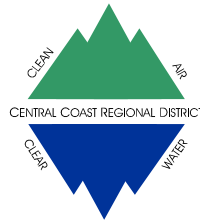


# MEDIA ADVISORY



## Central Coast Regional District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **BELLA COOLA FOREST FIRE & ROAD CLOSURE FINAL REPORT** **August 22, 2009 2300 hrs**

#### BELLA COOLA COMMUNITY GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

Traffic is flowing normally along Highway 20 at Heckman Pass between Bella Coola and Anahim Lake after Forest Service Crews yesterday determined the area safe from forest fires burning in the area.

An extreme thunderstorm event that occurred in the Bella Coola area on the evening of August 20<sup>th</sup> had the potential for starting several more fires in the Central Coast area. Forest Service helicopters are patrolling the region for evidence of new fires and will continue to do so over the next several days.

The Central Coast Regional District Emergency Operations Centre is standing down after 3 weeks of coordinating efforts in response to fires and highway closure issues.

Information concerning the activities of the last 3 weeks can be accessed through the Central Coast Regional District office during normal business hours at (250) 799-5291.

The Regional District wishes to express sincere appreciation to all of our stakeholder agencies, tourism partners and all media outlets for their assistance in addressing the difficult issues that presented throughout this wildfire event.

In particular, the continuous distribution of the factual information that we've published has been very helpful in keeping the local residents and general public accurately informed. We thank you for your diligence in this regard.

**-more-**

## **FIRE CONDITIONS –FINAL REPORT FROM CCRD**



Bella Coola Fire information will only be available from the Coastal Fire Centre from this date forward.

Information on all fires is available through the Ministry of Forests site at [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)

The Bella Coola Base of the Coastal Fire Centre is currently staffed by 3 Initial Attack (IA) crews along with the 19 members of the Bella Coola Ground-Pounders.

The Ground-Pounders are a recently-trained corps of local firefighters that have taken over the role of mop-up operations for the 2 local fires, specifically the Nuxalk Mountain Fire.

The Stue complex of fires is being assessed for fire activity on the lower portions today with the intent of controlling any potential lower advance of these fires. Allowing the fires to burn themselves out in the upper areas is a planned response since attacking these from the air often results in the fires being knocked off their ledges and spreading down below.

All local fires are being monitored in Patrol Status and the Fires Service is keeping watch on both known and potential fires that may result from the recent thunderstorm.

### **WRAP-UP**

The Forest Service Crews who travelled to Bella Coola during this event commented on the degree of community support they received while in the area. They altogether raved about the food they were provided and the friendly greetings they heard from all residents. Kudos to all Bella Coola folk for showing our appreciation.

The Forest Service also indicated their respect for the members of the Bella Coola Ground-Pounders. The Incident Commanders state that this newly-formed band of local fire-fighters is performing 2 levels beyond the expected average for a similar unit. Way to go Ground-Pounders!

It's important to note that there were no human-caused fires in the Bella Coola area during this event. The public is asked to continue this level of responsibility as the long-range fire condition forecast is a continuation of hot, dry weather into mid-September.

Follow-up information can be obtained from the Central Coast Regional District website at [www.ccrd-bc.ca](http://www.ccrd-bc.ca) under public notices.

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