



News Release No. 61

Date: July 29, 2009

Time: 4:00 p.m.

KELOWNA: Effective 8:00 a.m. Thursday, July 30th, the Evacuation Order will be rescinded for approximately 1,000 residents impacted by the Terrace Mountain wildfire. At that time, those people living in the following areas will be allowed to return to their homes but will remain under Evacuation Alert and must be prepared to leave their homes on short notice:

- Fintry
- Fintry Delta
- Upper Fintry/Dunwaters Estates
- Valley of the Sun

Returning residents will receive an information sheet reminding them that they are returning on Evacuation Alert and should remain prepared as they may have to leave the area again without much notice. The Terrace Mountain wildfire remains active and with drying weather conditions there is a risk that another evacuation may be ordered should fire conditions change.

RCMP will ensure a controlled re-entry at two points on Westside Road: the south end of La Casa resort and on the north side at Baziw Orchards. Residents are asked to provide appropriate identification and documentation on arrival. At 8:00 am tomorrow (Thursday) Westside Road will be completely open from either the north or south. RCMP remind returning residents that they may notice some personal items have been moved off patios and from around their residences. This may have been done by fire fighters to minimize damage if the fire moved into their area. However, should they notice any thefts or break-ins please report them through the regular police complaints line at 250-545-7171.

Although the Evacuation Order will be lifted, with the cooperation of BC Parks, Fintry Provincial Park will remain closed as it is a key staging area for the Ministry of Forests firefighting effort. Returning residents should be aware there is Ministry of Forest Fire Service apparatus and equipment set up in some residential areas. Please do not touch or disturb this equipment. As they are still engaged in fighting this active fire, helicopter and ground crews and equipment are still working and may be in residential areas.

The Evacuation Order remains in effect for the Fintry High Farms area. This order affects approximately 13 residents.

With the lifting of the Evacuation Order, the Vernon ESS reception centre will close at 5:00 pm tomorrow, Thursday, July 30th. Emergency Social Services will continue to provide assistance for food, lodging and clothing to Fintry High Farms area residents from the Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary reception centre, 2751 Cameron Road in West Kelowna. As the Evacuation Order remains in place for them, those residents must apply in person to receive renewal assistance.

The Emergency Operation Centre says all previous Alerts remain in effect for the Terrace Mountain forest fire. An estimated 1,200 residents of the Killiney and Caesar's Landing Short Notice Evacuation Alert areas must continue to be prepared to leave their homes on short notice. Another 2,508 residents are still on Evacuation Alert in the Westshore-Beau Park, District lots off Terrace Main, Wilson's Landing – Trader's Cove and Bear Creek Main to Bear Lake Evacuation Alert areas and should be ready to leave their home should that status change.

The Emergency Operations Centre reminds everyone that all orders and alerts are assessed on a daily basis with information and recommendations provided from the West Kelowna Complex fire incident command.

Deputy Director Jason Johnson says, "Everyone responsible for and involved with the Regional District of Central Okanagan Emergency Response Plan thanks the hundreds of people who have volunteered their time and talents over the past week and a half helping the Emergency Social Services organizations from the North Westside, West Kelowna and Vernon. Their willingness to step up to help fellow residents in their time of need is truly admirable. As well, many volunteers have helped staff phone lines around the clock at the Shaw call centre and have done an amazing job answering questions and helping keep residents keep up to date throughout these difficult and challenging days."

The latest information, news releases and maps are also available on the Regional District website, www.regionaldistrict.com by clicking on the Terrace Mountain Fire icon.

The Ministry of Forests estimates the Terrace Mountain wildfire is 85 per cent contained and still covers approximately 4,500 hectares.

Crews have built 36 kilometers of fire guard and yesterday fire specialists successfully burned off some fuel between the guard and the fire. They will continue to monitor weather conditions and when conditions permit will conduct burn off activities.

On the ground today more than 290 fire fighters and 86 pieces of heavy equipment are working the fire supported from the air by 16 helicopters.

The Ministry says today's sunny, hot weather, light winds and low humidity could lead to increased fire behavior. They will continue to monitor weather conditions throughout the day.

For more information regarding other forest fires in British Columbia visit the Ministry of Forests webpage www.wildfirebc.ca or call 1-888-3FOREST (1-888-336-7378).

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Public Information Office
Bruce Smith
250-469-8493