



FOREST FIRE UPDATE

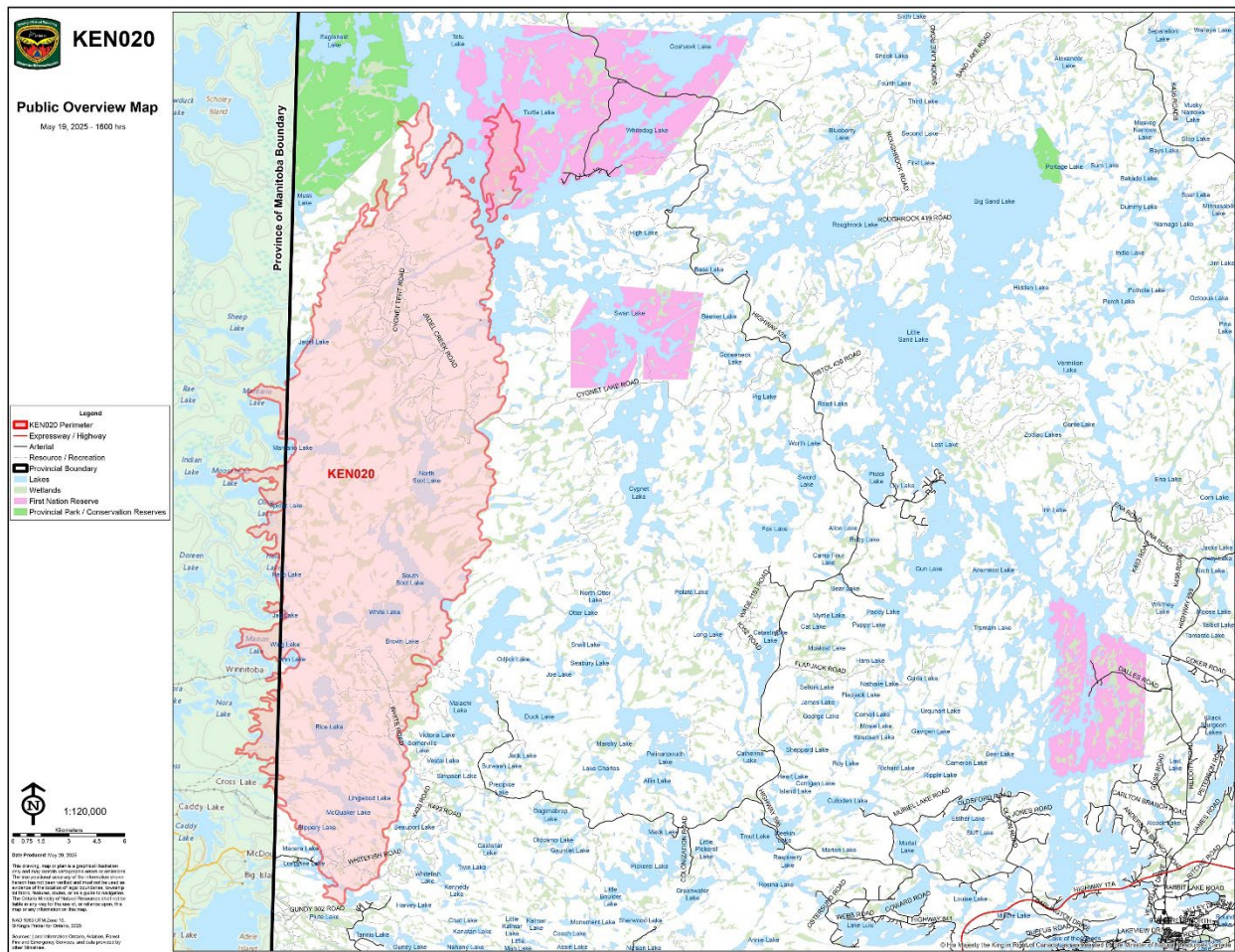
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER FOR **MAY 24, 2025** **KENORA 020/KENORA 014**



Visible as tiny specks against a backdrop of smoke, heavy helicopters work to extinguish flare ups on the eastern perimeter west of the Malachi Lake area as northeast winds increased fire behaviour on May 22. Fire behaviour was less active on May 23.

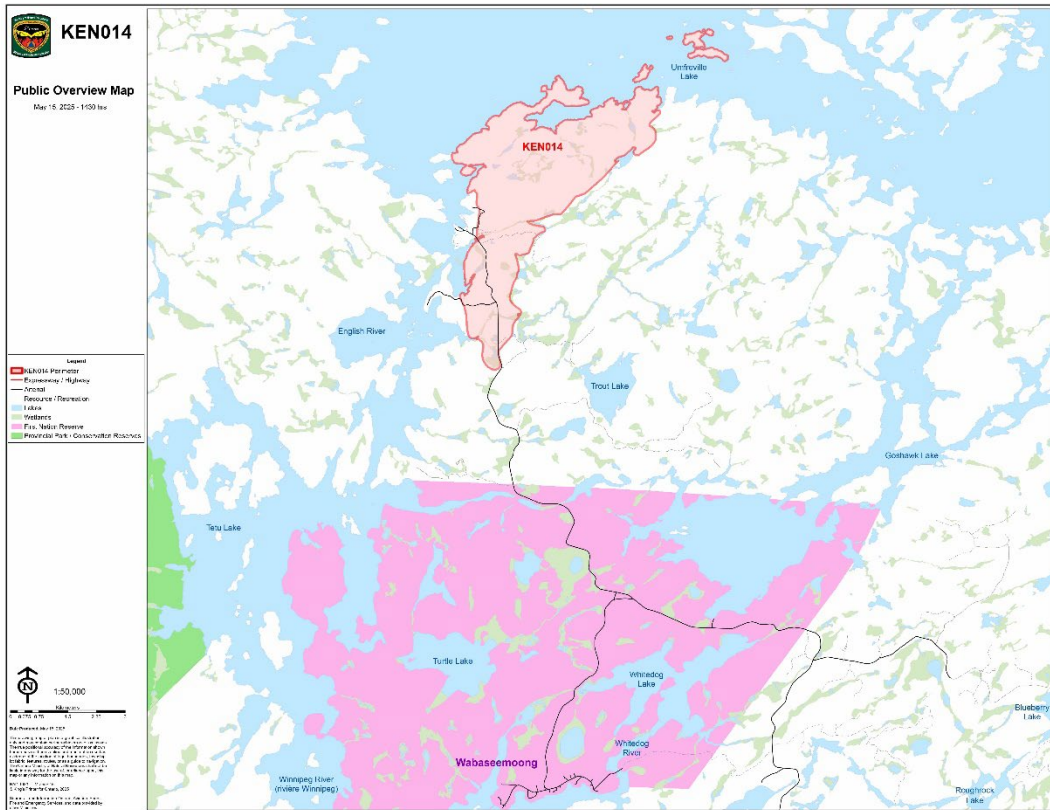
Current Fire Situation - Kenora 20

- **Lower fire behaviour was observed on Kenora 20, May 23 as a result of lighter winds and heavy suppression action on hot spots near the fire's eastern and western perimeters. The previous day (May 22) saw an increase in fire activity, particularly in the fire's mid-section during the peak burning period (1 pm – 6 p.m).**



- Heavy helicopters and smaller bucketing helicopters got an early start to the day, May 23, extinguishing visible smokes and searching out targets identified by recent high level infra-red scans.
- Overnight high level infra-red scans of the fire area will be ongoing as available, a valuable tool to help see hidden hot spots that can escape visual detection.
- Ongoing fair weather continues to dry out forest fuels and increase the potential for extreme fire behaviour. No rain is currently in the forecast.
- Ontario's Marney Brown Type 1 Incident Management Team arrives in Minaki, Saturday, to begin the transition process towards assuming command of the fire response on May 24.
- Crews continue to make good progress today in their assignments across three divisions of Kenora 020.
 - Firefighters are establishing hoses and working northwards from Ingolf to 100 feet inside the fire's perimeter.
 - Firefighters in the Malachi Lake area patrolled lines with hand tools, pumps and hose working inside the fire's perimeter to a distance of 50 feet.

- The fire's northern division at Wabaseemoong pushed south along the east and western perimeters today with bucket support and identified new helipad sites.



Kenora 14

- Fire behaviour was minimal on KEN 014, May 23. The fire's status of control is 'being held' and it is not expected to grow beyond its present boundaries.
- Crews continue to patrol perimeters and seek out hot spot targets identified by recent high level infra-red scans.

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

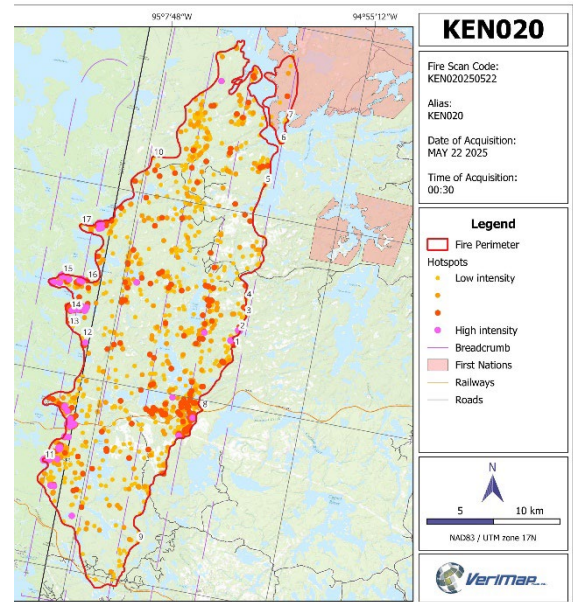
What is infrared scanning?

Wildland Fire Q&A

What is infra-red scanning?

Wildland fire management professionals use technology in a variety of ways to help them gain situational awareness across large areas on the landscape where fire may be behaving differently or hiding from plain sight.

Infra-red scanning is a valuable tool that shows where heat is specifically located and concentrated on the landscape. IR scans are important to gain an idea of how much firefighting remains to be done on a fire as well as identify specific locations as targets for helicopter bucketing or crews.



The most recent high-level infrared scan of Kenora 20, May 22.

Best performed in the gloom of dawn, infra-red scanning equipment ranges from hand-held devices used by technicians from helicopters, to sensors mounted on drones, planes, helicopters and satellites.

What is 'peak burn'?

Peak burn refers to the period of the day when winds and temperatures are at their highest and relative humidity is at its lowest – all important drivers of fire behaviour.

Barring some intervention by the weather or suppression, wildland fires are generally most active between the hours of 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. with some variation through the spring summer and fall.

Peak burn hours underlie the rationale for Ontario's outdoor burning regulations during the fire season (April 1 -Oct. 31) – which allow piles to be ignited no sooner than two before sunset, with the fire extinguished no later than two hours after sunrise.

What exactly do you mean by 'not under control', 'being held', 'under control', or 'being observed'?

While these terms, used to describe a fire's control status, are designed to have a universal meaning between different provincial wildland fire agencies from coast to coast, members of the public often have trouble knowing how to feel about such descriptions.

*In this sense the most problematic is always '**not under control**', or '**out of control**' (used elsewhere in Canada). Wildland fire management agencies use this term to describe a fire that may not be responding, or responding only in a limited way to firefighting, so that the further spread of the fire is not being contained.*

What level of concern does a 'not under control' status warrant from a member of the public? That depends.

Not under control' can encompass a wide range of fire behaviour from intense, fast moving flames, to a large, smouldering fire area that has yet to see enough firefighting action to ensure it will not grow further. The larger the fire, the more time and resources it will take before that status of control can change.

*A fire that is '**being held**' means that under the present conditions and resources assigned to the fire, enough firefighting has taken place that the fire isn't likely to grow any larger.*

*'**Under control**' means that enough firefighting has taken place to ensure no further spread of the fire.*

*The status '**being observed**' describes a fire that does not pose a threat to human lives, property and infrastructure and is monitored without intervention to allow the natural ecological benefits of wildland fires to take place.*



A division supervisor flies over sections of Kenora 20, May 22

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 Wabaseemoong’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 Wabaseemoong 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.

STAY CLEAR OF WATERBOMBERS



When waterbombers approach a body of water, move close to the shore so they can perform their scoop safely.

A waterbomber will not scoop from a lake or river if encroaching watercraft pose a safety hazard.

Help fight forest fires by staying clear of waterbombers!

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



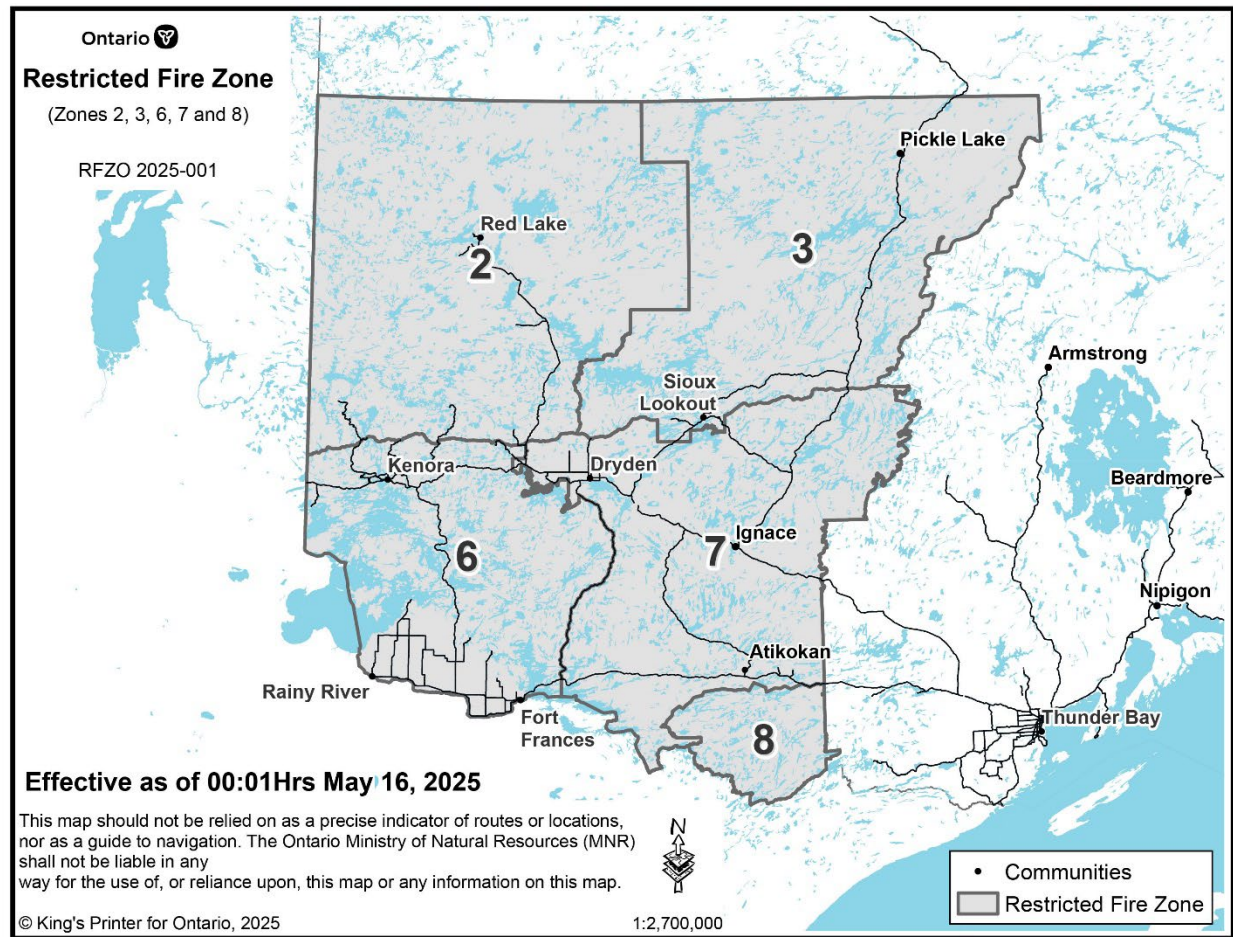
ontario.ca/AFFES



@ONforestfires



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.](#)

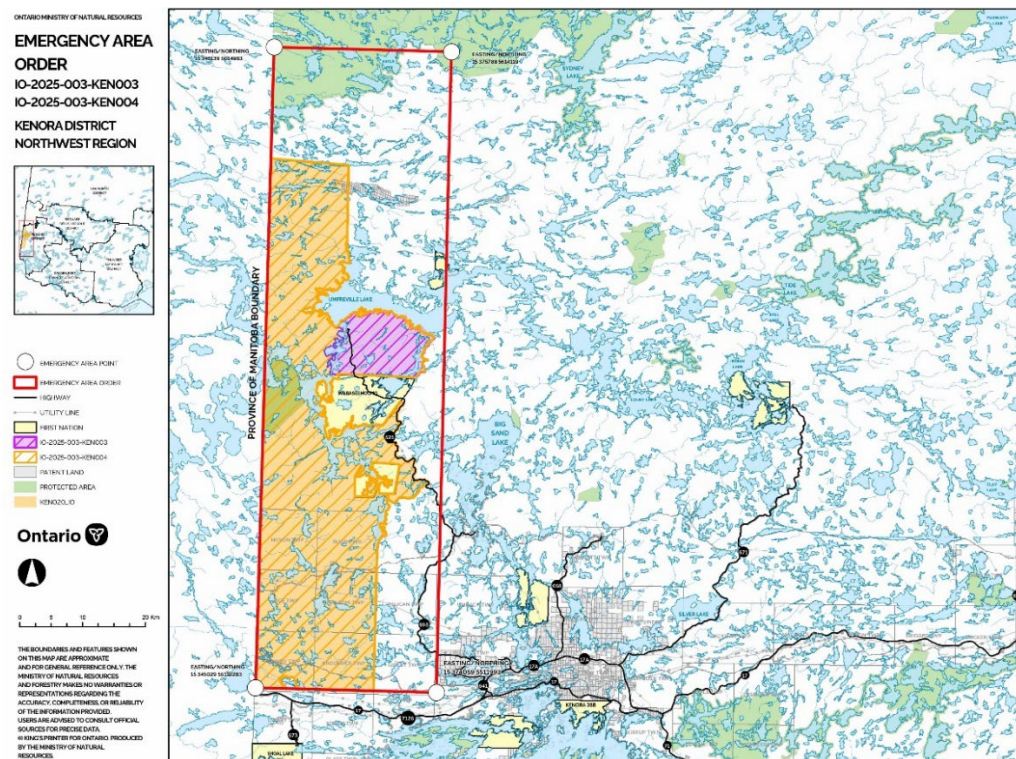
Weather outlook – May 23-29



Regional weather for May 22

A north south ridge of high pressure will hold over the central and western most districts keeping skies mostly sunny, while areas east of the ridgeline see mainly overcast with the slight chance of drizzle in parts of areas under the thicker cloud. Winds fluctuate between northerly and north northeasterly at 10 to 20km/h, odd gust near 30km/h. Relative humidity values driest along the Manitoba border at 15% to 30%, becoming increasingly saturated as you go eastward. Temperatures will peak in the high single digit to mid teens.

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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