



July 31, 2026, Issue Brief

The BC Day long weekend marks one of the busiest travel periods of the summer, with increased visitation expected throughout the Kootenay Rockies. Although much of the region remains open for visitors to enjoy, wildfire activity continues to create localized impacts, including smoke, access restrictions, and recreation closures. This issue brief provides the latest situational awareness to help tourism partners support visitors and encourage informed travel decisions.

As the [province of BC](#) encourages residents and visitors to plan ahead and stay informed this BC Day long weekend, tourism partners can help reinforce these messages by encouraging visitors to check road conditions, wildfire information, air quality, and local restrictions before heading out.

Current Conditions

Warm, dry conditions are expected to continue into the long weekend. Forecasts indicate the potential for changing weather over the weekend, including increasing winds in some areas. While forecast details may evolve, changing weather can influence wildfire behaviour and smoke movement. Tourism partners are encouraged to continue monitoring [Environment Canada](#) forecasts, BC Wildfire Service updates, and local conditions through the weekend.

A [Yellow Air Quality Warning](#) remains in effect for portions of the Kootenay Rockies, with wildfire smoke expected to continue affecting parts of the region through the long weekend. Smoke conditions will likely fluctuate from day to day, and even hour to hour, depending on wildfire activity, wind patterns, and local weather conditions.

Visitors may experience very different conditions between communities or while travelling throughout the region. Reduced visibility and periods of poorer air quality do not necessarily indicate

nearby wildfire activity, as smoke can travel long distances from fires burning elsewhere in BC and neighbouring jurisdictions. Smoke conditions are expected to remain a consideration throughout the long weekend, and visitors are encouraged to incorporate current conditions into their travel planning.

What this means for tourism partners

- Expect changing smoke conditions throughout the long weekend and be prepared to answer visitor questions.
- Encourage visitors to check current air quality and wildfire conditions before heading out, particularly for longer hikes, backcountry trips, or other strenuous outdoor activities.
- Remind visitors that conditions can vary significantly across the region and may improve or deteriorate throughout the day.

Monitoring Resources

- [BC Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#): Current air quality conditions and forecasts.
- [Air Quality Warnings](#): Smoke advisories and warnings.
- [BC Wildfire Service](#): Active wildfire information
- [FireSmoke Canada](#) and [FireWork](#): Smoke forecast maps to help anticipate changing conditions.

Wildfire Updates

Bootleg Complex

The Bootleg Complex continues to be the largest wildfire incident in the Kootenay Rockies, consisting of three primary wildfires: [Matthew Creek \(N11020\)](#), [Tower Creek \(N10944\)](#), and [Tower Creek #2 \(N10947\)](#). Firefighters continue suppression efforts across the complex using heavy equipment, helicopters, and planned ignition operations.

Planned ignitions on the Tower Creek wildfires have successfully met operational objectives and are expected to continue as weather and site conditions permit. These operations may result in increased smoke visible from surrounding communities and travel corridors.

The [Evacuation Alert](#) for the St. Mary Lake area remains in effect, and the [Area Restriction](#) around the Bootleg Complex continues to limit public access to support ongoing wildfire suppression. The Evacuation Alert for the City of Kimberley has been rescinded.

Visitor considerations

- Smoke may increase periodically as planned ignitions and suppression activities continue.
- Visitors should check current wildfire information before travelling or recreating near the Bootleg Complex.
- Anyone planning to access backcountry areas near the wildfire should verify that their intended destination is outside the Area Restriction and respect all closures.

Inonoaklin Creek (N51198)

The [Inonoaklin Creek](#) wildfire, located approximately 17 km northwest of Needles, has grown to 831 hectares. Firefighters continue to use an indirect suppression strategy due to the steep, heavily forested terrain, constructing control lines with heavy equipment while helicopters support ground crews with water drops.

The wildfire remains visible from Highway 6, although there are currently no impacts to the highway. An [Evacuation Alert](#) and [Area Restriction](#) remain in effect to support ongoing wildfire suppression and public safety.

Visitor considerations

- Highway 6 remains open, but travellers should expect to see smoke and active wildfire response operations in the area.
- Check DriveBC before travelling for the latest highway conditions and any traffic impacts related to wildfire response.
- Visitors should avoid stopping along the highway to view the wildfire and remain alert for emergency vehicles and traffic control personnel.
- Those planning to recreate near Needles should check current closures and choose alternative recreation areas if their planned destination is within the restricted area.

Upper Smith (Idaho)

The [Upper Smith Fire](#), burning approximately 10 km south of the Canada-US border in northern Idaho, continues to influence conditions in the Creston Valley. Although the wildfire remains outside

BC, it is clearly visible from parts of Creston and continues to contribute to periods of smoke and reduced air quality when weather conditions align.

Fire crews have continued planned ignition operations on the east side of the fire to strengthen containment lines and limit further spread. These planned ignitions have increased smoke production and made the wildfire more visible from the Creston Valley in recent days.

Visitor considerations

- Visitors to the Creston Valley may experience changing smoke conditions and reduced visibility throughout the day.
- The wildfire is not currently affecting travel routes or border crossings into the Creston Valley, but visitors should continue to monitor air quality if planning extended outdoor activities.
- Smoke conditions can change quickly depending on wind direction, wildfire activity, and local weather.

Diorite Wildfire (N21239)

Wildfire [N21239](#), located approximately 3 km east of Premier Lake Provincial Park, continues to be actively monitored by the BC Wildfire Service using a modified response strategy. The wildfire is estimated at 6.4 hectares and is not currently threatening structures or critical infrastructure.

Intermittent smoke impacts are expected to continue while warm, dry conditions persist. The wildfire remains within expected boundaries as it burns through isolated pockets of available fuel.

Visitor considerations

- The wildfire may be visible from the Premier Lake area and surrounding communities, particularly after dark when flames are more noticeable.
- Increased flame visibility at night does not necessarily indicate significant wildfire growth and is a normal characteristic of wildfire behaviour.
- Visitors planning to recreate in the Premier Lake area should continue to monitor BC Wildfire Service updates for any changes, although no significant tourism impacts have been reported at this time.

Access & Recreation Impacts

Trail Closures Near Rossland

The Hanna Creek wildfire ([N51161](#)) has resulted in temporary closures of two popular recreation trails near Rossland: the [Old Glory Lookout Trail](#) and the [Seven Summits Trail](#). These closures support ongoing wildfire suppression operations and help ensure public and firefighter safety.

Visitor considerations

- Visitors planning to hike or mountain bike near Rossland should check current trail conditions before travelling.
- Respect all trail closures and posted signage. Closed trails may be used by wildfire personnel and equipment, and conditions can change quickly.
- Consider alternative hiking and biking opportunities in the region while these closures remain in effect.

New Jumbo Creek Area Restriction

A new [Area Restriction](#) is now in effect for the [Jumbo Creek wildfire \(N21071\)](#), located approximately 38 km west of Invermere. The restriction has been implemented to protect public safety and support ongoing wildfire suppression activities.

This follows the Area Restriction already in place around the Bootleg Complex and the Inonoaklin Creek wildfire, highlighting the increasing need for localized access controls as wildfire activity continues across the region.

Area Restrictions Explained

An Area Restriction closes designated Crown land to public access to protect both visitors and wildfire personnel. Recreation activities such as hiking, camping, off-road vehicle use, and other access within the restricted area are not permitted while the Order is in effect. Visitors should plan ahead, respect posted closures and choose alternative recreation areas where available.

Visitor Preparedness

Campfire Prohibition Remain in Effect

A [Category 1 campfire prohibition](#) remains in effect throughout the Southeast Fire Centre as well as Kootenay, Yoho, Glacier, and Mount Revelstoke National Parks. Visitors should plan their long weekend activities knowing that campfires are not permitted in these areas.

Visitor considerations

- Plan ahead if camping or recreating outdoors and do not rely on having a campfire.
- Use approved gas or propane cooking appliances where permitted and always follow manufacturer instructions.
- Carry a fire extinguisher or other appropriate fire suppression equipment when camping or cooking outdoors. A small extinguisher can help stop a small fire from becoming a wildfire.
- Dispose of smoking materials safely and never leave any heat source unattended.

Report a Wildfire

Early reporting helps firefighters respond quickly to new wildfires. If you see a wildfire, prohibited fire, or open burning violation, report it as soon as it is safe to do so.

On provincial Crown Land

- Dial *5555 from a cell phone.
- Call 1-800-663-5555 toll-free.
- Use the “Report a Fire” feature in the BC Wildfire Service app, which allows you to submit details and photos and can be used even when cellular service is unavailable.

In a National Park

- Call Parks Canada Emergency Dispatch at 1-877-852-3100.
- For backcountry or general emergencies, call 403-762-4506.

Visitor Reminder

- Report the fire from a safe location – never put yourself at risk to get closer to a fire.
- If you’re unsure whether you’re on provincial Crown land or in a national park, reporting the fire to either agency will help ensure the information reaches the appropriate responders.

Regional Visitor Message

Visitors can continue to enjoy many areas throughout the Kootenay Rockies this long weekend; however, conditions may vary considerably between communities and recreation areas. Before travelling, check current wildfire information, road conditions, air quality, and any local closures. Flexibility and planning ahead remain the best ways to enjoy the region safely.

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](#)

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