



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

PAGC Task Force Raises Alarm on Upcoming Wildfire Season, Urges Proactive Measures

(Pre-Confederation, Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10) Stanley Mission, Sask. – Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) Wildfire Task Force recently met to deliberate on the imminent wildfire threats to northern Saskatchewan anticipated in the upcoming season. Established in 2018, the PAGC Task Force, which includes First Nation leaders and wildfire management experts, underscores the critical risk posed by this year's reduced snowfall.

The Canadian Forest Service advises that the forecasts indicate an unusually warm beginning to the 2024 wildfire season, necessitating a state of "high alert for 2024." The severe wildfires of 2023, which resulted in major evacuations and led to significant air quality degradation, serve as a stark reminder of the ongoing impacts of climate change, as evidenced by last year's evacuation of Fond du Lac Denesuline due to smoke hazards.

Task Force Chair Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte has called for increased vigilance and proactive strategies to protect First Nations in northern Saskatchewan, who not only face evacuation threats but also rely heavily on the land for their way of life.

"The prospect of a warmer wildfire season coupled with diminished snowfall underscores the necessity for preventive action to ensure the well-being of our communities. The protection of our territories and our people is paramount, and we cannot afford to be reactive," said Grand Chief Hardlotte.

Task Force member Senator Peter Beatty voiced strong confidence in the capabilities of local firefighting teams, and emphasized the potential of these teams not only within the province but also their capability to assist other provinces in need.

"These men and women are not only well-trained and experienced but ready to assist across provinces, reducing the need for international support. It's time we acknowledge and utilize our homegrown talent to its fullest potential."

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) has pledged to work in close association with the PAGC to foster community-driven wildfire management and

prevention initiatives, learning from the past years of unprecedented wildfire activity in northern Saskatchewan.

"We're aiming to reinforce our defenses and encourage community-led initiatives in wildfire management and prevention. Working with PAGC is crucial. Together, we will strengthen our defenses against the wildfire threat," said SPSA Vice President of Operations Steve Roberts.

About Prince Albert Grand Council:

The Prince Albert Grand Council is one of the largest tribal councils in Canada with a membership of over 44,000, representing 12 First Nations and the 28 northern communities in the territories of Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10. To learn more, visit pagc.sk.ca.

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