



# FIRE INFORMATION



BANFF NATIONAL PARK

## Red Deer River Valley Fall 2011

*Fire has played an important role in maintaining the Rocky Mountain landscape for thousands of years. This fall, Parks Canada fire managers in Banff National Park, will continue their efforts to safely restore fire to the landscape through a series of prescribed fire units in the Red Deer River Valley. This work is part of an integrated approach to land management in this area.*

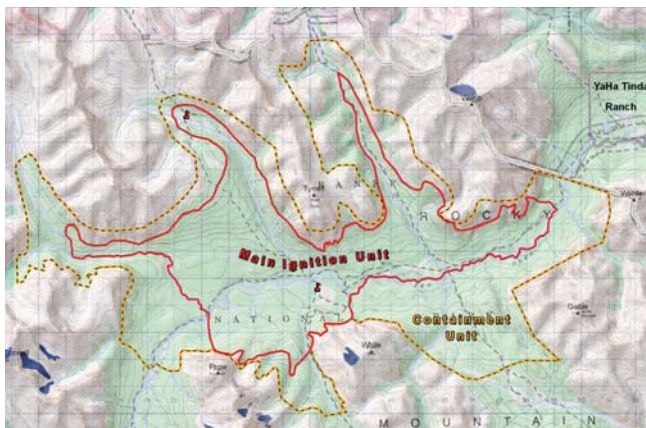
### The Red Deer River Valley

The Red Deer River Valley contains the largest area of flat, lower subalpine forest in the park, outside of the Bow Valley. Prescribed burning in this area will create openings in the forest canopy, recycle nutrients, and renew habitat for wildlife such as big horn sheep and grizzly bears. The burn is vital to restoring vegetation to more historical types when fire naturally swept through the area every 85 to 130 years.



### Where Will the Burn Be?

The burn unit within Banff National Park encompasses 4800 ha. Of the total area within the burn unit, 50-60% is likely to be burned. It is located adjacent to the park's east boundary, west of the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch and 51 km north of Lake Minnewanka.



Red Deer V main unit and containment zone

### Why are we doing this burn?

Reintroducing fire to this valley will serve the following purposes:

- improve wildlife habitat
- restore historic vegetation patterns
- reduce the amount of susceptible mountain pine beetle habitat
- reduce the threat of future wildfires from spreading outside the park.

### When Is It?

Weather permitting, guard preparation and burning will commence on August 29th. Guards are prepared and burned prior to igniting the main unit to contain the fire. Burning of the main unit will follow, as conditions allow.



## How This Might Affect YOU?

Safety is Parks Canada's top priority. To ensure the safety of people and property, some trails and areas within the Red Deer River Valley will be closed this fall. An area closure and temporary trail closures will be implemented on August 29th 2011.

### Temporary Trail closures include:

- Red Deer River (East Boundary to McConnell Creek)
- Divide Creek/Pass
- Tyrell Creek
- Elkhorn Summit
- Snowcreek Summit
- McConnell Creek
- Skeleton Lake

For current information on closures please see the Important Bulletins section of the Banff National Park website ([www.pc.gc.ca/banff](http://www.pc.gc.ca/banff)). Area closures will be lifted as soon as it is safe to do so.

## What about smoke?

Large columns of smoke may be visible during burning operations and light smoke may settle into nearby valleys overnight.

Fire managers make every effort to minimize smoke by choosing the best wind and atmospheric conditions for burning.

High-level smoke may extend eastward towards the Sundre area. Although less likely, smoke may also be blown into the Bow Valley.

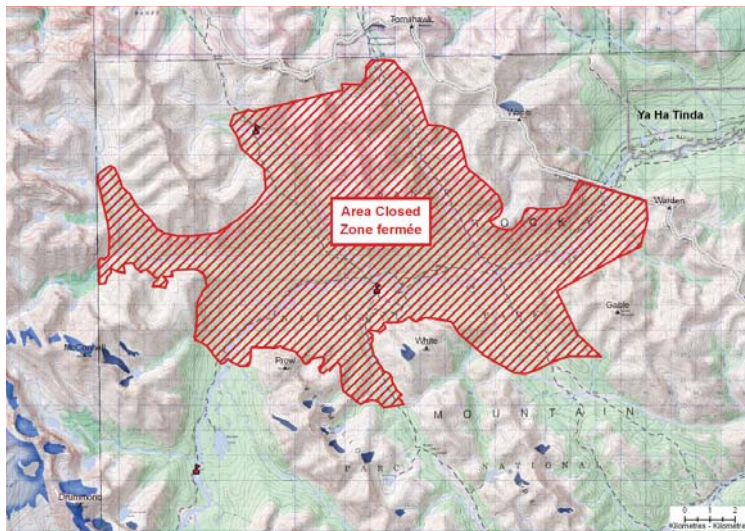
***If you or a member of your family has a smoke sensitivity and would like to receive advance notice of burning days, please contact Dave Verhulst, Fire Communications Officer, 403-762-1447 or [dave.verhulst@pc.gc.ca](mailto:dave.verhulst@pc.gc.ca), to be put on Parks Canada's Smoke Notification List***



*moving supplies for the Red Deer River Prescribed Fire, 2005*

## Managing Fire

Fire is primarily contained by natural barriers such as rocky ridges, alpine tundra, areas of wetter forest fuels, and by recent burns. To keep fire from spreading outside desired areas, fire guards have been created over the past few years.



*area that will be closed during burning operations (starting Aug. 29th)*

Firefighters and helicopters will be on site to monitor all burning. Additional resources will be on standby to assist with control as required.

A major benefit of this project is the creation of breaks in forest fuels that provide wildfire protection to neighbouring lands.

## More Information:

**Dave Verhulst, Fire Communications Officer (403) 762-1447 [dave.verhulst@pc.gc.ca](mailto:dave.verhulst@pc.gc.ca)**