



For Immediate Release

May 4, 2023-ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ Prescribed Fire April 28-29th, 2023

Ktunaxa have been using fire (ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ) as a land management tool within ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ Ktunaxa since time immemorial. Intentional fire was used for many applications- to enhance berry production, clear travel routes, to provide pasture for cattle and horses, influence the movement of elk herds and to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. However, a century of fire exclusion has altered the fire regime within the Rocky Mountain Trench of ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ Ktunaxa.

The prescribed fire conducted on April 28-29, 2023 on ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ lands was conducted for ecosystem enhancement purposes- to improve biodiversity while reducing wildfire risk. The 1240 hectare prescribed fire was the culmination of a five-year project that considered archaeology and culturally sensitive areas, species at risk, wildlife tree retention, invasive plant management, wildlife habitat and fire effects monitoring.

ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑭ, with the support of many partners including the BC Wildfire Service, City of Cranbrook, City of Kimberley and numerous contractors, were able to successfully implement the prescribed fire, achieving the objectives as outlined in the Prescribed Fire Burn Plan.

Implementation of a prescribed fire requires specific weather and fuel moisture conditions to achieve the desired ecosystem restoration outcomes. The application of prescribed fire under these rigorous conditions ensures success from both a public safety and ecological perspective. Ours, as well as other concurrent prescribed fires in the Rocky Mountain Trench contributed to the volume of smoke observed.

The intentional use of fire now will reduce the risks posed from a large wildfire in this area when conditions are dryer and less easily controlled.

To learn more about cultural and prescribed fire please visit: <https://prescribedfire.ca/>

If you have further enquires please contact:

Michelle Shortridge

Information Officer

778-761-1040

mshortridge@aqam.net