

Motorhome fire sparks blaze at Jackass Mountain, B.C.

Last Updated: Monday, June 30, 2008 | 8:27 PM ET [Comments 20](#) [Recommend 13](#)

[CBC News](#)



A motorhome travelling on the Trans-Canada Highway near Jackass Mountain caught fire and sparked a forest fire around 4:30 p.m. PT Sunday. (Submitted by Beth Beeson)

More than 60 firefighters, along with helicopters and air tankers, continued Monday to battle a wildfire at the base of Jackass Mountain in the Fraser Canyon, just south of Lytton, B.C.

The forest fire, first reported at about 4:30 p.m. PT Sunday, was sparked by a motorhome fire on the Trans-Canada Highway, Lytton RCMP said Monday.

Const. Cory Lepine told CBC News the motorhome caught fire after a transmission fluid line ruptured, shooting flames into the air.

An elderly couple from Oregon, who were travelling to Alaska through B.C., escaped unharmed and have since returned to the U.S., Lepine said.

The Trans-Canada Highway was reduced to a single lane of traffic in alternating directions for a three-kilometre stretch because of the fire and fallen hydro lines.

Fire officials said no homes or other buildings are threatened.

The fire covers roughly 20 hectares and is burning westward up the canyon slope through fir and Ponderosa pine.

James Heigh, a provincial forest protection assistant, said the steep terrain makes it difficult for crews to battle the blaze because they have to watch for rolling debris and the threat of dead trees falling over.

Fire officials said the fire will likely be controlled sometime Tuesday, but crews are expected to remain on the scene for at least another week to ensure it gets extinguished.

2nd fire covers smaller area

At the same time, residents of Kelowna, in the Okanagan Valley, about 200 kilometres east of Lytton, watched nervously Monday as a wildfire burned through an area east of Okanagan Mountain Park.

While the fire only covered about three hectares, it is in an area charred by a destructive 2003 fire, where there is still a large amount of dead timber to fuel the blaze.

No homes were threatened by the fire Monday morning, but fire information officer Elise Reidlinger said it is an aggressive ground fire with intense flame.

"We are expecting it to be a stubborn fire because of all the dead fuel and fallen trees," Reidlinger said. "We do have 'dozers working on getting access. We have air tankers en route, three helicopters, and seven B.C. Forest Service personnel, with more on their way."

Fire crews said they suspect the fire was caused by lightning.

With files from the Canadian Press

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[fed up 2008](#) wrote:Posted 2008/06/30

at 11:41 AM ETAs a firefighter with the BC government, I find the last comment a little bit uninformed... and I am not here to wave the liberal flag; rather, explain what we deal with for our jobs every year. Fire season is getting longer by a few days every year, beetle kill is ridiculously dangerous for fire crews to work in, we're seeing thousands of new homes being built in the forest without thought to their fire risk, and we've experienced, what, something like the 8 hottest summers on record in the past ten years or something? Also, the fire suppression that we've been doing for the past hundred years has allowed forest fuels to accumulate which also makes the fires worse... but it is not publicly acceptable for us to let fires burn a little to get rid of some of these fuels. So we are in a very difficult situation, nevermind that it is our lives on the line out there putting those fires out.

The government is not ignoring or downplaying the fire risk. Fire crews have worked through the winter to minimize fire risk near communities and started earlier than normal to prepare and train for the fires. There have also steadily been more and more fire fighters hired almost each season. NO government could ever be totally equipped to handle the type of fires that can occur... taxpayers would scream if thousands and thousands of firefighters were employed year round, especially in seasons when there were no fires. Structural fire departments aren't staffed daily for "the big one" either (e.g. if West Ed was to catch fire), they rely on mutual assistance from other departments, as do we.

I will agree with you though, the big one, its coming. People need to take responsibility for themselves if they live in or near the forest and accept that it is an inevitable part of life in Canada so they should get themselves ready...it helps us focus on our job . Stay safe this summer everyone.

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[Defeated](#) wrote:Posted 2008/06/30

at 10:52 AM ETThe BIG fire is coming and when it starts,it will decimate the interior of B.C.

And it WILL happen...it's not if,but when.

Anyone who has driven through the northern part of the province and the interior KNOWS it is coming.

It is the B.C. government that is ignoring and downplaying it.

No suprise there.

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[Getsomeworkdone](#) wrote:Posted 2008/06/30

at 9:20 PM ET"An elderly couple from Oregon, who were travelling to Alaska through B.C., escaped unharmed and have since returned to the U.S., Lepine said."

I know it sound cruel but I presume the couple are paying for the services of the Canadian fire fighters plus compensation caused by the fire they started. I hope they have enough insurance to cover everything.

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[OilerNut](#) wrote:Posted 2008/07/01

at 12:34 AM ETGetsomeworkdone,

Why would they have to pay? It's not like they burnt down their motorhome for fun.

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[logicalview](#) wrote:Posted 2008/06/30

at 11:25 AM ET"A car fire in the Fraser Canyon sparked a wildfire Sunday just south of Lytton, B.C., 250 kilometres northeast of Vancouver."

Word has it that a Triumph Spitfire was responsible.

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