

# Status Update – Mount Underwood Wildfire and Franklin River Road closure



**Date:** October 1, 2025

## Background

On August 11, 2025, a wildfire ignited on Mount Underwood near China Creek Marina. The fire burned rapidly upslope, causing considerable damage. As a result of the fire Franklin River Road (Bamfield Main Road) was closed. Although the wildfire is still burning, it is not projected to spread beyond the current perimeter. It is classified as **Under Control** and remains at 3,518 hectares.

The incident command team handed operations over to the Coastal Fire Centre.

A 1.5-kilometer section of the Bamfield Main Road remains closed at least until the end of October because of slope instability related to damage from the fire.

## Updates

### Mount Underwood Wildfire: No update

- BCWS continues to work in this area, with 37 crew and five pieces of heavy equipment. They remain focused on patrols and mop up efforts as some areas continue to smoulder and burn.
- The crew is asking people travelling to China Creek, by Franklin River Road, to drive with caution as they are working along the roadway.

### Franklin River Road closure:

- Recently, there has been public commentary suggesting that industry vehicles are being permitted to travel through the Franklin River Road (Bamfield Main Road) closure, while residents are denied the same access, forcing them to take an alternate route that adds several hours to their travel for essential services in Port Alberni, such as family doctor visits. It is important that this matter be clarified.
  - The road permit area currently managed by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) applies *only to a 1.5 km section of Bamfield Main Road*, specifically between the 8.5 km and 10 km road markers. Outside of this section, permitting requirements may fall under other jurisdictions, including Mosaic, as the private landowner in those areas. Those areas and the related road closures are not covered under the ACRD's Evacuation Order and therefore, the ACRD does not issue permits for them.
  - Social media conversations, while often well-intentioned, can easily become misleading if all the facts are not shared. This reinforces the need for clear communication and accurate information as we navigate these challenging road access issues together.
  - Ditidaht First Nation has issued a media release on October 1 to provide clarification on access to Bamfield Main Road and jurisdictional complexity.
- A 1.5-kilometre stretch of Franklin River Road (Bamfield Main Road), between kilometre 8 and kilometre 9.5, remains closed due to unstable slopes affected by fire.

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- The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) aim to have the Bamfield Main Road fully open by the end of October 2025: [Work underway to re-open Bamfield Main Road by end of October](#)
- The MOTT is working in conjunction with Mosaic and other agencies to manage the road closure of portions of Bamfield Main and Hawthorne Main.
- MOTT has ordered the closure gates, and they are expected to arrive and be installed in the coming weeks.
- MOTT will be adding a weather station in the area to help inform future closures based on weather conditions.

## **Geotechnical assessment:**

- As of September 30, there has been no significant debris falling in the closure area as a result of the rain in recent days.
- A geotechnical assessment has been completed to identify hazard risks.
- Based on these findings, MOTT is developing an operating guideline, like the approach at Cameron Lake, that will establish rain and wind thresholds for increased patrols and potential pre-emptive closures.
- Assessments and removal of dangerous trees are ongoing, and MOTT is co-ordinating tree falling and related utility work with Telus and BC Hydro.

## **Road agreement:** No update

- MOTT continues to lead efforts to safely re-open Bamfield Main Road, in co-operation with Mosaic Forest Management. This includes plans for managing debris fall as we enter the winter months.

## **Youbou route:**

- Ditidaht First Nation issued a media release today, October 1, that calls upon the Province of British Columbia to take immediate and decisive action to designate and maintain the Alternate Route for the safety, well-being, and resiliency of all who live, work, and travel within the Alberni Valley and West Coast communities.
- Ditidaht is working with MOTT on the development and placement of signage.
- Ditidaht continues to maintain the road with support from MOTT.
- This is still the only available alternate route.

## **Emergency Operations Centre:** No update

- The ACRD continues to operate an Emergency Operations Centre under a State of Local Emergency with an evacuation order in place for KM7 to KM10.
- The Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth (JEG) is leading a Business Recovery Working Group to understand the economic impacts, share resources, identify ongoing needs, and develop a strategy to support local businesses.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) Recovery Unit is leading a Community Recovery Working Group to help support and address ongoing health, wellness and

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residential needs. A Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) has been completed to reflect these concerns.

- The ACRD EOC continues to participate in a Franklin River Road Working Group, which collaborates on concerns and work related to road safety and restoration.
- Minutes from the community meeting in Bamfield on Monday, September 15 are available here: [www.acrd.bc.ca/mount-underwood-wildfire](http://www.acrd.bc.ca/mount-underwood-wildfire).
- Island Health has developed the Bamfield and Region Health Supports document. It can be found here: [www.acrd.bc.ca/mount-underwood-wildfire](http://www.acrd.bc.ca/mount-underwood-wildfire).

## Related Links

[2025 Mount Underwood Wildfire](#)

[Work underway to re-open Bamfield Main Road by end of October](#)

[MOTT takes the lead on Bamfield Main](#)

[ACRD updated Evacuation Alert and Order](#)

[South Island Natural Resource District road safety information - Province of British Columbia](#)

[South Island Natural Resource District's Road Safety page](#)

**Date of Next Update:** October 3, 2025