

Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) Interface Fire Situation Overview – September 5, 2006 2200 hrs

Background

On Sunday evening, September 3, 2006, the Tatoosh Fire crossed the Canadian-US border into the central region, east of Manning Park. B.C. Forest Service estimates current fire size in BC at 2350 hectares. Earlier dense smoke made it difficult for the Forest Service to conduct over-flights to confirm fire size. Several small spot fires are burning ahead of the main fire. The fire is estimated to be burning approximately 18 km from structures at East Gate. Access is restricted in the Pasayten Road and trail areas.

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) activated an EOC in Princeton at the request of the BC Forest Service Protection Branch Incident Commander.

Heavy smoke from the Tatoosh fire continues to be a concern and made early mapping and detection difficult. It also created possible health concerns for people with breathing difficulties. Winds blew smoke in a more westerly direction this afternoon, providing better opportunities for mapping and response.

An evacuation alert was put in place for residents of East Gate, Pasayten River Valley and parts of Manning Park by the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen. This decision was a result of discussion with BC Forest Service Protection Branch and Emergency Operations Centre officials.

Office of the Fire Commissioner is providing mapping support to the EOC, PREOC, and agencies, including the provision of strategic planning tools. A structural branch supervisor is on site to support property owners requiring sprinklers. A number of sprinklers have been installed for East Gate area properties with additional planned.

The Central Region Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre and the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre are activated at level 2. Staff continue to provide agency coordination in support of local government through regularly scheduled conference calls with all agencies and local government. A liaison officer is in attendance at RDOS EOC.

Current Information

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen
<http://www.rdos.bc.ca/index.php?id=469>

BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Protection Program Wildfire Update
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/pScripts/Protect/WildfireNews/Situation.asp>

Interior Health Authority Smoke and Health
http://www.rdosmaps.bc.ca/min_bylaws/finance/EmergProtectiveServices/Fires2006/SmokekeySkiesFAQ.pdf

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/NR/rdonlyres/5AD0DD00-DA23-4340-841B-0F88F10E2D61/2795/SmokeandHealthFAQ2005.pdf>

Ministry of Environment Air Quality <http://www.airplaytoday.org/default.htm>

Ministry of Environment, BC Parks Trail Closures
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/recreation.html>

Office of the Fire Commissioner <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/firecom/>

Ministry of Transportation, Drive BC <http://www.drivebc.ca/>

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Incidents <http://www.inciweb.org/forest/4984>

Current Situation

Tatoosh Complex

The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) held a townhall meeting in East Gate at 1830 hrs, to provide public information on the fire situation. BC Forest Service and BC Parks attended to update residents. Regional District Okanagan Similkameen issued an Evacuation Alert for the Pasayten, Eastgate and Manning Park areas. RCMP and Search and Rescue volunteers assisted in door to door delivery of the alert. BC Parks staff will be informing park users and the lodge in area.

The Tripod Complex, south of Osoyoos has not crossed the border but is being monitored closely.

Region District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS)

The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen Operations Centre remains activated.

The Regional District is providing ample notice to the residents so that they can prepare should an evacuation be required. A public information line has been activated at 1-877-295-3790.

Definitions

Evacuation Alert: Local authorities issue a warning in the form of an Evacuation Alert about an imminent threat to life and property, and people are asked to be ready to leave on short notice. When people choose to leave an area before or during the issuing of an alert, this is referred to as a voluntary evacuation.

Evacuation Order: Local authorities issue an Evacuation Order when the population is determined to be at imminent risk, and people must leave the area immediately. Local police or RCMP enforce Evacuation Orders.

Evacuation Rescind: An Evacuation Order or Alert is rescinded or lifted by local authorities when it is determined to be safe for residents to return home. An Evacuation Order may be reinstated if a threat returns.