

To: Mayor and Council
From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Meeting Date: March 18, 2025
Meeting Type: Regular Council Meeting

Prepared by: Matt Vader, Director Parks, Recreation and Culture
Department: Parks, Recreation and Culture

Title: Jack Seaton Park | Burn Plan
Description: Prescribed burn of 3.8 hectares in Jack Seaton Park

RECOMMENDATION

For Information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) will be supporting the District of Lake Country and the Lake Country Fire Department in conducting a prescribed burn covering up to 3.81 hectares in Jack Seaton Park (see Attachment A for area).

The exact timing of this burn will depend on weather and site conditions, but it could begin as early as March 22, 2025. Burning will proceed if conditions are suitable and allow for smoke dispersal during burn operations, though smoke may also linger in the following days.

These projects are carefully planned and only go ahead at the right times and under the right conditions to ensure community and practitioner safety.

This burn is expected to provide an excellent example of what a forest stand can look like with a burn treatment versus what could happen when a wildfire occurs without treatment.

Key goals of this prescribed burn include:

- returning a natural and necessary process to the land base
- removing forest fuels to reduce the long-term risk of wildfire
- provide cross-training opportunities between BCWS, District of Lake Country and Lake Country Fire Department

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Fire is a normal and natural process in many of B.C.'s ecosystems with Jack Seaton Park providing an excellent example of the NDT-4 (Natural Disturbance Type) which would be characterized by frequent stand maintaining fires. This NDT includes grasslands, shrublands, and forested communities that normally experience frequent low intensity fires.

Fuel management treatments, particularly on NDT-4 sites, should not be viewed as one-time actions. Rather, fuel treatments require periodic maintenance entries to maintain the integrity and purpose of the treatment area. In the absence of maintenance, or periodic low-intensity fire, treated NDT4 sites will trend back towards pre-treatment structure and conditions.

In 2019 a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) was developed to provide the basis for all future wildfire mitigation actions in a community.

As such, the content of a CWPP provides a clear description of the wildfire environment, wildfire risks to the community, as well as strategic and operational recommendations to reduce risk and increase the community's resilience to wildfire threats. Following the completion of the CWPP, additional Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) funding, as provided by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), was requested to complete a prescription to guide the mitigation works within Jack Seaton Park (as well as the East Ridge area around The Lakes). The works are nearing completion around The Lakes in partnership with BCWS as well as significant landscape level treatments within the Spion Kop Crown Lands in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests.

Jack Seaton Park has been identified as having a High Wildfire Behaviour Threat Class, therefore was classified as a priority area for an interface fuel break treatment as it is immediately adjacent to private land and near or within the wildland urban interface. Additionally, following a recommendation within the CWPP that the application of prescribed fire should be supported as a proactive method of fuels management that can result in less smoke output than similar areas burning under wildfire conditions.

Regardless of the method for reducing fuel loading on any particular forested site, surface fuels must be considered and attended to. During hand falling/bucking or mechanical harvesting, processing and yarding, surface fine fuel loading can increase with disturbance. In many cases, particularly in Ponderosa pine and interior Douglas-fir stands, the use of low-intensity prescribed fire can be an effective means of both reducing surface fine fuel loads and realizing beneficial ecological fire effects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None Budget Previously Approved Other (see below)

COMMUNICATION

An information bulletin was released by BCWS and is shared through the District of Lake Country channels as well as door to door efforts from the Lake Country Fire Department with adjacent lands owners. Work with the adjacent landowners will include Firesmart assessments and recommendations.

Respectfully Submitted.

Matt Vader, Director Parks, Recreation and Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Jack Seaton Park - Prescribed Burn.docx
Attachments:	Jack Seaton Burn Plan – Attachment A
Final Approval Date:	Mar 11, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Darren Lee, Fire Chief - Mar 10, 2025 - 12:09 PM

Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services - Mar 10, 2025 - 12:56 PM

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer - Mar 10, 2025 - 4:33 PM

Makayla Ablitt, Legislative & FOI Coordinator - Mar 11, 2025 - 9:52 AM