



## August 6, 2026, Issue Brief

Wildfire conditions across the Kootenay Rockies continue to stabilize, with significant improvements to travel access and evacuation measures over the past several days. While major transportation corridors have reopened and several evacuation orders and alerts have been rescinded, wildfire response remains active across the region. This issue brief provides an update on current conditions, key wildfire incidents affecting tourism, ongoing access restrictions, and considerations for visitors and tourism partners.

### Current Conditions

Wildfire conditions across the Kootenay Rockies have become more stable in recent days, with improvements to travel access and the rescinding of several evacuation measures. However, dry conditions and wildfire smoke continue to be the primary regional considerations.

Smoke conditions remain variable across the region and can change significantly between communities and throughout the day depending on weather patterns and wildfire activity. Air Quality Warnings continue to be issued for portions of BC as wildfire smoke affects air quality.

Dry conditions also persist across much of the region, with drought conditions expanding in several watersheds. These conditions continue to support elevated wildfire potential and reinforce the importance of ongoing wildfire prevention measures.

### What this means for tourism partners

- Encourage visitors to check current road, wildfire, and air quality conditions before travelling.

- Remind visitors that smoke conditions can change quickly and may vary considerably between communities.
- Continue communicating localized wildfire restrictions and recreation closures where applicable.
- Reinforce wildfire prevention measures, including the Category 1 campfire prohibition.

## Wildfire Update

KRT continues to monitor wildfire activity throughout the region on a daily basis. The updates below highlight several key incidents that currently have the greatest potential to affect visitor travel, access, and the overall visitor experience. While many other wildfires remain active, these incidents are considered the most relevant to tourism at this time.

### Wait Creek Wildfire (N11360) – Columbia Valley

Conditions around the [Wait Creek](#) wildfire continue to improve. The wildfire is now classified as Being Held, the Regional District of East Kootenay has fully rescinded the remaining Evacuation Order and Evacuation Alert, and Highways 93 and 95A remain open, restoring normal travel through the Columbia Valley.

Although evacuation measures have been lifted, suppression and patrol activities continue. Visitors may continue to notice smoke as crews complete ongoing wildfire response and containment work.

#### What this means for visitors

Visitors can once again travel through the Columbia Valley using Highways 93 and 95A. While travel access has returned to normal, the wildfire remains an active worksite. Visitors should continue to follow any local signage or temporary closures, avoid interfering with wildfire operations, and remain aware that smoke may be visible as suppression efforts continue.

### Inonoaklin Creek Wildfire (N51198)

The [Inonoaklin Creek](#) wildfire remains active northwest of Needles. Planned ignitions may be used to strengthen existing control lines, which could temporarily increase smoke or visible flames. An Evacuation Alert and Area Restriction remain in effect.

### What this means for visitors

Although the wildfire is visible from Highway 6, the highway remains open and has not been directly impacted by the fire. Visitors should check DriveBC before travelling, as wildfire conditions can change quickly.

To help keep wildfire response efforts safe and efficient:

- Do not stop along Highway 6 to watch wildfire operations.
- Stay clear of active fireline worksites.
- Keep drones off the landscape so firefighting aircraft can operate safely.
- Respect the Area Restriction and all directions from emergency personnel.

### Upper Smith Wildfire – Northern Idaho

Conditions on the [Upper Smith](#) wildfire continue to improve. Containment has increased to 40%, and evacuation zones have been downgraded to Ready status.

Although the wildfire is becoming more stable, interior smoke and occasional smoke columns will continue to be visible as heavy fuels smoulder within the fire perimeter. Depending on weather conditions, smoke may continue to affect air quality and visibility in the Creston Valley.

### What this means for visitors

Visitors travelling in the Creston Valley may continue to experience periods of smoke from the Upper Smith wildfire, despite improving conditions on the incident. Smoke conditions can change throughout the day, so visitors planning outdoor activities should monitor current air quality and local conditions.

### Area Restrictions Remain in Effect

Although travel conditions have improved across much of the Kootenay Rockies, Area Restrictions remain in effect around several active wildfires. These restrictions are established to protect public safety and allow wildfire crews to safely carry out suppression activities.

Visitors should not enter restricted Crown land, even if nearby highways and communities remain open. Recreation access within these areas remains closed until the restrictions are rescinded.

## Current Area Restrictions include:

- [Sea Lion Mountain](#) (NE of Golden) - New
- [Jumbo Creek](#) (W of Invermere)
- [Matthew Creek](#) (W of Kimberley)
- [Calamity Creek](#) (NW of Kimberley)
- [Inonoaklin Creek](#) (NW of Needles, Hwy 6)
- [Poplar Creek](#) (NE of Meadow Creek/Kaslo, Hwy 31)

Visitors are encouraged to check the BC Wildfire Service and DriveBC before travelling and to respect all posted closures and directions from emergency personnel.

## Looking Ahead

Warm, dry conditions are expected to persist across much of the region. Although recent progress on several wildfires has improved travel conditions, visitors and tourism businesses should continue to expect localized smoke, changing wildfire conditions, and occasional operational impacts as suppression efforts continue.

## Monitoring Resources

Conditions can change quickly between issue briefs. The following official resources provide the most current information on wildfire activity, emergency information, travel conditions, and air quality.

### Wildfire Information

- [BC Wildfire Dashboard](#)
- [InciWeb](#) (US)

### Travel & Emergency Information

- [EmergencyInfoBC](#)
- [Regional District of East Kootenay](#) emergency page
- [Regional District of West Kootenay](#) emergency page
- [Golden & Area](#) emergency page
- [Revelstoke & Area](#) emergency page
- [DriveBC](#)

## Air Quality & Smoke

- [BC Air Quality Warnings](#)
- [Environment Canada Air Quality Health Index](#)
- Government of Canada [FireWork](#)

*\*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.*