

## APPENDIX 3

# Stanley Park Fire Preparedness Plan for 2007 Summary

### Background

The Stanley Park windstorm on December 15, 2006 resulted in more than 10,000 trees falling and caused extensive damage to approximately 42 hectares of forest. Less severe damage occurred over an additional 38 hectares of forest. The Restoration Plan for the park includes a series of recommendations that address a variety of issues, including the need to reduce fire risk within the park.

The most probable fire event in the Park would be associated with an accidental ignition by a Park visitor. Smoking, illegal campfires and/or a car fire, for example, all have the potential to provide an ignition point for a significant fire event within the park. These concerns are specific to the 2007 fire season (April 1 to October 31) while the large accumulations of woody debris in various areas of the park remain during the fire season. The fire risk must be managed.

### Purpose of the Plan

The objective of this Plan is to detail, for the City of Vancouver (including the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and Vancouver Fire Rescue Services), Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR), personnel, procedures used and equipment available for prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires within Stanley Park. The Fire Preparedness Plan is in effect for the fire season, from April 1 to October 31 each year, or as otherwise determined by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and will be subject to annual or periodic updates to supersede the previous year's Plan. This Plan will also form part of the Emergency Preparedness Plan formulated by the City of Vancouver.

### Contents of the Plan

- Emergency phone list
- Stanley Park supervisor phone list
- Radio frequencies
- Forest fire prevention preparedness
- Detection
- Special precautions, restrictions and closures
- Use of sprinklers in high risk areas
- Suppression
- Emergency Evacuation (to be determined)
- Air Operations (to be determined)
- Stakeholder Notification

### Fire Danger Rating and Operational Constraints

The Canadian Forest Fire Weather Index System is used to determine an index classification which in turn governs operational activities, patrols, strategies, and closures. Through collection of data related to humidity, temperature, wind, etc. provided from a remote temporary weather station installed at HMCS Discovery in Stanley Park, the B.C. Forest Services, located in Parksville, can calculate fire hazard ratings that are sent each day to Park Board staff to help prevent and prepare for fire risks.

The B.C. Wildfire Act outlines operational requirements related to different levels of fire danger which have been modified to better reflect wildfire probability and suppression capability within Stanley Park. (for example, presence of Rangers, hydrants, nearby firehalls, etc.) The Wildfire Act and the Wildfire Regulation provide useful fire prevention and fire control measures that are considered best practices which guide activities in the park such as debris piling, silviculture treatments, timber removal and road construction.

Other high risk activities might include such things as use of any fire or spark-producing tools, portable wood chipping, operating vehicles with metal tracks or chains.

Clear guidelines for restrictions on High Risk Activities are provided for Park Board staff to safely manage their work and restoration operations in times of extreme fire risk. For example, if the fire danger class reaches “extreme,” certain risk related activities, such as the use of chain saws, could be restricted. These guidelines will apply during the fire season and are determined by daily review of the current fire weather and related indices.

### **Fire Detection**

Detection of fires is one of the most effective methods of limiting fire risk and catching small fires before they become large. Given the elevated risk of the blowdown areas, it is recommended that once the Fire Danger Class reaches IV a comprehensive set of evening and night time patrols be implemented. Patrols will be focused on blowdown areas where the frequency of patrols will be determined by: 1) fire danger; 2) likelihood of illegal camping and fires; and, 3) amount of public use. The frequency of daytime patrols will be more limited compared with night time patrols. Night time is considered the most probable time for a human ignition to go undetected. Patrols would be carried out by Park staff and their contractors, and the Vancouver Police Department.

### **Other Special Precautions, Restrictions and Closures**

If Vancouver experiences an extended period of drought and fire danger becomes extreme, it may be necessary to take special precautions and/or close portions of the park. All Park Board vehicles in the park are equipped with a shovel, Pulaski, and back pack fire pumps for initial attack of any identified fire starts, and staff have received basic fire suppression training.

Other mitigation measures include watering down debris accumulations in high use areas, installation of sprinklers and or other suppression measures as determined by the Director of Stanley District. It is recommended that a threshold level of drought code (DC) of 600, a component of the Canadian Fire Danger Rating System, be used to establish specific area closures as determined by the Directory of Stanley Park District. While any closure would be considered undesirable, it may be necessary given the amount of fuel, the number of visitors, and protection of human safety and park infrastructure.

### **Fire Prevention Is Everyone’s Responsibility**

- Fire prevention and safety is everyone’s responsibility
- Currently the Park Board and VFRS are asking that visitors refrain from smoking in the park
- Respect signage and regulations around smoking, campfires and BBQs
- Direct fire concerns and questions to park staff
- Fire risks are heightened significantly in blowdown areas
- Report all fires 911—description of the fire’s location

### **Fire Suppression**

During times of high and extreme fire danger (DGR IV and V) Vancouver Fire and Rescue will respond to any fires. They are the incident commanders and will call in assistance from the GVRD initial attack crew and/or air support from MOFR. The MOFR Coastal Fire Center will be notified immediately of any dispatch of GVRD ground crews and will determine additional resource requirements based on current conditions.

Where the assessed fire behaviour, as determined by the GVRD initial attack crew, is greater than rank 3, air tanker support would be requested immediately.

### **Stakeholder Notification**

If fire risk reaches predetermined thresholds this may require use restrictions and/or closure of some portions of the park. Additionally, a fire in the park may require evacuation, access closures and control of the Park and local air space. All of these actions have the potential to negatively impact local businesses and stakeholders.

It is important that stakeholders recognize that the situation is considered higher risk than historic conditions and that exceptional measures may be required to manage the risk if the fire danger reaches extreme (DGR V).