

2024 Penticton Fire Zone and Fire Department Pre-Season Meeting



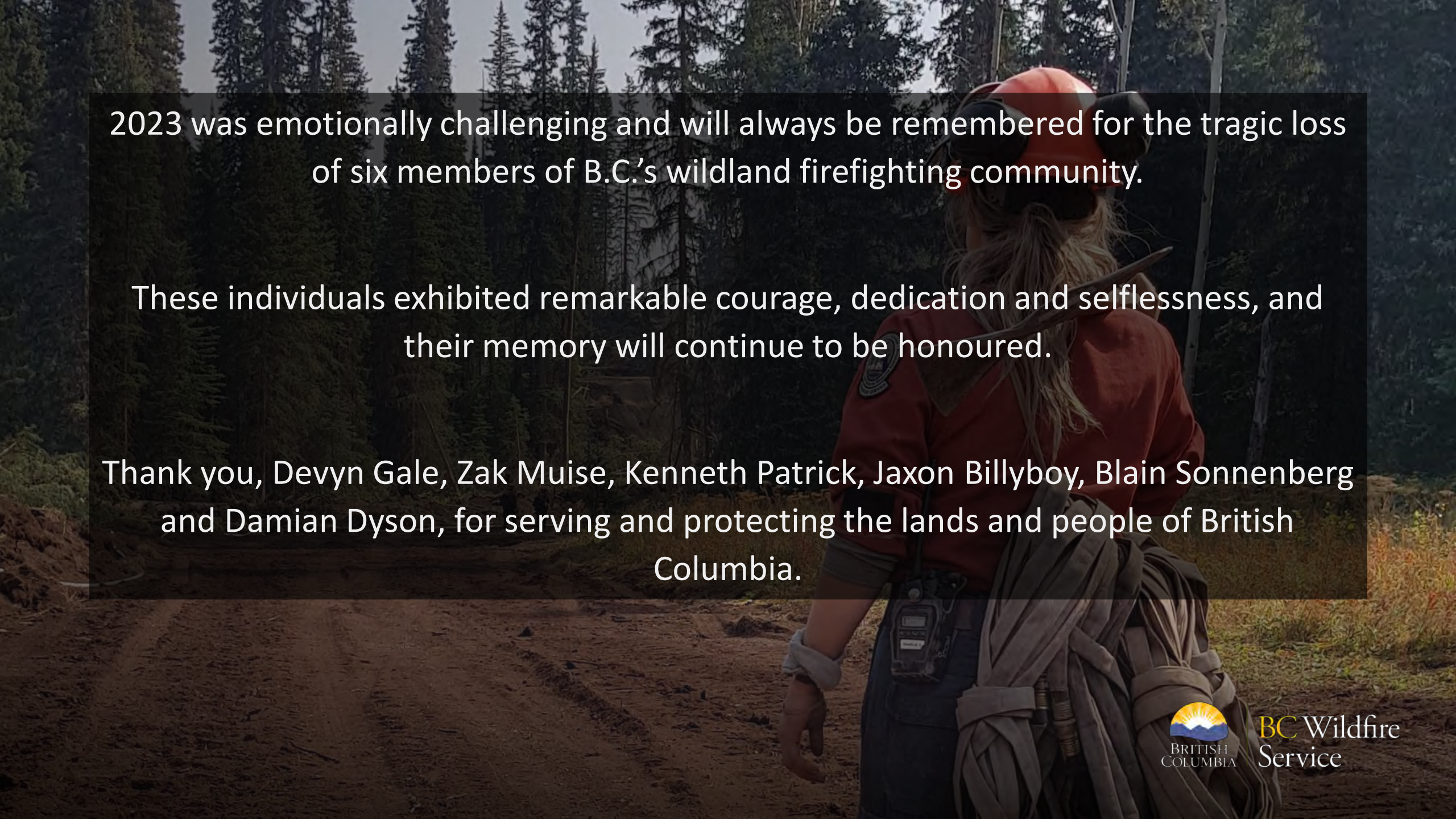
BC Wildfire
Service



2023 Wildfire Season Summary



BC Wildfire
Service



2023 was emotionally challenging and will always be remembered for the tragic loss of six members of B.C.'s wildland firefighting community.

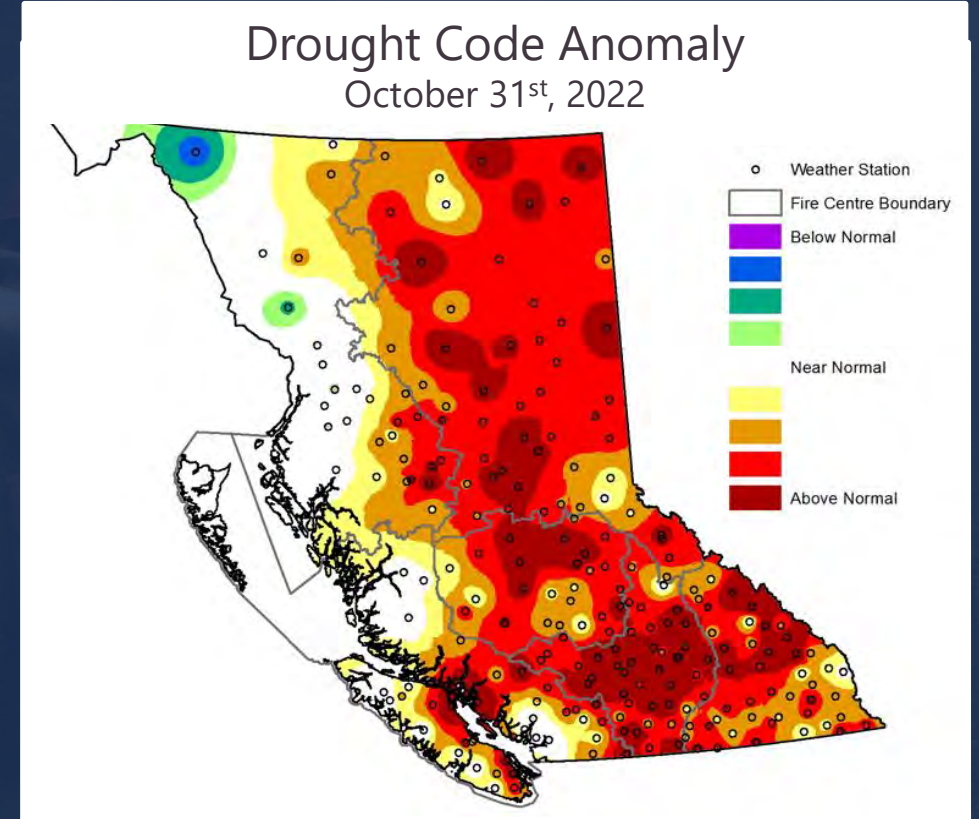
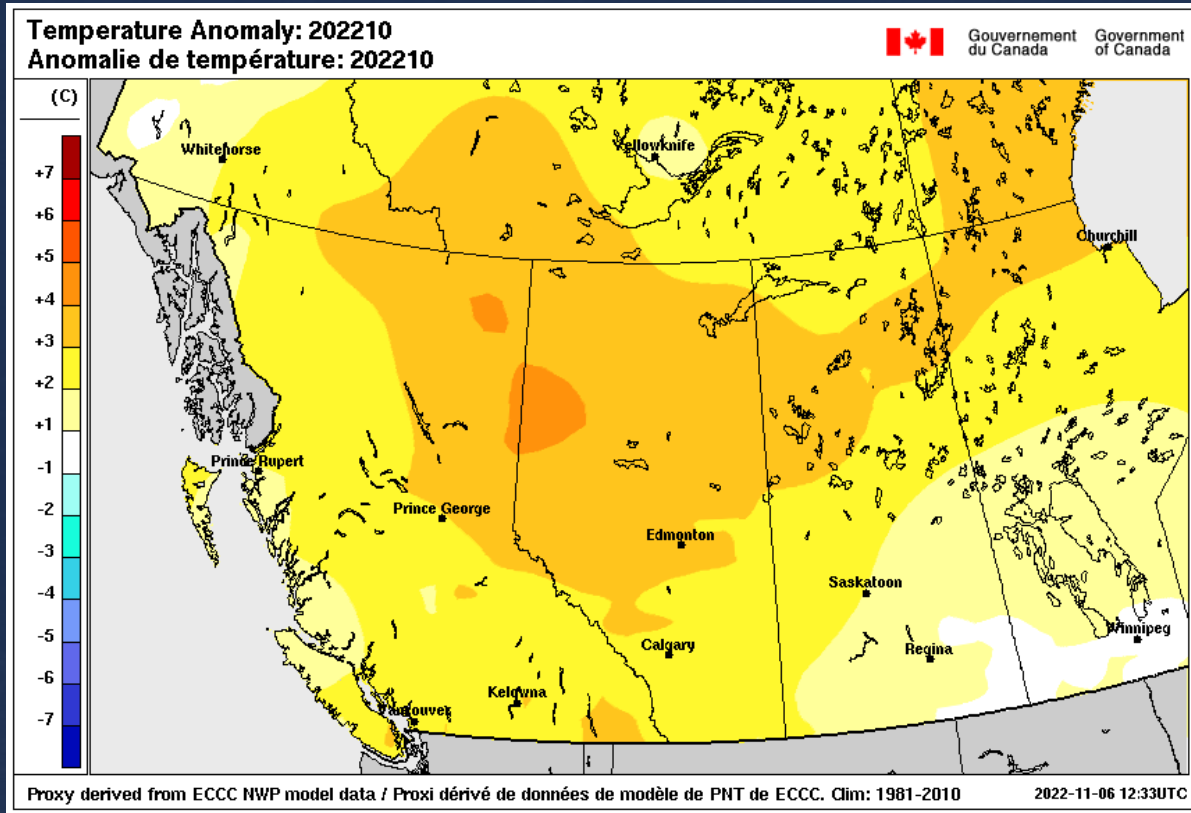
These individuals exhibited remarkable courage, dedication and selflessness, and their memory will continue to be honoured.

Thank you, Devyn Gale, Zak Muise, Kenneth Patrick, Jaxon Billyboy, Blain Sonnenberg and Damian Dyson, for serving and protecting the lands and people of British Columbia.



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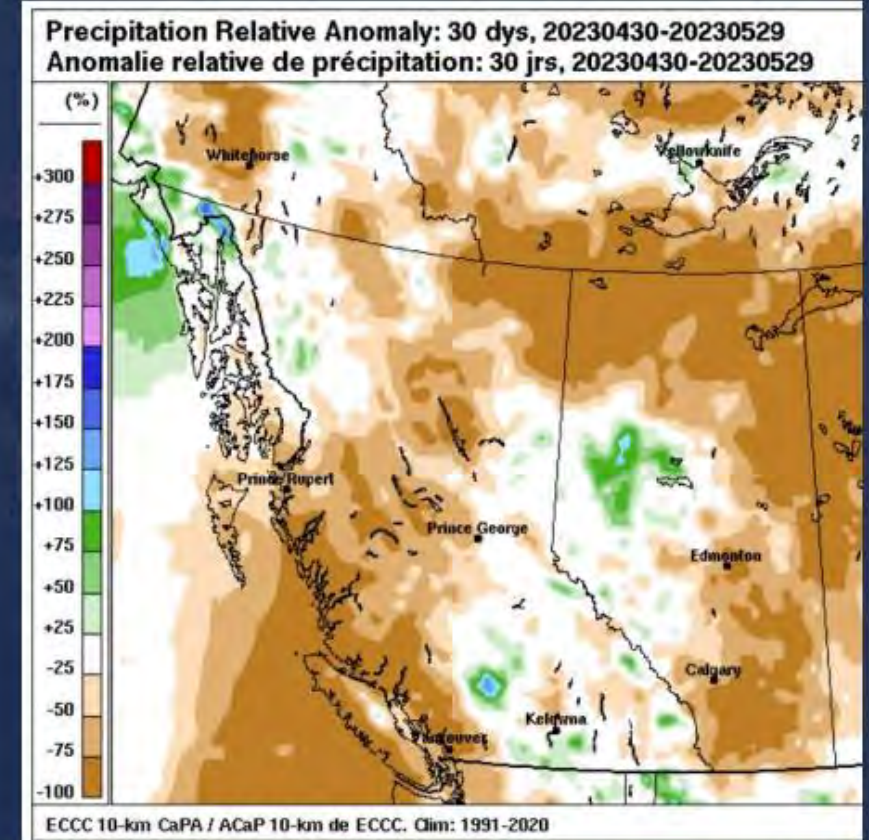
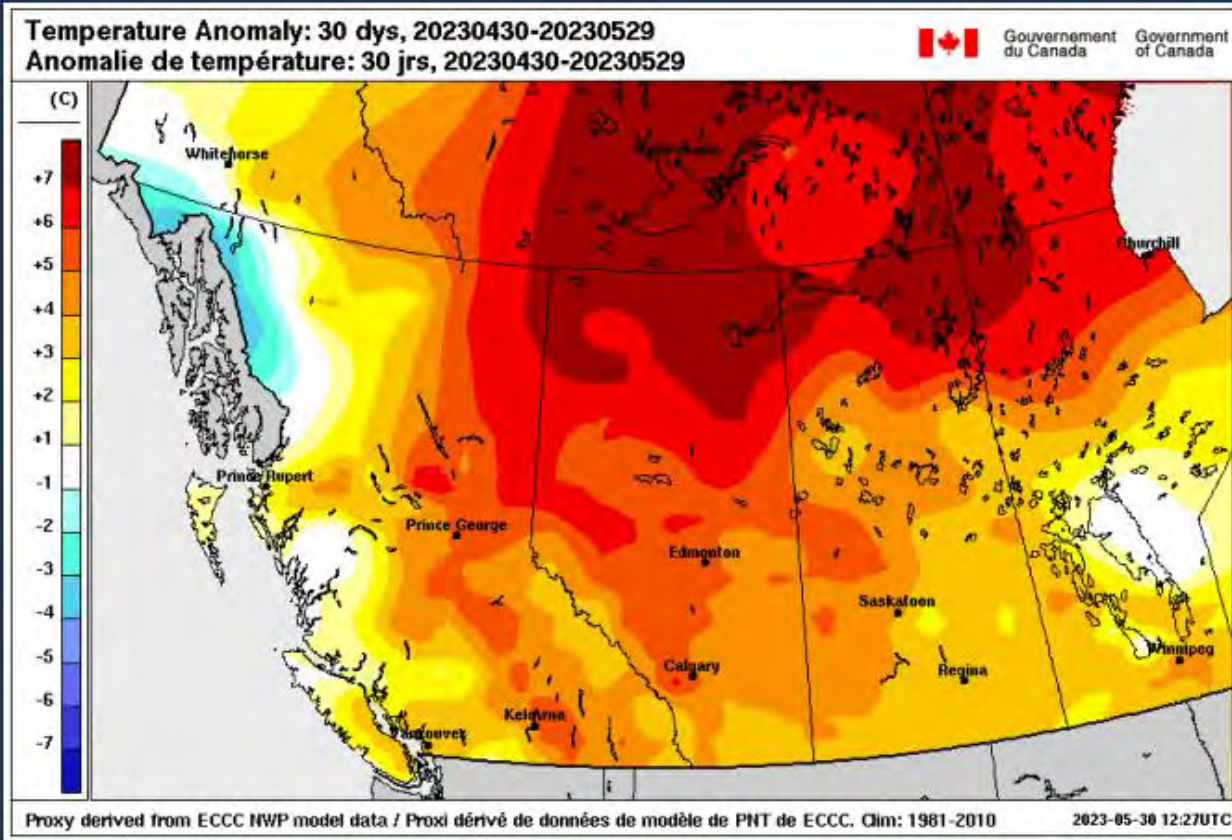
Pre-2023 Wildfire Season Conditions



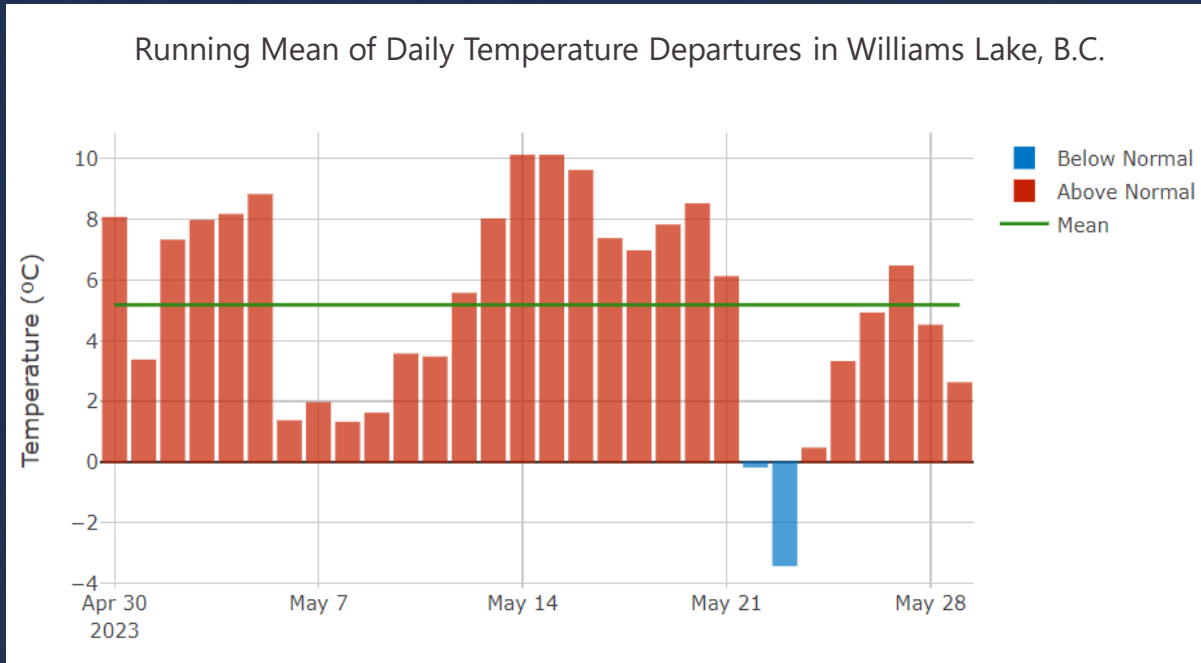
- October 2022 was one of the driest & warmest Octobers on record
- Daytime highs were consistently four to 10 degrees above normal
- B.C. saw very limited precipitation during a typically wet month

- With very limited moisture, drought conditions in our forests were much higher than normal for the late fall
- These elevated drought codes carried over into spring 2023 and set the stage for a potentially active fire season.

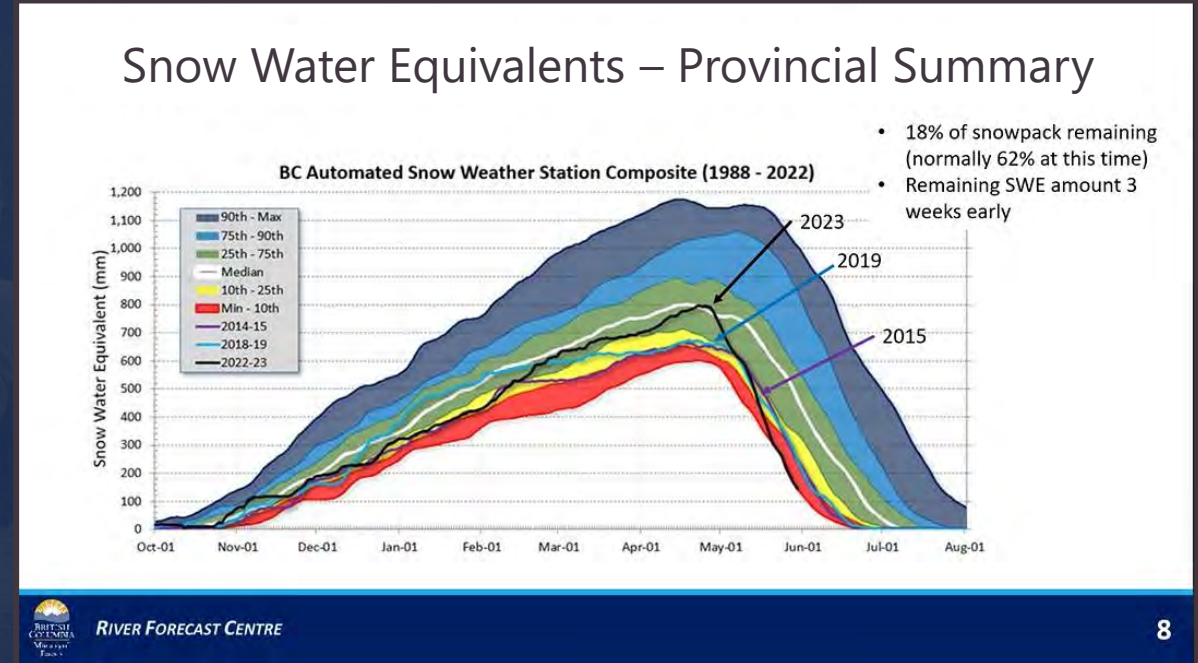
2023 May Temperature Anomalies



May: Record Breaking Heat

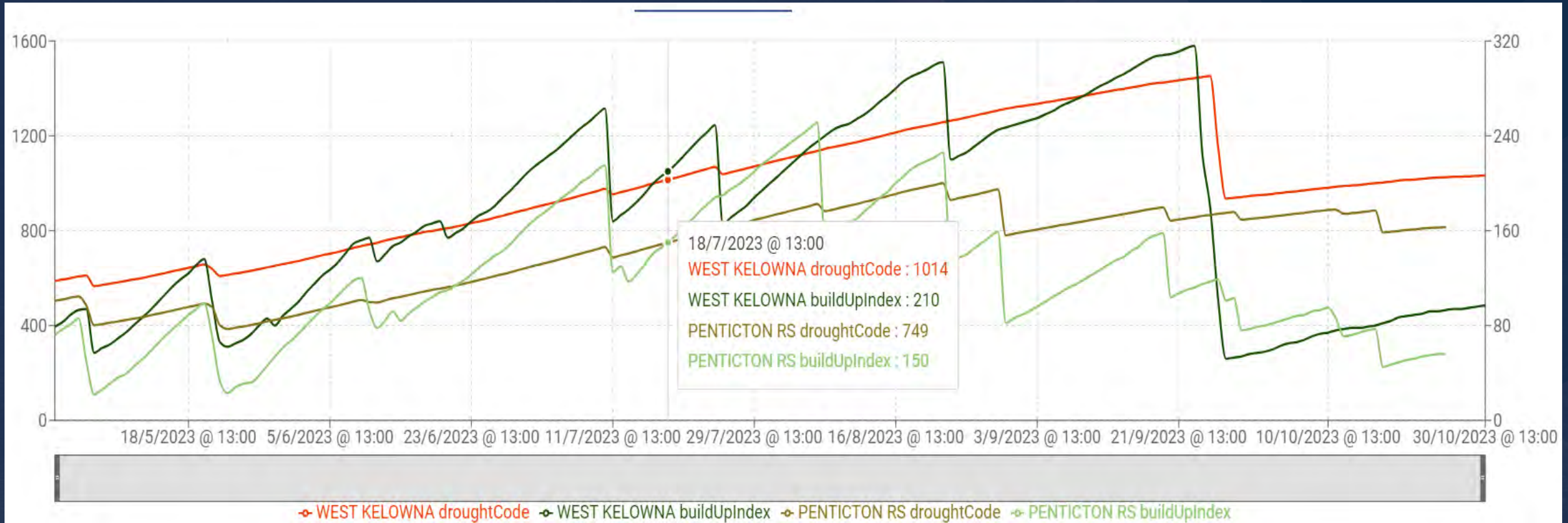


An early season heatwave delivered temperatures six to 10 degrees above normal through much of May.

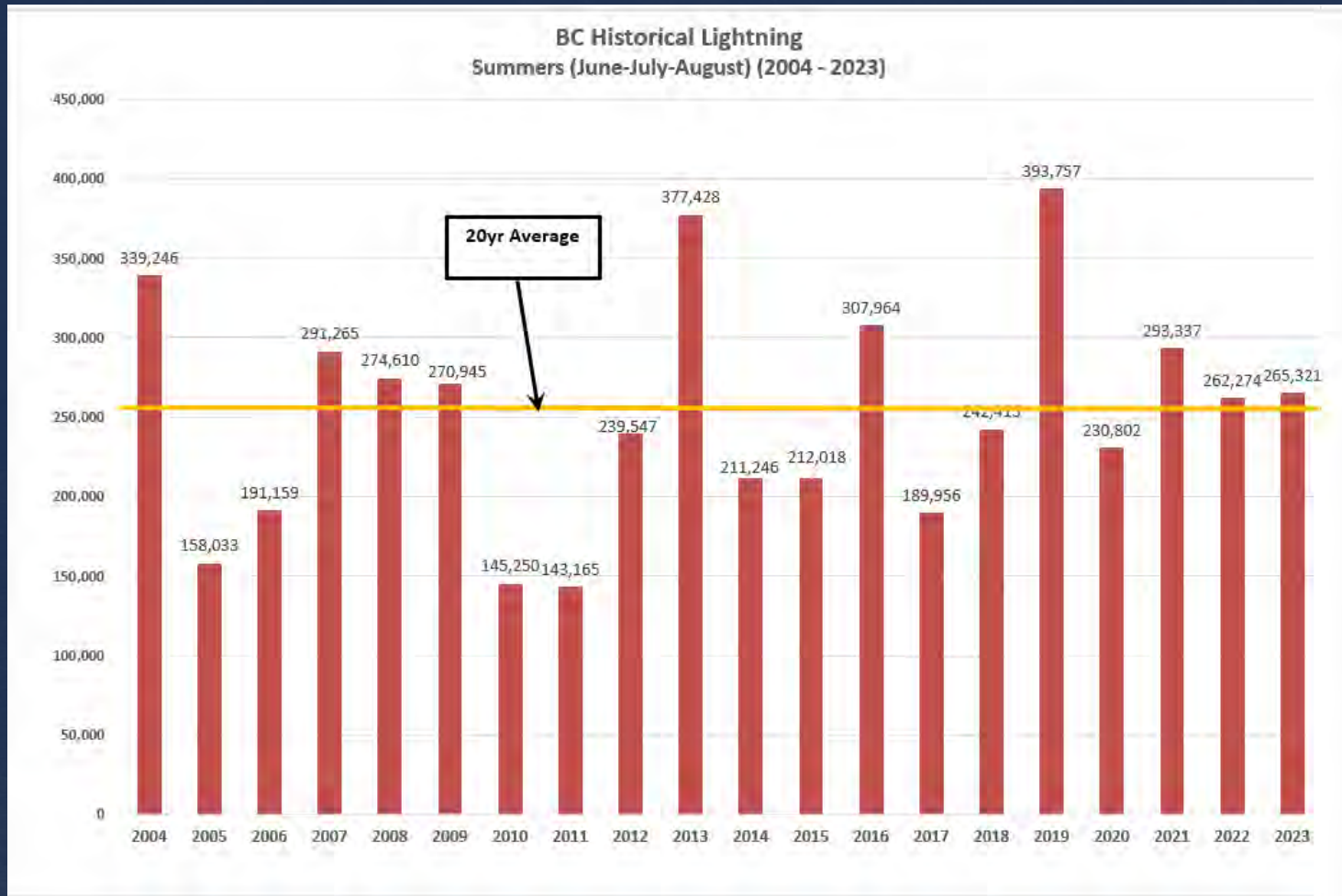


Snow melt was accelerated resulting in high-elevation fuels being free of snow and therefore receptive to lightning two to four weeks earlier than normal.

2023 Drought Codes and BUI

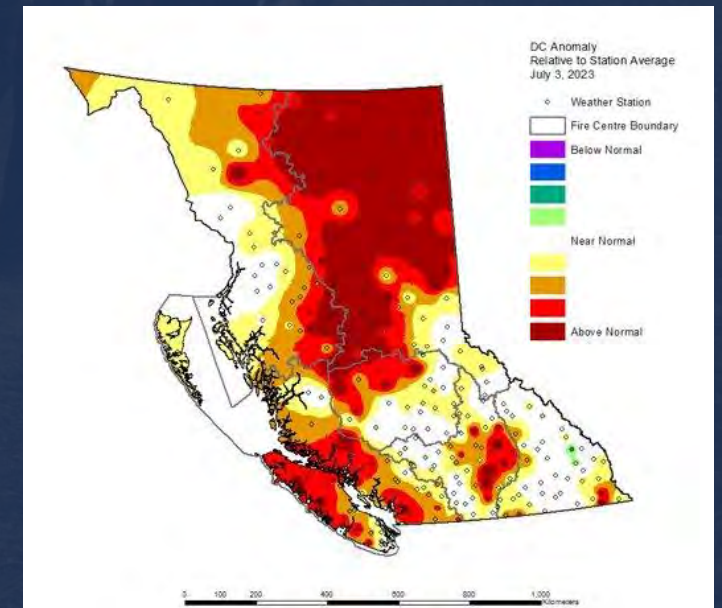


2023 Provincial Lightning Statistics

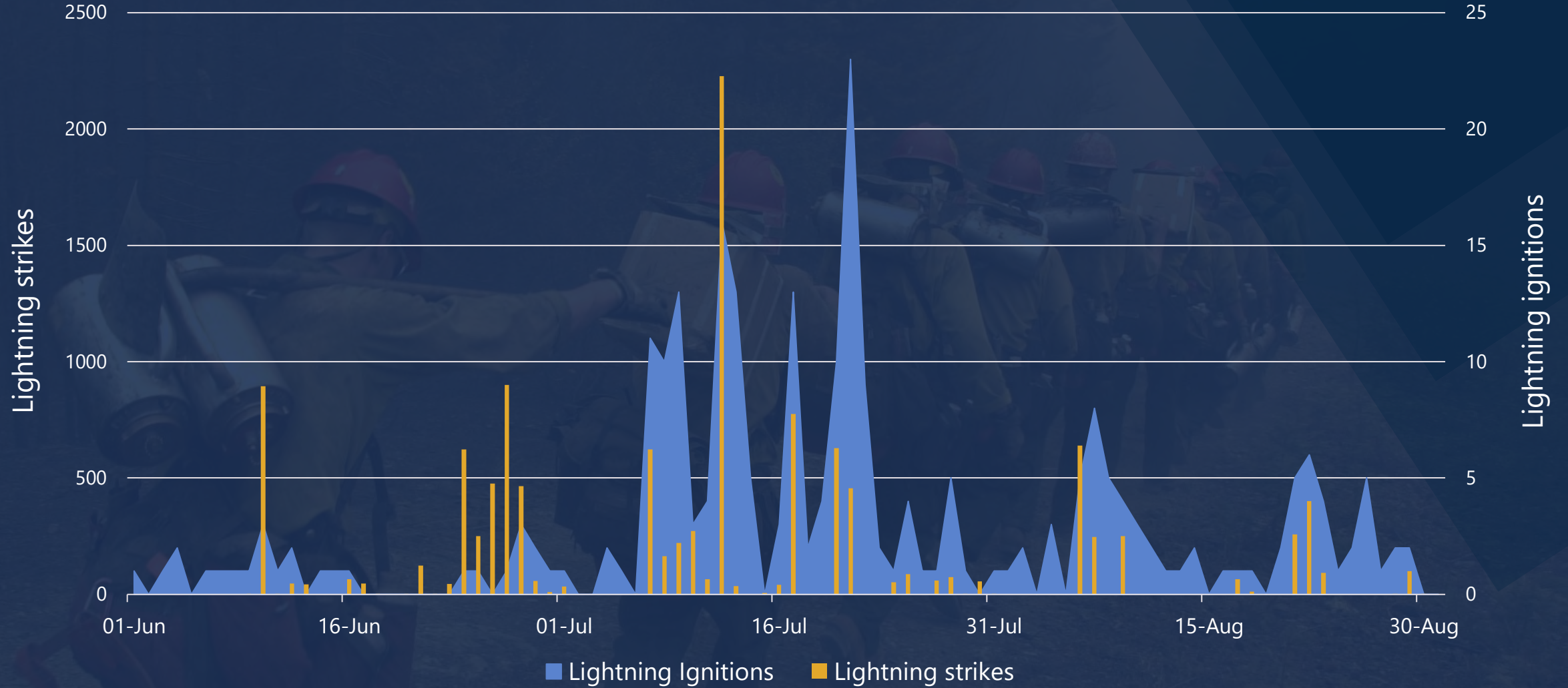


- The number of lightning strikes during the 2023 fire season were just slightly above the 20-year average.
- The true exception was how dry the fuels were and their receptivity to ignition from lightning strikes.

Drought Code (DC) Anomaly – July 3, 2023



KFC Lightning Ignitions and Strikes



2,245

Wildfires

2,840,545

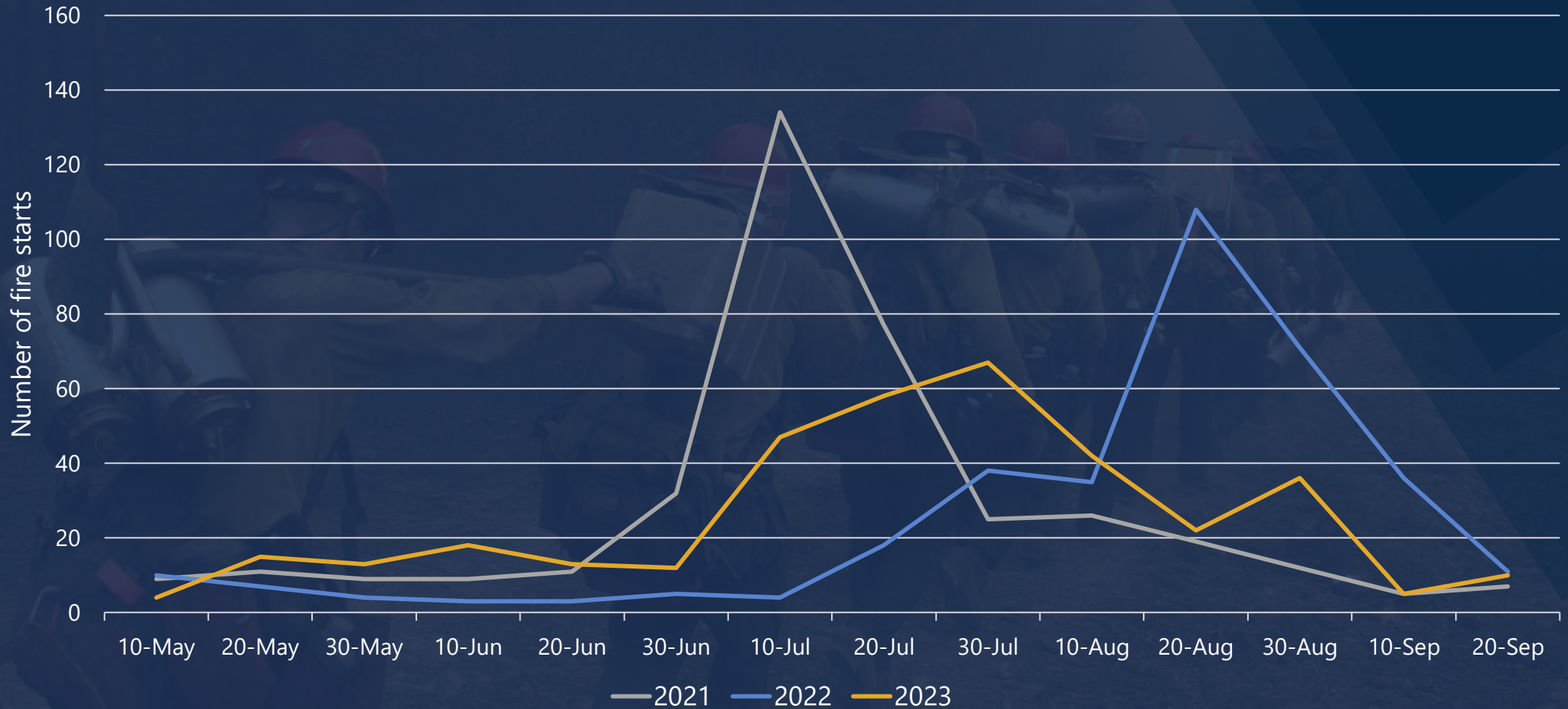
Hectares Burned

From April 1 – Oct. 31, 2023



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Number of fire starts during core season, 2021-2023



How does 2023 compare to other significant wildfire seasons?

Hectares burned this year is **double** the last record of 1.35 million in 2018.

This amount is **10 times** the **20-year average** annual area burned (284,001 hectares) and is what would historically be expected over a **decade**.

	2018	2021	2023
Total wildfires	2,080	1,625	2,245
Hectares burned	1,355,271	869,270	2,840,420
Wildfires of Note	111	67	57
Evacuation orders	66	181	208
Evacuation alerts	124	304	386
Suppression costs	~ \$615 million	~ \$718 million	~\$817 million
Total days on provincial state of emergency	24 (Aug. 15 to Sept. 7)	56 (July 21 to Sept. 14)	28 (Aug 18 to Sep 14)

This fire season, the predominant cause of wildfire was lightning.*

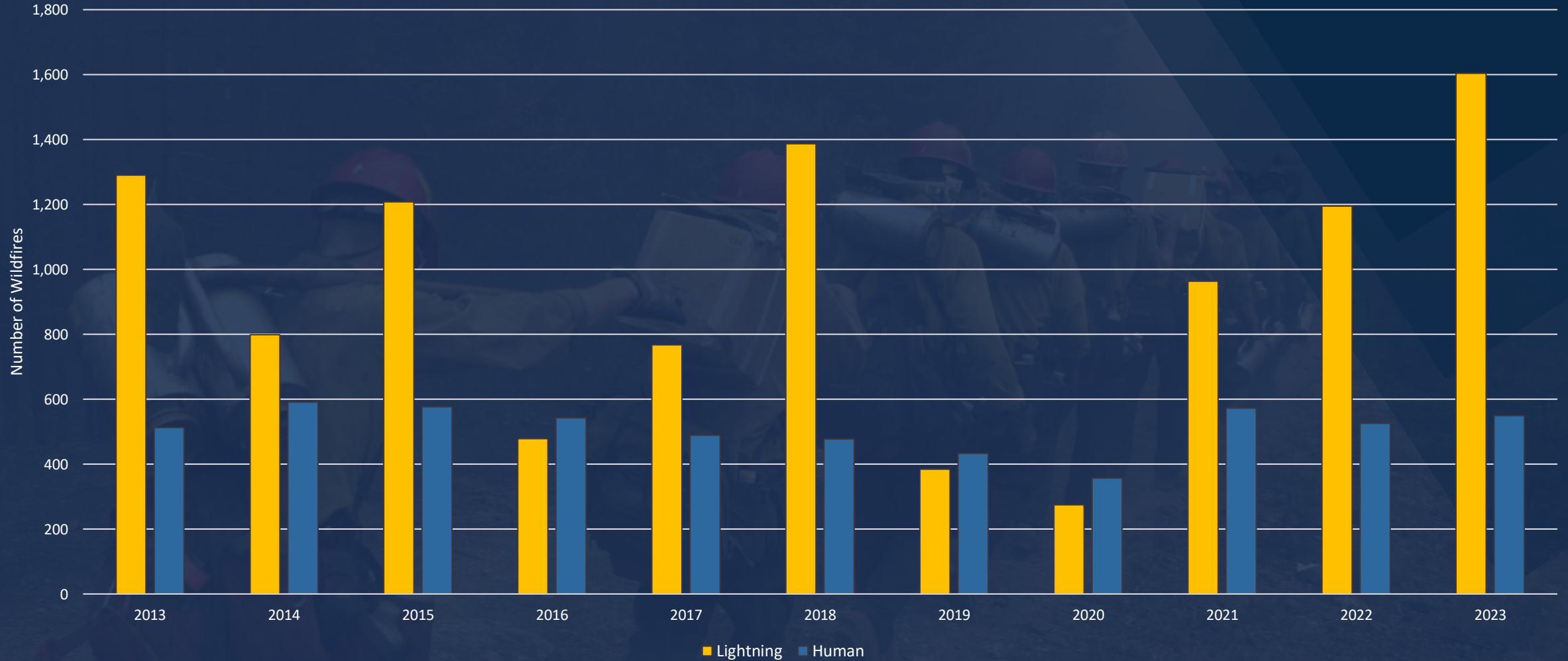


73% suspected lightning

25% suspected human

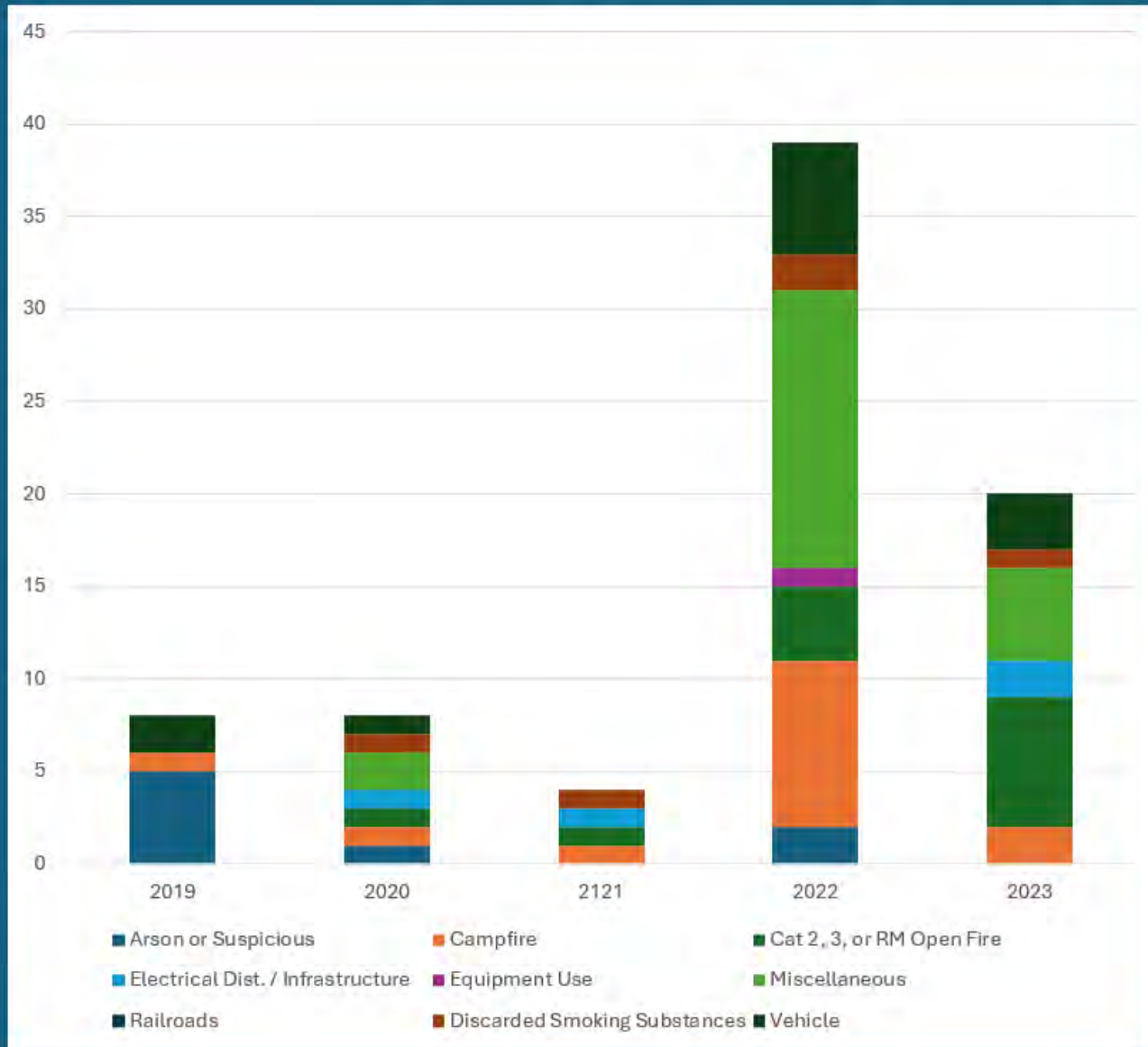
2% undetermined

10-Year Comparison of General Fire Causes



From April 1 – Oct. 31, 2023

5-Year Zone Fire Cause Data- K5



2023 Three Top Human Causes

1. Cat 2, 3, or RM Open Fire
2. Miscellaneous
3. Vehicle

Activity by Fire Centre



Northwest Fire Centre

277 wildfires
174,796 hectares burned

Prince George Fire Centre

672 wildfires
2,276,938 hectares burned

Coastal Fire Centre

365 wildfires
89,750 hectares burned

Cariboo Fire Centre

247 wildfires
53,648 hectares burned

Kamloops Fire Centre

388 wildfires
201,385 hectares burned

Southeast Fire Centre

296 wildfires
44,027 hectares burned

From April 1 – Oct. 31, 2023



Wildfires*



Hectares burned*

Provincially

2,256 2,840,776

Kamloops Fire Centre

392 201,385



BC Wildfire
Service

*From April 1 to Jan 16, 2024



295 of the wildfires within KFC were extinguished at **one hectare** or smaller.

Roughly **75.5%** of the total number of fires.

Statistics by Fire Zone

Fire Zone	Number of Wildfires	Hectares Burned
Kamloops Zone	117	94,325
Vernon Zone	118	550
Penticton Zone	62	71,971
Merritt Zone	59	231
Lillooet Zone	36	34,306

Kamloops Fire Centre Fire Bans and Restrictions



May 18 to October 13

Category 3 open burning prohibition



May 18 to October 6

Category 2 open burning prohibition



June 8 to September 28*

Category 1 campfire prohibition

*The Category 1 campfire prohibition was briefly lifted from June 16 to July 7, 2023.



Wildfires of Note: Kamloops Fire Centre

Fire name	Fire number	Hectares burned	Date of discovery	Cause
Knox Mountain	K51040	6.3	July 1	Human
Casper Creek	K71535	11,284	July 11	Natural
Lower East Adams Lake	K21620	Merged with K21633	July 12	Natural
Bush Creek East	K21633	45,613	July 12	Natural
Stein Mountain	K71634	4,734.3	July 12	Natural
Downton Lake	K71649	9,565	July 13	Natural
Rossmore Lake	K22024	11,382	July 21	Natural
Crater Creek	K52125	46,504.2	July 22	Natural
Eagle Bluff	K52318	7,060.6	July 29	Undetermined
McDougall Creek	K52767	13,970.4	August 15	Undetermined
Upper Park Rill Creek	K52813	2,043.8	August 18	Human
Glen Lake	K53294	1,116.2	September 16	Human



Wildfire Complexes: Kamloops Fire Centre

Crater Complex

- Crater Creek (K52125)
- Upper Park Rill Creek (K52813)



Grouse Complex

- McDougall Creek (K52767)
- Glen Lake (K53294)
- Two other wildfires

The background of the slide is a dark blue-tinted photograph of several firefighters. They are wearing full protective gear, including helmets, jackets, and pants, and are carrying large pieces of equipment, likely fire hoses or tools, over their shoulders. They appear to be in a line, possibly at a fire scene or during a training exercise.

The estimated cost of wildfire suppression from
April 1 – October 31 is

\$817 million

This does not account for future cost recoveries.



Changes to **BCWS** and the **Penticton** Fire Zone

Fire Response Structure

Provincial
PWCC



Regional
RWCC



Local
Zone/Incident

- The **PWCO (Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer)** prioritizes and manages the movement of resources between Fire Centres.
- The **RWCO (Regional Wildfire Coordination Officer)** sets wildfire control priorities within the Fire Centre and controls the deployment of resources to Fire Zones.
- The **ZWCO (Zone Wildfire Coordination Officer)** is responsible for resource and incident management at a local Fire Zone level under the direction of the RWCC.

BC Wildfire Service

Initial Attack Crews

- Approx 130 crews in the province
 - Helitack
 - Parattack
 - Rapattack
- 3 or 4 person crews

Unit Crews

- 30 crews stationed around the province
- 20 pack of expanded attack firefighters



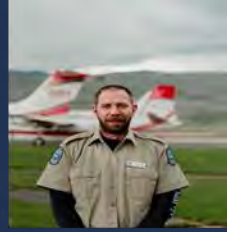
BCWS Changes

- ▶ IA crews uplifted to 4 person crews (completed 2023)
- ▶ Unit Crews transitioning to 22 people (2023)
- ▶ IA and UC Supervisors now year round
- ▶ Currently undergoing province wide evaluation on further transitions to year round work and additional positions throughout the organization

Penticton Fire Zone Changes

- ▶ 8 initial attack crews – 4 packs
- ▶ 2 new initial attack crew leaders
- ▶ 8 new recruits to initial attack crews
 - ▶ 3 transfers and 5 new hires

Penticton Fire Zone 2024



Wildfire Officer:
KEVIN PARKINSON
5P51



Asset Assistant:
Pat Harris



Operations Assistant:
Hilary Harris



Wildfire Technician:
Beau Michaud
5P52



Wildfire Technician:
Greg Gaudry
5P53



Wildfire Technician:
Ben Sandy
5P55



Wildfire Technician:
Trevor Lees
5P56



Wildfire Assistant:
Joel Rudyk
5P54



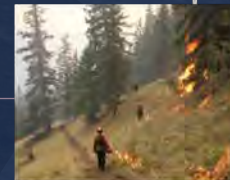
Wildfire Assistant:
Mikhail Elsay
5P57



Crew Supervisor:
Braydon Kellett
5P58



Crew Supervisor:
Leo Kerrigan
5P59



H51 Crew
H52 Crew
H53 Crew
H54 Crew



H55 Crew
H56 Crew
H57 Crew
H58 Crew

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention

The 7 FireSmart Disciplines

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Emergency Planning
- ▶ Vegetation Management
- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Development
- ▶ Interagency Cooperation
- ▶ Cross Training

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Education



- ▶ Staff participated in several activities with a focus on public education and awareness including:
 - Ember stomp in Penticton
 - 9 Elementary school visits
 - Penticton Safety Village

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Emergency Planning

- ▶ Participation or coordination of tabletop exercises
 - Penticton Airport
- ▶ Establish lines of communication with Regional, Municipal and First Nations first response partners, participating in face-to-face meetings before the start of fire season.

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Vegetation Management

- ▶ Prescribed burn implementation
- ▶ Support regional and partner WRR projects
 - Pile burning at Apex
 - Arawana chainsaw training site

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Legislation

- ▶ Participate in policy and legislative reviews
 - Community Wildfire Resilience Plan Roundtable with City of Penticton

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Development

- ▶ Prevention team engages with Regional Districts, First Nations and Municipalities in 2023 to discuss FireSmart development practices within their jurisdictional boundaries and provide recommendations as required as part of Community Resiliency Investment (CRI).

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Interagency Cooperation

- ▶ Penticton staff participate in advisory and working groups:
 - South Okanagan Wildfire Advisory Group
- ▶ Participate in AAR's and response agency roundtables
- ▶ Support partners with engagement initiatives
 - Kelowna FD open house

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Recap

Cross Training

- ▶ Interagency wildfire response training.
 - Summerland FD
 - SOSFCA interagency scenario
- ▶ Prescribed burn prep and delivery
 - Assisting LSIB on Crater and MPB burns
 - Assisting PIB on Carmi and Garnet project sites.

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2023 Summary

<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>K5 Zone - 2023 Outcomes:</u>
140		Forecasted Prevention Activities / Initiatives / Projects
72	51%	Activities and/or Projects COMPLETED
42	30%	Activities and/or Projects IN-PROGRESS
14	10%	Activities and/or Projects DEFERRED
4,221		REGULAR HOURS dedicated to Prevention Activities

Penticton Fire Zone Prevention 2024 Opportunities

Always open to discuss
prevention initiatives! Please
reach out:

Beau.Michaud@gov.bc.ca

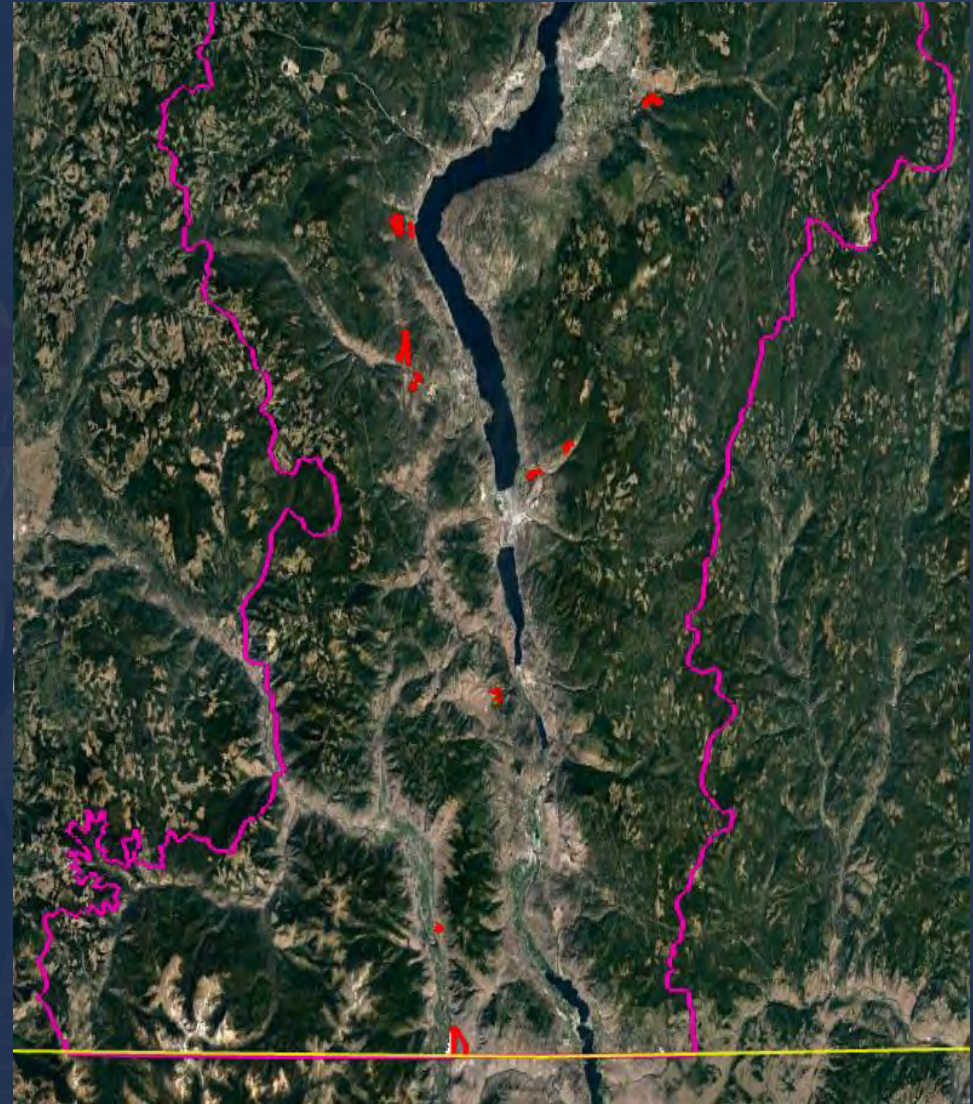
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Emergency Planning
- ▶ Vegetation Management
- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Development
- ▶ Interagency Cooperation
- ▶ Cross Training

2024 Planned Cultural and Prescribed Fire Projects



Penticton Fire Zone

12 projects actively being worked on at various stages of completion.



Spring 2024 Cultural & Prescribed Fire

K5 Prescribed for Outlook			
	Project	% Ready for burn	Comments
1	LSIB IR Band Office	0%	Approval documents and plan still needs to be drafted and approved
2	Little Chopaka	0%	Approval documents and plan still needs to be drafted and approved
3	Meadow Valley	80%	Burn Plan, Comms plan and flume prep still required along with pre-burn equipment install. Eg, pumps, hose
4	Medicine Creek	90%	LOU, Waiver and Burn plan need to be revised and approved. Comms plan released
5	Penticton Creek	95%	Comms bulletin release. Jay S to advise on equipment required for burn day

LSIB MPB Risk Reduction Burn

Rough location in relation to
a reference West of Osoyoos

Size 32+ha

Partners BCWS, LSIB

Objectives Risk
Reduction/Ecosystem
Restoration



Little Chopaka

Rough location in relation to a reference West of Osoyoos

Size 370ha

Partners BCWS, Parks, LSIB

Objectives Risk Reduction/Ecosystem Restoration

Timeline: Ongoing over multiple years



Meadow Valley

Rough location in relation to a reference South of Peachland

Size 20ha

Partners BCWS, DOS, PIB

Objectives Maintenance burn, community risk reduction



Medicine Creek

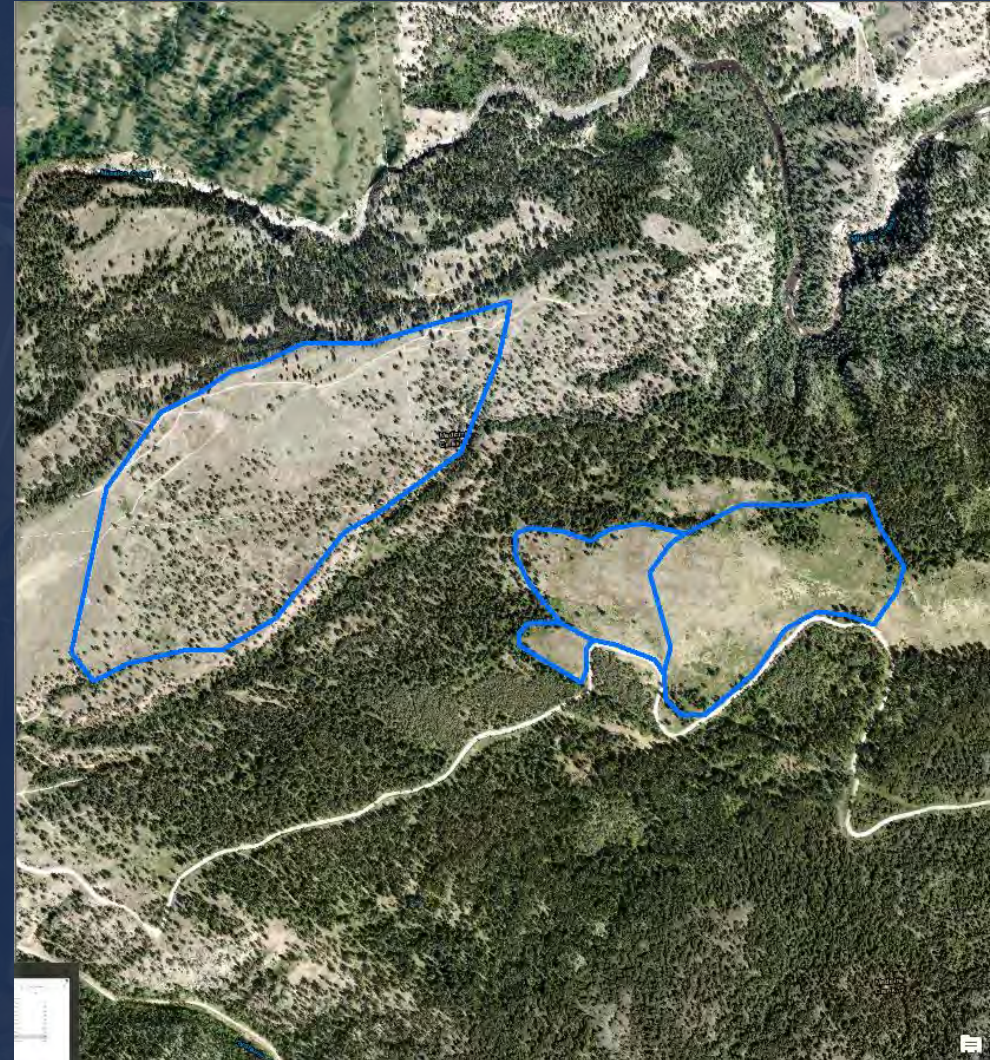
McCulloch Road

Size: 300+ha

Partners: BCWS, WFN

Objectives: Risk
Reduction/Ecosystem
Restoration

Timeline: Ongoing project over
multiple years



Penticton Creek

Location 4km East of
Penticton

Size 37ha

Partners BCWS, DOS, PIB

Objectives Risk
Reduction/Ecosystem
Restoration



Summary

Fire is a tool that has been used extensively throughout time. Land managers are starting to learn again, through science and First Nations knowledge to reintroduce fire to the boarder landscape in a controlled manner to reduce risk and enhance ecosystems.

2018-21: 730ha

2022: 100ha

2023: 60ha

2024: 350ha

2025: 200ha +



2023 Fire Warden Summary

<u>2023 TOTALS:</u>	PATROL HOURS	KMs COVERED	ABANDONED/ UNATTENDED CAMPFIRE	FIRE USE - NON- COMPLIANT	FIRE USE - IN COMPLIANCE	PERSONS TALKED TO	*Day Use* / Boat Ramp Vehicles	Total # of *Overnight* vehicles
KAMLOOPS ZONE / K2	126.5	3740	0	1	0	243	65	260
VERNON ZONE / K4	1231.25	45865	2	2	60	1830	3006	4313.5
PENTICTON ZONE / K5	1584.5	51113	3	7	240	2783	1802	3924
MERRITT ZONE / K6	1661	54354.5	1	2	32	2408	2600	8278
LILLOOET ZONE / K7	781.17	22013	1	2	25	2464	580	2275
KFC total stats - YTD	5384.4	177085.5	7	14	357	9728	8053	19050.5

BCWS Structure Protection Specialists



- All inquiries about structure protection deployments, training, SPU's etc can be sent to SPCO@gov.bc.ca
- Courses Offered:
 - WFF1 Train the Trainer
 - WSPP115
 - Engine Boss
 - Task Force Leader/Strike Team Leader

THANK YOU.

Questions?



BC Wildfire
Service