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Silverton Wildfire Operational Update #3

Friday, July 26, 2024 2:00 p.m.

Aylwin Creek Fire and Komonko Creek Fire

Silverton, BC – The entire Village of Silverton remains on evacuation order today. Anyone who has not yet registered with Emergency Support Services either in person at the Nakusp & District Community Complex or online or by phone is encouraged to do so, whether you expect to be seeking support or not. Details can be found on the Regional District of Central Kootenay website. (www.rdck.ca)

Yesterday's rain was not heavy (1 – 2 mm in many areas) but it was enough to keep fire behaviour calmer than in recent days. Gusty winds at times escalated fire behaviour to rank three and crews had to withdraw to safety zones so structure protection personnel could conduct operations to defend structures. Today's temperatures are forecasted to be cooler, which should result in lower levels of fire behaviour again. Winds will generally be southerly with some westerlies at ridgetops. Wind speeds will be 10 – 20 km/h, with gusts up to 40 – 50 km/h and could see shifting direction due to nearby convection. These winds should ease throughout the day. Heavy smoke is again hampering air support, but yesterday airtankers and skimmers were able to support the response, delivering retardant and suppressant to slow the fire's growth.

The Aylwin Creek Fire had minimal increased growth on the fire's northern flank nearest to Silverton over the past 24 hours. There was more activity around at the southern flank around the Enterprise Creek area. A holding line is being created by crews on the north flank near Bannock Point.

The Komonko Creek Fire's southwestern flank was most active, backing down the mountainside toward Highway 6. The cooler conditions and precipitation were beneficial to crews and heavy equipment constructing guard on the fire's western flank and to structure protection personnel who are working in and around Red Mountain Road and Highway 6. Also, BC Hydro personnel are working on danger tree assessment and falling along Highway 6.

A Boil Water Notice remains in place for the Village of Silverton's water system on the recommendation of Interior Health. This is a precautionary step, due to the potential for ground water contamination from fire fighting activities in the area (e.g. use of retardant). All users are advised to bring water intended for consumption, oral hygiene or food preparation to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute or use an alternate, safe source of water.

There has been no reported change in the size of the Aylwin Creek or Komonko Creek Fires. The Komonko Creek Fire remains mapped at 534 hectares in size, and the Aylwin Creek Fire is at 400 hectares. Both fires remain out of control. Today the fires are being actioned by two unit crews, four operational single resources, five helicopters, two line locators, 14 pieces of heavy equipment and 7 machine operators, two structure protection specialists and three structure protection crews under the direction of a new Incident

Management Team that assumed command on July 22nd. The Komonko Creek and Aylwin Creek fires are now part of the Slokan Lake Complex of fires.

The operational objectives on the Aylwin Creek Fire are focusing on the construction of control lines, keeping the fire from advancing over Highway 6, and structural protection. Structure Protection crews continue to deploy structure protection on areas of concern.

On the Komonko Creek Fire, crews are focusing on the construction of control lines from the Red Mountain Road area, northwards. Today crews are establishing guard east of Red Mountain Road, moving north toward Silverton Creek. Heavy equipment continues to support the construction of the control lines. Structure protection crews are also continuing to deploy structure protection apparatus and equipment on areas of concern.

An Area Restriction remains in effect for the entire Slokan Lake Complex – for Silverton, this begins at the Silverton Forest Service Road (also known as 4 Mile Creek Road) and extends all the way south to Slokan. Highway 6 remains closed in both directions to protect both public and responder safety.

Everyone is no doubt anxious to get home, and BC Wildfire Service has provided us with an overview of how and when they make a determination to change or rescind an evacuation order. When BC Wildfire Service is confident that they know where exactly the fire lines are, and they can predict where the fire will move to, then they can make an assessment to change their evacuation order. Everyone's safety is the number one priority.

For those who are concerned about Canada Post being currently unable to provide service, we have been advised that the Post Office in New Denver will reopen on Monday. For anyone who has to pick up their medical or emergency supplies before Monday, that have been delivered to the New Denver Post Office, you may contact the New Denver Village Office and they will make the necessary arrangements for you. Contact number during office hours – 250-358-2316.

Finally, we are thinking about our neighbours in Jasper who suffered incredible devastation in their community this week. Our hearts go out to them, and our gratefulness to our emergency responders and firefighters becomes ever more profound.

For more detailed information from BC Wildfire Services specific to the Komonko and Aylwin Creek fires, please visit the following websites:

<https://wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/incidents?fireYear=2024&incidentNumber=N51210&source=list>

<https://wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/incidents?fireYear=2024&incidentNumber=N51065&source=list>

The Village of Silverton will provide regular updates with as much information as possible. Please continue to support our fire fighters and the teams that are working hard to protect our community.

Village of Silverton