



FOREST FIRE UPDATE

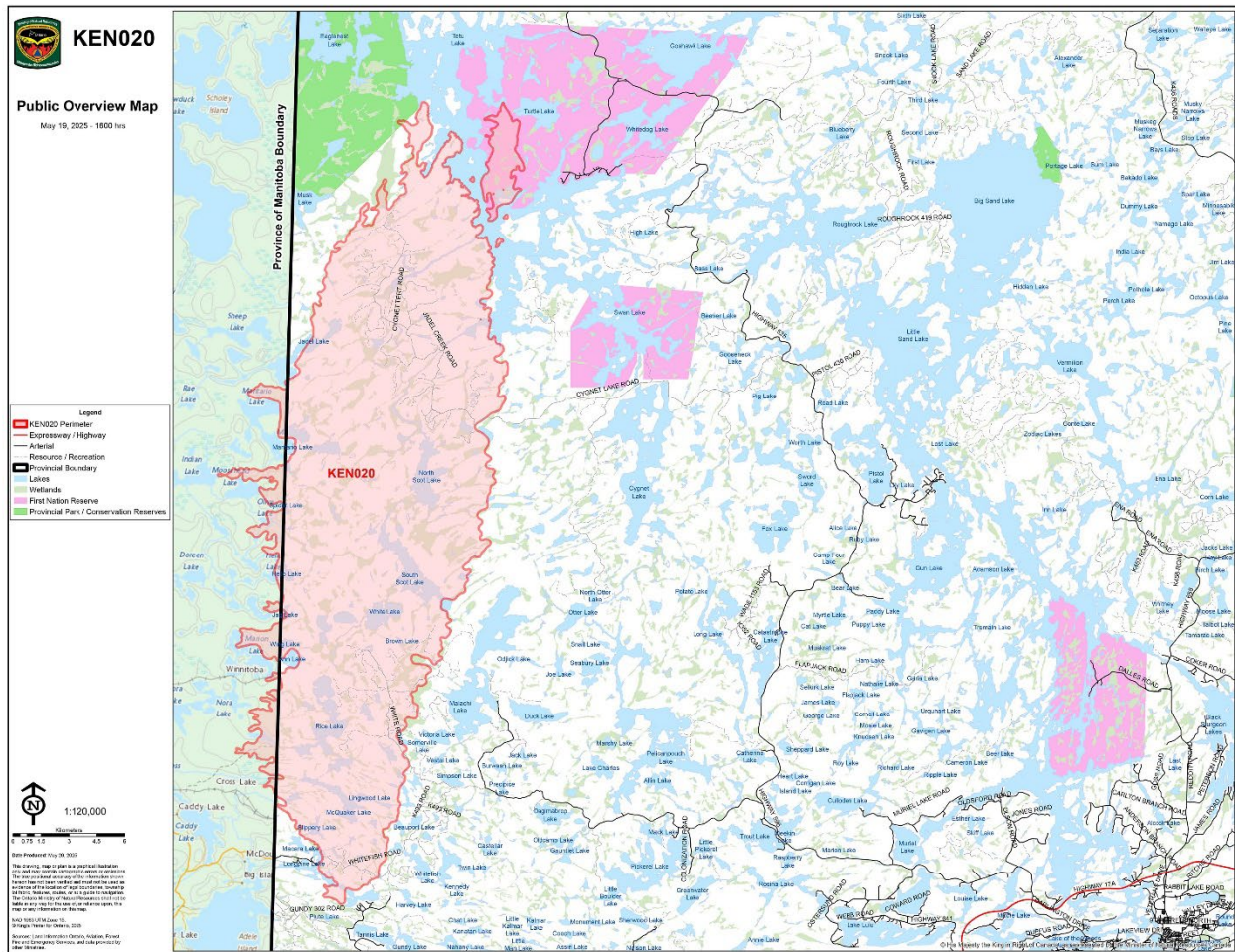
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER FOR **MAY 22, 2025** **KENORA 020/KENORA 014**



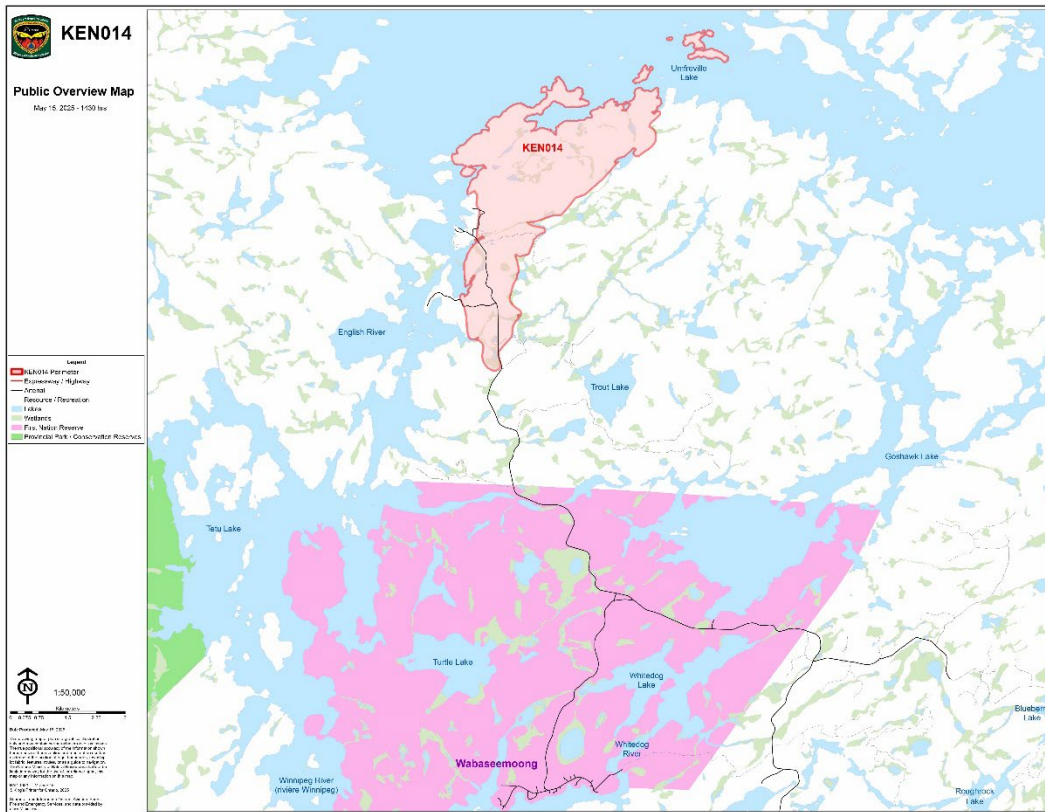
Incoming crews are briefed on the fire situation at the Minaki Incident Command Post, May 17.

Current Fire Situation - Kenora 20

- Another day of good work and progress made on the Kenora 20 fire by over 150 firefighters and 16 helicopters across three divisions of the 31,276 hectare fire.
- The fire's status remains not under control.
- A high-level infrared scan (HLIR) conducted overnight indicates there is significant heat present across the fire area. Over the course of the day, fire operations staff set out to check the scan results against their own ground-level observations.
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- Ongoing HLR scans over the next several days will identify hot spot targets for crews and helicopters to locate and extinguish.
- With no rain in the forecast and gradually building fire behaviour, fire fighters taking advantage of east winds to suppress the fire in priority areas:
 - Firefighters are establishing hoselines and working northwards from Ingolf and maintaining structural protection around the Longpine Lake and Macara Lake area.
 - Firefighters in the Malachi Lake area are establishing hoseline along the eastern flank of Kenora 20 and cutting helipads for future crew placements.
 - The fire's northern division at Wabaseemoong continued to establish hoseline moving south along the perimeter of the fire and maintain structural protection which has been completed in the community.



Kenora 14

- Crews are making significant progress establishing hoseline on the eastern perimeter of the Kenora 14 fire, located approximately 12 kilometres north of Wabaseemoong.
- A high level infrared scan was conducted on Kenora 14, indicating significantly lower concentration of hot spots than neighbouring Kenora 20.
- Kenora 14 is sized at 1,607 hectares.

Information Contacts

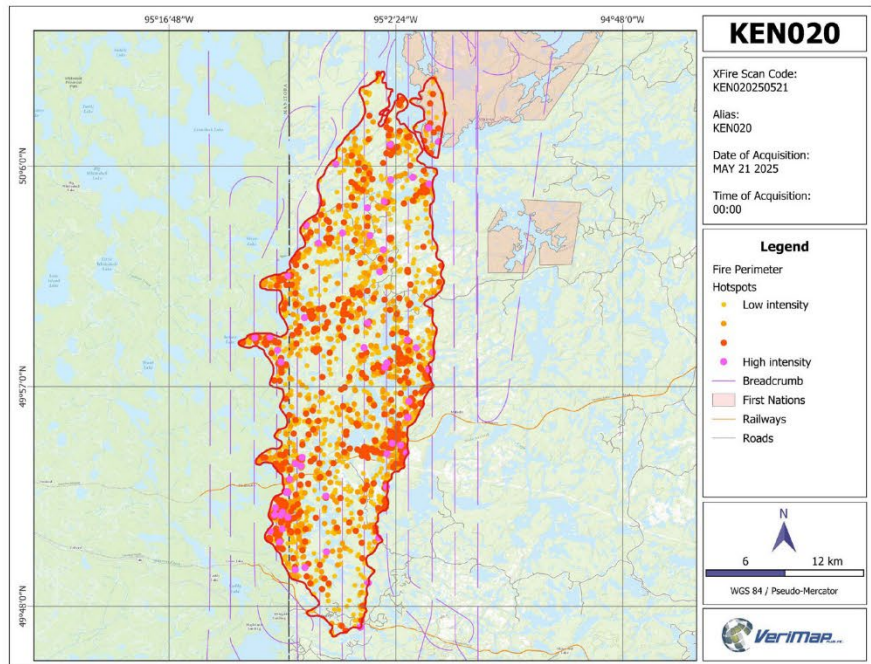
AFFES Information Officer (Fire updates, media inquiries) Horan Incident Management Team
Chris Marchand - affes.inc1-info@ontario.ca / 807-323-1851

AFFES Community Liaison Officer (Wabaseemoong, area Indigenous communities)
Maggie Kavanaugh - Maggie.Kavanaugh@ontario.ca / 807-889-0942

Kenora District IMT – Information Officer (road closures, travel restrictions)

Michelle Riley - Michelle.Riley@ontario.ca / 807-747-0341

IR Scan results show hot spots across Kenora 20 fire area



A high level infra-red (HLIR) scanning flight was conducted over Kenora 20 and Kenora 14 overnight on May 21, 2025 with the aim of detecting remaining heat and hot spots on the fire.

The results of the scan indicate there is heat present across the fire area as well as the fire's northeast corner near Wabaseemoong.

Over the course of the day, fire operations staff set out to check the scan results against their own ground-level observations.

Above image shows results of a overnight high-level infra-red scan of the Kenora 20 fire, May 21.

Several factors suggest that significantly more fire suppression is required on Kenora 20 prior to any decision to lift the evacuation order and travel restrictions. These are:

- Gradually escalating fire behaviour and wildland fire hazard due to increasing temperatures, low relative humidity and moderate winds from the east.
- Scan results indicate the presence of unextinguished hot spots on the 'jump fire' area

nearest the community.

- The potential for worsening air quality as a result of wildland fire smoke from local fires as well as the large Manitoba fire EA061 (101,689) located to the northwest of the community as winds come variable toward the weekend.

- Low rainfall totals throughout the fire's lifespan (9.4 mm total on May 16-17) in addition to lack of rainfall in the forecast for the next week.

Background information on High-Level Infrared Scanning

HLIR scanning refers to the use of remote sensing / thermal imaging technology. Typically, the camera systems are mounted on aircraft and more recently, Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), also known as drones.

From a wildland fire perspective, thermal imaging technology, commonly referred to as Infrared or IR, is primarily used to detect heat signatures from wildfires, hot spots, and residual burning. It is especially useful during wildland fire operations to conduct:

- Hotspot mapping (detection of smouldering areas not visible to the naked eye)
- Supporting fire crew safety and strategic planning



Waterbombers – one tool in the wildland fire toolbox

Ontario's 'Yellowbird' fleet of nine CL-415 Canadair Air Tankers are an iconic symbol of wildland fire management and Canadian ingenuity at work in the boreal forest. The amphibious aircraft, designed to scoop up over 6,000 litres (8 tons) of water in 12 seconds as it skims the surface of a waterway and drop that water onto a wildland fire, is an important tool for fire managers.

But are water bombers used to extinguish fires? The answer might surprise most people.

The aircraft is used primarily in situations where high-intensity fire behaviour challenges ground-based attempts to control it, to safely approach it, or when time is an important factor. In such cases a CL-415 can be used to reduce fire intensity and slow its movement allowing ground crews to approach the area and fully extinguish the fire.



The CL-415 fills its water tanks in a matter of seconds by extending these small ports on the bottom of the plane while skimming across the water.

In Ontario, waterbombers commonly work as a 'package' of two CL-415s, coordinated by an Air Attack Officer in a smaller, more agile 'birddog' aircraft. The Air Attack Officer scouts the fire ahead of the waterbombers, communicates with staff on the ground and coordinates air traffic with other aircraft working in the fire area.

If waterbombers are working around you, boaters can help by staying close to shore, leaving lots of space for the planes to scoop. The presence of a drone in the air puts important air attack missions at risk as the waterbombers will be required to leave the area. It is illegal to fly a drone within 9 kilometres of a forest fire.

WABASEEMOONG MEMBERS

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Wabaseemoong Leadership meets with MNR-AFFES and OPP twice a day for situational updates for Kenora 20 and Kenora 14. Wabaseemoong and MNR-AFFES have been responsive to questions from community members.

Below are frequently asked questions and answers.

Q: Is road access still closed to community members?

A: Evacuation Order(s) and travel restriction(s) through an Implementation Order remain in effect. There is no future timeline for when the restrictions will be lifted as there continues to be wildland fire response efforts in the area.

Chief Scott has indicated he remains committed to the safety of his community members and urges the community to follow the restrictions in place.

“For your safety and the safety of our response teams, including Wabaseemong’s Response team, please do not return to the community until MNR-AFFES has lifted the evacuation order and the travel restriction and Wabaseemoong Leadership has indicated it is safe to return to the community from our evacuation host site”.

Q: Can I go to the community to retrieve some belongings?

A: MNR-AFFES has deployed a structural protection team to set up sprinklers and pumping units to protect infrastructure and homes from the fire. Photos of the protection efforts have been provided to Wabaseemong leadership and leadership is satisfied with the protection of homes and infrastructure. The sprinkler lines will be fully operational on May 19, 2025 and the structural protection team will then move to support the on the ground fire crews on the fire line.

Q: Did the cold damp weather help with fire suppression efforts over the weekend?

A: Yes, the cold damp May long weather helped by drastically lowering the fire's intensity, which afforded more time for firefighters to arrive from British Columbia and other parts of Ontario over the weekend. However, rain totals were only enough to temporarily reduce fire behaviour. Dry, warm weather throughout the week will result in rebounding fire intensity as forest fuels continue to dry out.

The fire is still burning, in a less active state, and can still pose a threat as warm, dry and windy weather returns. With more firefighting resources now in place, MNR-AFFES have an opportunity to make progress on preventing the fire's edges from flaring up and posing a direct threat to the community.

Q: When can community members go back to the community?

A: There is no timeline for return to the community, MNR-AFFES currently has over 200+ people on the ground working towards getting the fire 'under control'.

With the warmer weather we will also be completing infrared scanning of Kenora 20 and Kenora 14 for hot spots to be actioned by bucketing helicopters and ground crews with pumps and hose.

MNR-AFFES and Chief Scott do not want to send members back to the community just to be evacuated again due to a change in fire situation. The safety of Wabaseemoong is at the forefront of all decisions and recommendations made by Chief Scott and MNR-AFFES.

Q: Why are some people allowed back into the area?

A: Travel permits are being applied for and authorized by Kenora District MNR Office.

The travel permits allow for certain individuals to enter the community to deliver necessary items (food etc.) to MNR-AFFES staff and to the brave Wabaseemoong response team in the community working towards fire suppression, Hydro One work, and ensuring key infrastructure is maintained within the First Nation.

Travel permits/permissions help ensure that MNR-AFFES and Chief Scott is aware of who is in the area. Water bombers and helicopters are actively engaged in fire suppression efforts to maintain the fire perimeter. The presence of unauthorized

individuals or drones is the area poses a significant safety risk and will result in the suspension of suppression activities until it is safe to resume operations and further delays the lifting of evacuation orders and travel restrictions.

Q: Are our dogs and cats okay?

A: Emergency Management Ontario and the Wabaseemoong Emergency Management team have organized for pet food to be brought to the community by MNR-AFFES.

Wabaseemoong Emergency Management team remains in contact with surrounding pet rescue networks to support fostering of dogs and cats as well as reuniting pets with their families who are able to accept them.

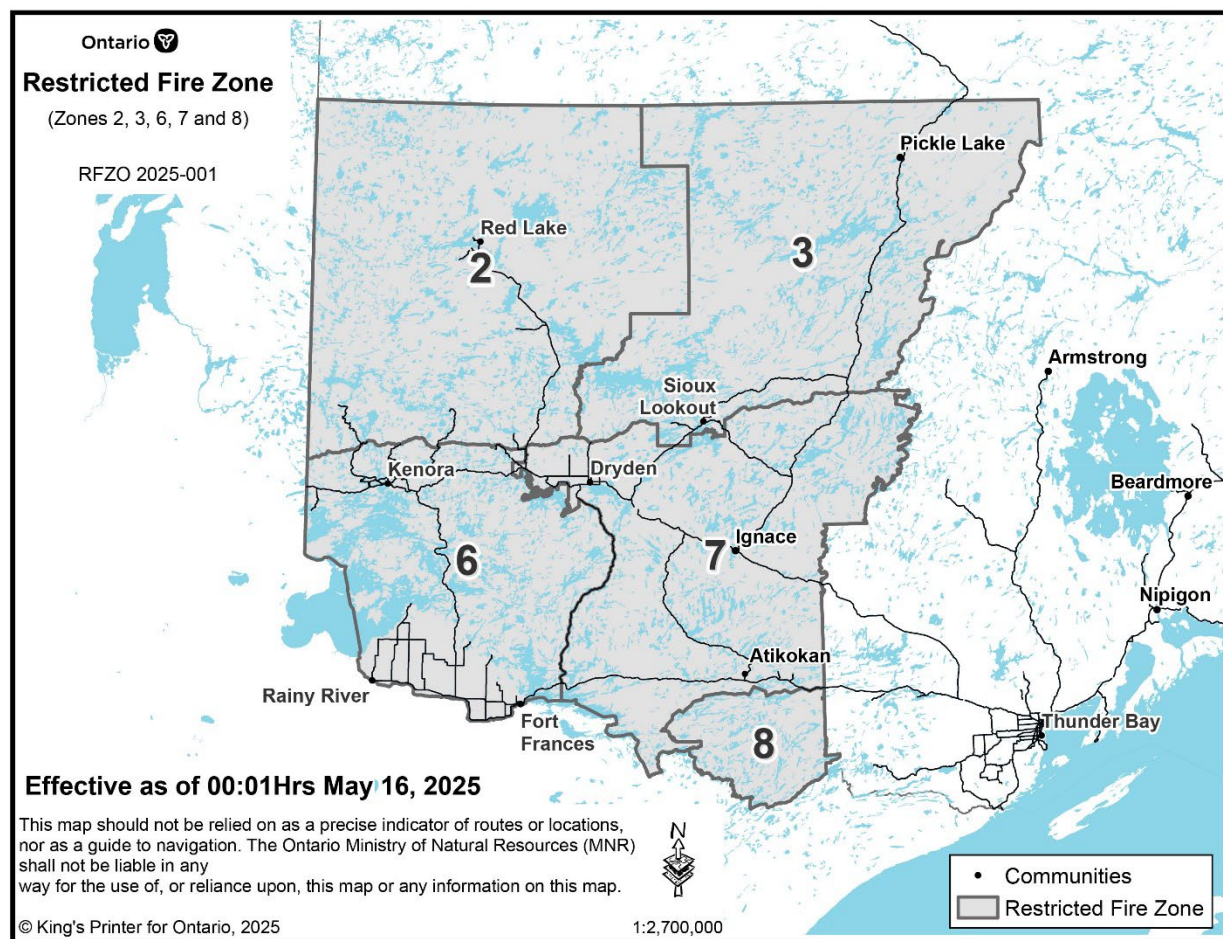
Q: Is there someone I can contact at MNR-AFFES for updates?

A: Yes, the MNR-AFFES is able to deploy a staff member to fill the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) function for active fires. The Kenora Fire Management Supervisor has Maggie Kavanaugh filling that function and she is available daily from 7am-9pm (Maggie's role within MNR-AFFES is Indigenous Relations and Partnerships Team Lead). She is available to respond to questions from community members as well.

The CLO serves as the on-site or remote representative of the MNR-AFFES during emergencies, acting as a vital link between Indigenous communities and the MNR-AFFES Incident Management Team. The CLO supports with monitoring Indigenous community needs, concerns and response efforts, ensuring effective communication and coordination. The CLO may also collaborate with other Ministries as well to receive information that the Indigenous community may require and work alongside other agencies as well such as Emergency Management Ontario (EMO), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and other organizations. Additionally, the CLO provides logistical updates related to wildland fire updates to Indigenous communities.

Maggie can be reached at Maggie.kavanaugh@ontario.ca, 807-889-0942 cell/text. You may also contact the Public Information Officer attached to the Incident Management Team that is currently assigned to manage the fire response. Call or email to be added to the distribution list for daily Kenora 2/Kenora 14 Fire Updates. Chris Marchand may be reached at affes.inc1-info@ontario.ca, 807-323-1851.

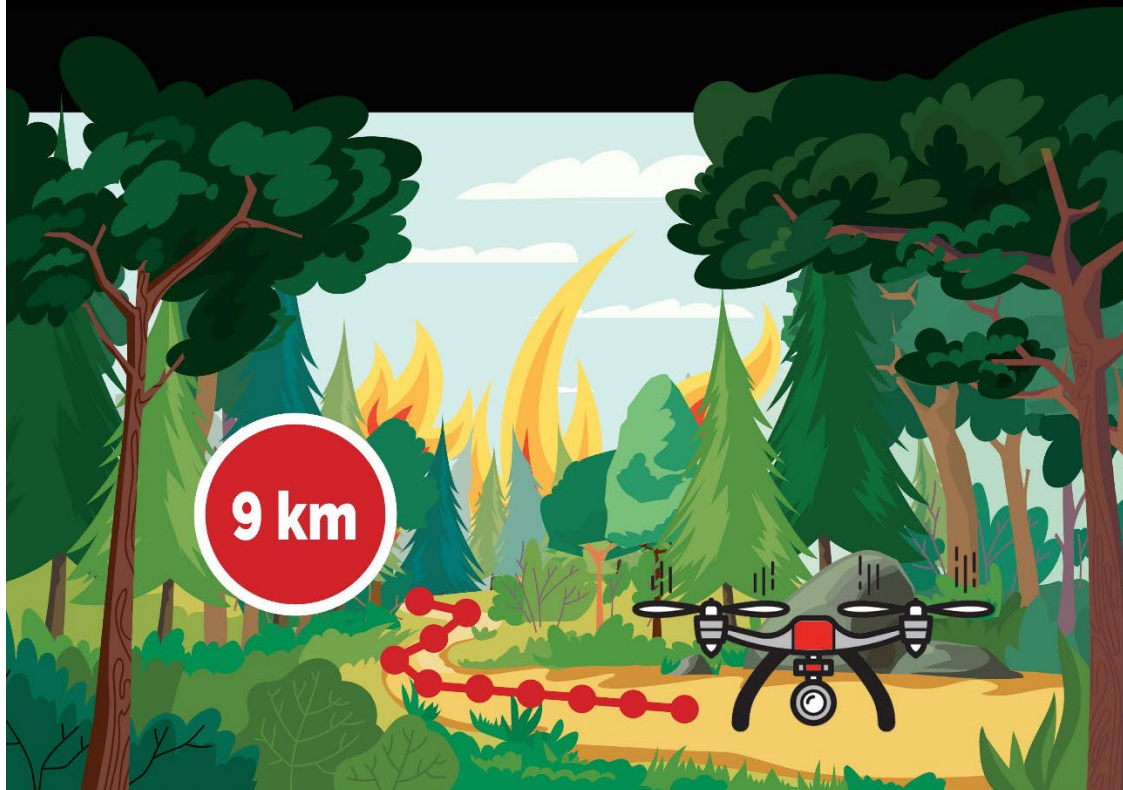
Restricted Fire Zone in effect



Due to the extreme forest fire hazard, the Ministry of Natural Resources will be declaring a Restricted Fire Zone effective Friday, May 16 at 12:01 am local time for a portion of the Northwest Region (zones 2, 3, 6, 7, 8). The area impacted will be from the Southwest corner of the USA, Manitoba and Ontario border, North along the Manitoba border to West of the midway point of Weeskayjahk Ohtahzhoganeeng Provincial Park, East to North of Wabakimi Provincial Park, South along the Western border of Wabakimi Provincial Park to the Eastern border of Quetico Provincial Park until the USA border, then back West along the USA/Canada border to the Manitoba Border.

No open air burning, including campfires, is permitted within the boundaries of a Restricted Fire Zone. Portable gas or propane stoves may be used for cooking and warmth BUT must be handled with extreme caution. All burning permits are suspended. [Learn more about the fire restrictions here.](#)

FOREST FIRES ARE DRONE FREE ZONES



DO NOT fly drones within 9 kilometres of a forest fire area.

You can put the safety and lives of pilots, firefighters and emergency workers at risk. It's dangerous and illegal. Stay clear of forest fires!

See all active Ontario forest fires at ontario.ca/forestfire, or learn more about us at ontario.ca/AFFES.

Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Government of Ontario



ontario.ca/AFFES



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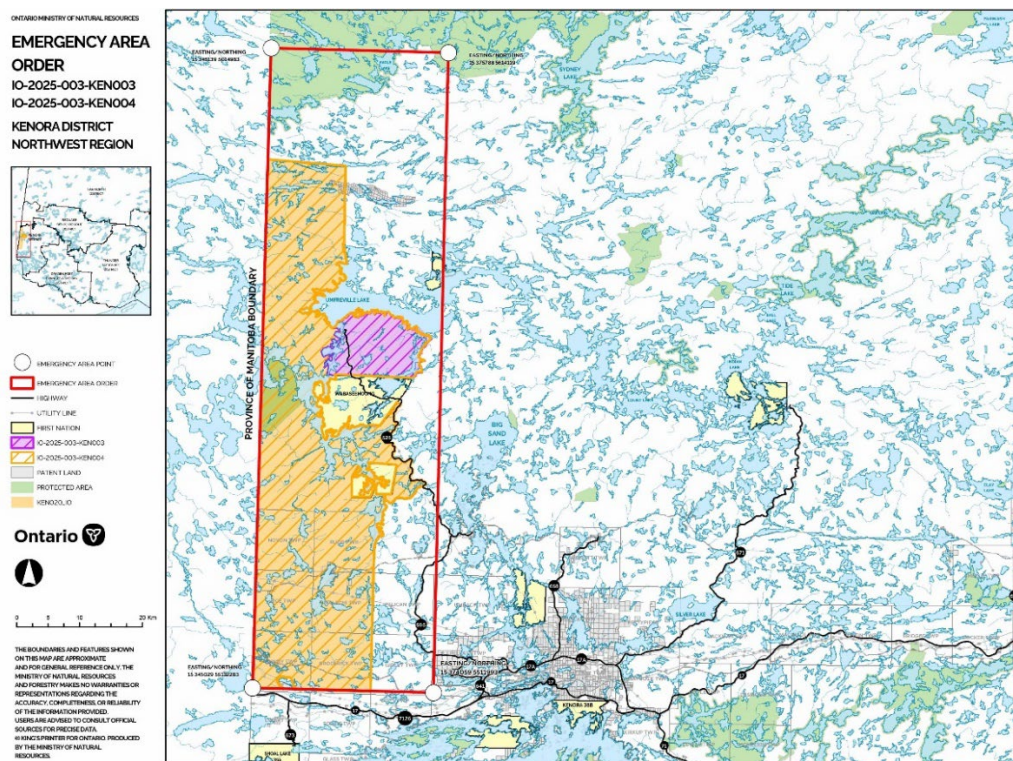
Weather outlook – May 21-28



Regional weather for May 22

Cloudy with showers (trace to 5mm) in the eastern areas, while sunny and dry in the west. Light to moderate north or northeasterly winds will prevail, at 15 to 20km/h, gusting to 30 to 40km/h. RH will be 50-60% or higher in the east, and 15% to 30% in the west. Temperatures will range from mid single digits in the east to the mid teens in the west.

Travel restrictions in fire areas



Evacuation Order of area

- 1. All persons must immediately evacuate the area indicated on the hatched section of the map unless authorized by a travel permit issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources.**
- 2. All persons are prohibited from entering the area indicated on the attached map unless authorized by a travel permit issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources.**

KEN020

Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services has been advised that as recommended by the Ministry of Natural resources' Kenora District, an Implementation Order is now in effect for the purposes of public safety and/or effectual fire suppression, for areas near Kenora 20 Under the Emergency Area Order EAO 2025-03 declared on May 13, 2025.

- All travel and use of roads, including Gundy Road north of Tannis Lake, Pickerel Lake Road beyond the Pelicanpouch access point at km 9, and Cygnet Lake Road, is prohibited unless authorized by a travel permit.**
- All use of lakes and waterways within the Area including the Winnipeg River below Whitedog Falls (UTM 15U 366399 5553102), Eaglenest Lake, Tetu Lake, Cygnet Lake, Rice Lake, Malachi Lake, Otter Lake, Macara lake, Longpine Lake, and Dagimabrop Lake is prohibited.**
- All use and occupation of Crown Land, within the hatched area identified on the attached Implementation Order map (Schedule A), is prohibited.**

KEN014

Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services has been advised that as recommended by the Ministry of Natural Resources' Kenora District, an Implementation Order is now in effect for the purposes of public safety and/or effectual fire suppression, for areas near Kenora 14 Under the Emergency Area Order EAO 2025-03 declared on May 13, 2025.

- All travel and use of roads, including Highway 525 at and beyond the northern boundary of Wabaseemoong First Nation, is prohibited unless authorized by a travel permit.**

- All use of lakes and waterways within the English River system between Tetu Lake (UTM 15U 356895 5562897) and Umfreville Lake (UTM 358379 5570917) is prohibited.
- All use of lakes and waterways between Goshawk Lake (UTM 15U 371012 5562576) and Umfreville Lake (UTM 3712722 5570758) is prohibited.
- All use and occupation of Crown Land, within the hatched area identified on the attached Implementation Order map (Schedule A), is prohibited.
- See map for reference

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