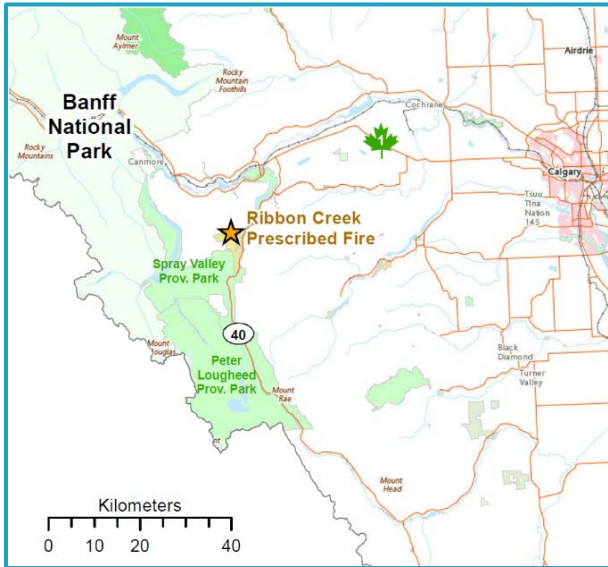


Ribbon Creek Prescribed Fire

Kananaskis Country – 2024



Goals

- Create a fuel break to help protect nearby communities and infrastructure from the threat of wildfire
- Restore and improve wildlife habitat for a variety of species
- Reduce human-wildlife conflict
- Reintroduce natural restoration benefits of wildfire to the area

Benefits of Prescribed Fire

The Ribbon Creek Prescribed Fire will reintroduce wildfire in a controlled manner to help maintain, restore and protect the area's recreation, tourism and ecological values. The last major wildfire in the Evan Thomas area was in 1936. Since then, there has been an accumulation of forest fuels leading to a very high risk of severe wildfire. This prescribed fire will establish a fire break in the area to help protect communities, resources and infrastructure in the immediate vicinity and may help prevent a potential wildfire from moving down the valley. It will also create an area from which firefighters can work should a wildfire occur in the area.

Another benefit is the improvement of habitat for a variety of wildlife species. This project will have almost immediate benefit for bighorn sheep, bears, ungulates, and other species. It will also improve human-wildlife coexistence in the valley by drawing wildlife species away from more populated areas where conflicts may occur.

Location Description

The Ribbon Creek Prescribed Fire is located in the Ribbon Creek drainage in Kananaskis Country, south of the Nakiska Ski Area and west of Kananaskis Village within the Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area and Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park. The project size is approximately 8,000 hectares; however, it is being broken into several subunits. Our operations this year will focus on approximately 260 hectares. The area is comprised of spruce, lodgepole pine and grassland meadows.



Short Term Impacts of the Project

We will strive to minimize disruptions to area users; however, there may be some unavoidable impacts. The area immediately surrounding the prescribed fire will be closed to public access while operations are underway. Durations of closures will be kept to a minimum. This will impact hiking trails within the perimeter and any that are directly adjacent to prescribed fire operations. Roads and highways are expected to remain open. There may be short-term speed reductions.

Smoke Considerations

Smoke is a reality with any fire. Prescribed fires require a specific set of conditions to achieve the goals of the project. Daily operations will always consider atmospheric and smoke venting conditions and every effort is made to minimize smoke impacts.

To reduce the impact on visitors and businesses in the area, project operations will pause on weekends and holidays.



Timeline

Before any main unit ignition will take place, a suitable guard will be established. The guard establishment involves some cutting of vegetation as well as burning the tops of trees along the boundary and approximately 10 to 20 metres into the prescribed fire unit. Ideal conditions for guard establishment are in early to mid-spring when the tops of the trees are snow free, but ample snow remains on the ground. When conditions are suitable, crews will continue the guard work that was begun in 2023.

Main unit ignition requires warmer and drier conditions. It is expected that the main unit operations would be underway in late summer into fall. If appropriate conditions present earlier in the summer, fire managers will take advantage of the opportunity and may begin main unit ignition. These operations would utilize a combination of ground and aerial ignition and will involve more personnel, equipment and aircraft.

More Information

The Ribbon Creek Prescribed Fire supports the goals of the [Evan Thomas 10 year Vegetation Management Strategy](#). This public document can be found on the Open Government portal: open.alberta.ca by searching 'Evan Thomas'.

Please check trail conditions and advisories before you head out at [AlbertaParks.ca](https://albertaparks.ca). Visit the [Kananaskis Visitor Information Centre](#) for more information on other area recreation opportunities.

Kananaskis Information Line: 403-678-0760