

May 19, 2023

Barbara Roden
Chair, Thompson-Nicola Regional District
300-465 Victoria Street
Kamloops, BC, V2C 2A9

Via Email: cboissonneault@tnrd.ca

RE: Campfire Ban – Kamloops Fire Centre May 2023

Dear Ms. Roden,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter sent to myself on the 18th of May, 2023 requesting the implementation of a campfire ban within the TNRD boundaries of the Kamloops Fire Centre. Thank you sharing your concerns and insights into the current drought conditions, volatility of wildfires, and the hazard that other regions in British Columbia as well as Alberta are experiencing. Your interest in protecting the communities you represent is shared by the province, BC Wildfire Service, and the Kamloops Fire Centre.

The BC Wildfire Service evaluates the requirement for prohibitions, including campfire bans, on a daily basis. In addition to the drought codes that you referred to, campfire prohibitions are enacted based on the evaluation of scientifically supported considerations including risks to public safety, current and forecast weather trends, Relative Humidity (R/H), Build up index (BUI) threshold value, current and predicted fire load and fire behavior, and current resource availability.

Based on these factors, the wildfire risk to public safety is considered low in the Kamloops Fire Centre at this time. The short-term weather outlook summary is forecasted for higher temperatures and a risk of thunderstorm activity today and Saturday. However, Sunday will see a change in the weather pattern which includes a cooling in temperatures, an increase of relative humidity, a mix of showers and thunderstorms throughout the region. This cooler pattern will continue through to Tuesday morning. Higher relative humidity values decrease fire behaviour and relative humidity is expected to increase in our favour early next week with a return of a more seasonal and cooler weather pattern.

The build-up index (BUI) is a key component of our assessment. The BUI represents a numerical rating of the total amount of fuel available for combustion and represents the moisture content of the organic layer found in the forest floor. The BUI is used as an indicator of wildfire severity (depth of burn) or suppression difficulty. The weather stations in the Kamloops Fire Centre are not reporting BUIs within limit or threshold which is indicative of the greenery that can be observed in the region. In the coming weeks fuels will begin to cure and we can expect to see BUIs within higher risk thresholds at which point we would consider applying a campfire prohibition. For more information on the BUI please refer to the Fire Weather Index Systems page on our [website](#).

We also consider our current fire load and the few incidents we have had have not been challenging our responders for containment and can be characterized as smoldering surface fires with slow rates of spread.

Kamloops Fire Centre is prepared with resources for a predicted fire load is 6-10 daily fire starts throughout the May long weekend. The Kamloops Fire Centre has Response Officers, Initial Attack Crews, and heavy equipment alerted in every fire Zone location that serves the TNRD. We also have alerted helicopters and air tankers in Kamloops and Penticton to bolster response capabilities. Support from the provincial rappel program, based out of Salmon Arm, is also providing crews and helicopter support for the Fire Centre region.

Despite the activity you have observed in the northeast of the province and in Alberta, the fire activity in the Kamloops Fire Centre so far this year is slightly below the 10-year average of 39 fires for this time of year. To date this year, there have been 36 wildfires in the Kamloops Fire Centre. Of those 36, only four are determined to be the result of a campfire. At this time there are currently three wildfires within the Kamloops Fire Centre, two of which are classified as Under Control.

The decision to implement a campfire prohibition is considerate of the science that supports the decision and is always in the interest of public safety. While the BC Wildfire Service will not be implementing a campfire ban ahead of the long weekend, we are providing the public with educational prevention messaging regarding safe and cautious fire use, focused on campfires.

At this time, I would like to extend an offer to the TNRD Board for a meeting with myself at a date and time that is convenient for the board to further discuss your campfire prohibition concerns or any topics related to fire management.

Respectfully,



Kaitlin Baskerville

Kamloops Fire Centre Manager

BC Wildfire Service