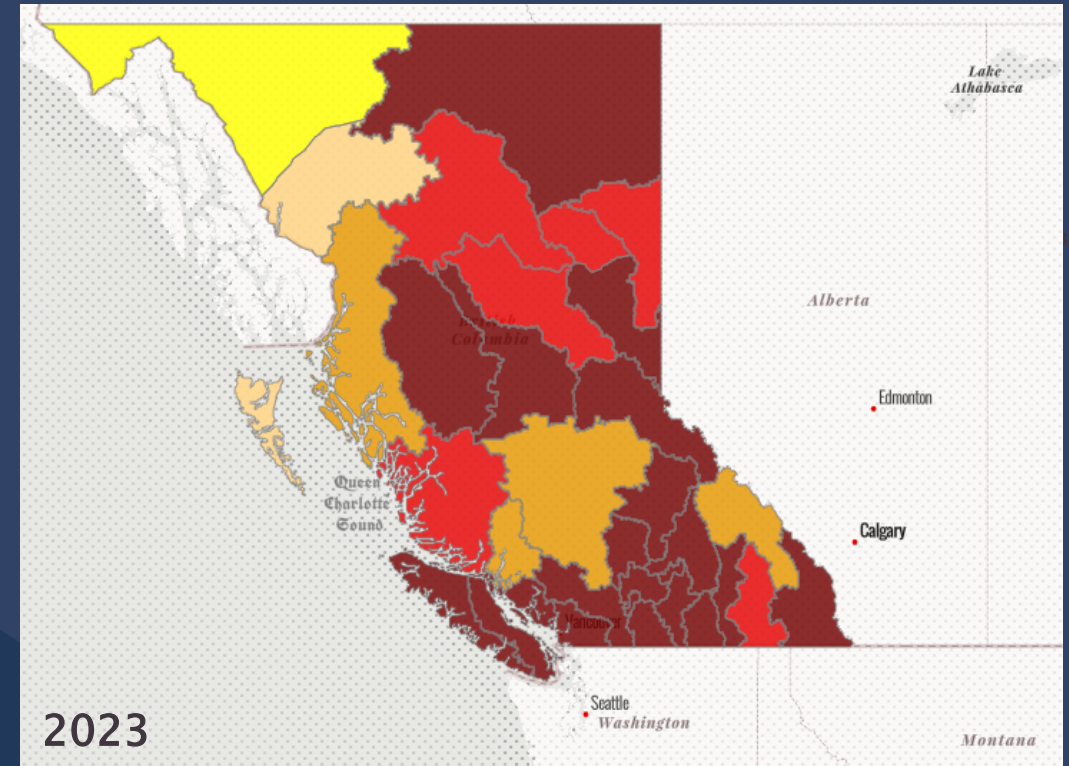
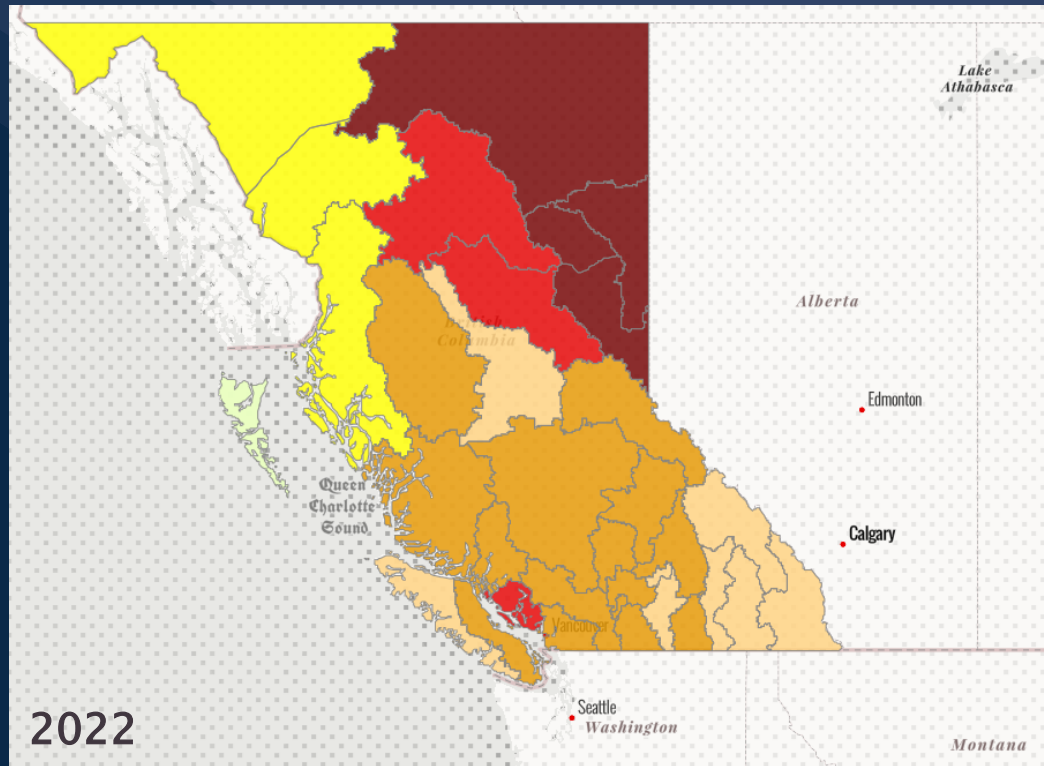
# Bans and Prohibitions

- The first open fire prohibition was issued on May 5, 2023
- Over double the 10-year average was spent in Category 2 and 3 fire bans
- Nearly four times the 10-year average number of days were spent under a campfire (Category 1) ban

Zone	Total Days Cat 2 Ban	Total Days Cat 3 Ban	Total Days Cat 1 Ban
Prince George	155	155	77
Robson Valley	162	155	77
VanJam	155	155	108
Mackenzie	155	155	108
Dawson Creek	173	166	97
Fort St. John	173	166	97
Fort Nelson	173	166	118
Average Days by Ban Type	164	160	97
10-yr Average by Ban Type	74	64	24



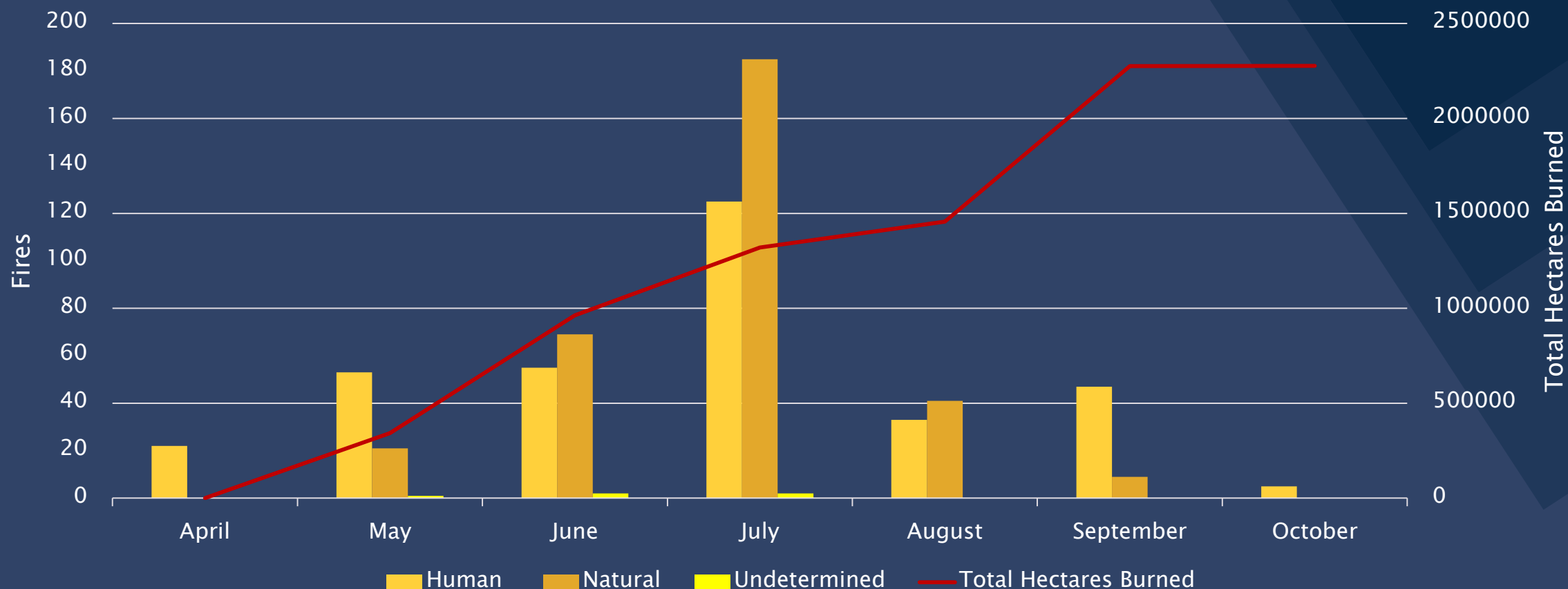
# Drought Conditions in the Fall



BC Drought Levels Map

# Wildfire Activity by Month

## Prince George Fire Centre



*\*From April 1 to October 31*

This season there were  
**60** Wildfires of Note in B.C., with **24**  
of them in the Prince George Fire  
Centre.

A Wildfire of Note is a fire that is particularly  
visible or posing a threat to public safety.

# Prince George's 24 Wildfires of Note:

Cameron River (80175)	385 Hectares	Discovered 01–May
Coffee Creek (80190)	89 Hectares	Discovered 03–May
Teare Creek (30210)	1,100 Hectares	Discovered 04–May
Boundary Lake (80220)	6,422 Hectares	Discovered 05–May
Red Creek (80223)	2,947 Hectares	Discovered 05–May
Donnie Creek (80280)	619,072 Hectares	Discovered 12–May
Stoddart Creek (80291)	29,505 Hectares	Discovered 13–May
West Kiskatinaw (70645)	25,095 Hectares	Discovered 06–June

# Prince George's 24 Wildfires of Note:

Peavine Creek (70644)	4,427 Hectares	Discovered 06-June
Big Creek (60666)	166,856 Hectares	Discovered 07-June
Nation River (60853)	22,372 Hectares	Discovered 23-June
Klawli Lake (50872)	17,333 Hectares	Discovered 24-June
Tsah Creek (41149)	501 Hectares	Discovered 05-July
Gatcho Lake (41158)	21,926 Hectares	Discovered 06-July
Finger Lake (41195)	25,059 Hectares	Discovered 07-July
Great Beaver Lake (51279)	48,396 Hectares	Discovered 08-July

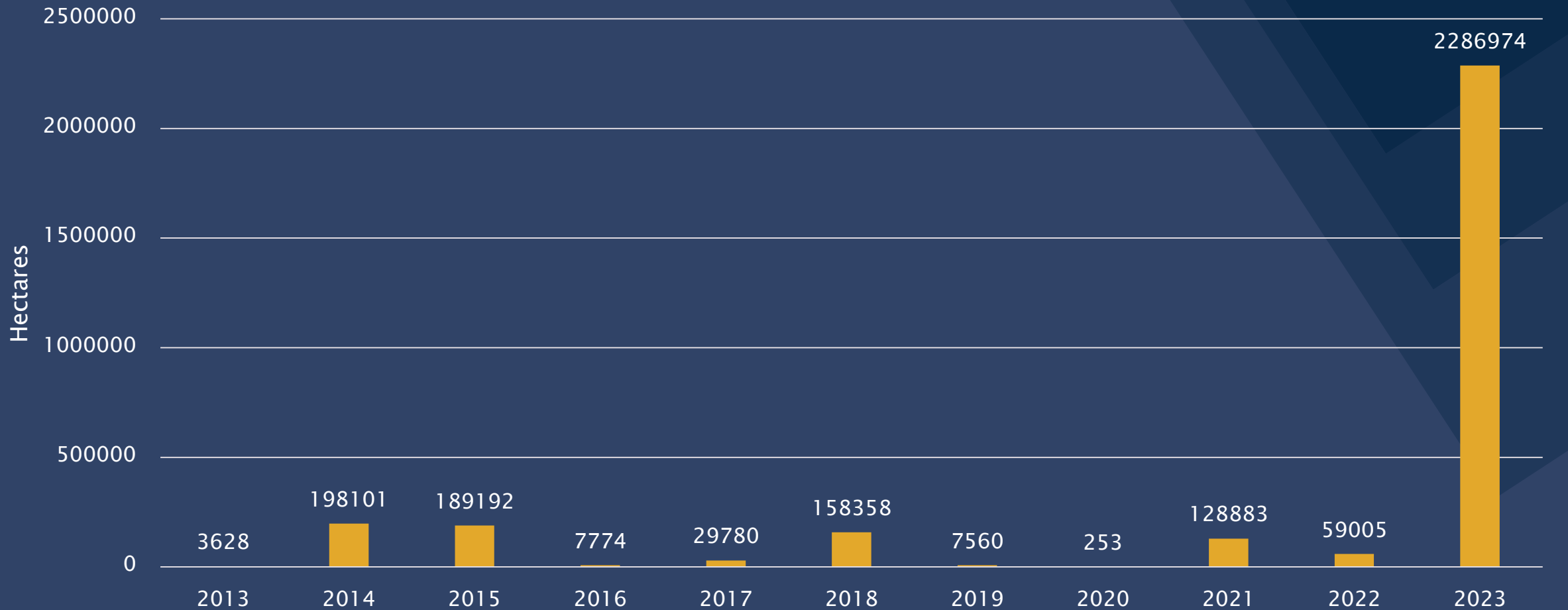
# Prince George's 24 Wildfires of Note:

Tatuk Lake (41307)	44,641 Hectares	Discovered 08-July
Lucas Lake (41380)	2,760 Hectares	Discovered 09-July
Nithi Mountain (41422)	736 Hectares	Discovered 09-July
Davidson Creek (41493)	4,878 Hectares	Discovered 10-July
North Lucas Lake (41502)	34,853 Hectares	Discovered 10-July
Greer Creek (41511)	4,767 Hectares	Discovered 10-July
Whitefish Lake (51564)	6,143 Hectares	Discovered 11-July
Mount Wartenbe (73406)	1,246 Hectares	Discovered 08-October



# Hectares Burned – PGFC

## 10-Year Comparison



*\*From April 1 to October 31*

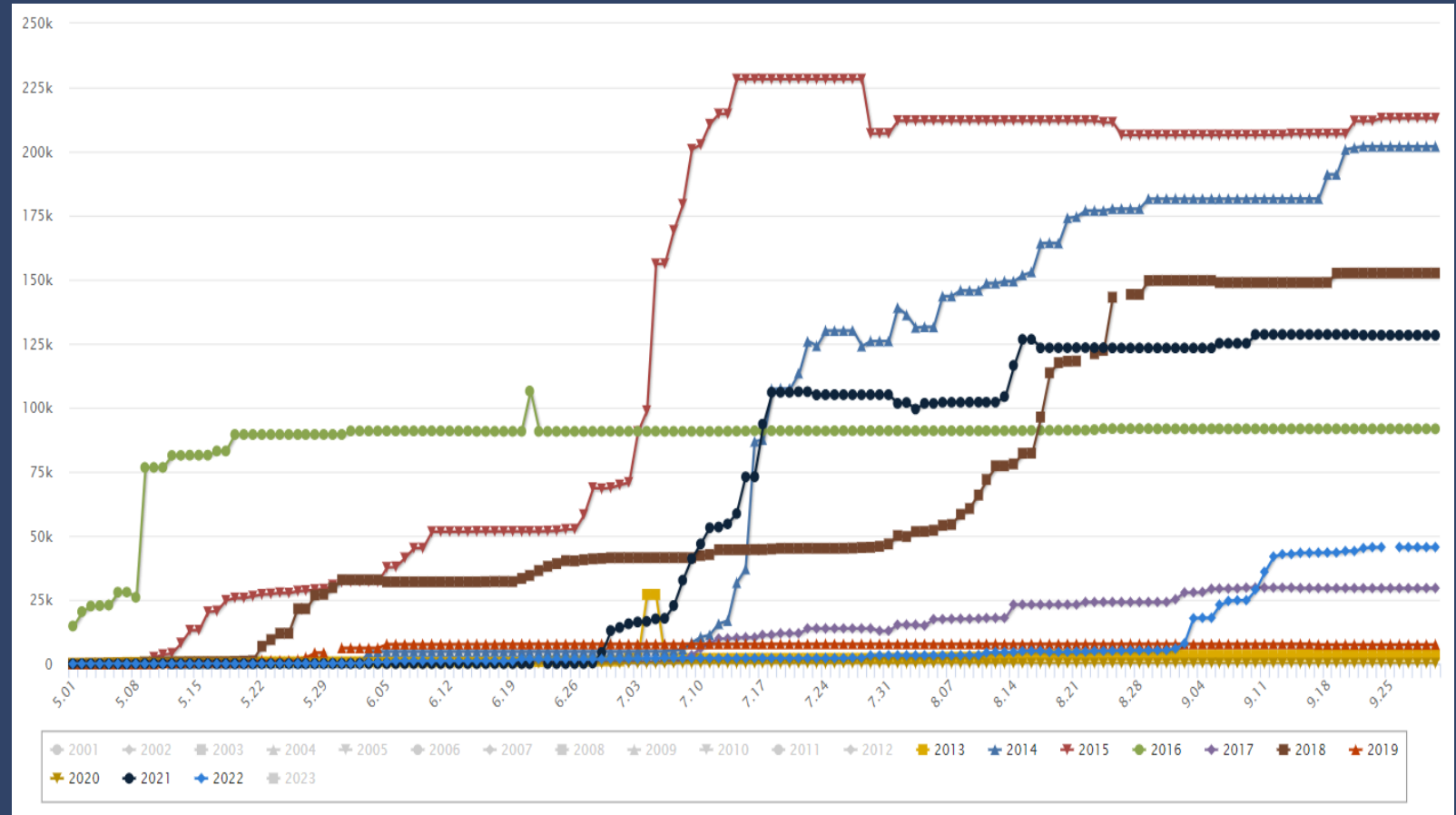


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# 10-year total hectares burned (by year)

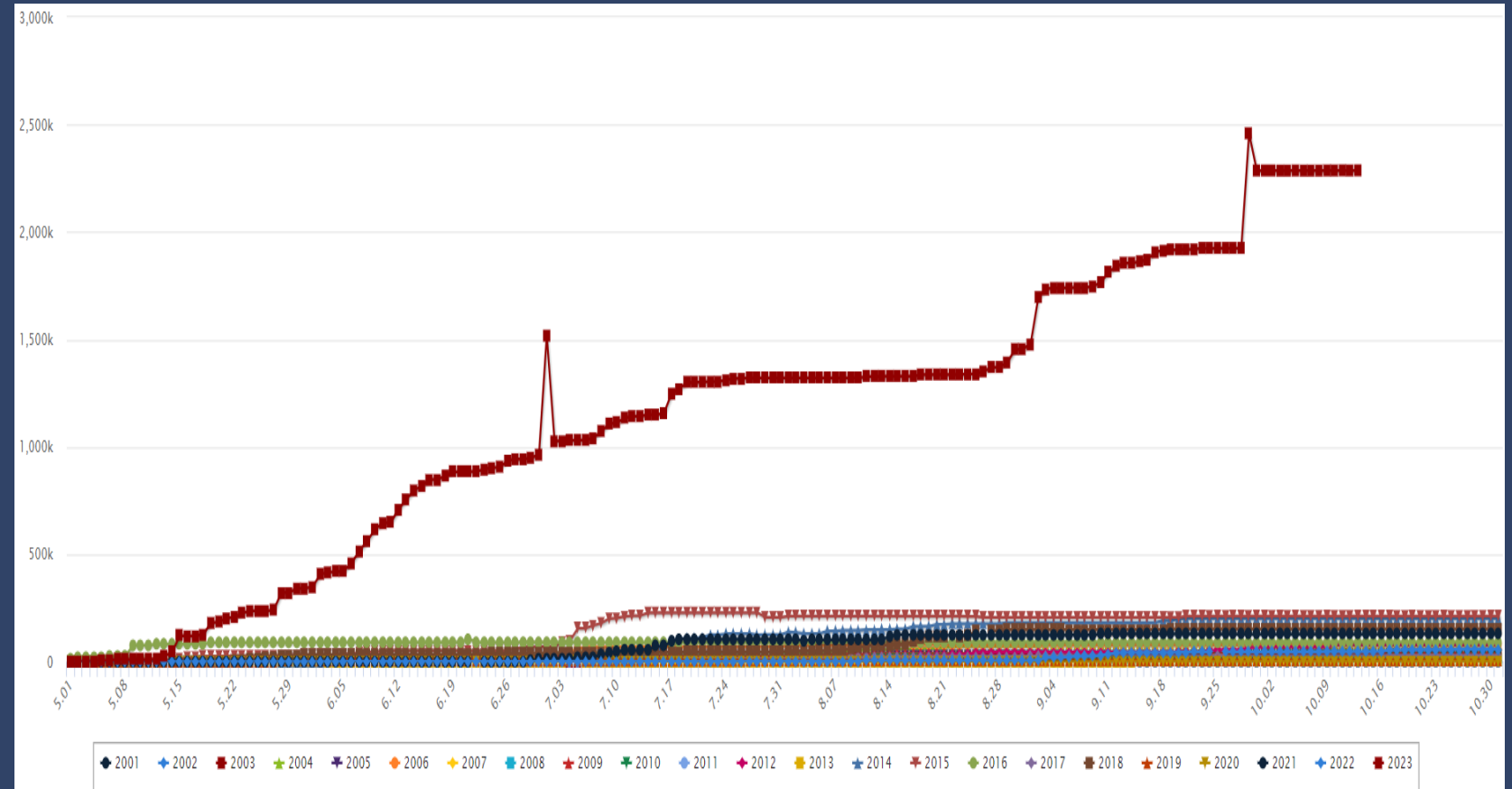
Totals to September  
30

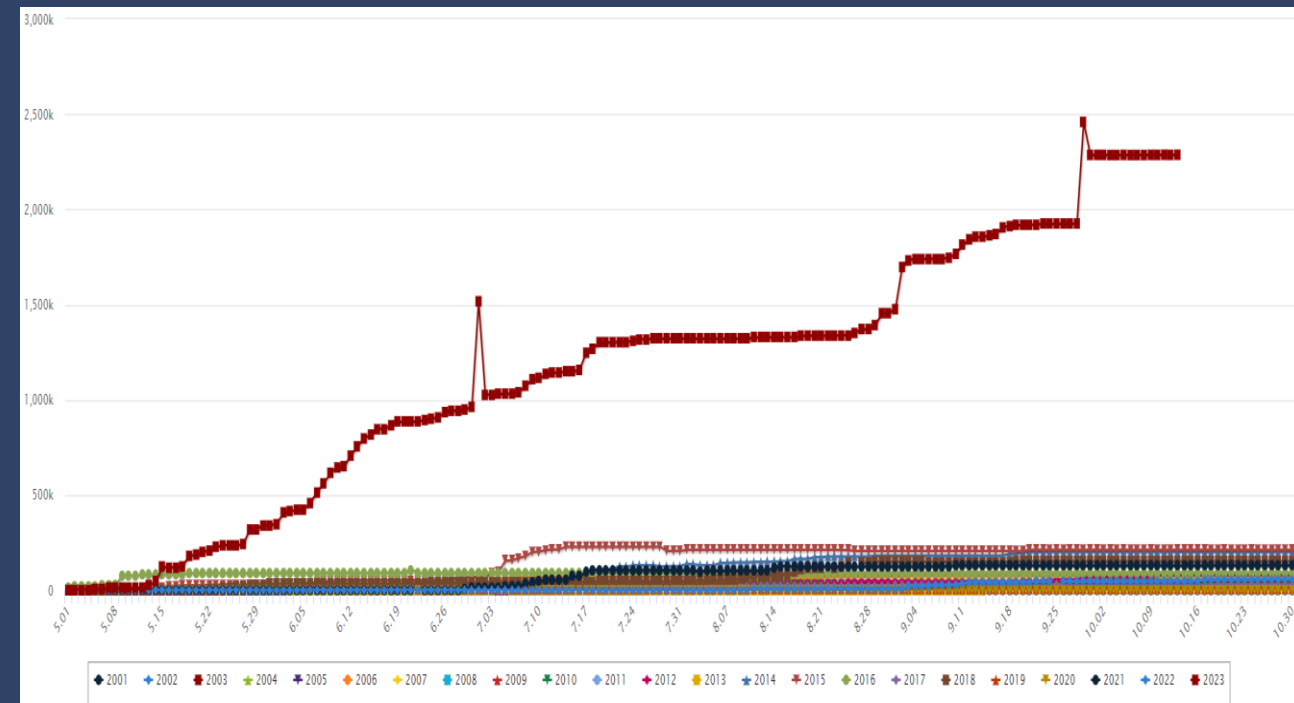
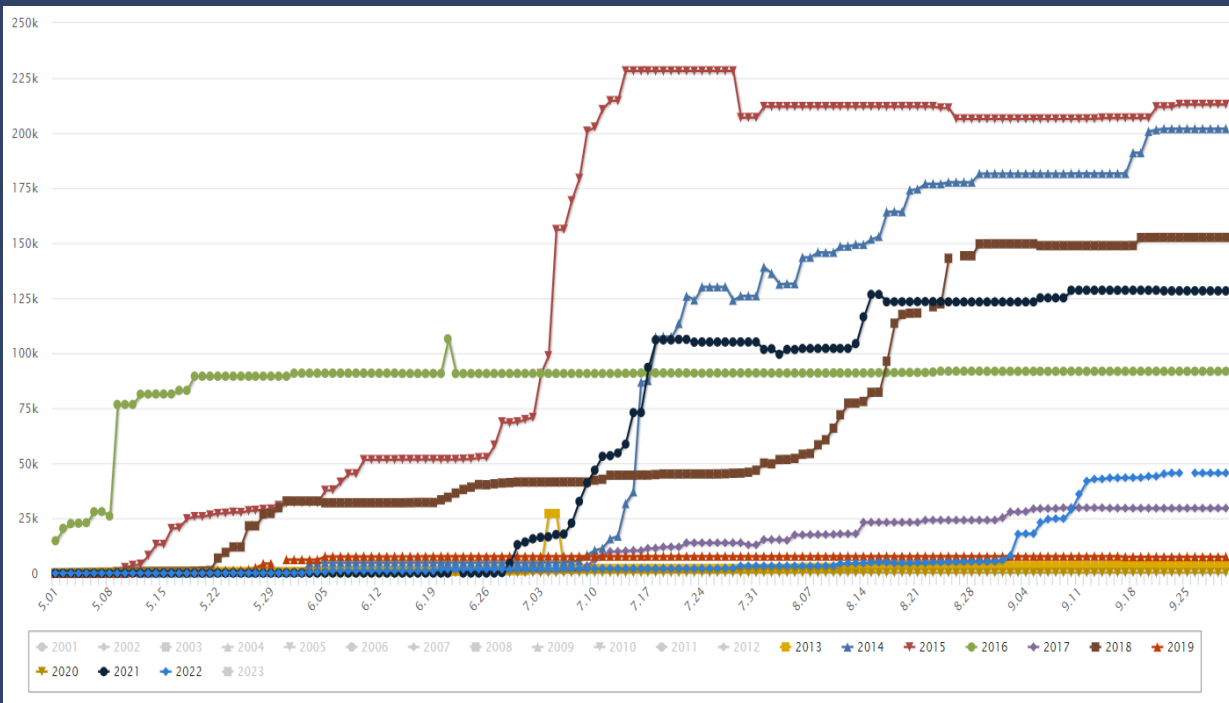
2014	2015
202,029	ha
	213,055 ha
2018	2021
152,564 ha	128,291 ha
2022	2017
45,564 ha	29,578 ha



# Hectares burned 2023 vs. previous years

- By July 1, the 2023 hectares burned surpassed the previous 10 years combined
- By July 19, the 2023 hectares burned surpassed the previous 20 years combined
- October 13 total hectares burned: 2,286,973







A total of **5** jumpships (**2** B.C. and **3** U.S.) operated in the Prince George Fire Centre in 2023.

The PGFC had contracted aircraft flying for **174** consecutive days from April 27 through October 18.

The highest number of helicopters active in the Prince George Fire Centre at one time was **52** helicopters on **July 3** plus an additional **4** provincial and **2** Rapattack machines (**58** total machines).



TBD

Total **Parattack** flight hours

519

Operational Missions



TBD

Operational flight hours flown

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**Practice** flight totals:

35.5

Hours flown

412

Individual Practice + Demonstration  
Jumps



# Of 519 Parattack Missions:

**Fire Jump Missions: 165** (884 individual fire jumps)

(Totals include OOC assistance from: 3 U.S. Jumpships, 131 U.S. Smokejumpers)

Fire Centre	Total Missions	Fire Jump Missions
Cariboo	1	0
30 Kamloops	6	0
Northwest	12	4
Prince George	500	161
32 Southeast	0	0

Paracargo/Cargo Move: 27  
Crewmove/Reposition:

Demobilization: 86

Patrol: 19

Dry Run/Diverted/Called-off:

Smokechase: 39

Recce: 121

**Nine** airtanker groups were stationed throughout the province this season, including **1** group from Alberta.

A total of **36** airtankers and birddog aircraft were engaged in 2023 and completed **44** practices and **816** provincial missions (over the 10-yr average of **509** missions).



# In Prince George Fire Centre:

Number of airtanker practices: 12

Number of airtanker targets: 258

Litres of fire suppressant used: 6,656,359

Litres of fire retardant used: 2,854,786



# Of 258 Air Tanker Targets:

Initials: 73

Support: 65

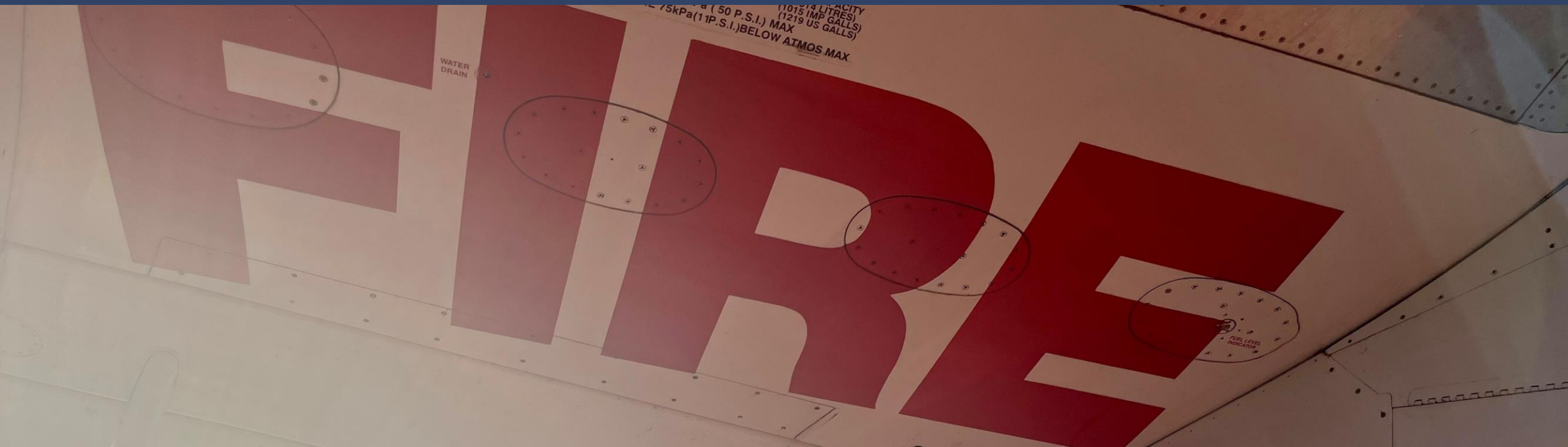
Cancelled: 21

Resources: 14

Recces: 34

Not Actioned: 51

Beyond





# Out-of-province deployments



- Upwards of **1,750 personnel** were contracted across the province to provide assistance in various fire-related functions
- Assistance came from: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, the Yukon, the Canadian Armed Forces, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica and South Africa

## How does 2023 compare to other significant wildfire seasons?

Provincial hectares burned this year is **double** the last record of 1.35 million in 2018.

This amount is **10 times** the **20-year average** annual area burned (284,001 hectares) and is what would historically be expected over a **decade**.

	2018	2021	2023
Total wildfires	2,080	1,625	2,245
Hectares burned	1,355,271	869,270	2,840,420
Wildfires of Note	111	67	57
Evacuation orders	66	181	208
Evacuation alerts	124	304	386
Suppression costs	~ \$615 million	~ \$718 million	~\$817 million
Total days on provincial state of emergency	24 (Aug. 15 to Sept. 7)	56 (July 21 to Sept. 14)	28 (Aug 18 to Sep 14)



THANK YOU.  
**Questions?**

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