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## Fire as Both Risk and Opportunity

The BC Forest Service was established in 1912 to manage and protect British Columbia's forests. The original focus of the Forest Service was to control fires, but today the role of the Wildfire Management Branch is to manage forest fires in conjunction stakeholders' input.

Fire is increasingly recognized as natural and essential to the health, productivity and diversity of the forest. It is also recognized that fire is essential in reducing the accumulation of fuels, improving habitat and is an important method of keeping insects and disease in check. Shifting the focus from fire control to fire management means that each fire is looked at as both a risk and an opportunity.

It was realized that the practises of the past were no longer effective and that a new philosophy towards fire and its use in mitigating future threats to communities, resources, cultural and historical sites and other identified values was essential.

At Coastal, most fires are quickly extinguished to reduce losses, protect values, or to minimize smoke. If fires are in remote areas or burning on locations unsafe for crews to work they may be left to burn. Fires may be assigned perimeters and be allowed to burn up to those boundaries before being put out.

The Protection Program Strategy of 2006 specifically states that 'reconciling the role of fire in maintaining the ecosystem with the need to protect people, property and forest values presents a complex challenge.' The Coastal Fire Centre works closely with land managers, resource agencies, private homeowners, local governments and communities to determine what the appropriate use of fire

is on the landscape. Where the risks are low and the ability to reduce accumulated fuels is high, a decision may be made to allow a modified response to a wildfire or a prescribed burn may be considered. The decision is not taken lightly and many factors are taken into consideration to decide whether the risk of letting a fire burn is more beneficial to the forest than leaving the accumulated fuels to build up.

While public safety is always paramount, the role of Wildfire Management Branch is also to protect property, other assets, forests and grass land from the effects of unwanted wildfire, control the build up of forest fuels and manage wildfire or prescribed fire for the attainment of a healthy forest.

## Modified Response Fire

**'A wildfire that is allowed to burn within set policy and management guidelines or may be auctioned in such a manner as to bring the wildfire back within those guidelines.'**

Fire is increasingly identified as desirable, not solely as a destructive force, for ecosystem restoration. Because of this, a more strategic approach to wildfire management is now used instead of simply putting out every fire.

In consultation with the Coastal Fire Centre, land managers and other stakeholders identify specific areas that require full response and other areas where modified response may be considered.

In a modified response, trigger points are flagged and a fire may be allowed to burn to a certain point before any action would be taken. Sometimes a series of trigger points are set and different actions taken at each stage. The area is carefully monitored and resources allocated as necessary as directed by a fire management plan.

## To Date in Coastal

### Fires to Date

Person Caused **46**

Lighting Caused **3**

Total Number of Fires **49**

Hectares burnt **22**

Number of Incidents Responded to **578**

### Fire Danger Rating



Moderate/High with areas of Extreme in Southern Vancouver Island

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Please report!

1-800-663-5555  
Or  
\*5555 on your cell.



**100 years of serving the people of BC and you can help us celebrate that proud history.**

In celebration of the centenary a committee has been formed to commemorate and recognize the institution and the people who made the BC Forest Service the professional organization it is today.

**The question is how can you become involved?**

Join! For \$20.12 you can become a member.

The money used will help celebrate the past accomplishments, create enthusiasm and raise awareness of our historic past.

2012 will see a variety of events to commemorate the proud history of the Forest Service of which the Wildfire Management Branch is a part. Show your support by turning out at any one of the many events that will be planned for the year.

<http://www.bcfs100.ca/bscripts/index.asp>

## Today At Coastal

A trail of lightning went through the Coastal Fire Centre Wednesday night, igniting the first three lightning-caused fires this season – one on Redonda Island, one just north of the Powell River pulp mill and one on the west side of Lillooet Lake in the D’Arcy/Pemberton area. All of these fires were spot fires and actioned quickly.

Fires continue to be abandoned in Coastal, which have contributed to the large number of incidents. We have also responded to an escaped campfire at Weaver Lake. We would like to thank a member of the public who spotted and reported this fire, allowing our crews to respond quickly.

Please remain vigilant if you are in an area where there was lightning as there is a possibility for ‘holdovers’. These are lightning strikes that smoulder until fed by the heat of the day and have access to fuels. A smoulder will then fully ignite and may become visible.

## Weather

**SYNOPSIS..** An upper ridge building south of Campbell River will maintain a sunny warm day today while a weakening front crossing Haida Gwaii will gradually drift south over the next few days eventually bring showers to the Mid-coast tonight, northern Vancouver Island tomorrow and parts of the Sunshine Coast Saturday evening. The pressure gradient will intensify over all outer coast areas as the front goes through bringing gusty winds with the showers.

**OUTLOOK..** By Sunday the front is washing out and although a few showers are likely over the western parts of Fraser Zone it likely stays dry over the eastern parts through early next week.

**LONG TERM TREND..** A new ridge pops up by Wednesday bringing a few more sunny warm days.