BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Wildfire Service

July 31, 2021 (Vol 7.)

WILDFIRE UPDATE

ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE COMPLEX

Octopus Creek Wildfire	Michaud Creek Wildfire	Renata Creek Wildfire
(N51800)	(N51765)	(N51688)
Size: 17,696 hectares	Size: 8,113 hectares	Size: 2,504 hectares
Status: Out of control	Status: Out of control	Status: Out of control
Cause: Lightning	Cause: Lightning	Cause: Lightning

GENERAL WILDFIRE COMPLEX UPDATES:

We'd like to remind folks the Southern Interior received only 30% of it's normal rainfall to date. Burning conditions across much of the province are currently three to four weeks ahead of the average mid-July or August conditions. Please, be aware of your surroundings and report wildfires immediately to 800 663-5555 or *5555 on your cellphone.

I will be available for an informal **INFORMATION STATION** in the community of **EDGEWOOD** regarding the Arrow Lake Wildfire Complex on ***Sunday, August 1, 2021*** from **12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m**. at the Edgewood Fire Hall.

RESOURCES:

There are currently a total of **125 firefighters, 34 pieces of heavy equipment and 4 helicopters** assigned to the Arrow Lake Complex. Additional aircraft is available, if requested.

Octopus: 50 firefighters , 9 pieces of heavy equipment

Michaud: 47 firefighters, 20 pieces of heavy equipment

Renata: 1 firefighter, 5 pieces of heavy equipment

Incident Management Team and General Complex: 15 firefighters, 12 support personnel, 4 helicopters

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Wildfire Information Officer: Caroline Charbonneau | Hours: 0800-2000

778 364-1287 | BCWS.ArrowlakeINFO@gov.bc.ca

Evacuation Information: Emergency Operation Centre | 250 352-7701 | www.rdck.ca

Road & Ferry Conditions: | 800 550-4997 | DriveBC.ca

www.bcwildfire.ca BC Forest Fire Info @BCGovFireInfo **www.firesmartbc.ca**

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WEATHER & FIRE BEHAVIOUR FORECASTS:

A slight increase in wind and the potential for a change in direction is anticipated. We are expecting a possible increase in fire behavior if winds increase, especially at higher elevations.

Steep terrain has a similar affect on wildfires as wind does and can increase fire behaviour. As a result, steeper areas may experience greater fire behaviour and growth. Be aware conditions could change rapidly and fire behaviour increase suddenly.

There will be poor overnight humidity recovery again tonight which will continue over the next few days. This means fine fuels and vegetation available to the fire will burn easier then usual—certain types of vegetation we don't normally expect to burn easily is. Please be aware that any hot exhaust, spark or friction could ignite very quickly and spread very quickly.

AREA RESTRICTIONS:

The BC Wildfire Service has amended an **Area Restriction Order** for the vicinity of the Octopus Creek wildfire (N51800). This area restriction reflects the continued need to protect the public in areas where ongoing fire suppression activities are taking place. Visit www.bcwildfire.ca for more information.

EVACUATION ALERTS & ORDERS:

The Regional District of Central Kootenay has issued an evacuation order and alerts in the vicinity of these wildfires. The most current information is available at https://www.rdck.ca/

Please be advised that the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) does not issue evacuation orders or alerts. The BCWS works closely with Regional Districts and shares critical wildfire information. The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) will use the wildfire information, along with other critical information from local authorities and protection services, to base their decision on evacuations.

Spot a wildfire, smoke or illegal fire activity? Call 1 800 663-5555 or *5555 on your cellphone.

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ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE COMPLEX | OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS

The overall objective of the wildfire complex is to build control lines to prevent the wildfires from approaching values at risk such as communities, properties, infrastructure, watershed and natural resources (for example: cell towers, hydro lines and major transportation corridors). Once the wildfire is contained, crews will continue to work the perimeter of the wildfire inward, removing the risk of escaping the anticipated boundaries. Control lines are built using multiple techniques, such as dozers or hand tools, to remove the burnable vegetation. In some cases, crews may use planned ignitions to remove fuel between the control lines and the fire.

Planned ignitions are essential to help contain large wildfires. They are used in situations where direct attack has limited effectiveness, or to maximize resources by reducing the area that requires suppression. Planned ignitions are monitored under the direction of a certified ignition specialist or other qualified personnel to meet pre-determined land management objectives. Large-scale ignition operations are supported with appropriate resources (aircraft, heavy equipment and firefighters). Before a burn is carried out on a wildfire, a detailed action plan must be established as well as control lines and a water delivery system. The last step before commencing the planned ignition is to organize resources and conduct a safety briefing. Opportunities for planned ignition are being explored. The exact timing of these potential burns will depend on weather and site conditions, but could begin as early as today, only if conditions are suitable.

OCTOPUS CREEK WILDFIRE | OBJECTIVES:

At various locations along the wildfire perimeter, crews and heavy equipment will continue to work together to build control lines in priority areas, largely near communities and structures. Where possible, direct attack on the wildfire will also continue.

One of the main priorities on the Octopus wildfire is to continue working on the north flank, building a containment line to protect the community of Fauquier from the advancing wildfire and re-direct the wildfire up slope. The aerial planned ignition has been postponed due to smoky conditions; however, crews are making good progress clearing burnable vegetation with hand ignitions on control lines. Heavy equipment and crews on Koch Creek's east flank are making good progress establishing control lines.

The fire is slowly creeping toward the control lines; however, the crews and equipment continue to reinforce the guard. Additional heavy equipment is planned to install new guard in priority areas once the priority lines are set.

Control line located on the east flank of Octopus Creek Wildfire (July 31, 2021)

Spot a wildfire, smoke or illegal fire activity? Call 1 800 663-5555 or *5555 on your cellphone.

ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE COMPLEX | OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS (continued)

MICHAUD CREEK WILDFIRE | OBJECTIVES:

Firefighters are working along the wildfire perimeter in identified priority areas. They continue to use direct attack where possible, utilizing water pumps and hoses. Crews continue to work on spot fires across Johnson Creek with water and hose along with helicopter assistance when visibility allows. Under the current weather conditions, firefighters anticipate they can contain the spot fires.

Crews will continue to focus on establishing and reinforcing containment lines in priorities areas, which includes the north flank, in order to limit the growth to the north and north west.

The residents of Edgewood may notice some of the structural protection has shifted around within the town for safety reasons. The structural protection will remain in place until the community is no longer threatened. We appreciate the assistance from the residents. We ask that you please, leave the equipment in place until the alert is lifted, for the benefit and protection of your properties and structures.

RENATA CREEK WILDFIRE | OBJECTIVES:

On the Renata Creek wildfire, crews continue to build and reinforce containment lines established in priority areas. The fire continues to back down slowly toward the community, but there is no imminent threat at this time. The structure protection unit had been delayed due to smoke but has since arrived in Renata and are currently deploying equipment.

The south flank of Michaud Creek wildfire and the north of Renata Creek wildfire has been mostly inaccessible for rotary-wing due to smoke conditions. The wildfire is being monitored by satellite imagery. Planned control lines will be constructed as soon as conditions allow, with heavy equipment and planned ignition where possible.

STRUCTURE PROTECTION

Structure protection was established early on and is maintained and monitored by dedicated firefighters on properties that are threatened.

We ask that you do not disturb the sprinklers and other structure protection equipment that’s been installed in the community.

All the wildfires in the complex are being closely monitored by BCWS and other trained firefighters.

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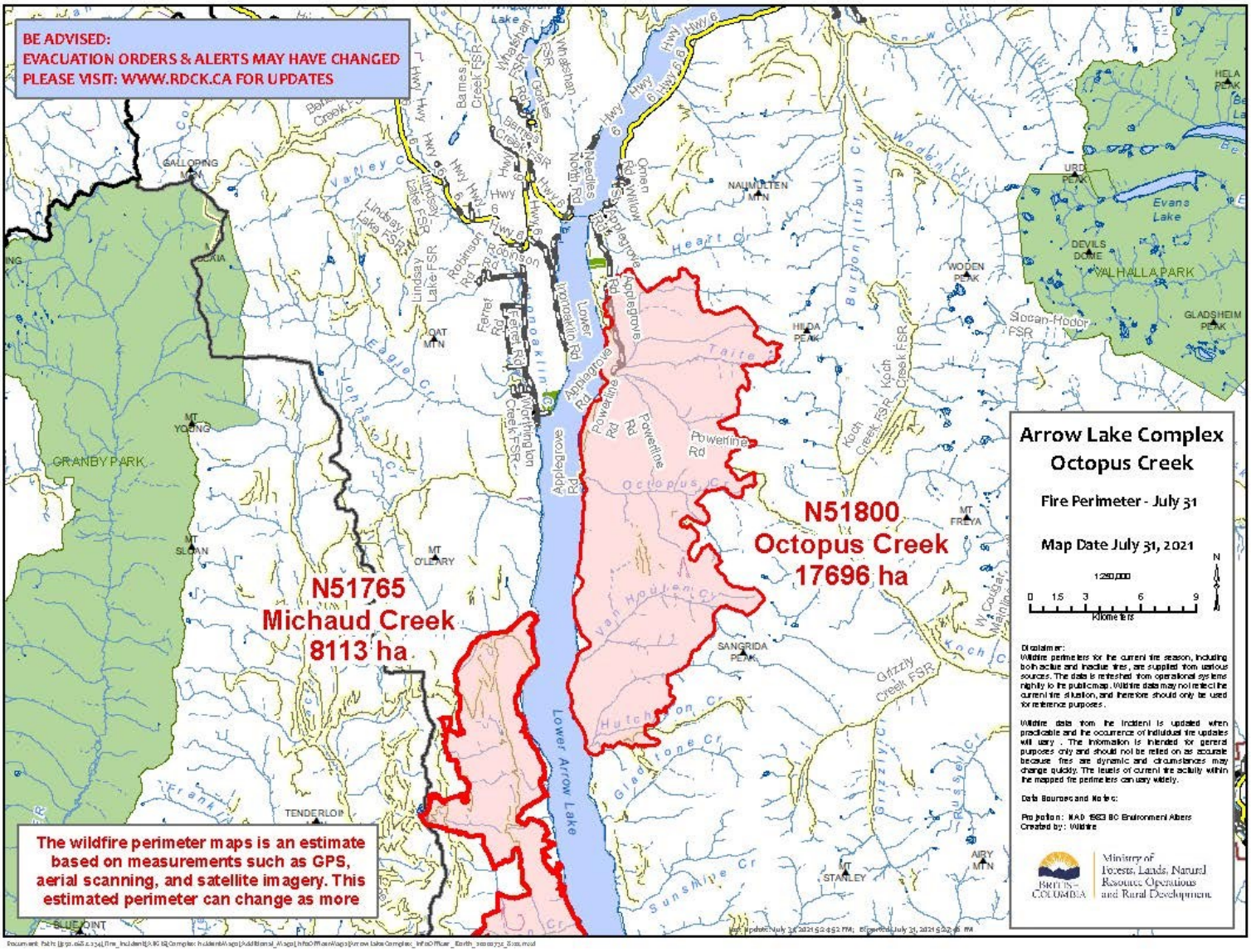
WILDFIRE UPDATE

ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE COMPLEX MAPS | NORTH MAP



The wildfire perimeter maps is an estimate based on measurements such as GPS, aerial scanning and satellite imagery. This estimated perimeter can change as more accurate measurements become available. Areas within the fire perimeter may not have been affected or burnt by wildfire.

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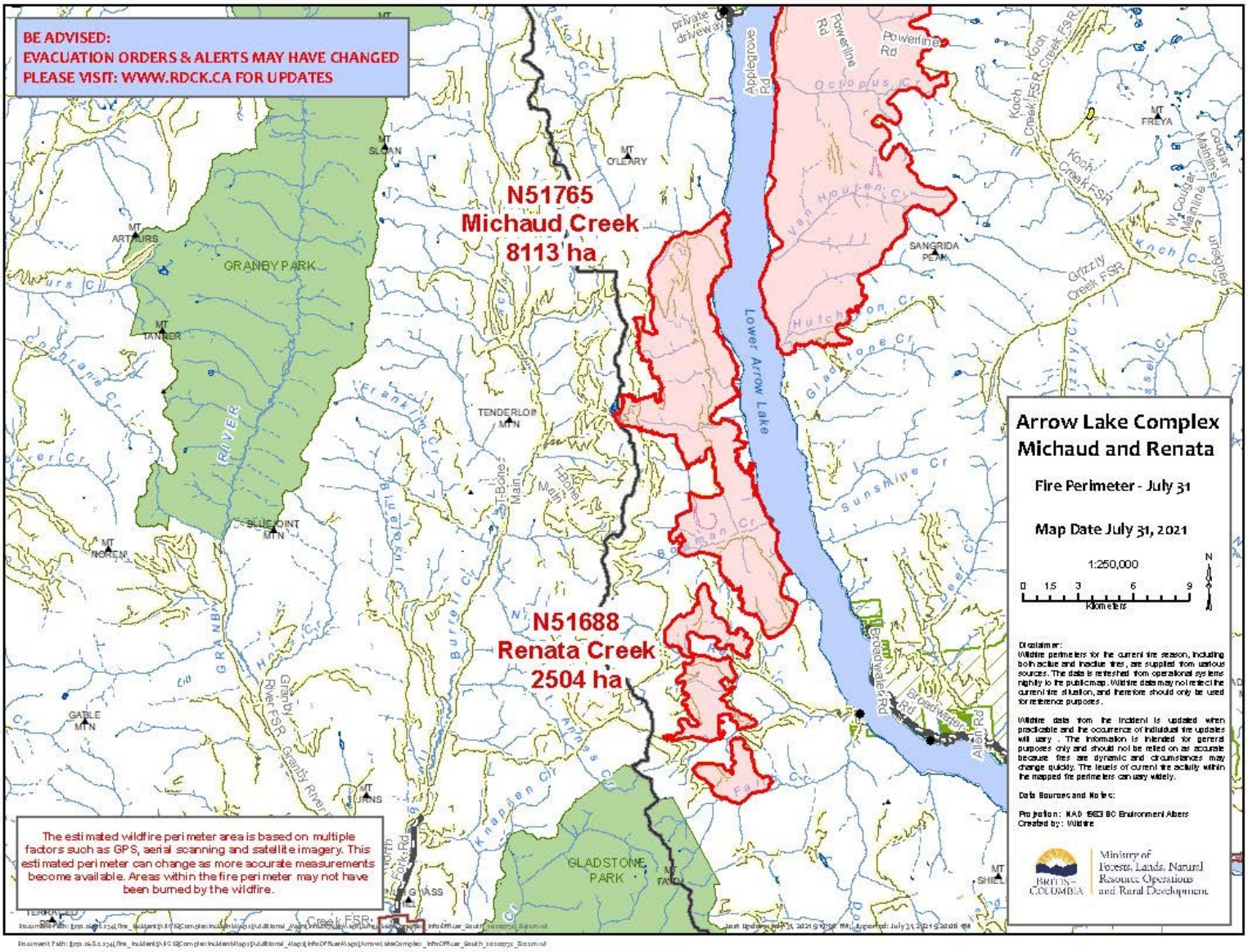
ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE COMPLEX MAPS | SOUTH MAP



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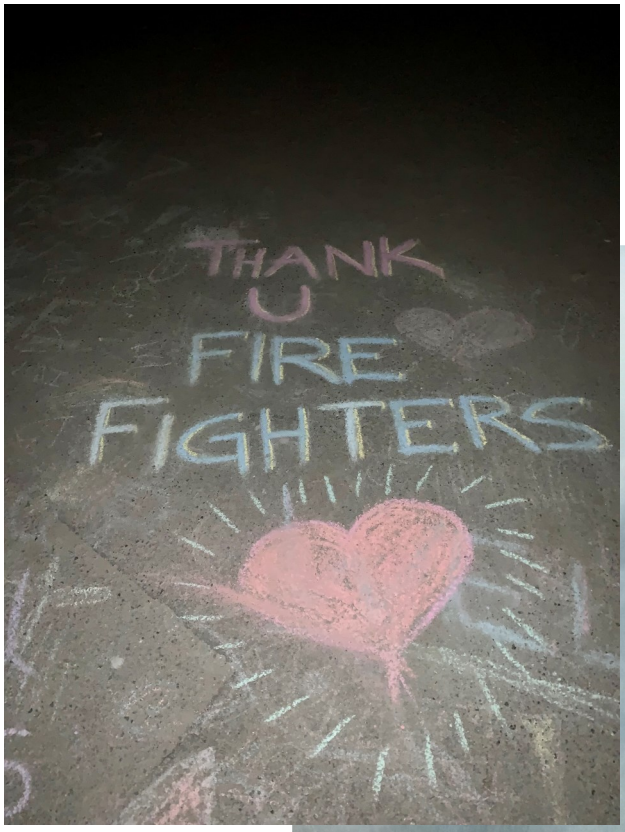
WILDFIRE UPDATE

ARROW LAKE WILDFIRE PHOTOS

Additional photos are posted on the Information Board located at the Nakusp & District Sports Complex.



Left: Firefighters appreciate the kind words from all the communities. (July 31, 2021)

Right: Active wildfire is observed on the east flank of Octopus Creek wildfire today. (July 31, 2021)

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HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- View an interactive map by clicking here or visiting **http://ow.ly/uo2U30oXqzS**
- **Road Closures:** DriveBC |dial 1-800-550-4997 | https://www.drivebc.ca/
- **Drifting Smoke:** www.bcairquality.ca/bluesky/west/index.html
- **Smoke Health Concerns:** HealthLink BC | dial 8-1-1| www.healthlinkbc.ca/kbaltindex.asp
- For info on **Community Support Services**, click here or visit https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/
- For **damage** to private property and Reserve Lands, please email **BCWSClaims2019@gov.bc.ca.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES			
BC Wildfire Service	**Emergency Management BC**	**Local municipalities and regional districts**	**First Nations**
- BCWS' jurisdiction covers all BC Parks, Crown and private lands, but it does not include the boundaries of local governments that have forest fire prevention bylaws and are serviced by a fire department. - BCWS speaks directly about **wildfires** (i.e. fire status, operations, etc.) and is responsible for disseminating wildfire updates to local governments, stakeholders, First Nations and the public. - BCWS does not announce Strategic Evacuation Orders or Alerts. - BCWS does announce Tactical Evacuations. - In the event of an imminent threat to public safety, BCWS can authorize an immediate **Tactical Evacuation** of the affected area.	- EMBC coordinates communication across all agencies and stakeholders to support communities. - EMBC provides advice to evacuees and support to communities regarding Emergency Operations Centres and Emergency Support Services.	- Local Municipalities and Regional Districts speak directly about **Strategic Evacuation Orders and Alerts in** their respective jurisdictions. - Local Municipalities and Regional Districts do not speak about the status of a wildfire unless the fire occurs within their jurisdiction. For example, if a wildfire starts within the boundaries of a local government, BCWS will often assist the local fire department with suppression efforts. If the fire spreads into Crown land to become a wildfire, BCWS will often assume control.	- On IR lands, Evacuation Orders and Alerts are implemented by a Band Council Resolution or other. - A designated person(s) from the respective First Nations community will speak to Evacuation Orders and Alerts on IR lands.

ACCESSING INFORMATION		
BC Wildfire Service Online Communications	**EmergencyInfoBC EMBC Online Communications**	**PreparednessBC EMBC Online Communications**
@BCGovFireInfo	@EmergencyInfoBC	@PreparedBC
www.bcwildfire.ca	www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca	www.gov.bc.ca/preparedBC
BC Wildfire Service		PreparedBC

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FIRE STAGES OF CONROL:

Out of Control	Describes a wildfire that is not responding (or only responding on a limited basis) to suppression action, such that the perimeter spread is not being contained.
Being Held	Indicates that (with the resources currently committed to the fire) sufficient suppression action has been taken that the
Under Control	The fire has received sufficient suppression action to ensure no further spread of the fire.

WILDFIRE RANKS:

Rank	Description
1	**Characteristics:** Smouldering ground fire, no open flame, white smoke, slow (i.e. creeping) rate of fire spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Direct attack with ground crews using hand tools and water delivery systems (i.e. pumps and hose).
2	**Characteristics:** Surface fire, visible, open flame, unorganised or inconsistent flame front, slow rate of spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Direct attack with ground crews using hand tools, water delivery systems, or heavy equipment. Hand constructed control lines and lines that have been cleared of combustible material will likely be successful.
3	**Characteristics:** Organised flame front – fire progressing in organised manner, occasional candling may be observed along the perimeter and/or within the fire, moderate rate of spread. **Firefighting tactics:** Hand constructed control lines alone are likely to be challenged, ground crews conducting direct attack may require air support from fixed-wing air tankers, skimmers or helicopters conducting bucketing or tanking operations. Control lines constructed by heavy equipment will generally be effective
4	**Characteristics:** Grey to black smoke, organised surface flame front, moderate to fast rate of spread on the ground, short aerial bursts through the forest canopy, short-range spotting. **Firefighting tactics:** Ground operations may not be successful at the head of the fire, indirect tactics may be required to bring the head of the fire under control. Parallel attack may be used along the flanks of the fire to direct the head into favourable ground or fuels. Air operations may be required to support ground personnel.
5	**Characteristics:** Black to copper smoke, organised crown fire front, moderate to long-range spotting and spot fire growth. **Firefighting tactics:** The limited options available include indirect attack and planned ignitions to remove fuel in the path of this type of fire behaviour. Ground operations are often restricted to fighting the least active sections of the fire or conducting ground ignition operations from secure control lines with readily available escape routes and safety zones.
6	**Characteristics:** Organised crown fire front, long-range spotting and independent spot fire growth, possible fireballs and whirls, violent fire behaviour probable, a dominant smoke column may develop which influences fire behaviour. **Firefighting tactics:** Firefighting under these conditions is extremely dangerous. Suppression efforts will be well away from active fire behaviour and may include preparing structure protection measures or conducting indirect large-scale ignition operations in an attempt to steer the fire. Often, the safest and most prudent strategy is to pull resources back to safe areas, ensure that personnel and the general public are safe, and wait for fire behaviour to lessen before re-engaging in fire suppression operations.

RANK 1 RANK 2 RANK 3 RANK 4 RANK 5 RANK 6