



April 28, 2023

Chief Administrative Officer:

The *Forest Fires Act* provides the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development (DNRED) with the legislative authority to suppress all wildland fires and to restrict burning from the third Monday in April to October 31 yearly on forest land in New Brunswick.

The *Forest Fires Act* defines "forest land" as "any land lying outside the boundaries of a city or town and not cultivated for agricultural purposes, on which trees, shrubs, grass or other plants are growing, together with roads, other than public highways".

Recent Local Governance Reform implemented by the Government of New Brunswick has increased the area of "forest land" that now lies within the jurisdiction of newly formed towns. On average, this amounts to a 1,200 per cent increase of forest land for which towns are responsible for.

Under current legislation, the newly formed towns are responsible for all costs associated with wildland fire suppression and can restrict burning within their boundaries. The cost, risk to human life and the potential loss of infrastructure associated with wildland fire can be significant. To alleviate the risk and cost to towns, DNRED will enact section 20 (1) of the *Forest Fires Act*, which states:

"When the Minister considers it to be in the public interest or when officials of a city or town request it, the Minister may order a conservation officer or a forest service officer to combat a fire within the boundaries of a city or town".

This means DNRED will continue to action and absorb the costs associated with wildland fire suppression on forest land within towns and will remain in place until changes to the *Forest Fires Act* come into force for the 2023 forest fire season. In return, DNRED requires that your municipality follow any burn bans and daily burning restrictions as set out by DNRED from the third Monday in April to October 31, 2023. These restrictions are posted daily after 2:00 p.m. at [New Brunswick Forest Fire Watch \(gnb.ca\)](http://www.gnb.ca) or at 1-866-458-8080.

DNRED will also begin the process to amend the *Forest Fires Act* in order to provide a long-term solution to the above issues.

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For more information or questions relating to this action, please send an email to Provincial.Firecentre@gnb.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Holland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "H".

Mike Holland
Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development