

A firefighter in silhouette is working in a forest, using a tool to clear brush. The scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a strong glow and silhouetting the firefighter and the surrounding trees. The firefighter is wearing a helmet and a dark uniform, and is bent over, focused on the task. The forest is dense with evergreen trees, and the ground is covered in low-lying vegetation.

2024 Wildfire Preparedness

Prince George Fire Centre



BC Wildfire
Service

2024 BCWS Resource Overview

6 IMTs Mixed Type 1 & 2 resources;
30 x 20 person Unit Crews
130 x 3 person Initial Attack Crews
12 x 3 person Rapattack Crews
13 x 3 person Parattack Crews
700+/- W-TEAMS staff (govt employees)
1200+/- Contract Fire Fighters T2 & T3

2024 BCWS Resource Overview

28 Air Tankers and 8 bird-dog aircraft
8 Long Term Contract Medium Helicopters
2 Fire Equipment Depots – North and South
8 Mobile Fire Camps – 50 to 300 person
7 Type 1 Structure Protection Trailers, 40+ T2
(contract)

2024 BCWS Resource Increase

\$16 million investment to expand firefighting equipment, including pumps, fire camp equipment, safety gear, and medical and hygiene equipment before April 2024.

Increase existing aviation fleet to include additional plane and helicopter agreements.

2024 BCWS Resource Increase

Record number of early recall for firefighters in several fire centres.

Record number of applicants to fill the existing seasonal firefighter positions.

Fire Centre Resources

Prince George

6 Initial Attack Crews
1 Unit Crew (Firehawks)

Robson Valley (Valemount)

3 Initial Attack Crews

VanJam (Vanderhoof)

4 Initial Attack Crews
1 Unit Crew (Titans)

Mackenzie

6 Parattack Crews
1 Unit Crew (Mack)

Dawson Creek

3 Initial Attack Crews

Fort St John

12 Parattack Crews
1 Unit Crew (Rhinos)

Fort Nelson

4 Initial Attack Crews



Seasonal Update

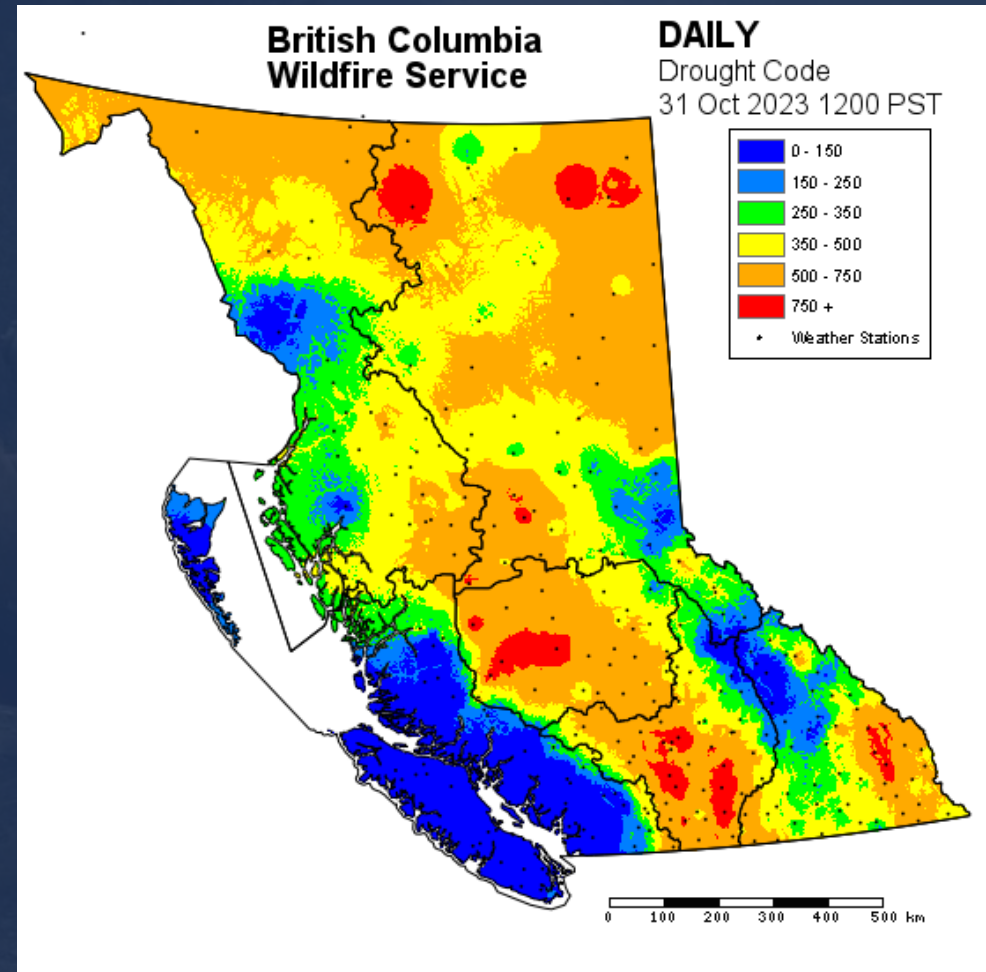
BC Wildfire Service Predictive Service Unit



BC Wildfire
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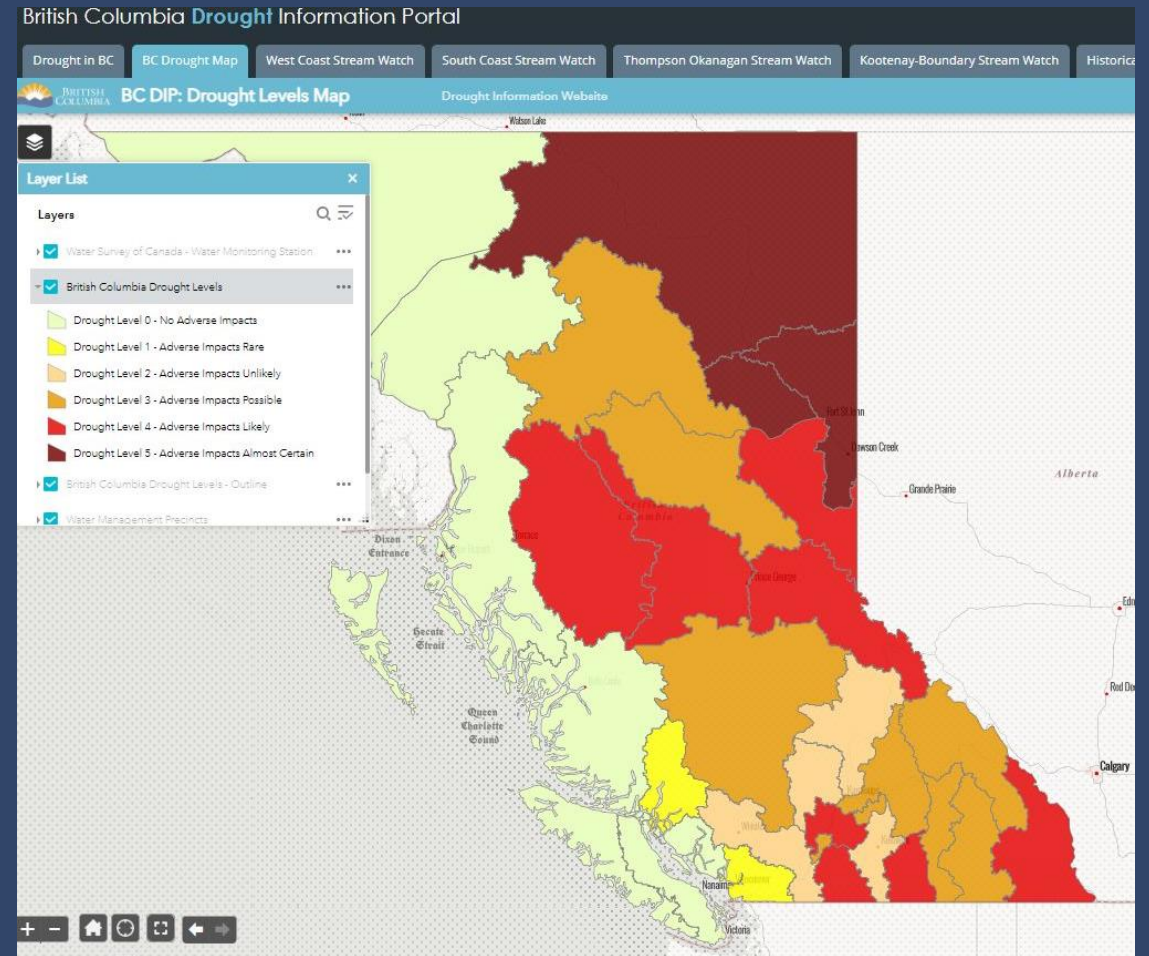
Conditions at the end of 2023

- Fall precipitation helped recover Drought Code values in the Coastal Fire Centre, and portions of the Southeast and Northwest Fire Centre regions.
- The remainder of the province will carry high to extreme Drought Code values into spring 2024.

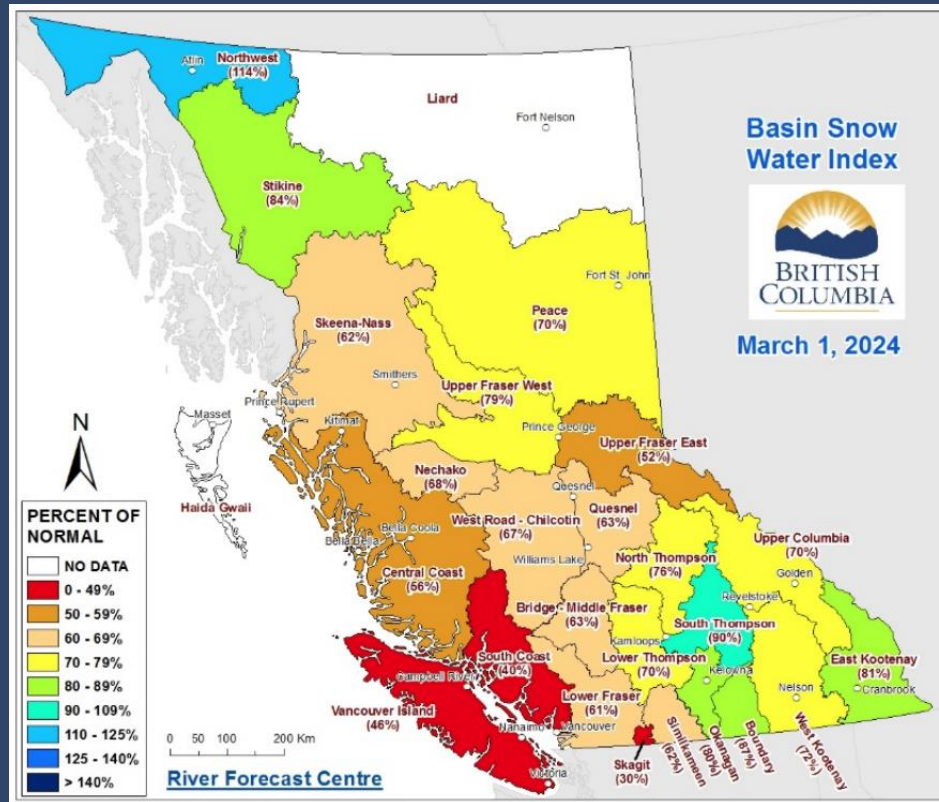


Deep, persistent drought conditions

- Many regions of the province were carrying high to extreme drought conditions that predated widespread freezing in November 2023.
- Frozen soils and dormant forests have limited capacity to absorb moisture. Snow and rain received over winter will have a limited impact on the drought.
- To alleviate the drought, continuous and widespread rain is needed once the snow melts.



Wildfire & snow: Myth busting



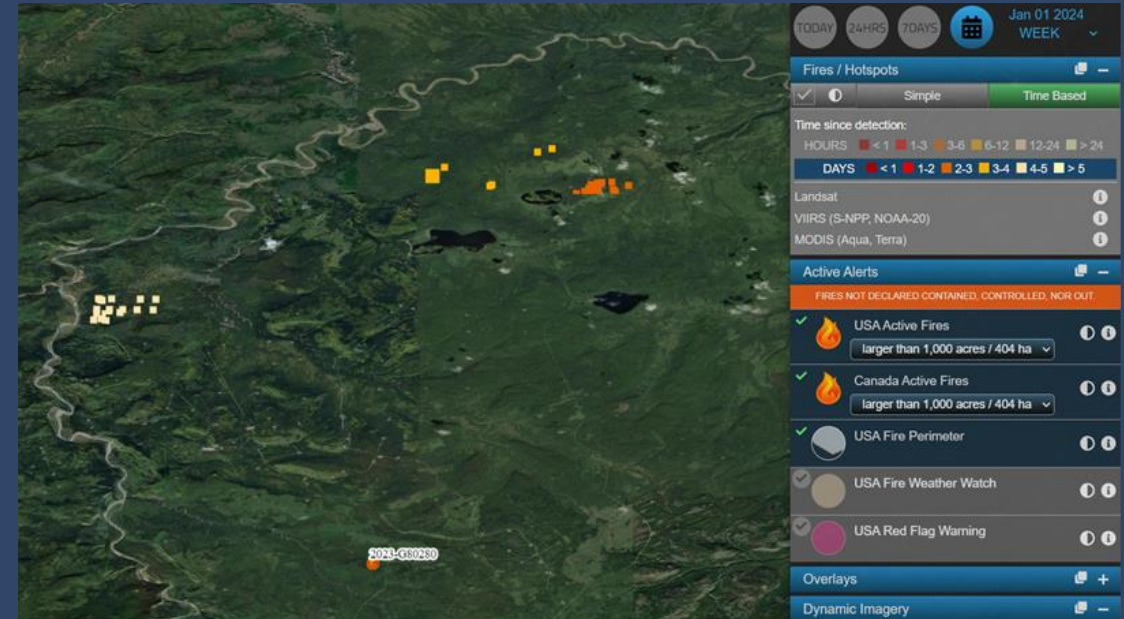
Despite some recent healthy snowfall, its impact on the upcoming wildfire season is likely to be minor:

- A lot of snow sublimates into the air instead of melting into the ground
- In many Interior locations, snow tends to be light/fluffy/dry

That said, maintaining a layer of snow prevents the fuels underneath from further drying out. Once the snow melts, surface fuels will dry out very quickly, especially in the presence of wind.

Holdover fires

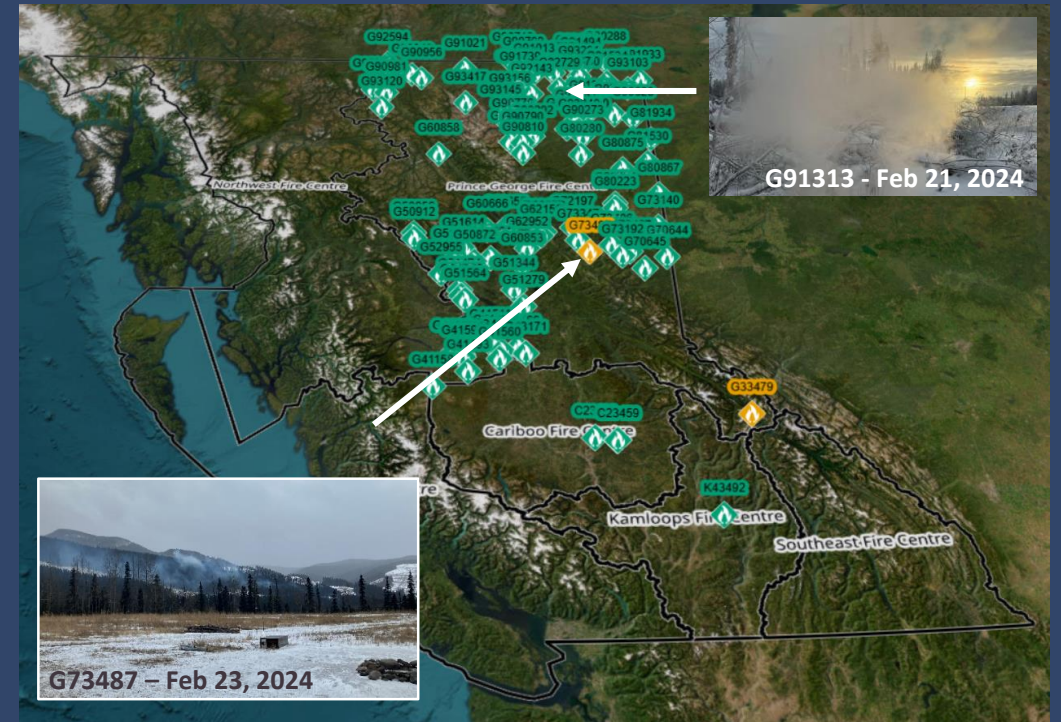
- Holdover fires are not an unusual phenomenon, although historically infrequent, in areas with a large build-up of surface fuels and a thicker duff layer above the mineral soil.
- Numerous holdover fires in the northeast have smoldered beneath the snow through the winter.
- Once the snow melts, drier air and moderate winds will be sufficient to reinvigorate these holdover fires.



The VIIRS satellite detected fire activity on the northeast corner of Donnie Creek (G80280) and the south edge of Klua Lakes (G90273) during the last week of December 2023.

Current wildfire situation

- Holdover fires from last season continue to be closely monitored
- Concern increases for these fires once the snow fully melts drier air and moderate winds will reinvigorate them
- New (human-caused) fires have already occurred in 2024 – a result of incredibly warm, dry & windy conditions



March 5, 2024

June rains?

- Typically, May and June are the rainiest months for the B.C. Interior. The amount of rain received during this period heavily influences the duration and severity of the fire season.
- Long-range weather forecasts have limited skill, particularly for precipitation.
- Conditions could improve in 2024 if June brings semi-continuous, widespread rains.
- Meteorologists are leery that BC will see sufficient rainfall in June 2024 to alleviate the deep and persistent drought conditions.

Summary

- The underlying deep drought conditions will remain as we approach the beginning of the 2024 fire season.
- Numerous holdover fires that have smoldered through the winter will re-intensify once snow free fuels coincide with dry air and winds.
- While strong El Nino conditions are currently fading, the residual heat in the Pacific will continue to support the likelihood for warmer and drier than normal conditions through the remainder of the 2023-24 winter and into spring.
- Long-range precipitation forecasts have limited skill. The amount of rain required to mitigate the current drought is unlikely.
- Given the antecedent conditions, there is an increased likelihood of an early start to the fire season and increased wildfire activity through the 2024 fire season.

BCWS Roles and Responsibilities

- BCWS speaks directly about **wildfires** (i.e. fire status, operations, etc.).
- BCWS is responsible for disseminating wildfire updates to local governments, stakeholders, First Nations and the public.
- In the event of an imminent threat to public safety, there are three levels of evacuations that local authorities may use:
 - Evacuation Order
 - Evacuation Alert
 - Tactical Evacuation

The Multi-way Call

- This procedure is used in all fire centres and has demonstrated effective and timely decision-making.
- EMCR will initiate and invite participants to a multi-way call based on BCWS' recommendation for an Evacuation Order or an Evacuation Alert.
- In most circumstances, BCWS will wait for the local authority or First Nation to communicate the Evacuation Order/Alert before sharing information with the public, stakeholders and partners.

BCWS is not a responsible authority for ...

- Initiating rapid damage assessments
- Sharing information on damaged structures
- Initial evacuation order/alert communications

Operational work directed by BCWS

If local authorities or First Nations are constructing fire guards or other wildfire management work, a wildfire official must approve and direct the work for associated equipment and personnel costs to be paid for by BCWS.

Information Sources



BC Wildfire
Service

Who to contact for detailed incident information

- Liaison Officer or Information Officer assigned to an IMT
- **Fire Centre Information Officer**
The PGFC Fire Information Team will often be your first point of contact

250-561-4629 | INFOPG@gov.bc.ca

- Regional and/or Zone Wildfire Coordination Officer

Additional Wildfire Information Sources

Public website: www.bcwildfire.ca

Social media: Facebook & Twitter

BCWS dashboard and app

BCWS YouTube

The screenshot shows a YouTube playlist interface. The main video player displays a firefighter working, with the title 'How We Respond to Wildfires' and 'BC Wildfire Service' below it. Below the player are icons for 'Play all' and 'Shuffle'. To the right is a list of 8 videos:

- 1. Mop up operations on wildfires (BC Wildfire Service • 256 views • 5 months ago)
- 2. Direct and Indirect attack strategies on wildfires (BC Wildfire Service • 4.7K views • 7 months ago)
- 3. How we understand fire fuels (BC Wildfire Service • 1.2K views • 7 months ago)
- 4. Heavy equipment operations on the fire line (BC Wildfire Service • 3.4K views • 7 months ago)
- 5. Stoddart Creek Wildfire - Stormrider Unit Crew Night Operations (BC Wildfire Service • 2.2K views • 9 months ago)
- 6. Stoddart Creek Wildfire - Rhino Unit Crew (BC Wildfire Service • 3.1K views • 9 months ago)
- 7. Provincial Wildfire Reporting Centre (BC Wildfire Service • 503 views • 1 year ago)
- 8. How we respond to wildfires - Fire Camps (BC Wildfire Service • 1.8K views • 1 year ago)

Contract Opportunities



BC Wildfire
Service

Entry Level Fire Suppression	First Nations Liaison/ Cultural Heritage Field Technician	Indigenous Initial Response (IIR)	Equipment Rental Agreements (ERAs)
<p>Fire suppression assistance, used on low complexity sustained action fires within the contractor's local community or territory.</p> <p>This may include working alongside and supporting provincial employees or other contractor personnel.</p>	<p>Identify and evaluate archaeological resources within project areas that the BCWS provides.</p> <p>Provide decision-making authority on behalf of a First Nation to an IMT or Fire Centre.</p> <p>Paid contracts are available when requirements are met.</p>	<p>Initial response fire suppression and assistance on fires within the First Nation's initial response service area within the First Nation Territory.</p>	<p>BCWS uses a range of equipment, including water tenders, bulldozers, rock trucks, and skidders, in support of fire operations.</p> <p>Providers should work directly with their local zone office to obtain an invitation to the Vendor Portal where they can add their equipment as an available resource.</p>



THANK YOU.

Questions?



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