



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Smoke will be visible in Foothills area this week due to small pile burning

Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) would like to advise residents of some wildland fuel management work that is taking place in the Foothills area of Vernon this week.

Starting Wednesday, July 22, residents may see smoke from category 2 small pile burning. The work is being completed on a portion of City-owned land to reduce the severity of a wildfire in the area should it occur, and to help return the area to a more natural state.

“We started this fuel management project in 2019,” said Fire Chief David Lind. “Originally, we had cleaned up the site by removing debris and thinning out the trees and vegetation. We planned to do a prescribed burn with permission from the Province that same year; however, we were unable to get suitable weather conditions. We hoped to complete the prescribed burn again this past spring, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a province-wide burn ban was put in place.”

A portion of that burn ban has since been lifted by the Province, and category 2 small pile burning is currently permitted. This allows VFRS to take the next step in the fuel management project, with a larger prescribed burn anticipated to take place at a future date, when conditions are appropriate.

“Vernon Fire Rescue is working with a qualified private contractor to complete the pile burning,” said Chief Lind. “We reviewed a number of options for the site with our Fire Ecologist and determined this is the most suitable option at this time. Controlled burning like this requires specific weather conditions to be met, to reduce the impact of smoke on the region. This is our window of opportunity.”

VFRS firefighters will be on site regularly and will remain in close contact with the contractor.

“This is low risk work,” said Chief Lind. “A lot of planning and consideration goes into wildland fuel management and the purpose of the work is to protect our community and keep the natural environment healthy. I have full confidence in the team doing this work. It will be done in compliance with all provincial and federal regulations and conducted in a safe, controlled and responsible manner.”

Approximately five days of burn activity is expected to take place over the next week. During the day, residents in the Foothills area may want to keep their windows closed to prevent smoke from getting inside their homes. The piles will be extinguished before the contractor leaves the site each evening, when windows can be opened again.

According to the BC Wildfire Service, the current wildfire risk in Vernon is low to moderate. For the latest information on current wildfire activity and burning restrictions, visit www.bcwildfire.ca.

To report a wildfire or open burning violation, please call 1-800-663-5555 or toll-free *5555 on a cell phone. To report a local fire or emergency, please call 911.

Below is a map where the small pile burning will be taking place (within the blue dotted boundaries).

