

August 21, 2023 @ 8:00 P.M.

Fire Behaviour Update

Wood Buffalo Complex (previously Parks Canada Fire 7, Alberta Wildfire MNZ003, and NWT SS069):

We experienced some fire growth today, however; the unexpected north winds helped to limit fire growth towards communities. The fire is burning in all fuel types.

The Wood Buffalo Complex remains 4km south of Fort Smith, NWT and 6km south of Fort Fitzgerald, AB.

The attempted ignition efforts to burn fuels on the south side of Highway 5 from the Salt River Bridge to the intersection of Thebacha Road did not take in recent days. However, today's weather conditions rendered favourable results. Due to extreme drought indices, active fire in that area removed the fuels to bring the fire to the road. This highlights how dramatically weather conditions can change how and where a wildfire will burn.

There will be significant smoke in the area over the next few days that will likely impact visibility.

The danger from this wildfire has not passed. A state of local emergency remains in effect for Fort Smith and Fort Fitzgerald. IT IS UNSAFE FOR RESIDENTS TO RETURN.

Road closures:

Road closures are in place for your protection. Attempting to return to the area not only puts you at risk, but will impede firefighting operations and impair our ability to respond to the fire. If you re-enter before it is safe, you can completely halt operations, as it is not safe to conduct firefighting operations while people are nearby, especially if we don't know where you are.

Highway 5 is **CLOSED** with staff monitoring the entrances from Hay River to Fort Smith due to active fire reaching the highway, safety concerns and heavy smoke. Please do not attempt to enter this area, if you try to re-enter unauthorized you will be turned around. Pine Lake Road, including Pine Lake Recreation Area, **remains CLOSED** due to fire behaviour and ongoing fire operations in the area. For up-to-date highway information click here [Highway Conditions \(gov.nt.ca\)](https://dot.gov.nt.ca) or insert <https://dot.gov.nt.ca/Highways>

Report any wildfires or suspicious smoke in Alberta to 310-FIRE, in Northwest Territories to 1-877-NWTFIRE, and in Wood Buffalo National Park to 867-621-0136.

For further information, contact:

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