

More western Canada wildfire evacuees to be allowed back home

August 24 2023



Canadian firefighters have gained an upper hand against mountainside wildfires blazing near Kelowna and West Kelowna, allowing some evacuees to return home.

More wildfire evacuees in western Canada will be allowed on

Wednesday to trickle back home, after rain and cool temperatures helped firefighters beat back blazes, officials said.

Across the country, more than 15 million hectares (37 million acres) have burned this season—an area larger than Greece and more than twice the size of the last record of 7.3 million hectares.

Inhabitants of the lakeside cities of Kelowna and West Kelowna, in British Columbia, got a first glimpse of the devastation on nearby mountains, as clouds and [wildfire](#) smoke cleared.

Some 200 homes have been destroyed or damaged in the Kelowna and West Kelowna areas, but no deaths have been reported.

"It does look pretty shocking," West Kelowna fire chief Jason Brolund told a briefing. But, "on the ground, things are looking good."

About 25,000 people remain on evacuation orders throughout British Columbia, down from 30,000 Sunday.

Brolund said authorities were "making progress" in putting out the fires and getting people back into their homes.

"There will be additional evacuation orders which will be rescinded today," he said. "They will come in small pieces."

British Columbia Premier David Eby described to public broadcaster CBC fires that moved at breakneck speed—including one that advanced 20 kilometers (12 miles) in just 12 hours.

"Our wildfire service also captured (images of) a fire tornado," he said after touring the devastation.

"Even the most experienced (firefighters) have been surprised by this activity," he said.

As of Wednesday, 14 out of more than 360 wildfires burning in British Columbia continued to threaten [local communities](#), he added.

In the far north, crews held back a [fire](#) on the outskirts of Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories whose more than 20,000 inhabitants were ordered out last week.

But flare-ups continue to threaten several remote towns and villages. Rain has helped, but the amount of precipitation has not been enough to alleviate extremely dry conditions.

"We're relieved to hear that fires may be coming under control and the [critical infrastructure](#) in the Northwest Territories remains intact," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.

King Charles, who with his wife Camilla visited the Northwest Territories last year, expressed concern, saying in a statement: "We can only begin to imagine the heartbreak in those communities as they face this disastrous situation."

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Citation: More western Canada wildfire evacuees to be allowed back home (2023, August 24) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-08-western-canada-wildfire-evacuees-home.html>

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