The 2017 Harrop Wildfire
Lessons from a community on evacuation alert

Kootenay Wildfire & Climate Change Conference
Nelson, BC
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Harrop-Procter Community Forest
Outline

- The Harrop 2017 wildfire
- HPCC adaptation
- Lessons learned
July 27—lightning strike
Hello community,

Lots of action today on the Harrop wildfire. The fire has expanded somewhat to the east. However the fire has not moved any closer to Harrop.

[...]

So we now will have a heavy lift helicopter, a 20-person ground crew, and one piece of heavy equipment working on the fire. There is a new staging area at the end of the East Harrop Mainline road (at the Mill Lake trail head).

**Today the decision was made to start work on a machine-built fire guard, to be constructed with an excavator starting tomorrow.** The machine guard will start at the end of the East Harrop road. This will involve crossing the upper reaches of Harrop Creek on a temporary log structure. I am personally involved in supervising this work.

Best wishes to everyone.

Erik

July 31st
Wednesday evening fire update, and clarification
2 fire update Thursday evening
2 Friday evening fire update
2 fire update Saturday evening
2 fire update Monday evening
2 fire update and map Tuesday
2 more detailed map of fire
2 fire update Wednesday evening
2 Thursday evening fire update and photos
2 fire update Friday evening
2 fire update Sunday evening
2 Mount Irvine fire report-- nothing found yet
2 Harrop fire update Tuesday evening
3 fire update Thursday evening
3 Harrop fire--photos and updated map
2 Fire update Friday evening
3 Fire update Tuesday evening
2 Fire update--spotting into Narrows
2 fire update Thursday evening
2 quick fire update Friday evening
2 update on fire guard
2 fire update & public meeting Monday
2 fire update and map of emergency guard
2 fire update Wednesday evening
Evacuation Alert Issued for Harrop, Procter, Sunshine Bay, Kootenay Lake Village

August 31, 2017

Due to recent changes in activity of the Harrop Creek wildfire, the Regional District of Central Kootenay has issued an Evacuation Alert for 486 properties within Harrop, Procter, Sunshine Bay and Kootenay Lake Village. See map.

This Evacuation Alert has been issued to prepare residents to leave at a moment’s notice should the fire threaten lives or properties. Although there is no requirement for residents and visitors to leave at this time, it is recommended that preparations should be made including the relocation of livestock, trailers, and boats. This action can only take place within the Evacuation Alert phase as there is only 1 access/egress route that depends on the cable ferry. In the event of an Evacuation Order, the ferry would be restricted to vehicles and passengers only, due to limited time and ferry capacity. Absolutely no trailers will be allowed.

All RDCK residents, businesses, and visitors are encouraged to sign up to the RDCK Emergency Alert system which will contact users when an emergency or disaster strikes in their area and action is required. To sign up, go to:
Hi Erik
This is Amy my husband Jarrod and I live at the base of narrows and slater creek 6660 harrop procter rd...is there anything specific we should think about ...this is also where we get our water from...Amy

Hi Erik
Any real info on what is being seen on Facebook about the “explosion” of our fire? 😊 Esta

Hi Erik, we are on our way to Victoria to drop Anouk off at Uvic. There are a lot of stories and comments about the fire. We know you are busy but can you keep us posted, Rob will drive back as fast as he can if needed, we are worried.
Thanks for your help.
Rob and Emmy

Thank you again Eric. I have complete confidence that all issues related to the fire are being closely evaluated. We are so appreciative that you are an integral part of this process and that you keep us informed of what is happening.
Gerry

Thank you. I imagine long and sad days for how we all envisioned managing the forest. Please pace yourself ...
Ramona

Erik,
I thank you for your clarity and wisdom in telling us just what is going on with eyes on the ground. It makes a huge difference in keeping the what-if’s at bay as much as possible. I saw the burn area on my way home last night and it does look scary so the info is essential for all of us to understand.
Take good care of yourself, Erik... it’s gonna be a long haul...
September 20th: Evacuation Alert lifted
THANK YOU FIRE FIGHTERS
3,117 hectares
Lessons learned—Harrop fire

- Quick decisions paid off
- Need access
  - No access, no resources
- Terrain is highly limiting
- Communicate, communicate
- Pre-existing relationships are essential
  - Phone numbers and email addresses on hand
- Trust was essential for quick, effective tough decisions
  - Wildfire Branch, Forest District, licensee, public
Lessons learned—The Future

- Expect more
- Pre-planning is essential
  - Integrate with forest management
  - Plan access, stream crossings
  - Input from local Fire Zone
- Develop landscape-level fuel breaks
  - Invest in access and fuel breaks
- Adapt logging plans, stocking standards, timber supply
- We can build community consensus
Thank you!

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