

BC Wildfire Service

May 16 Update

Current Situation

Late April-early May have been extremely busy with activities:

- Wildfires
- Floods
- Cultural & Prescribed Fire
- Training
- Onboarding of new team members

B.C. is providing support to our partner agencies as much as able.



Current Activities – Wildfire

Total Fires: **179**

Last 7 days: **40**

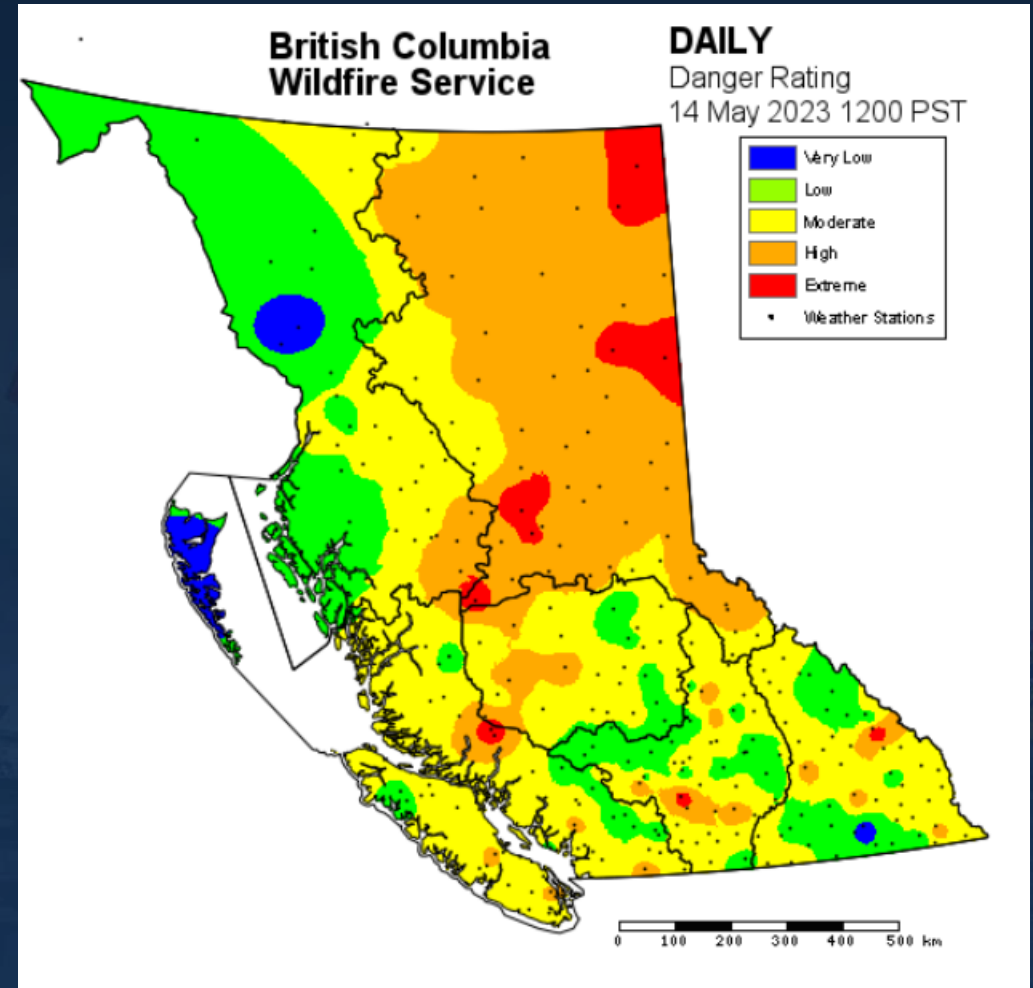
Hectares Burned: **42,714**

10 Year Averages: **149** fires & **9,853** ha

Active Fires: **56**

Out of Control: **13**

Fires of Note: (5) Boundary Lake 6,200 ha
Stoddart Cr 6,100 ha
Donnie Cr 26,000 ha
Red Lake 2,800 ha



Spring Dip – closing



Green-up



The 'spring dip' refers to the period after the snow melts and before significant spring rainfall when forest fuels are cured and available to burn. As a result, it is common for grass fires to ignite and spread quickly in early spring.



Partnerships

First Nations Partnership Burn Plans
on track to finalize

35

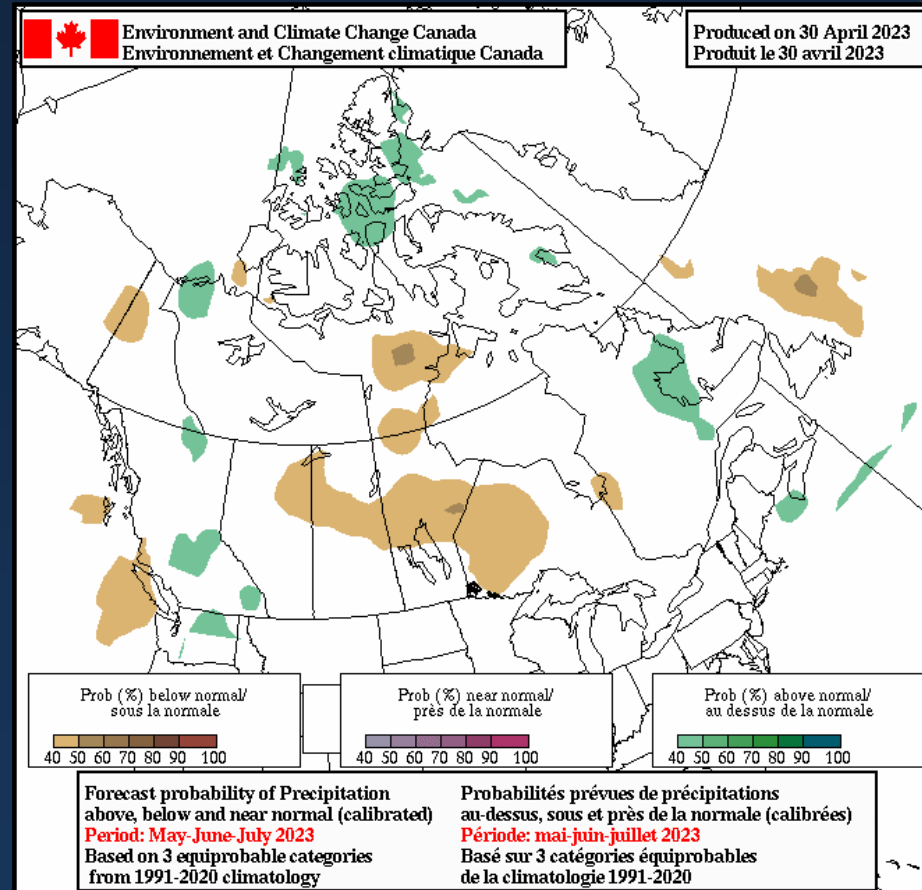
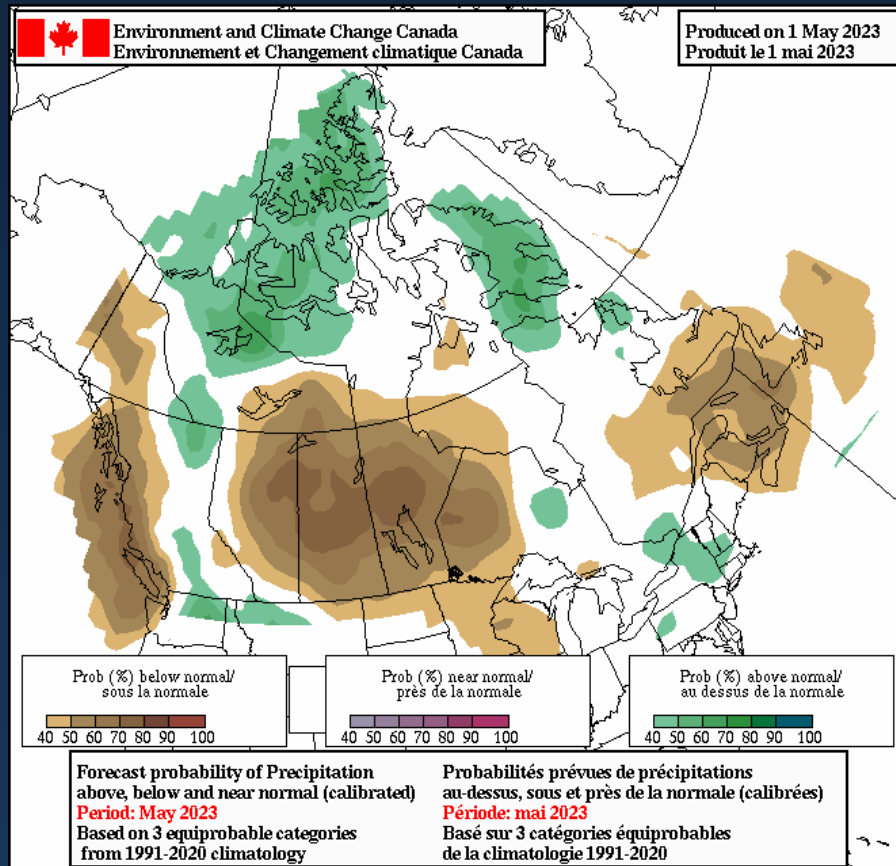
Total Burns Forecasted for 2023
if plans approved and Rx windows open

73

Burns Completed
as of May 9

23

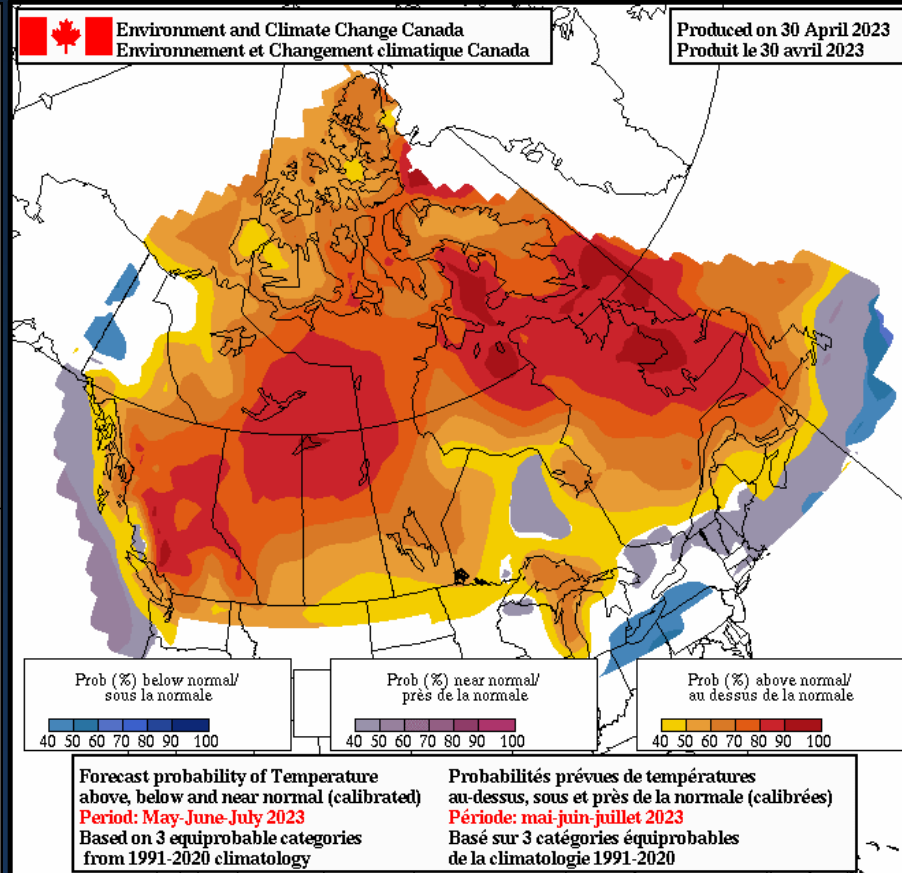
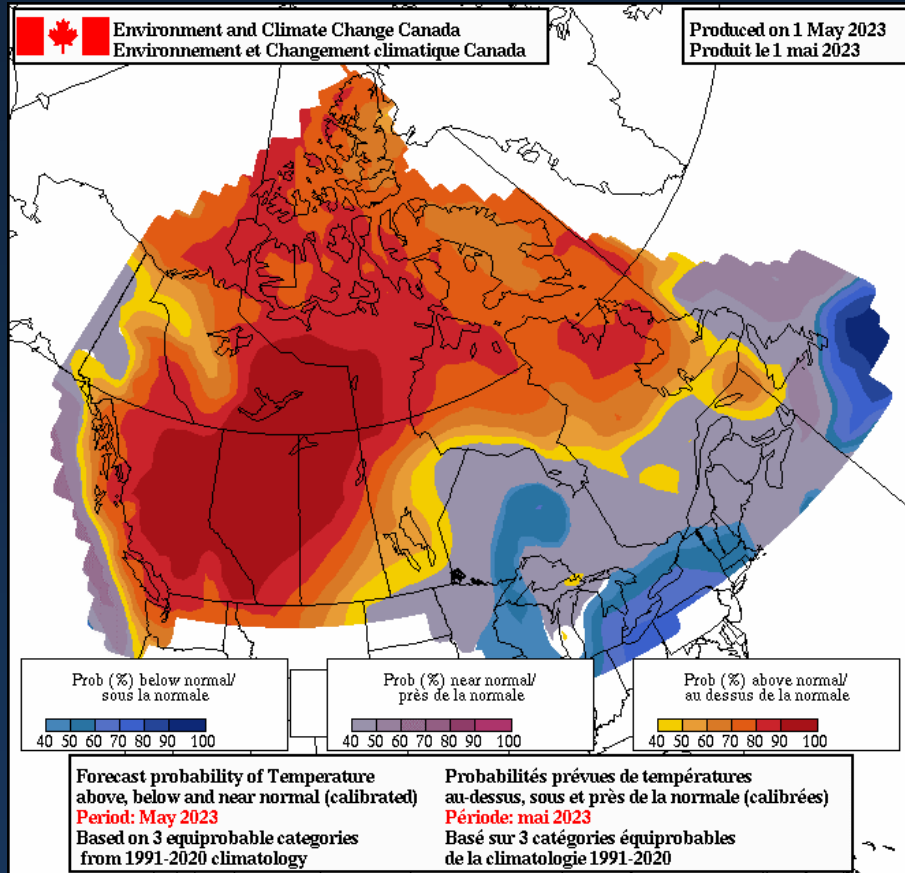
Early Summer Outlook - Precipitation



Precipitation outlook for May-June-July 2023

- **Drier than normal** conditions are anticipated through May.
- Beyond May, there is **no clear signal** for precipitation heading into June and July.
- **Limited accuracy and information** on rainfall amounts to alleviate the elevated drought.
- As always, fire activity through the peak of the fire season will greatly **depend on the amount of June rainfall**.

Early Summer Outlook - Temperature

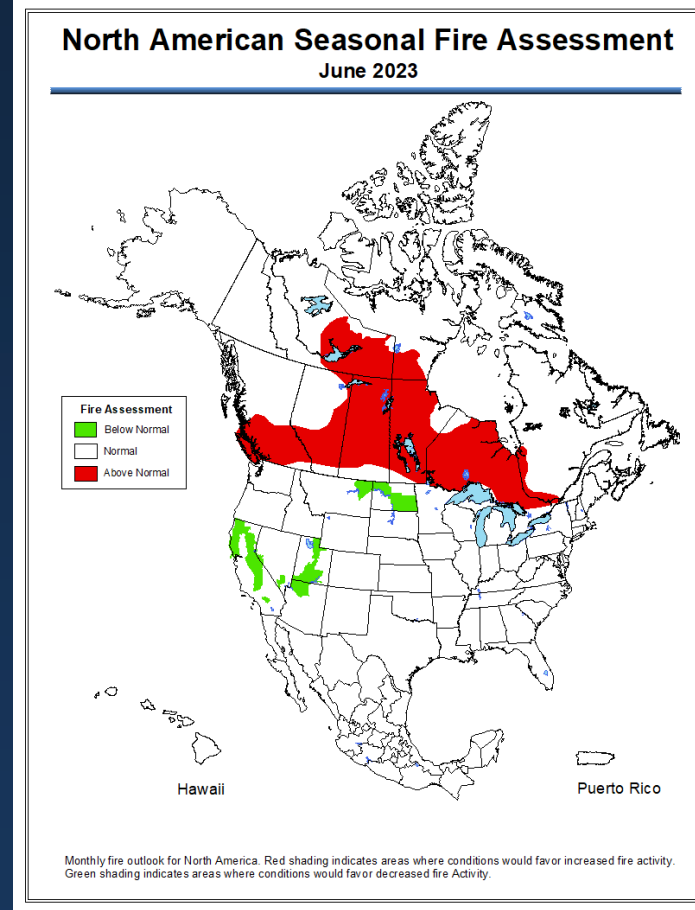
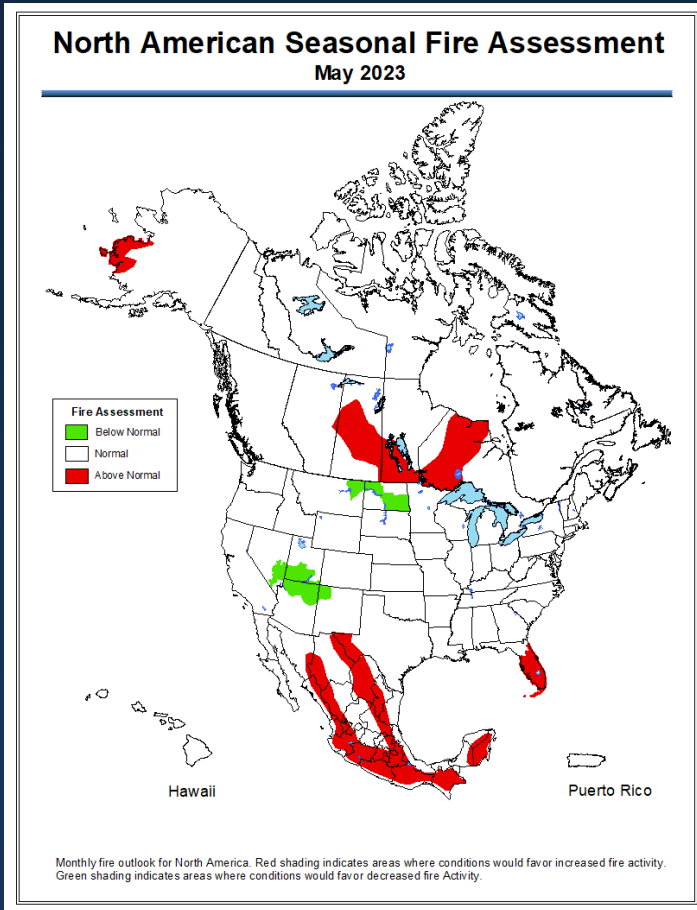


- Indications of a **high probability** of above normal temperatures through May.
- **Low probabilities** of above seasonal temperatures are forecast for June and July.
- Overall, the temperature outlook for May-June-July shows a **moderate to high likelihood** of above seasonal temperatures.

Temperature outlook for May-June-July 2023

Early Summer Outlook – Fire Assessment

North American Seasonal Fire Assessment 2023



- The latest seasonal guidance from NIFC/NRCAN.
- Fire activity levels throughout the spring will likely be **near normal** across with most of North America with areas in the far south region and Florida remaining in elevated risk.
- Progression into early June sees elevated risk expected to expand across most of Canada **extending into the far north.**

Short term May Outlook

- Expect warm and dry to remain in place for most of the province next 7-10 days with no reprieve in sight.
- Elevated drought conditions have persisted; Cariboo, South Thompson, Okanagan, Peace region and the Rocky Mountain Trench.
- Drought conditions will persist until significant and prolonged precipitation is observed.
- Early season fires are showing elevated fire behaviour due to early season drought conditions and “spring dip”.



For More Information

Visit bcwildfire.ca or download the BC Wildfire Service mobile app for information on open burning, wildfire prevention and active wildfires.



Cooperative Community Wildfire Response



Indigenous Services
Canada



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Forestry



First Nations'
Emergency Services Society
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cooperative Community Wildfire Response

Quarterly Status Update



Cooperative Community Wildfire Response



Supporting wildfire response capacity building in Indigenous and rural, non-Indigenous communities in B.C.



Background

Wildfire is considered the number one risk to small, remote communities in B.C.

Since 2017, several reports and after-action reviews demonstrate that emergency events, such as wildfires, disproportionately affect Indigenous communities. Additionally, there are positive examples of cooperation to build off where remote communities have already established fire response capacity

This project provides the overarching cooperation needed to expand capacity and improve coordination and consistency in fostering community cooperation.

There are a number of examples of strong wildfire response cooperation across BC to further support.. We are in this together.



Wildfires disproportionately affect remote and forested Indigenous communities in Canada and Indigenous peoples are 33% more likely to evacuate from a wildfire.

- Tara K. McGee, 2021

Wildfire impacts on rural and remote communities

Approx 12.3% of people in Canada live in the wildland-urban interface, which includes 32.1% of on-reserve First Nations. These communities are more prone to natural disasters, driven by climate change.¹

From 1980-2019, First Nations reserves comprised 21% of evacuations and small communities (<1000 people) comprised 70% of evacuations in southwestern B.C.²

Communities with <5,000 residents and First Nations communities less likely to have community wildfire protection plans/resilience plans (which can include planning for evacuations).³



References

1. [Exposure of the Canadian wildland–human interface and population to wildland fire, under current and future climate conditions](#)
2. [Wildfire evacuation patterns and syndromes across Canada's forested regions](#)
3. [Community Engagement With Proactive Wildfire Management in British Columbia, Canada: Perceptions, Preferences, and Barriers to Action](#)

Cooperative Community Wildfire Response



Supporting wildfire response capacity building in
Indigenous communities across B.C.

- Recognizing Indigenous knowledge and holistic view of fire and land management
- Supporting First Nations to exercise right on their traditional territory
- Designing an approach to work side by side, and share lived experience.
- Formalizing and streamlining procurement and cooperation.
- Connecting Nations with training and capacity-building opportunities.

Cooperative Community Wildfire Response



Supporting wildfire response capacity building in
rural, non-Indigenous communities across B.C.

- BCWS-led sub-project involving Operations and Corporate Wildfire Services.
- Research and engagement methods will be scoped and planned early 2023.
- Ranchers, volunteer fire departments, trusts, fire brigades.
- Pursuit of inroads for improved cooperation with BCWS.

Note: this phase is to commence with support from Fraser Basin Council

COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RESPONSE

FIRST NATIONS Hold Diverse capacities for WildFire Management Leadership, Local Knowledge, Training & Experience, Equipment, and Important Relationships & Partnerships

AGENCIES
can continue to enable opportunities through KEY PROCESSES:

BUILD Relationships & Trust

Address Racism to enable **CULTURAL SAFETY**

Clarify **Authority & Jurisdiction**

Streamline **Funding**

Capacity Building



PRIORITY OPPORTUNITIES

FIRST NATIONS' EMPLOYMENT within BC WILDFIRE SERVICE

Flexible AS-NEEDED CONTRACTS & MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS

STRENGTHEN & EXPAND INDIGENOUS LIAISONS

FULL-TIME FIRST NATIONS CREWS TRAINED for WILDFIRE Management CULTURAL & PRESCRIBED BURNING, ALL HAZARDS & STRUCTURAL PROTECTION

FULLY FUNDED IN-COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR



Progress to date with Indigenous Communities

- UBC has supported over 20 interviews with community members in Indigenous communities
- A reflection of voices report has been completed and shared back to community members
- Areas of Cooperation shared at the FireSmart Conference
- BCWS is supporting FNESS with \$5M grant over the next 5 years to support revitalization of fire management practices with First Nations communities
- BCWS has for the 2023 fire season:
 - Included cultural awareness and safety sessions into all bootcamps this fire season, led by First Nations in the community.
 - Released cultural sensitive site cards to all crew leaders
 - Set-up an interim liaison contract for this year, until further engagement can occur after fire season
 - Is continuing to pilot Indigenous Initial Response in 2023, and has committed to this response option being available for 2024.
 - Hired an Indigenous Relations Coordinator to directly support hiring, retention and opportunities for First Nations in BCWS

Next step and Questions

- BCWS, FNESS and ISC will be working with communities after the 2023 fire season, to review findings and build out response options for the 2024 fire season
- We want feedback on what this would look like from communities.

- Contact information

- BCWS.FNIR@gov.bc.ca

