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in the Fairbanks North Star
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-Appendix A-
Media Coverage

February 15, 2020

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Rapidly-growing 3,000-acre wildfire burning on army training range near Fort Greely

By
Tim Ellis, KUAC - Fairbanks

-
May 2, 2019

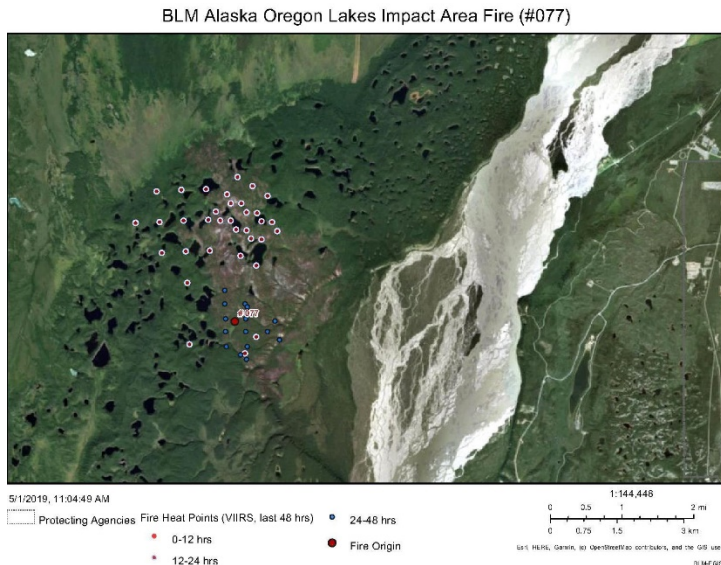


Smoke billows from the 2,500-acre Oregon Lakes Impact Area Fire southwest of Fort Greely. (Photo by Tim Ellis/KUAC)

The wildfire burning on an Army training range seven miles southwest of Fort Greely has grown to 3,000 acres since Tuesday, according to BLM-Alaska Fire Service's latest estimate.

BLM-Alaska Fire Service officials on Wednesday night revised their earlier estimate that the Oregon Lakes Impact Area Fire had grown to 4,000 acres.

The fire is burning in a remote spot west of the Delta River that was burned over by the 2013 Mississippi Fire. The impact area is littered with unexploded ordnance dropped by warplanes during training.



A BLM-Alaska Fire Service aerial photo shows where the Oregon Lakes Impact Area Fire started in an area west of the Delta River, and how winds out of the south and southwest have pushed it northward. (Graphic courtesy of BLM-Alaska Fire Service)

The Oregon Lakes fire was reported Tuesday by Range Control personnel who manage the Donnelly Training Area near Fort Greely.

The fire kicked up tall columns of smoke that are visible throughout the area. The smoke drifted into the Delta Junction area on Tuesday and Wednesday.

A BLM-Alaska Fire Service spokesperson said rain forecast for today will likely slow or halt its progress.

The spokesperson said the fire service will continue to monitor the fire and work to contain it on Army-administered land.

Unexploded military ordnance complicates effort to suppress 6,600-acre wildfire in Alaska

By ZAZ HOLLANDER | Alaska Dispatch News, Anchorage | Published: May 7, 2019 (Tribune News Service) — Federal fire bosses are plotting a strategy to battle an unusually large early season wildland fire near Delta Junction once it leaves military lands, where it's already scorched thousands of acres.

The Oregon Lakes Impact Area Fire — named for a munitions-training range within the Donnelly Training Area — was burning across nearly 7,000 acres of military land about 11 miles south of Delta by Monday, doubling in size since last week despite cooler, wetter weather.

That's the largest active fire in Alaska — and it's barely May.

"It's pretty early for a fire that size," said Beth Ipsen, public information officer for the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service in Fairbanks.

The National Weather Service issued a red flag warning for dry and windy conditions in Deltana and the Tanana Flats Tuesday, the fire service announced. Winds are expected to push the fire to the north, possibly threatening state timber along the Delta River and Delta Creek.

The fire was burning in a military training area with unexploded ordnance on the ground, making it too dangerous to put firefighters or low-altitude aircraft nearby, officials say.

The area has been in use since the late 1940s.

Army and Air Force training missions shot mortars and artillery and dropped bombs into the ground at Oregon Lakes, according to U.S. Army Alaska spokesman John Pennell.

The ones of concern misfired and didn't go off.

"There could be a few, there could be several, there could be a lot," Pennell said. "Not knowing exactly what is where and in what state of readiness to explode, it's safer for us to just keep people out of there."

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

The fire is burning mostly in tall, dry grass and downed trees from the 2013 Mississippi Fire on the west of the braided Delta River. That fire started in May but rekindled and grew to nearly 70,000 acres by August, threatening homesteads and cabins in an area north of Delta known as Whitestone.

Then too, fire officials had to wait until the flames left military land before they could work to put them out.

Ipsen credited the unusually warm spring — March was Alaska's warmest on record — as well as unseasonable dry conditions for fueling the fire.

The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise warned at the start of the month of above-normal fire danger in Alaska through this month, especially along roadways.

There are no homes near the Oregon Lakes fire. But it is "at least a couple miles" from a 1,500-acre state parcel of white spruce saw timber, according to Tim Mowry, a Fairbanks-based public information officer for the Alaska Division of Forestry.

As of Monday morning, the fire was estimated at 6,672 acres and smoldering in spruce with only a 5 percent active perimeter, according to an update. But winds were starting to pick up during a recon flight Monday around mid-day.

The Alaska Fire Service is deploying a team of high-level fire managers to develop a strategy to actively fight the fire if it moves off military lands.

The Type 2 Incident Management Team will work with the BLM fire service's Military Management Fire Zone, U.S. Army Alaska and the Division of Forestry, according to the BLM fire service.

"When the wind picks up, there's potential for significant fire growth," Ipsen said. "That's why we're getting the team in there now, because we're anticipating this could get very active here in the next couple days."

The Delta River drainage brings "known challenging weather patterns that could cause the fire to persist throughout the summer," according to a Sunday update. The team will plan for an opportunity to launch suppression tactics once the fire moves out of the military impact areas.

The team, composed mostly of Alaskans, will stay in Delta Junction.

Residents of that city of just under 1,000 on Monday weren't too concerned about the fire reaching their homes, city administrator Mary Leith said.

It's burning on the other side of the Delta River, Leith said. "If it gets running and it's headed toward Whitestone again, people have some concerns. But it's not right here up close yet because the river is our buffer."

Still, Delta residents are wary of "breathing smoke all summer," as they did in 2013, she said. "So if the military could please get this under control we'd greatly appreciate it. I know they're working now with Forestry and BLM so hopefully this will all work out."

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Very high fire danger: Red flag warning for Interior Alaska

Tuesday, May 7th 2019, 12:11 PM AKDT

Updated:

Tuesday, May 7th 2019, 12:15 PM AKDT

By: [Jeremy LaGoo](#)



As the Oregon Lakes fire continues to burn in the Interior, a red flag warning is in effect for parts of the area on Tuesday, May 7 until 9 p.m.: [the Deltana and Tanana Flats as well as the eastern Alaska Range](#).

A red flag warning means weather conditions are right for increased fire danger.

Dry conditions and wind gusts as high as 45 mph will increase fire danger through the day, before more moisture and calmer conditions arrive in the late evening.

The warning follows the spread of the early-season blaze, 11 miles southwest of Delta Junction. The Oregon Lakes fire started April 30 and has grown to an estimated 6,670 acres as of Tuesday morning.



There are two main criteria for Tuesday's warning:

- Relative humidities equal to or below 25%
- Sustained winds of at least 30 mph

Unlike some regions, there are no temperature requirements for this warning.

In red flag conditions, fire danger is high enough that [something as small as a stray cigarette can cause a wildfire](#). Be sure to closely monitor all burning and fully extinguish all fires until they are cool to the touch.

Alaska News

Fire near Delta pushes smoke into nearby communities as winds rise

• Author: [Zaz Hollander](#)



The Oregon Lakes Fire sends

up a large cloud of smoke Tuesday, May 7 2019 as it burns on military testing lands south of Delta Junction. Wind began kicking up in the area Tuesday. (Photo courtesy Sebastian Saarloos)

The Oregon Lakes Fire sends up a large cloud of smoke Tuesday, May 7 2019 as it burns on military testing lands south of Delta Junction. Wind began kicking up in the area Tuesday. (Photo courtesy Sebastian Saarloos)

Alaska's largest wildland fire began sending up a huge cloud of smoke near Delta Junction Tuesday as winds kicked up in the area.

The Oregon Lakes Fire, named for the military testing area where it's burning, was for days estimated at more than 6,600 acres. As of Tuesday afternoon, it grew slightly to 6,745 acres.

The remote fire was reported April 30 and so far has been burning 11 miles south of Delta Junction in an area unsafe for firefighters and low-flying fire suppression aircraft due to the likelihood of unexploded ordinance on the ground. It's not threatening any buildings.

The fire is burning mostly in tall, dry grass and downed trees from the 2013 Mississippi Fire on the west side of the braided Delta River, within the Donnelly Training Area.

[As wildfire season gets underway, Alaska seeks \$2 million from feds to take down beetle-killed trees]

Fire activity and smoke increased with the uptick of winds Tuesday afternoon, according to a [BLM Alaska Fire Service update](#). A team of federal fire managers that took over Tuesday morning spotted "some heat in the trees" on the north side of the fire earlier in the day but expected more information from a later flight.

All the smoke was coming from the southern end of the fire, according to public information officer Kale Casey, in Delta. The fire was consuming pockets of mixed fuels -- trees and grass -- in that southern area.

The White Mountain initial attack fire crew from the Alaska Division of Forestry arrived in Delta Junction Tuesday in preparation for the uptick in fire activity and the possibility of taking action if the fire burns off the training area, according to the update.

Oregon Lakes fire crews now tasked with protecting homes

Saturday, May 25th 2019, 8:22 AM AKDT

By: [Bryan Dunagan](#)



1/2

Fire crews assigned to the Oregon Lakes fire are switching their focus to protecting nearby homes. The fire is believed to be human-caused, according to [Alaska Fire Info](#), and has scorched nearly 17,000 acres near Fort Greely.

On Thursday, Alaska Fire Info said firefighters mopped up the last of the blaze. They are now working on protecting homes near the Whitestone, Southbank and Richardson Clearwater communities.

As of Friday, crews expected an air-drop of additional supplies. The crews will be constructing fire lines near communities which could be at risk.

Fire managers will be working on suppressing the fire from the air to slow it down. The fire is expected to move north and west.

Alaska Fire Info said the fire managers do not know how far the blaze could travel.

Interior Alaska wildfire grows, fueled by high winds

• Author: [Michelle Theriault Boots](#)

Days of high winds have stoked a 20,000-acre wildfire burning in Alaska's Interior .

The Oregon Lakes Fire has been burning [since April 30](#) mostly on a remote military training area west of Delta Junction in Alaska's Interior. On Sunday, fierce winds increased the size of the blaze by [about 2,000 acres](#), according to the Northwest Incident Management Team, a consortium of government agencies managing the fire.

Firefighters are now working to protect homes and cabins in outlying subdivisions northwest of Delta Junction, including the Richardson-Clearwater, South Bank and Whitestone areas. As of Monday, around 130 firefighters were assigned to it.

Complicating matters: The blaze has primarily burned in the Donnelly Training Area, where decades of unexploded bombs from military training exercises make it unsafe for firefighters to work from the ground. The area is considered so treacherous that if a soldier were to walk into it by accident he or she would be "plucked up by a helicopter longline," said Kale Casey, a public information officer with the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service.

"Having crews in the impact area, or north of the impact area, is just straight-up dangerous," he said.

Firefighters instead have used aerial tankers to dump retardant and water.

Two firefighting crews, the Pioneer Peak Hot Shots and the Midnight Sun Hot Shots, have rotated out after finishing 14-day assignments. Firefighters from the Tanana Chiefs Type II crew arrived Sunday, according to a statement from the Northwest Incident Management Team.

The scouring weekend winds pushed the Oregon Lakes fire to the west, officials said.

The fire is about nine miles away from cabins and other buildings in the Whitestone area, Casey said. But people in the area know the wrong combination of winds could push the flames at homes — fast.

"If these winds line up and make a massive run, there could be an outlying threat," he said.

That's why crews have been working with landowners to create "defensible space" to keep the fire away from homes and cabins if it gets that far, installing hoses, pumps and sprinklers in inhabited areas and removing vegetation.

"Most property owners...have given permission for firefighters to work on their land," the statement from the Northwest Incident Management Team said. "Fire managers still need to locate property, cabin and homeowners in the South Bank area."

Owners of cabins in that area who have not talked to fire managers should call (208) 254-1130, officials said. Flight restrictions, including for drones, remain over the fire and in rural Delta Junction-area communities of Whitestone, South Bank and Richardson Clearwater.





The Oregon Lakes fire continues to burn Sunday, May 26, 2019. (BLM Alaska Fire Service)

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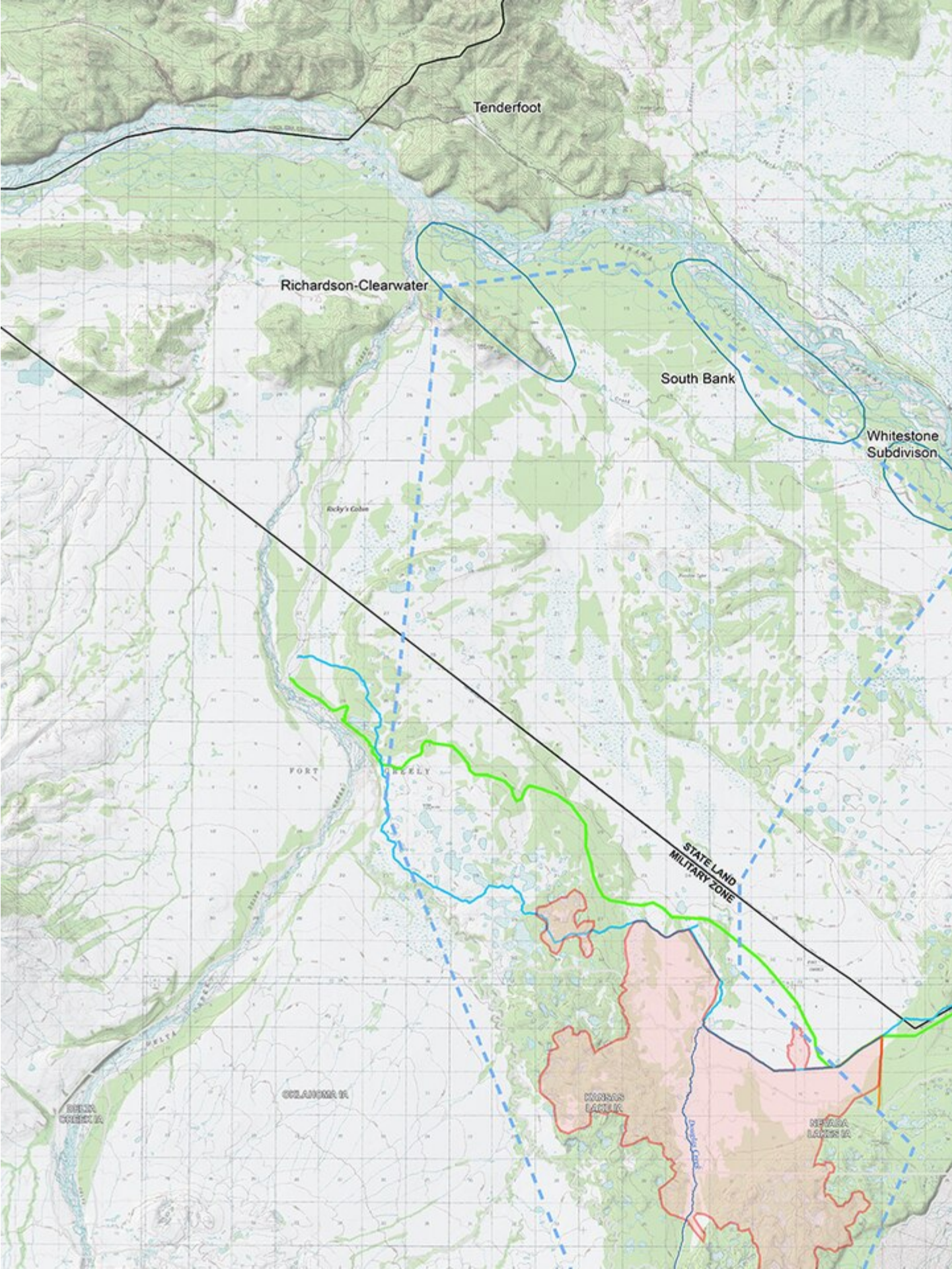
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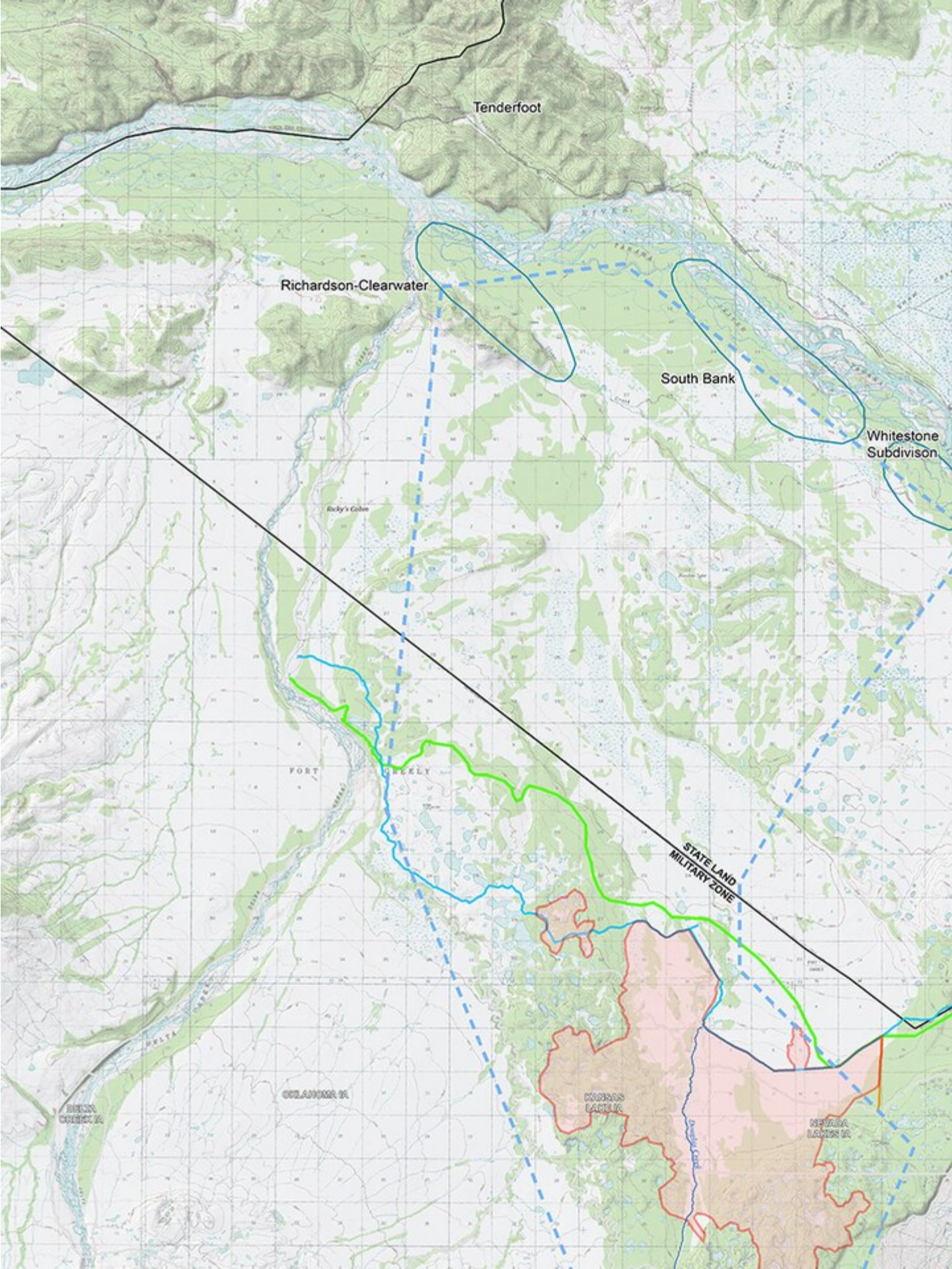
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Map from Alaska Fire Service showing the Oregon Lakes fire on Monday, May 27.

Map from Alaska Fire Service showing the Oregon Lakes fire on Monday, May 27.

High winds expand Oregon Lakes Fire near Delta Junction



By The Associated Press & Laura Holman |

Posted: Mon 9:50 AM, May 27, 2019 |

Updated: Mon 9:59 AM, May 27, 2019



FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP) - A wildfire that has burned in Alaska since April has expanded by 2,000 acres due to high winds.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reported Sunday that the Oregon Lakes Fire in the Delta Junction area expanded along its western perimeter Saturday night.

The Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service says the fire has not moved northward, but smoke from the southwest area mixed with sand blown up from the Delta River has formed clouds visible from Delta Junction.

Officials say the fire was listed Sunday at 27 square miles and crews are working to protect structures in surrounding communities.

As of Monday morning, the fire was burning at 19,328 acres, with 130 personnel assigned to it.

Transportation and observation flights were temporarily canceled due to high winds and poor visibility.

The cause of the fire is believed to be man-made, but is still under investigation.

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High winds cause Oregon Lakes Fire to spread

Tuesday, May 28th 2019, 5:11 AM AKDT

By: [Aaron Morrison](#)



(Courtesy BLM Alaska Fire Service)

For nearly a month, the Oregon Lakes Fire has been burning near Fort Greely and recent activity has caused it to spread.

Chinook winds — or warm, dry winds — have led to a westward expansion of the fire. According to a release from the Alaska Fire Service on Monday, winds have been [gusting near 45 mph](#) this weekend, causing the fire to increase by nearly 2,000 acres. Because of recent dry conditions, the fire is spreading across an area consisting of dry grass and ground fuels.

The fire spread west towards military observation points in the Donnelly Training Area, where firefighters had already set up sprinklers and pumps. To prevent the fire from spreading, retardant and water has been dumped near the observation points, where air operations plan to survey the area.

AFS says crews will now focus on installation efforts to protect communities near the fire. Those areas — Richardson-Clearwater, South Bank and Whitestone — will have hoses, pumps and sprinklers installed near cabins and homes. Additionally, crews are reducing ground fuels that could carry the fire near cabins.



Many property owners in the Richardson-Clearwater and Whitestone communities have given firefighters permission to work on their land, but fire managers are asking those who own property in the South Banks area and have not spoken with fire officials to call (208)-254-1130.

As efforts continue to prevent the Oregon Lakes Fire from spreading, AFS says winds could still be a problem. A Red Flag Warning is still in effect for the area until 10 p.m. Monday, with gusty winds still possible into Tuesday.

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RELATED STORIES:

[Oregon Lakes fire crews now tasked with protecting homes](#)

[Progress continues in Oregon Lakes Fire](#)

[Light rain helps firefighters in Oregon Lakes wildfire](#)

Oregon Lake Fire moderated due to damp weather



By *Taylor Perez* |

Posted: Sat 12:34 PM, Jun 01, 2019 |

Updated: Sat 12:35 PM, Jun 01, 2019



ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - The Oregon Lakes Fire transitioned from a Type 2 incident to a Type 3 meaning the complexity has decreased.

Fire crews have made significant progress near Richardson Clearwater, South Bank, and Whitestone.

The temporary flight restriction is still in place in order to protect fire suppression efforts.

Fire managers say that it is still early in the fire season and there is still the possibility of the fire increased once the fuels dry and the humidity decreases.

The fire is currently at 31,850 acres with two crews assigned. The cause is still under investigation.

Lightning sparks 3 wildfires in Southwest Alaska Tuesday



A fire burns Tuesday near Beaver Creek, 33 miles west of McGrath.

By [Lex Treinen](#) |

Posted: Wed 5:50 PM, Jun 05, 2019 |

Updated: Wed 6:19 PM, Jun 05, 2019



ANCHORAGE (KTUU) - Smokejumpers are on their toes after three wildfires were reported following thousands of lightning strikes in Southwest Alaska Tuesday. More lighting is predicted for Wednesday night.

At 3 p.m. Tuesday the first fire was reported in the Lonesome Hills between McGrath and Medfra near the Kuskokwim River and was reported as about 5 acres in size. Eight smokejumpers responded from their positions in Galena, where they were positioned in anticipation. They secured the perimeter of the fire by 7 p.m. Tuesday evening.

A second fire was spotted at 8 p.m. Tuesday night near Beaver Creek, 33 miles from McGrath. It is about 10 miles from the unpopulated Iditarod checkpoint of Ophir and five miles away from a mining claim. Smokejumpers worked until midnight to contain the fire to about 18 acres.

Satellite and helicopter flights detected a third fire on Mt. Hurst near the Dishna River, about 55 miles west of McGrath. The fire grew from 5 acres to 150 acres, but since there are no threats to property, fire managers won't take any action unless it grows.

UPDATE: SHOVEL CREEK FIRE GROWS TO 400 ACRES; RED FLAG WARNING ISSUED FOR LIGHTNING THREAT

Posted by publicnewspress | Jun 22, 2019 | Alaska | 0 |



Updated 2 p.m.: The Shovel Creek fire north of Murphy Dome has grown to an estimated 400 acres as of Saturday morning, according to the Alaska Division of Forestry.

Residents should be aware of fire activity, fire personnel and aircraft in the area. A temporary flight restriction is in place so that the area can be clear for firefighting aircraft.

Anyone interested in hiring out equipment for the firefighting effort can find process information at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/equipment>.

Updated 9:45 a.m.: A Red Flag warning has been issued for Fairbanks and the surrounding area from noon until midnight today. Strong thunderstorms with lightning are expected this afternoon, especially southeast of Fairbanks. Temperatures are expected to be in the mid-80s, with low humidity, and new wildfires are expected from the lightning, according to the National Weather Service.

A wildfire 3 miles north of Murphy Dome and 2.5 miles south of the Chatanika River has quickly grown to 200 acres and is threatening several cabins along the river. The fire is one of several that erupted amid hot and dry weather, along with lightning, that has arrived around Interior Alaska in recent days.

The Shovel Creek Fire is burning 3 miles north of Murphy Dome and about 2-1/2 miles south of Chatanika River. This photo was taken at about 6:30 p.m. on June 21, 2019.

The Shovel Creek Fire north of Murphy Dome was reported at 5:20 p.m. Friday, according to the Alaska Division of Forestry. It is burning in black spruce and moving rapidly toward cabins along the Chatanika River.

“Air tankers have dropped four loads of retardant to try and box the fire in and it seems to be holding against the fire,” an 8:15 p.m. update from the Division of Forestry reads. “Winds out of the north are blowing the fire down into the valley.”

“There is another small 1-2 acre fire that smokejumpers are working to extinguish with help from helicopter water drops,” the update reads.

Eight smokejumpers have been deployed and an air tanker is dropping retardant. Another air tanker, along with helicopters and water-scooping aircraft have been ordered, along with two bulldozers. An Alaska Type 2 incident management team has been ordered to oversee the battle.

Elsewhere, the Alaska Division of Forestry reports that a fire is burning at about Mile 30 Chena Hot Springs Road and about 2 miles south of the road on the south side of the Chena River and east of the south fork of the river. The Nugget Creek Fire is about 150 acres, according to division spokesman Tim Mowry.

The fire is burning in a limited suppression area in the Chena River State Recreation Area and is not being fought at this time because of other fire activity in the region, Mowry said, adding that the fire did not appear to be threatening anything.

Far to the north of Fairbanks, a 1,000-acre fire was burning about 30 miles southeast of Allakaket, about 170 miles north of Fairbanks. That fire is being monitored.

Seven smokejumpers are working on an 8-acre fire on the Kantishna River 44 miles east of Lake Minchumina, according to the Alaska Fire Service. That fire was threatening a nearby Native allotment and structures, including an occupied home.

Fires were also burning in Northwest Alaska in the vicinity of the Koyuk and Noatak rivers, with sizes of 600 and 200 acres respectively, according to a Friday morning update from the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center.

Contact the newsroom at 459-7572.

Shovel Creek Fire expands; new fire reported near Salcha; fireworks banned

- By Kyrie Long, klong@newsminer.com
- Jun 27, 2019

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Firefighting efforts on the Shovel Creek Fire, located north of Murphy Dome, northwest of Fairbanks, Alaska. Represented are tanker and helicopters assisting firefighters, in addition to equipment in the staging area. photo by J. Michael Johnson

- J. Michael Johnson



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Norm McDonald, incident commander for the Alaska Type 2 Green Incident Management Team, addresses a crowd of about 180 people at a community meeting regarding the Shovel Creek Fire

at the Ken Kunkel Community Center on Wednesday night, June 26, 2019. Photo by Tim Mowry/Alaska Division of Forestry

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A smoke column rises from the 665-acre Nugget Creek Fire at 10 p.m. Wednesday night, June 26, 2019 near milepost 36 of Chena Hot Springs Road.. Photo by Tim Mowry/Alaska Division of Forestry

Updated 7:30 a.m.: The Fire Marshal's office has temporarily banned the sale and use of fireworks in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and most of the Railbelt, the Kenai Peninsula, the Copper River Valley and Kodiak Island due to "very high wildfire danger" and limited availability of firefighting resources.

Temperatures in the Fairbanks area are expected to reach the lower 80s today, and nearly 90 on Saturday. Some rain is expected Sunday evening and Monday, but 80-degree temperatures are forecast to return later in the week.

The popular Granite Tors trail in the Chena River State Recreation Area has been closed due to the proximity of the Nugget Creek Fire. The Mastodon Trail, which accesses the Nugget Creek Cabin also has been closed.

The Shovel Creek Fire spread extensively by Thursday morning, keeping residents of subdivisions in the Murphy Dome area under a "Level 1: Ready" evacuation notice, which has been in place since Monday.

"We ended up this morning with 1,622 acres involved for Shovel Creek itself, and we also increased in terms of personnel that's on the assignment itself," said Bernie Pineda, fire information officer.

About 350 personnel are working to contain the Shovel Creek Fire, Pineda said, adding that crews have come up from the Lower 48 to help. That's an increase of just over 100 from Wednesday.

The lightning-caused fire started Friday.

Crews worked Wednesday to continue building fire breaks, according to Pineda, but the fire got a lot of heat from the sun and is burning in an area full of black spruce and tundra grass. As of Thursday morning, crews are still working around the perimeter of the fire, direct and on the fire line.

“The most active part of it was on the east side of the perimeter of the fire, and we had some spotting that did occur on the west side of Shovel Creek itself, which was a bit of a problem,” Pineda said.

Personnel are continuing with efforts to protect structures in the Chatanika River corridor.

“We got the structure protection folks continuing work on some of the residences up there as well as some of the cabin owners on both the north side and the south side of Chatanika River,” Pineda said.

Fire officials held a community meeting Wednesday evening, which saw a turnout of about 180 people, according to a report from the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center. Residents of the Martin Subdivision, the McCloud Subdivision, the Murphy Subdivision, Perfect Perch Drive, the Lincoln Subdivision and the Chatanika River Corridor are still under notice to be prepared for possible evacuation.

Northwest of the Salcha River, the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service is working to contain the Ninetyeight Creek Fire, which was reported Wednesday evening. The fire was 1,800 acres as of the most recent report. Water-scooping aircraft were sent to the area in addition to smokejumpers.

The fire is burning in black spruce. A temporary flight restriction over the area.

The Nugget Creek Fire, another lightning-caused fire, grew to 665 acres on Wednesday.

The fire is currently burning parallel to Chena Hot Springs Road, in the Chena River State Recreation Area. The blaze led to the closure of the Mastodon Trail.

Brooks Ludwig, superintendent of the Northern Area Office of the Alaska State Parks, said the fire is being monitored but that no other trails have been closed.

“We’re just kind of looking ahead you know. The fire is kind of headed towards Granite Tors trail, but it’s nowhere close yet,” he said.

A rappel crew came to the area Thursday to help protect structures. Ludwig said a helicopter came through with fire crews setting up hoses and sprinklers at the Nugget Creek Cabin.

The Interior is nearing red flag conditions in some areas, with smoke expected to persist in the area. A red flag warning is given by the National Weather Service when there is increased fire danger in a given location.

Contact staff writer Kyrie Long at 459-7510.

Shovel Creek Fire grows; others continue to burn near Fairbanks

Volume 90%

By John Dougherty |

Posted: Thu 7:14 PM, Jun 27, 2019 |

Updated: Thu 9:38 PM, Jun 27, 2019



FAIRBANKS, Alaska As hot dry conditions persist fire danger in the interior remains high with numerous fires burning around Fairbanks and over 100 fires in the Yukon Flats. The most threatening fire is currently the Shovel Creek Fire burning north of Murphy Dome.



Officials from the Alaska Incident Management Team and Borough Emergency Operations met with almost 200 residents Wednesday night to update them on the Shovel Creek Fire, talk about the 'Level 1: Ready' evacuation notice for subdivisions near Murphy Dome, and answer questions.

Officials from the Alaska Incident Management Team and Borough Emergency Operations met with almost 200 residents Wednesday night to update them on the Shovel Creek Fire, talk about the 'Level 1: Ready' evacuation notice for subdivisions near Murphy Dome, and answer questions.

Jeff Deet lives inside the McCloud subdivision which is in a ready state. He said they are aware that fire danger is present when it is hot outside and you live in black spruce so they were largely prepared for the notice. Still, they did take precautions.

“As we got the notice, we thought a little bit more about exactly how safe our property is,” Deet said. He made sure fuel jugs were away from the house and that his family had a way to move their 40 sled dogs if they need. “In a moment’s notice we can just load up and get out,” he said.

A ‘Ready’ evacuation notice has been issued for the Martin subdivision, McCloud subdivision, Murphy subdivision, Lincoln subdivision, Perfect Perch Drive and the Chatanika River corridor.

There are 345 personnel assigned to the Shovel Creek Fire with many crews from the lower-48 helping. There over 25 crews from the lower-48 in Alaska to assist with the high fire activity around the state and more are on the way.

A spot fire jumped Shovel Creek Wednesday and burned into an old fire scar. Overall the fire grew over 700 acres Wednesday and is now estimated at 1,622 acres with no containment.

“We are actively putting in saw line, getting hoses in behind that and trying to get suppression on the fire,” said Norm McDonald, incident commander for the Alaska Team.

Crews have laid over 15 miles of firehose around the perimeter of the fire. They are also working to protect recreational cabins and residents nearest the fire on the Chatanika River.

Because of fire activity Moose Mountain Resort and the top of Murphy dome has been closed to public access. Officials are asking people to stay clear of these areas for their own safety and to not disrupt fire efforts.

Officials have set up signs around the area with fire maps and information about evacuations. There is also a temporary flight restriction in effect that applies to drones. Officials said that if they see drones in the area, all aircraft must be grounded until the drone is gone.

Other fires:

The Caribou Creek fire started on June 16 and has burned 310 acres around 7 and a half miles off of 18 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. The fire is 65% contained and crews continue mop up efforts.

The Nugget Creek has burned 665 acres in a Limited Protection Area near 36 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. The fire is still active but is boxed in by old burns. A repel crew was inserted today and will set up sprinklers around several cabins potentially threatened by the fire.

The Ninetyeight Creek Fire was started by lightning Wednesday and is burning in an area of black spruce three miles northwest of where Ninetyeight Creek meets the Salcha River. The fire has burned 40 acres and is two miles from the nearest structure. Eighteen smokejumpers and multiple water-scooping aircraft and a retardant tanker attacked the fire last night and more resources are expected today.

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at Elders and Youth Conference

Officials are monitoring and fighting multiple fires in the Yukon flats that are threatening villages and native allotments. They are also managing a 1,700-acre fire southeast of Tok.

Further south, officials continue to battle the 42,000-acre Swan Lake Fire burning along the Sterling Highway near Sterling. The fire has caused significant delays to traffic with the road reduced to one lane. The 511 personnel working the fire have been using back burns to stop the fire from crossing the highway and threatening the Homer Electric Transmission Line.

There are 121 active fires burning in Alaska.

Many areas of the state remain under a burn suspension due to the hot dry conditions. Burn barrel and open debris fires are prohibited and any burn permits have been suspended. Small campfires under three feet in diameter are still allowed but officials advise against them.

The hot conditions are expected throughout the weekend with temperatures possibly reaching the 90s on Saturday. Smoke will linger in Fairbanks for the foreseeable future.

More information can be found at akfireinfo.com

Shovel Creek & Nugget Creek Fires burning near Fairbanks



Shovel Creek Fire Alaska Department of Forestry

By *Gilbert Cordova* |

Posted: Fri 8:14 AM, Jun 28, 2019 |

Updated: Fri 8:18 AM, Jun 28, 2019



ANCHORAGE, (KTUU) - The Shovel Creek Fire is burning northwest of Fairbanks. Alaska DOF says the fire is at 0% containment, burning about 2,307 acres so far. The fires started June 21 by lightning, and around 446 firefighters are currently in the area.

Friday, crews will continue to hold and improve the containment line on the east and south sides of the fire.

Officials say because of this work, travel on the Bennet Highway may be delayed from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm due to fire operations. Motorists should plan accordingly.

Meanwhile, east of Fairbanks the Nugget Creek Fire is about 1,550 acres. Alaska DOF says because of resources, a small number of firefighters are actually in the area. Basically, officials say they are monitoring this fire.

Alaska DOF says because of the many wildfires burning across the state, they are having to prioritize where to send crews. *Copyright 2019 KTUU. All rights reserved.*

Dozens of Wildfires Across Alaska Leave Wide Swaths Shrouded in Smoke

By Jan Wesner Childs

June 30 2019 12:09 PM EDT

weather.com



Firefighters battle the Shovel Creek Fire outside of Fairbanks.
(Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service/Twitter)

At a Glance

- More than 120 wildfires have been reported.
- The smoke has prompted air quality advisories for several areas.
- An evacuation order was issued for two neighborhoods near Fairbanks.

Dozens of wildfires burning in Alaska have prompted evacuation orders and air quality alerts, including in the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas.

Residents of two neighborhoods about 20 miles northwest of Fairbanks were [ordered to evacuate](#) just after midnight Sunday. About 52 structures are in the evacuation zone, according to the order issued by Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Management.

Residents of three other neighborhoods in the area were told to prepare for evacuation if it becomes necessary.

(MORE: [Europe Heat Wave Kills Several in France, Spain and Italy](#))

The neighborhoods are threatened by the Shovel Creek Fire, which has burned about 8 square miles so far. The fire was sparked by lightning, the agency said.



This satellite image shows hazy, brown smoke over parts of Alaska.
(GOES-West/NOAA)

It is just one of dozens of blazes burning in the interior and south-central Alaska as the state's summer tourist season gets into full swing and the Fourth of July holiday approaches. Some 120 fires were burning as of Friday morning, the Associated Press reported.

State and local agencies have issued [air quality advisories](#) for several regions. On Sunday, Fairbanks had the [worst air quality](#) of any city in the United States, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which posts daily air quality information and forecasts.



Highest 5:

[About the Highest 5](#)

Current AQI	Today's Forecasts	Tomorrow's Forecasts
Fairbanks, AK		159
North Pole, AK		142
Pinal County, AZ		107
Stanfield, AZ		107
Anchorage, AK		102

The National Weather Service issued a dense smoke advisory for Anchorage, as officials considered whether to ban outdoor grilling and cancel the city's July Fourth fireworks. The state fire marshal on Friday already announced a [ban on fireworks](#) in several areas.

A fire south of Anchorage has snarled traffic and clouded scenic views on the Sterling Highway, along the western side of the Kenai Peninsula.

The first fire of the season in [Denali National Park](#) was also sparked by lightning last week, the National Park Service said.

Hot, dry weather is fueling the fires, with several areas hitting record high temperatures

Shovel Creek Fire grows to over 10,000 acres near Fairbanks, evacuations underway



Shovel Creek Fire (Photo by Division of Forestry)

By [Gilbert Cordova](#) |

Posted: Mon 9:28 AM, Jul 01, 2019 |

Updated: Mon 9:28 AM, Jul 01, 2019



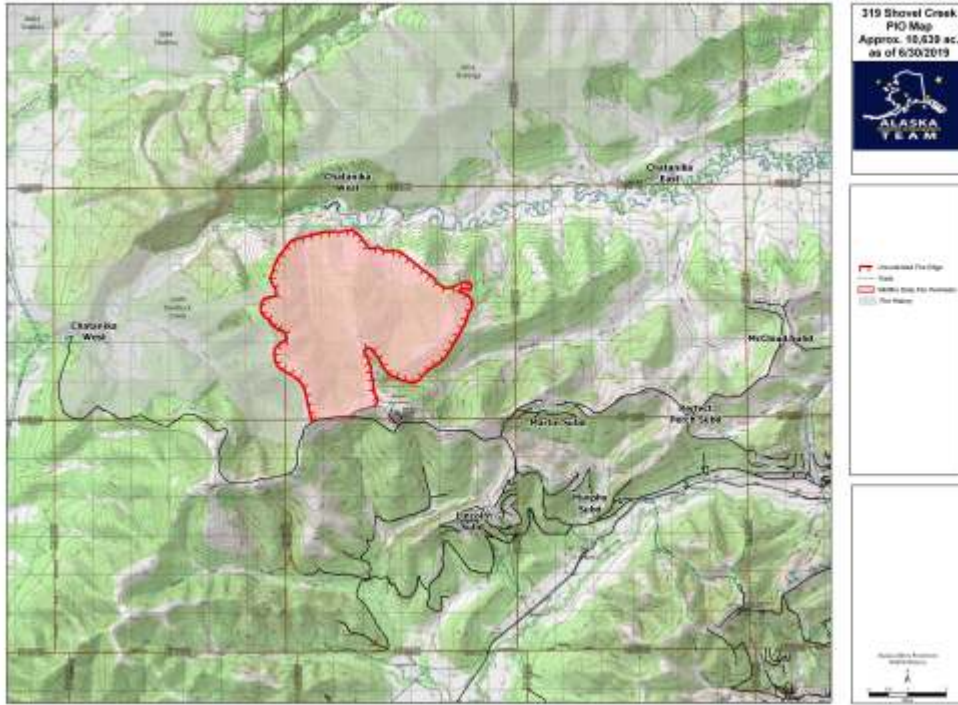
ANCHORAGE, (KTUU) - The Alaska Department of Forestry says the Shovel Creek Fire near Fairbanks has now burned more than 10,000 acres.

The fire is burning northeast of Fairbanks.

On Sunday, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Department of Emergency Management [raised the evacuation alert for the Martin and Perfect Perch subdivisions](#). The Level 3 alert indicates an imminent threat and advises residents to evacuate to an emergency shelter immediately.

Over the weekend, Alaska DOF says rain helped decrease fire activity and gave firefighters a much-needed break.

Moving forward, Alaska DOF says firefighters will hold, improve and mop up the established containment line that extends west of Murphy Dome into the Hardluck Creek Fire scar.



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Fairbanks borough mayor declares Shovel Creek wildfire a disaster emergency

- Author: Associated Press
- Updated: July 3
- Published July 3



Aerial view of the Shovel Creek Fire on Friday, June 28, 2019, looking east towards Murphy Dome near Fairbanks. (Alaska Division of Forestry)

Aerial view of the Shovel Creek Fire on Friday, June 28, 2019, looking east towards Murphy Dome near Fairbanks. (Alaska Division of Forestry)

FAIRBANKS - An Alaska mayor has declared a disaster emergency in the hopes of securing state assistance to stop an ongoing wildfire, a report said.

Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Bryce Ward made the declarat.....Thanks for being an ADN.com reader.

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Volunteers knocking on doors, warning Fairbanks residents of Shovel Creek Fire danger

Friday, July 5th 2019, 2:22 PM AKDT

Updated:

Friday, July 5th 2019, 6:28 PM AKDT

By: [Elizabeth Roman](#)



Fairbanks CERT volunteers at the Shovel Creek Fire. (Photo: Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Operations / Lorna Illingsworth)

Volunteers with the Fairbanks Community Emergency Response Team are visiting homes near the Shovel Creek Fire notifying residents of the dangers around their communities.

According to a Facebook post from [Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Operations](#), CERT volunteers are "tirelessly going door-to-door notifying residents of the danger and as well as providing additional assistance where needed."

In a [public service announcement](#) from the Division of Forestry, public information officer Carly Reed said "Alaskans want to be part of the solution."

The best way to do that, she said, is to be informed, follow the posted evacuation alerts and be ready for any changes that may come.

"With the strategic firing operation on a section of Old Murphy Dome Road set to begin today if conditions remain favorable, homeowners and locals in the area want to be a part of the solution that will limit the impact this fire has and shorten it's duration as well," [the latest update on AK Fire Info reads](#).

The Shovel Creek Fire is currently burning at [10,008 acres and is 12% contained](#). Over 700 personnel are working on putting a stop to the fire, which was sparked on June 21 because of lightning.

Earlier this week, Mayor Bryce Ward [proclaimed a disaster emergency](#) for the borough due to the Shovel Creek Fire. Through the proclamation, the borough requested Gov. Mike Dunleavy to declare a disaster emergency on the state level, which would provide state and individual assistance.

According to the Incident Information System, [here are the current evacuation alerts for the fire](#):

EVACUATION ALERTS:

- LEVEL 1 (READY) 741 Structures – Chatanika River Corridor, Drouin (41), Hardluck (104), Moose Mountain (440), Coyote Jones (41), and Hattie Creek (26) neighborhoods
- LEVEL 2 (SET) 180 Structures – Lincoln Creek (64), Murphy (19), McCloud (40), and Vancouver (57) neighborhoods
- LEVEL 3 (GO) 52 Structures – Martin (42) and Perfect Perch (10) neighborhoods

An evacuation shelter has been [established at Randy Smith School](#), located at 1401 Bainbridge Blvd, to accommodate evacuees. A temporary pet shelter is located at the Tanana Fairgrounds.

Fire officials will be hosting a community meeting at the Ken Kunkle Community Center, located at 2645 Goldstream Road, on Friday at 6 p.m. to give an update and answer questions about the fire. The meeting will be streamed live on [the borough's emergency operations Facebook page](#).

More information about the fire [can be found online](#) or by calling the incident management team at 907-347-6801.

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MORE NEWS FROM KTVA:

[Wildfire near Montana Creek Road now estimated at 200-300 acres](#)

[Firefighters keep MLK Jr. Fire from spreading](#)

[Swan Lake Fire: 163,714 acres, 37% contained](#)

Wildfire near Beaver Creek forces campground evacuation, temporary Alaska Highway closure

Social Sharing

- Facebook
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After 6-hour closure Saturday, Alaska Highway near Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay reopened

CBC News · Posted: Jul 07, 2019 3:34 PM CT | Last Updated: July 7



The new wildfire near Beaver Creek, Yukon, is estimated at 617 hectares as of Sunday afternoon, according to Yukon Protective Services. (Submitted by Murray Lundberg)

5

comments

A wildfire that started near Beaver Creek, Yukon, on Saturday forced an evacuation of a nearby campground and temporarily closed parts of the Alaska Highway.

The highway near Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay was closed for six hours on Saturday. It has since been reopened, but officials warn that roads can close with short notice depending on the fire conditions.

Snag Junction Campground was evacuated.

The fire is running parallel to the highway and is estimated at 617 hectares as of Sunday afternoon, according to [a social media update](#) from Yukon Protective Services.

"Black and grey smoke is highly visible in the area," said the Yukon Protective Services update.

Crews fought the fire with air tankers and a helicopter on Saturday and will continue to try and suppress the wildfire, states the update.

As of Sunday, the fire is burning away from Beaver Creek and the highway, heading northeast toward White River.

Officials say the community is not under an evacuation order at this time.

This wildfire is one of three new fires identified in the last 24 hours, according to the Yukon Wildfire map. The two others are near the Wellesley Lake area and are not a threat to communities, according to the map.

There are currently 27 active fires in the territory, according to Yukon Wildfire.

- **[Air quality advisories issued for Yukon](#)**

An air quality advisory for all Yukon communities was put [in effect earlier this week](#).

A special air quality statement was issued for Whitehorse Sunday afternoon, as "elevated pollution levels are expected or occurring," according to an Environment Canada release.

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Fairbanks Air Quality Index spikes to Hazardous levels



Fairbanks Airport on Monday evening (Image from DOT webcam)

By [Lex Treinen](#) |

Posted: Mon 10:19 PM, Jul 08, 2019 |

Updated: Mon 10:22 PM, Jul 08, 2019



ANCHORAGE (KTUU) - In the midst of several fires surrounding Fairbanks, the Air Quality Index (AQI) spiked to the 'Hazardous' level, meaning that "Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion; people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children should remain indoors," according to the EPA.

(Click a Station for air quality details.)

Station Name	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	O ₃	CO	SO ₂	NO ₂
Southeast Alaska (Juneau)						
Floyd Dryden	70	25				
Southcentral Alaska (Anchorage & Mat-Su)						
Butte (Mat-Su)	61	29				
Garden (Anch.)	87	43				
Laurel (Anch.)		52				
Palmer (Mat-Su)	65	24				
Parkgate (Eagle River)	89	39				
Interior Alaska (Fairbanks & North Pole)						
A Street (Fairbanks)	344					
Hurst Road (North Pole)	203					
NCORE (Fairbanks)	327	188	1	31	5	8
Southwestern Alaska and Aleutians (Bethel)						
Bethel	199	107				

Disclaimer
Alaska AQI will not always match AirNow AQI as the timing of receipt of the raw data is different.

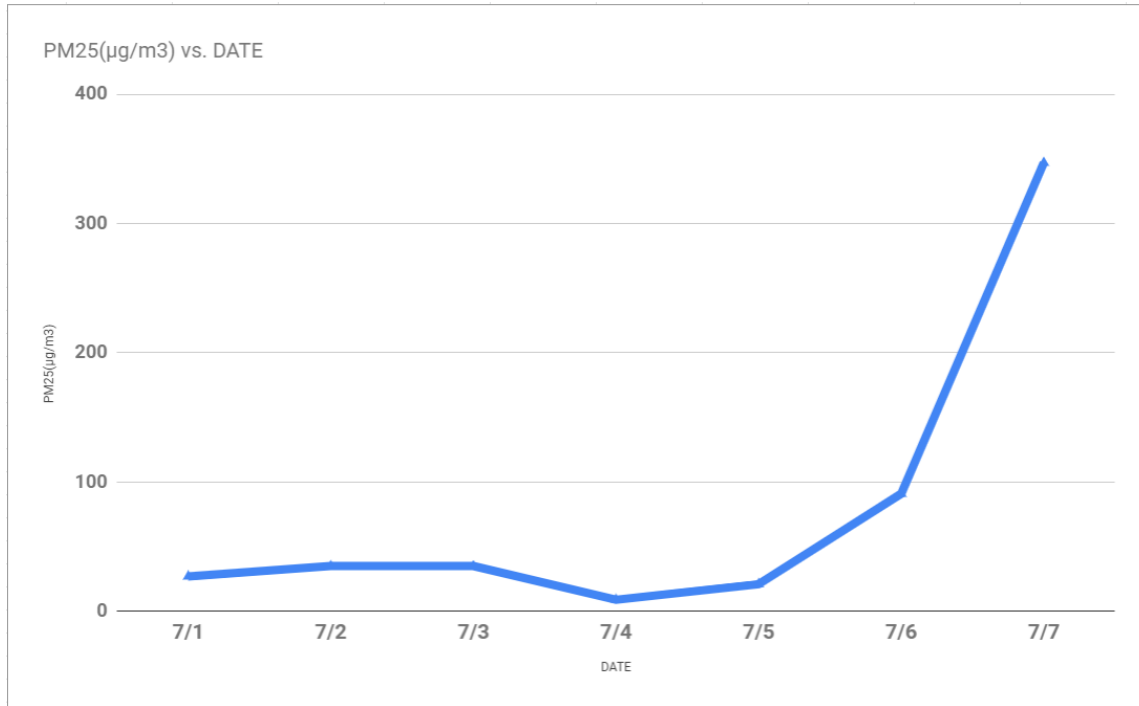
Health Effect Categories

- Hazardous
301 - 500
- Very Unhealthy
201 - 300
- Unhealthy
151 - 200
- Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
101 - 150
- Moderate
51 - 100
- Good
0 - 50
- No Data

[Explanation of Categories](#)

Air Quality Indices around Alaska on Monday evening (Image from Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation)

The AQI -- calculated based on the highest levels of any of four pollutants based on an EPA formula -- is currently at 344 at the A Street monitoring station in Fairbanks.



PM2.5 concentrations at the A Street monitoring station in over the last week (Data from Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation)

There are currently several fires burning outside of Fairbanks including the Shovel Creek Fire (11,731 acres), the Nugget Creek Fire (6,936 acres) and the Beaver Fire (4,812 acres).

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Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire Update for 7-9-19 2019

🕒 July 9, 2019 by [akfirepios](#) 🗨️ Comments Off on Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire Update for 7-9-19 2019

The Gila Las Cruces Type 3 Incident Management Team assumed command of the Beaver Fire (#390) this morning. This is in addition to the Ninetyeight Creek Fire (#391) which they have been managing since July 1. The team will also respond to any new fires within Fort Wainwright's Yukon Training Area.



Helirappeller Ben Dronen of the Wenatchee Valley Helirappellers prepares for a mission on the Ninetyeight Creek Fire while Pilot Bill Hansen checks conditions on the ground. Photo by Public Information Officer Shawn Bawden

The Ninetyeight Creek Fire is the smaller of the two incidents. It has been held to 69 acres since Sunday, but containment increased to 60% last night. Crews will continue to improve control

lines along the fire's perimeter, search for hot spots, and prepare to backhaul equipment that is no longer needed. There has been minimal fire activity for several days.

By contrast, the Beaver Fire has been burning actively and is expected to grow due to increasing temperatures and decreasing relative humidity. Today's planned actions include monitoring the fire's progress and behavior, assessing threats from potential fuels, and determining the right tactics for the conditions on the ground. The fire is primarily burning in a military impact area, where there is a known risk from unexploded ordnance, preventing response on the ground and by low-flying suppression aircraft.

Hot and dry conditions will continue through mid-week. Tuesday and Wednesday will be in the low to mid-80s and relative humidity will hover around 30%. Heavy smoke will continue to impact the Tanana Valley over the next two days.

Restrictions: A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect for the area over the Ninetyeight Creek Fire. The Alaska State Fire Marshal's office has suspended the sale and use of fireworks in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Smoke Forecast: <https://wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlooks/Alaska>

Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire Update, 7-11-19

🕒 July 11, 2019 by [akfirepios](#) 🗨️ Comments Off on Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire Update, 7-11-19

The **Beaver Fire (#390)** lessened in intensity yesterday but grew to 12,960 acres. The fire has not yet crossed the South Fork of the Chena River. Most of the fire's growth occurred on its southeast, east and northeast sides. On Thursday personnel will monitor the fire from the air and secure military sites in the Yukon Training Area. Incident managers are working closely with military officials, discussing options, contingencies and safety issues. The fire is burning predominantly in a military impact area where unexploded ordnance poses a known risk.

Firefighters on the **Ninetyeight Creek Fire (#391)** will spend Thursday securing containment lines and removing equipment that is no longer needed. Most resources will soon be pulled off this fire and held in reserve for responding to new fires in the Yukon Training Area or re-assigned to other wildfires. The Lassen Interagency Hotshot Crew will remain on the Ninetyeight Creek Fire until Sunday.

The National Weather Service has issued a **Red Flag Warning** from noon today to midnight on Friday. A Red Flag Warning means warm temperatures, very low humidity and stronger winds are expected to increase fire danger. The high temperature today is forecast to be 87 degrees, and relative humidity will be near 30%. Isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon may produce gusty and erratic winds.

Restrictions: A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect for the areas over the Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire.

Beaver Fire crosses South Fork of Chena River, no growth on Ninetyeight Creek Fire

🕒 July 12, 2019 by [akfirepios](#) 🗨️ Comments Off on Beaver Fire crosses South Fork of Chena River, no growth on Ninetyeight Creek Fire

The **Beaver Fire (#390)** is still moving to the east/southeast and crossed the South Fork of the Chena River yesterday. Three small spot fires (totaling less than 1 acre) on the river's south bank were showing minimal activity, and a helicopter was used to drop water on hot spots. Incident managers are continually looking for opportunities to lessen the fire's impacts to military missions and values at risk. Due to the fire's movement, Brigadier Road east of the intersection of Johnson Road is closed to ensure firefighter and public safety.

The National Weather Service has issued a **Red Flag Warning** until midnight today. A Red Flag Warning means warm temperatures, low humidities, and strong winds are expected to combine to produce an increased risk of fire danger. Scattered thunderstorms are forecasted, but due to frequent lightning strikes and dry fuels, new fire starts are possible.

The **Ninetyeight Creek Fire (#391)** continued to hold at 69 acres and 75% containment. Yesterday three crews assigned to the fire moved to the incident's command post where they will either be on standby to respond to new fires in the Yukon Training Area or re-assigned to other incidents. The Lassen Interagency Hotshot Crew will remain on the Ninetyeight Creek Fire.

Closure: Brigadier Road east of the intersection of Johnson Road is closed. Military Police from Fort Wainwright will staff the closure to ensure firefighter and public safety.

Restrictions: A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect for the areas over the Beaver Fire and Ninetyeight Creek Fire.

Smoke Forecast: <https://wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlooks/Alaska>

Alaska Interagency Fire Information Line: 907-356-5511

Email: 2019.afs.fires@gmail.com