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FIRE INFORMATION

Fire Information Update – August 23, 2023 @ 8:00 pm (page 1 of 1)

Fire Behaviour Update

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

Today, we were able to complete the ignition operation that was planned for south of Fort Fitzgerald, near the finger where the fire took a run last night. They were able to complete the entire east side that they planned to. Unfortunately, they weren't able to complete the west side that they planned to do as the conditions were no longer favourable for ignition operations.

We saw some decent fire behaviour today, however; the fire did not move closer to Fort Smith, Fort Fitzgerald, Border Town, Halfway, Thebacha or Bell Rock. The northerly winds helped to push the fire back on itself; most of the fire growth was towards the south.

Given the northerly winds, we utilized this opportunity to deploy crews and heavy equipment to south of Fort Fitzgerald to support the ignition operation. They worked at strengthening the containment line so that the ignition operation would be successful. Tomorrow, they will use a hand torch to finish up some areas along Hay Camp Road that didn't ignite today.

Throughout the day, helicopters were busy bucketing along the north flank that's south of Fort Smith and also in Thebacha. Today, the wildfire responded well to bucketing.

There are approximately a dozen structures on Foxholes Road that a structure protection crew was busy working to protect today. They made good progress and they should be finished by tomorrow.

It is still UNSAFE FOR RESIDENTS TO RETURN. A state of local emergency remains in effect for Fort Smith and Fort Fitzgerald. We understand you want to go home but now is not the time, please be patient so that our crews and incident management teams can focus on this wildfire, rather than worrying about people who have re-entered the community unauthorized.

Road closures:

Road closures are in place for YOUR protection. Entering into an area before it is safe puts YOU at risk and IMPEDES OUR ABILITY to respond to the fire. We cannot 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>

Significant smoke and poor visibility created challenging fire operations today. For more information on smoke intensity and to see where it's coming from, go to firesmoke.ca.

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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