
FACTSHEET

March 20th 2007

Ministry of Forests and Range

PRESCRIBED FIRE AS AN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT TOOL

- Fire is a normal, natural process in many of British Columbia's ecosystems. Many species of birds, insects, plants and animals depend on fire for its regenerative properties.
- Fires help control insects and diseases in forests, and lead to forest succession (younger forests replacing older forests) to create a patchwork of forest ages, which supports biodiversity.
- Prescribed or controlled burning is one of the tools used by forest professionals to achieve certain objectives for land management. For example, using fire is appropriate for habitat enhancement, to improve forage for cattle, deer, elk and moose, and for interface fire risk reduction.
- Prescribed fires are carefully planned so that their intensity and size meets the land management objectives contained in the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan in the section for fire-maintained ecosystems.
- All plans must comply with the Environmental Management Act's Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation, which is in place to minimize the amount of smoke created. For example, burns may only be ignited on days when the venting index indicates smoke will not be trapped close to the ground. The regulation also requires the open flames to be out in 96 hours.
- Prescribed fires are ignited weather permitting to ensure the fire does not create excessive smoke, and to help ensure the fire does not get out of control. Elements important in determining the date of a burn include the venting index, temperature, humidity and forecast winds.
- Prescribed fires are ignited and continuously monitored by trained crews. The Burn Boss is responsible for making sure the fire is extinguished to reduce unnecessary smouldering and to ensure it doesn't reignite.

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