Prescribed burn planned west of Telkwa to prepare for re-planting

To prepare for reforestation, the BC Wildfire Service and West Fraser Mills will be conducting a prescribed burning project on several cut blocks, located about 30 kilometres west of Telkwa.

The cut blocks are located along the 118 Road between kilometre seven and 10 within the Howson Creek drainage. The treatment may take place anytime between early September and the end of October, depending on weather and fuel conditions. West Fraser may also be burning piles at the site during this timeframe.

Burning will only occur when conditions are appropriate to ensure safety, meet objectives and allow for adequate smoke dispersal. BC Wildfire Service personnel will monitor the fire at all times.

Smoke may be visible from Telkwa, Smithers and surrounding areas.

West Fraser logged approximately 175 hectares in the winter of 2019/2020. While most of the site was prepared for replanting through mechanical piling and mounding, steep terrain prevented this in some sections. Broadcast burning, a method where the fire carries through unpiled debris over a prescribed area, will be used on 34 hectares to reduce residual forest debris. This will improve planter access and increase the quality and quantity of planting spots. The project has the added benefits of providing staff training and development opportunities in planning and implementing prescribed burning projects. These skills will be applied on future wildfire risk reduction projects. It is also expected that the blocks will be more resistant to future wildfires due to the reduction of surface fuels.

About prescribed fire:

Prescribed fire is the planned and controlled application of fire to a specific land area and is one of the most ecologically appropriate and relatively efficient means for achieving planned public safety and resource management objectives – for example, enhancing habitat, preparing an area for tree planting, disease eradication, etc. These fires can take many months to plan and are managed in such a way as to minimize the chance of escape and emission of smoke while maximizing the benefits to the site.

This prescribed fire is a resource management open fire as defined by the BC Wildfire Regulation. These fires require the completion of a burn plan, which provides an overview of the project and its objectives. As well, the burn plan identifies potential human, land and
resource values that could be affected, and mitigation actions are prescribed. Burn plans also specify the resources, weather and fuel conditions for the project to be safe and successful. Specific ignition, control, mop up and patrol actions are prescribed to prevent the fire from escaping. Post-fire monitoring and actions are identified to ensure no long-term negative impacts to values and site safety. The burn plan is submitted by a forest professional and must be approved by BC Wildfire Service officials and the Natural Resource District Manager.

For more information about prescribed fire, please visit:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/vegetation-and-fuel-management/prescribed-burning

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