



July 13, 2026, Issue Brief

This issue brief provides an update on current wildfire activity across the Kootenay Rockies, including fires with the potential to affect visitor experiences, smoke conditions, and travel planning. It also includes key visitor messaging and links to official information sources to support consistent communications across the region.

Wildfire Activity Increases Across the Kootenay Rockies

Wildfire activity has increased across the Kootenay Rockies and neighbouring northern Idaho, with several new incidents now being monitored. While most tourism businesses, attractions, and transportation corridors remain open, visible smoke, localized air quality impacts, and an evacuation alert near Premier Lake highlight the importance of monitoring current conditions and sharing accurate information with visitors.

Lussier River Wildfire Prompts Evacuation Alert Near Premier Lake

An evacuation alert has been issued for 72 addresses in the Premier Lake area due to the Lussier River Wildfire (N20809). The fire is currently estimated at 115 hectares and is located near Premier Lake Provincial Park, a popular destination for camping, boating, and recreation.

BC Wildfire Service crews continue an active suppression response, with firefighters, heavy equipment, airtankers, and helicopters working to establish containment lines and limit fire growth. Fire behaviour was moderated by cooler morning temperatures and lighter winds yesterday, allowing crews to make progress.

Visitor Considerations

Tourism operators in the Premier Lake area are encouraged to remind visitors that wildfire conditions can change quickly and to check official sources before travelling.

Visitors should also be reminded to:

- Stay well clear of firefighting aircraft operating over lakes and surrounding areas. If aircraft are actively skimming water or conducting suppression operations, move off the water and away from the area to allow crews to work safely.
- **Do not fly drones** anywhere near wildfire operations. Transport Canada and the BC Wildfire Service prohibit drones within 5 nautical miles (9.3 km) of a wildfire and up to 3,000 feet above ground level. Unauthorized drones can force firefighting aircraft to stop flying, delaying suppression efforts and increasing risk to firefighters and nearby communities.
- Monitor official wildfire information, BC Parks advisories, and local emergency updates before travelling to the Premier Lake area.

Resources

- BC Wildfire Service – [Lussier River \(N20809\)](#)
- Regional District of East Kootenay – [Evacuation](#) Alert and map

Upper Smith Wildfire Visible from Creston

The Upper Smith wildfire, burning in northern Idaho approximately 10 km south of the Canada-US border, is visible from parts of the Creston Valley and may contribute to localized smoke or haze depending on weather conditions. While the fire remains outside the Kootenay Rockies region, smoke from the incident has contributed to localized haze and reduced air quality in the Creston area, prompting questions from visitors.

The fire was first detected on July 8 and is currently estimated at 166 hectares. The incident remains out of control, with 81 personnel and three crews assigned. According to the latest available situation report, no significant growth has been reported in recent days as suppression efforts continue.

Visitor Considerations

- Smoke and haze may be visible in the Creston Valley, with conditions changing throughout the day depending on weather and wind patterns.

- Visitors with asthma, heart or lung conditions, older adults, young children, and those who are pregnant may wish to monitor local air quality conditions and adjust outdoor activities if smoke levels increase.
- Visible smoke does not necessarily indicate that nearby attractions or recreation areas are closed. Visitors should check official sources for current wildfire conditions and any local advisories before travelling.
- Visitor centres and tourism organizations can reassure visitors by directing them to official wildfire and air quality information and providing current local conditions where available.

Resources

- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) – [Fire Information Map](#)
- BC Air Quality [Health Index](#)
- Interior Health – [Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke](#)
- FireWork [Smoke Forecast](#)

Moyie Falls (N10812)

A wildfire has been identified near Moyie Falls, south of Cranbrook. The fire is currently estimated at 5 hectares, with three Initial Attack crews and helicopter support responding. The early deployment of ground crews and aviation resources indicates an active suppression effort aimed at limiting fire growth while the incident remains relatively small.

At this time, no evacuation alerts, evacuation orders, or reported impacts to transportation corridors or tourism infrastructure have been issued. The incident will continue to be monitored as weather conditions and fire behaviour evolve.

Visitor Considerations

- Visitors travelling in the Cranbrook and Moyie areas should check current wildfire conditions before heading out, particularly if planning backcountry or recreation activities.
- If firefighting aircraft are operating nearby, stay well clear of the area and follow any instructions from emergency personnel.
- Never fly drones near wildfire operations. Unauthorized drones can force firefighting aircraft to suspend operations, delaying suppression efforts and creating safety risks.

- Conditions can change quickly. Check official sources for the latest wildfire information before travelling.

Resource

- BC Wildfire Service – [Moyie Falls](#)

Travel & Visitor Information

Key Messages

- Check conditions before travelling.
- Respect all wildfire restrictions and closures.
- Stay clear of firefighting aircraft and equipment.
- Never fly a drone near wildfire operations.
- Follow instructions from emergency personnel.
- Share only information from official sources.

Where to Find Current Information

- [BC Wildfire Service](#)
- [BC Air Quality Health Index](#)
- [DriveBC](#)
- [US InciWeb](#) – Upper Smith Wildfire
- [FIRMS](#) – Upper Smith Wildfire

**This report includes content generated with AI assistance, with all information verified and approved by Kootenay Rockies Tourism staff. Final content reflects our organization's expertise and commitment to accuracy.*