



The Paskwa Fire (HWF030) | May 17, 2023 at 9am

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 54,155 hectares. The fire is approximately 2km from the Wood Buffalo National Park boundary and 12km from the community of Garden River.

Overnight, driven by wind the fire grew towards the south and away from the community of Garden River. The fire grew more due south than forecast and so remains outside of Wood Buffalo National Park. It is expected to cross the border of the park during backburning operations today. The southeast edge of the fire is forecast to reach the border early tomorrow morning.

Today, backburning operations will occur to burn off forest fuels between the retardant line near the community of Garden River and the northeast perimeter of the fire. As this operation will occur partially inside the trigger point, residents of the community will be sheltering in place while burning in that area occurs. The shelter in place order is expected to begin at 4:00 pm – exact timing will be provided by the IMT during the operation.

Today 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. In addition to the resources in Garden River, the operation is being supported by bucketing from heavy helicopters. Five medium helicopters are available to provide bucketing support as well.

This morning, crews installed sprinklers at the Fifth Meridian cultural heritage site. These sprinklers will be activated for the duration of backburning operations.

The backburning operation will take advantage of favourable weather conditions and winds from the east that will blow the fire away from Garden River. 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 is continuing 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. Today the forecast is as follows, a temperature in the low 20 degrees and a relative humidity of 20 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
- 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)



The Paskwa Fire on the morning of May 17, 2023