



## **WATCH LAKE – NORTH GREEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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[www.wlmgfiredept.org](http://www.wlmgfiredept.org)



# *Newsletter - Spring / Summer 2016*

### **Another early summer?**

It's official, the ice came off on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> this year. The one-day phenomenon was witnessed and recorded by Jeanette and Theode Kasper, the new property managers at the Flying U Ranch. Jeanette was able to get a few good photos and a 30 second video of the ice as it rapidly disappeared. Last year the lake broke on March 28<sup>th</sup>, the earliest date in the last 20+ years. The second earliest on record was in 2005 when the ice departed on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The water level was higher than usual last spring and, even though it went down a bit during the past summer, it appears to remain at a fairly high level prior to the run-off season. Water levels in the lakes and ponds in our area are always a concern to the fire department, since suppressing even a small structure fire requires a considerable volume of water. A recent structure fire consumed all 7250 gallons carried on the trucks and used up the 8000 gallons in the reserve tank at Hall #1.



*Photo by Jeanette Kasper – April 8, 2016*

### **Fire Restrictions**

The grasslands and forests surrounding our homes are again very dry this year and, as a precaution, beginning on April 4 the Cariboo Fire Centre has prohibited all Category 2 and Category 3 open fires throughout their jurisdiction.

Prohibited activities include:

- \* The burning of any waste, slash or other materials.
- \* Stubble or grass fires of any size over any area.
- \* The use of burning barrels or burning cages of any size or description.
- \* The use of sky lanterns.

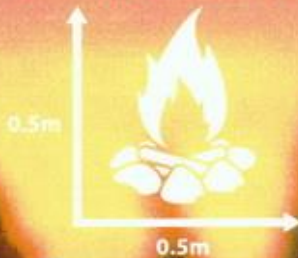
This prohibition does not ban campfires that are a half-metre high by a half-metre wide or smaller, and it does not apply to cooking stoves that use gas, propane or briquettes.

# OPEN FIRE REGULATIONS



40% of B.C. wildfires are human-caused and therefore preventable

## CAMPFIRES, CATEGORY 2 FIRES AND CATEGORY 3 FIRES: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



### CAMPFIRE:

- Any fire smaller than 0.5 metres high by 0.5 metres wide

#### REGULATIONS:



You must have ready access to 8 litres of water or a shovel for the entire time your campfire is lit.



Your campfire must be completely extinguished and the ashes must be cool to the touch before leaving the area for any length of time. (Hot coals can reignite the fire.)



During campfire prohibitions, only a CSA- or ULC-approved portable campfire apparatus may be used, and the flame height must not exceed 15 centimetres.



You must build a fire guard around your campfire.



### CATEGORY 2 FIRE:

- 1 to 2 concurrently burning piles no larger than 2 metres high by 3 metres wide
- Stubble or grass burning over an area less than 0.2 hectares

#### REGULATIONS:



A fuel break must be established around any Category 2 burn area.



Fireworks are banned when a Category 2 fire prohibition is in effect.



Burning barrels are banned when a Category 2 fire prohibition is in effect.



At least one person equipped with a fire-fighting hand tool must monitor the fire at all times.



### CATEGORY 3 FIRE:

- Any fire larger than 2 metres high by 3 metres wide
- 3 or more concurrently burning piles no larger than 2 metres high by 3 metres wide
- 1 or more burning windrows
- Stubble or grass burning over an area greater than 0.2 hectares

#### REGULATIONS:



A fuel break must be established around any Category 3 burn area.



Monitor your open burn to ensure that the fire doesn't spread beyond its intended size.



You must have a burn registration number to light a Category 3 open fire. Call the burn registration line 1 888 797-1717 to obtain one.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS:



Never burn in strong wind conditions.



Your fire must be extinguished before leaving the area.



Always keep your fire a safe distance away from nearby branches, wood and other combustible materials.



Do not conduct Category 2 or Category 3 burns when venting conditions are "Poor" or "Fair". Always check here first: [www.bcalrquality.ca/readings/ventilation-index.html](http://www.bcalrquality.ca/readings/ventilation-index.html)

\*Further bans and restrictions can be implemented at the Wildfire Management Branch's discretion.



Anyone found in contravention of an open fire prohibition may be fined up to \$345. If your fire escapes and results in a wildfire, you may be fined anywhere from \$100,000 to \$1 million and be sentenced to one year in prison. Please check with local government authorities for any other restrictions before lighting any open fire.

Please report wildfires by calling  
**\*5555 or 1 800 663-5555.**



Ministry of  
Forests, Lands and  
Natural Resource Operations

[www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)

[@BCGovFireInfo](https://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo)



[www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo](https://www.facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo)



[www.youtube.com/user/ProvinceofBC](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProvinceofBC)



## First Major Fire of the Season

During the evening of March 30 a local resident saw flames rising from a neighbouring property and called 911. Our crews from both halls responded and the first vehicle arrived on scene within eleven minutes to find a structure totally engulfed in flames. It was too late to save the building, but the immediate concern was to contain the fire and to keep it from spreading to nearby buildings and other properties. Six vehicles and fifteen firefighters were on the scene for three and a half hours. They used all fifteen thousand gallons of readily available water and drew several more tandem loads from the dry hydrant at access 14 to suppress the fire. Unfortunately, the owner had not paid the annual fire dues on this property and was billed almost \$6,000 for emergency services.

## New Vehicles

A review of the internal safety procedures of the department revealed since we no longer have a full complement of medical first responders, we were lacking in first aid services for our own staff. With the large number of firefighters attending any emergency incident combined with the distance from the 100 Mile House Hospital, we were required to provide WorkSafeBC Occupational First Aid training for several members and provide an on-site ETV (emergency transportation vehicle). The standards for this vehicle are not as high as those for our regular emergency vehicles – it only has to be clean, warm, have radio communication, be big enough for a stretcher and run reliably. We were needing transportation for additional personnel and

this vehicle, a 1999 Suburban, will serve a dual purpose. Our resident mechanical wizards began the search for a vehicle that would fit the above criteria and was, above all, inexpensive. They found the perfect vehicle in Williams Lake and, when cleaned up, it will give us many years of service.



## New Engine:



After another extensive search for a suitable replacement for our oldest engine, we finally found one in Ontario that suits all of our needs. Our vehicles don't really wear out they "age out", meaning they get beyond the twenty-five-year age limit set by the Insurance Underwriters. There are a few vehicles available closer to home, but we must take the mileage, the number of hours on the pumps and the cost of follow-up maintenance into careful consideration when making the final decision.

This truck, found in Brampton Ontario, has the required very low mileage, the pumps appear to have low hours of usage and physically it is in excellent condition. Director Alan Watrich and Firefighter George Tyler picked up the truck in Ontario on the morning of April 20 and arrived home on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. They say that in spite of very poor highway conditions the truck ran flawlessly and with some outfitting it will be ready for service in just a few days.

## **Fire Dues Invoicing** (a reminder) – Please share with your neighbours.

When the invoices for the 2016 annual fire dues arrived in your mailboxes last fall they contained a notice regarding a payment deadline of January 1<sup>st</sup> with a grace period for paid properties from the previous year until January 31<sup>st</sup>. The payment date has always been January 1<sup>st</sup> of every year, yet members who had not paid at that time were not considered delinquent until March 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. This has led to the situation where payments are coming in throughout January and February and many property owners who travel south for the winter have not been paying until they return. Director Bill Thomas, who looks after collections for the Department, is usually still knocking on doors until the end of June and sometimes later. It has been pointed out by our lawyer that *according to our bylaws we are not obligated to respond to fires at unpaid properties* even for members who had been paid-up for the previous year. Furthermore, property owners cannot legally claim to have a responding fire department when applying for insurance if dues for the current year are not paid. The bottom line is:

- Dues are payable by January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Members from the previous year have until January 31<sup>st</sup> to remain in good standing.
- Unpaid properties have no fire department protection.\*

*\*NOTE: This does not necessarily mean we won't respond, however, if we do respond to an unpaid property it states in our Bylaws that:*

1. In the event that a member requests a Call-Out and that member is not a member in good standing, that member will pay the fees and debts owing by them to the Department in addition to an amount set at the discretion of the directors up to the amount of the current director-set Call-Out rate.
2. If a member is a member in good standing, they will not be charged for a Call-Out.
3. The Directors and Officers of the Department will have the right to utilize all legal options available to them to recover debts owing to the department by any person as a result of a Call-Out.
4. Nothing in these By-Laws will require or be construed to require the Department to respond to the Call-Out of a non-member.

## **New members needed**

Where other local fire departments are in danger of closing down because of a shortage of members, we have what appears to be an excellent number of volunteers on our roster. This is, however, only on paper. Some of our most highly-trained people can only be here part time, others are away for extended periods of time enjoying well-earned retirement activities. The biggest depletion to our roster will soon come from a number of firefighters wishing to retire because of their age. Many of our members are staying on well past retirement simply through a sense of dedication to the community. Recently, our oldest member retired at the age of 90. He will be sorely missed and it will take two forty-five-year-old recruits to replace his many talents.

We ask that all men and women enjoying life here at the lakes consider giving two hours a week at most to come out and join our group in their on-going training program. Learn new skills, get outfitted in the best of turn-out gear, learn to drive a fire truck, meet new friends and, above all, share our commitment to community safety. If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Chief Andy Palaniak at [wlnglvfd@gmail.com](mailto:wlnglvfd@gmail.com).

***Have a safe summer.***