



## **The Paskwa Fire (HWF030) | May 16, 2023, as of 8pm**

The Paskwa fire is located in the community of Fox Lake and was detected on May 2, 2023. This fire is classified as Out of Control (OC) and the last recorded size is 44,755 hectares. The fire is approximately 2km from the Wood Buffalo National Park boundary and 12km from the community of Garden River.

Today, driven by gusting northwest winds, the fire grew towards the southeast and away from the community of Garden River. Vigorous fire behaviour was observed throughout the burning period on the southeast perimeter. The fire is 2.4km outside of Wood Buffalo National Park and is forecast to cross the park boundary within the next 24 hours.

Air tankers dropped four loads of retardant, finalizing work on the control line near the community of Garden River. Structure protection work continued in the community, including the creation of fireguards and sprinkler setup.

The Incident Management Team met with the Little Red River Cree Nation Chief and Council, as well as with members of the community of Garden River to discuss proactively backburning forest fuels between the retardant line and the northeastern perimeter of the fire. There was support for the Team to proceed tomorrow with the operation.

Initially the IMT recommended the temporary evacuation of Garden River while backburning operations occurred. After evaluating the structure protection measures in place and in conversations with the LRRCN Emergency Management Team it was decided that residents of Garden River will instead shelter in place in the community during the operation, forgoing the need to leave the community.

During operations, the Structure Protection Group will be in place in Garden River, and the Incident Information Officer will be in the community to provide answers to residents' questions, as well as acting as a point of contact for the Paskwa fire operations branch into the community and providing updates as the operation progresses.

The backburning operation is planned to take advantage of favourable weather conditions and winds from the east that will blow the fire away from Garden River to burn off forest fuels between the retardant line and the northeast perimeter of the fire. During backburning, fire and smoke, as well as firefighting operations including helicopter bucketing from heavy helicopters will be highly visible from Garden River.

Today, work continued in the community of Fox Lake to create safe conditions to allow for re-entry, beginning with temporary access and escorted community visits is ongoing. Crews are working to create an extinguished perimeter of approximately 30 metres around every structure. ATCO crews are also working in the community to restore power and repair damaged lines.

Heavy equipment began to create new control lines along the perimeter of the fire, working southeast from Deep Lake. Crews have finished control lines along the south edge of the fire near the cultural heritage site and began demobilizing equipment to prepare for deployment elsewhere on the fireline.



There are 95 firefighters, 9 helicopters, and heavy equipment working on the Paskwa fire. Air tanker support is available as requested.

Little Red River Cree Nation has an evacuation order in place for the community of Fox Lake. The community of Garden River is on an evacuation alert. For information regarding the evacuation, please stay informed by visiting the Little Red River Cree Nation's Facebook page.

The Incident Management Team will continue to coordinate with the Wood Buffalo National Park management team as the fire moves towards the park boundary. Once the fire crosses the boundary, a unified incident command will be implemented to manage the fire.

### **Weather Forecast | Paskwa Fire (HWF030)**

The Incident Management Team has a dedicated Fire Behaviour Analyst and therefore the weather briefing will be fire area specific. Hot and dry conditions continue with no significant rain in the forecast. Tomorrow the forecast is as follows, a temperature in the low 20 degrees and a relative humidity of 30 percent. East winds of 10-15 km/h will continue throughout the day. Winds will be pushing the fire away from the community of Garden River.

### **Where can I find more information about the wildfires?**

Current information on wildfires can be found:

- [Wildfire.alberta.ca](https://wildfire.alberta.ca)
- Download the Alberta Wildfire Status App [https://open.alberta.ca/blog/?page\\_id=206](https://open.alberta.ca/blog/?page_id=206)
- High Level Forest Area Updates: <https://srd.web.alberta.ca/high-level-area-update>
- Follow Alberta Wildfire on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**To Report a wildfire call 310-FIRE (3473)**





Fire activity on the southeast perimeter of the Paskwa Fire on May 16, 2023