

DOF Daily WildFire Update

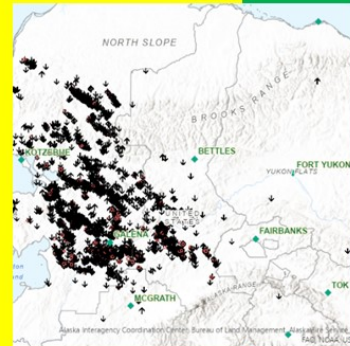
June 23, 2021

2021 Alaska Wildland Fire Numbers

As of Wednesday, June 23



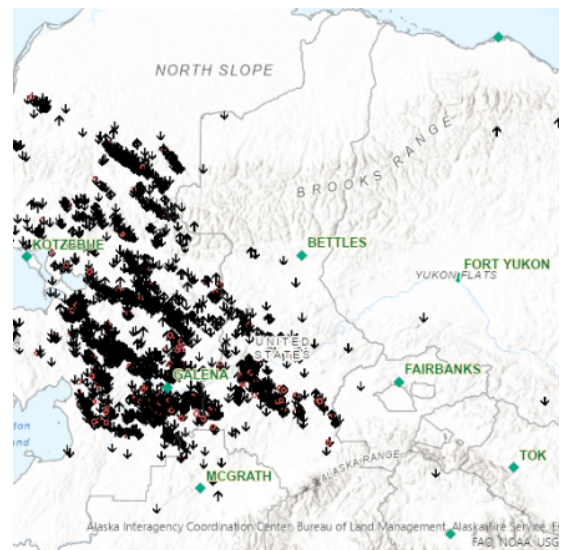
- **Number of wildfires to date: 244**
- **Estimated acres burned statewide to date: 40,084**
- **New fires yesterday: 13**
- **Current active fires: 65**
- **Current number of staffed fires: 12**
- **Personnel assigned to fires: 491**
- **Human-caused fires to date: 164**
- **Lightning-caused fires to date: 67**
- **Natural-caused fires to date: 5**
- **Undetermined fire causes to date: 8**



This map from the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center shows where the bulk of the 3,823 lightning strikes in Alaska and neighboring territories fell on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.

Quick Hits

- More than 4,900 lightning strikes detected across Alaska on Tuesday, with the largest concentration in Northwest Alaska. The strikes ignited at least 13 new fires in the Galena Zone and generated 23 new fire reports that fire managers with the BLM Alaska Fire Service are following up on today to determine if there are additional fires.
- Red Flag Warnings in effect from noon to 9 p.m. today and tomorrow for Deltana and Tanana Flats (Delta Junction), Denali and the eastern Alaska Range due to high winds, warm temperatures and low relative humidity. Southeast winds of 10-20 mph with gusts to 30 mph are forecast today and those winds will intensify tomorrow with sustained winds of 15-25 mph and gusts to 4 mph. Relative humidities will be in the low 20 percent range with temperatures ranging from 70 to 82 degrees. Winds will taper off in the evening tonight but pick back up tomorrow.
- Burn suspensions in effect for both Fairbanks and Delta Junction areas due to hot, dry conditions, forecasted high winds and limited firefighting resource availability.



Alaska Interagency Coordination Center
Map showing lightning strikes detected as of 10:15 p.m.

- We are currently utilizing five L-48 crews brought up on 30-day assignments to support fires throughout Alaska. Due to national fire activity NICC (National Interagency Coordination Center), is reviewing the length of that commitment and may recall the assigned crews to high priority incidents.
- The Alaska Fire Service has a Lower 48 Type 3 incident management team prepositioned in Fairbanks that is available if needed.
- Nationally we are in a Preparedness Level 4 (out of 5) which is much earlier than normal. Shortages of critical resources and widespread fire danger are the primary drivers for the PL.
- The McGrath tanker base which supports western Alaska remains closed due to runway construction. DOF is working with DOT on a lease agreement to set up a portable tanker base at the Aniak airport.
- All agency and contract crews are either assigned or on mandatory days off including all available EFF crews.
- DOF Areas north of the Alaska Range are keeping an eye out for lightning holdovers from lightning strikes during the past week. A holdover fire or sleeper fire can smolder below the surface of the ground for a substantial amount of time until temperatures warm, vegetation dries, and winds breathe life into the dormant fire.
- A group of four Fire Boss water scoopers and a Bird Dog (lead plane) from Alberta ordered through the Northwest Compact for Alaska fire support has arrived and will be based in Fairbanks due to high fire activity in that region. The scooper group should be available for state and federal fires sometime today.
- The Tok tanker base is closed through June 23 for maintenance.
- DOF is running short on tanker base managers and may have to shut down select tanker bases if personnel brought up from the L48 time out and cannot be replaced.

Haystack Fire (#196)

Acres: Estimated 924

Containment: 66%

Personnel assigned: 259

Resources assigned: 2 Type 1 hotshot crews; 4 Type 2 initial attack crews; 3 Type 2 crews; 2 medium helicopters; 4 Type 6 engines; 4 bulldozers; 1 water tender; 1 skidgeon; 101 overhead personnel.

Location: 18 miles N of Fairbanks

Weather: Hot, dry and breezy with high temperatures in the low 80s.

- No new fire growth and 18% increase in containment. Fire size reduced by 3 acres due to more accurate mapping.
- Return to hotter, drier weather today could reveal hot spots or lightning holdovers and produce smoke in unburned pockets on interior of fire. Fire managers are optimistic that the work will withstand this upcoming weather trend. Lightning and thunderstorms are also expected throughout the week.
- High winds forecast to move in today and Thursday could test containment lines.
- 30-35 people attended a community meeting held Tuesday night in Haystack subdivision.
- Hotshot crews are focused on the southern fire edge. They will start on both the east and west edges and work towards the middle to tie in and complete their mop up, a distance of 8-10 miles. It will take firefighters several days to cover that much ground.

- Chena Hotshots arrived at fire on Tuesday to replace the North Star Crew, which demobed on Tuesday. White Mountain and Tanana Chiefs crews will return to fire tomorrow after days off.
- A portion of an old fuel break constructed during the 2004 Boundary Fire by DOF was instrumental in stopping the northeast progression of the Haystack Fire.
- Zero injuries or accidents reported on the fire.

Straight Creek Fire (#244)

Acres: 24

Containment: 50%

Personnel assigned: 38

Resources assigned: 2 Type 2 crews (Yukon and Fairbanks #1); 3 helicopter crew members and a staging manager.

Location: 26 miles SW of Fairbanks, 2 miles north of Parks Highway near Mile 325 behind Skinny Dick's bar.

Weather: Hot, dry and breezy today with high temperatures in the low 80s. Similar conditions expected tomorrow.

- No new growth; containment increased from 20 to 50%.
- No significant fire behavior on perimeter of fire. No open flames; just smoldering and creeping.
- Hose line and dozer around entire fire perimeter.
- Crews mopped up 50 feet in from the heel of the fire toward the head.
- Crews are working on cooling a green island that is still burning in the interior of the fire. The interior island had some single tree torching on Tuesday and crews are mopping up the perimeter of that island.

About Mountain Fire #193

Acres: 2,135

Containment: 84%

Personnel assigned: 73

Location: 6 miles south of McGrath along the east bank of Kuskokwim River.

Resources assigned: Pioneer Peak Hotshot Crew, 8 smokejumpers filling critical overhead positions, 2 Type 2 contract crews, 3 boat operators, 1 helibase manager, 1 fire medic, 1 type 3 finance section chief, 1 type 3 plans section chief, 1 type 2 logistics second chief.

Weather: Chinook winds 20-25 mph with temps in the mid 70s.

- No new fire growth; containment increased from 80 to 84%.
- Two smokejumpers are hiking in remote and higher areas today utilizing packrafts as necessary to access heat in sloughs and beaver ponds. These difficult to reach areas of lingering heat will be tested by the 20-30 mph Chinook winds predicted for tomorrow.

- The jumpers will also serve as lookouts throughout the shift providing early notification in the event that the winds cause any flare ups.
- Pioneer Peak Hotshots will be moved to the heel of the fire to address remaining areas of heat along the line.
- Two T2 hand crews have reached their goal of mopping up 300 feet in from the perimeter in the Division they are working in and will be released back to McGrath today for reassignment or demobilization.
- An Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) with operator has been ordered and will arrive to provide key aerial mapping for hot spots and areas of concern. These areas will be addressed by remaining resources over the weekend and into the early week. The use of the drone reduces risk and exposure to fire crews.
- Local boat operators are transporting food and equipment to crews camping and working along the Kuskokwim River.
- Structure protection equipment has been left around cabins and outbuildings in Cranberry Ridge subdivision 3 miles north of the fire but there are no personnel assigned.

George Lake Fire #225

Acres: 6

Containment: 85%

Personnel assigned: 20

Resources Assigned: Baker River Hotshot Crew

Location: 40 miles SE of Delta Jct

Weather: Hot, dry and windy. Red Flag Warning issued from noon to 9 p.m. for today and tomorrow. Sustained winds of 15-25 mph with gusts to 40.

- No fire growth and or containment increase.
- No smokes or heat found on fire Tuesday; full containment expected today.
- Fire was called controlled at 12:30 p.m. yesterday.
- Crew is prepping backhaul and preparing for demobilization later today.

North Fork #216

Containment: 100%

Acres: 3.2

Personnel: 0

Resources assigned: All personnel demobilized today.

Location: 20 miles NE of Nikolai.

Weather: Chinook winds 20-25 mph with temps in the mid 70s.

- All hose pulled off fire on Tuesday.
- No heat or smoke found during final grid yesterday.

- All fire personnel are in the process of being demobilized from fire today.

Fire Information Resources

- www.akfireinfo.com – Word Press blog with daily fire updates and other information
- <https://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/aicc/sitreport/AICC%20Situation%20Report.pdf> – Daily Alaska wildfire situation report from Alaska Interagency Coordination Center with daily rundown of fire activity in Alaska.
- <https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/index.html#/a23a625f4d18412ea13cffeefcbe7f5e> - Alaska Interagency Coordination Center dashboard with all sorts of nifty fire information.
- <https://fire.ak.blm.gov/> - Alaska Interagency Coordination Center
- <https://www.facebook.com/AK.Forestry> - Division of Forestry Facebook page. All info that is posted to akfireinfo is posted here as well, along with other fire information. Info from both DOF and AFS is posted here.
- <https://www.facebook.com/BLMAFS> -BLM Alaska Fire Service Facebook page. All info that is posted to akfireinfo is posted here as well, along with other fire information. Info from both DOF and AFS is posted here.
- <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf> - Daily national situation report from the National Interagency Coordination Center with a rundown of fire activity in all regions of the United States and Canada.