



DOF Daily WildFire Update

July 19, 2021

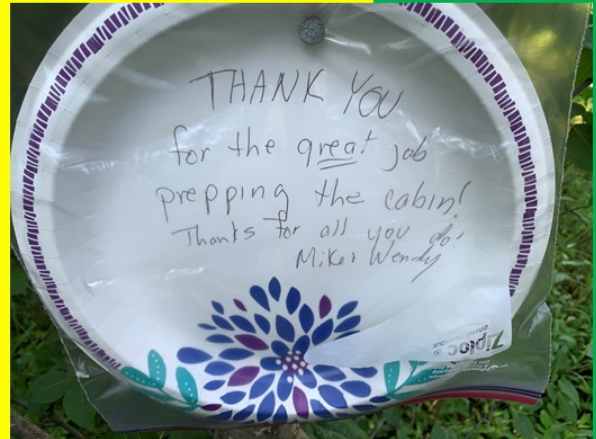


2021 Alaska Wildland Fire Numbers

As of Monday, July 19



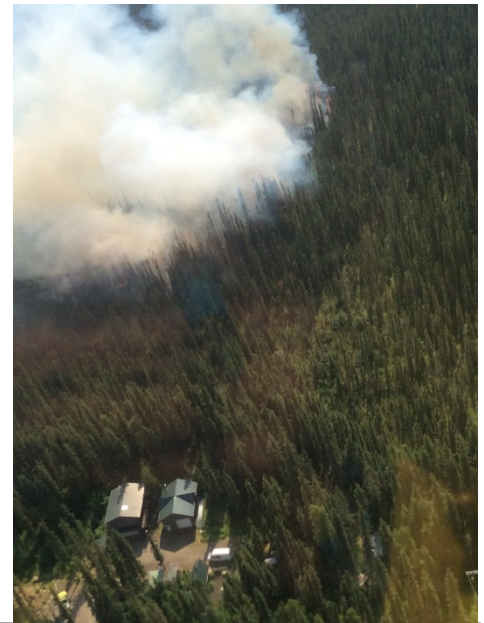
- **Number of wildfires: 314**
- **Acres burned statewide: 179,228**
- **New fires yesterday: 2**
- **Current active fires: 38**
- **Current number of staffed fires: 2**
- **Personnel assigned to fires: 55**
- **Human-caused fires: 208**
- **Lightning-caused fires: 86**
- **Natural-caused fires: 6**
- **Undetermined fire causes: 14**



A "Thank You" sign on a paper plate left by cabin owners for firefighters on the Munson Creek Fire. Ira Hardy/Alaska DNR-Division of Forestry

Wildfire activity

- **Yankovich Road Fire (Fairbanks Area), 3.5 acres, reported on Friday in west Fairbanks, undetermined cause, 0 personnel.**
 - Fairbanks Area Forestry made a great catch on the Yankovich Road Fire in west Fairbanks on Friday. The fire was on University of Alaska Fairbanks land just a mile or two from the main campus and only about one-half mile from dozens of residences along Yankovich Road. The fire was estimated at 5 acres when it was reported by a pilot at 2:30 p.m. and quickly put up a large, 500-foot smoke column that prompted multiple calls to the Northern Forestry Dispatch Center. The fire was only 100 yards south of the nearest structure. Fairbanks Area deployed four Fire Boss water scoopers



An aerial shot of the Yankovich Road Fire during initial attack on Friday. Elsie Norback/Fairbanks Area

based on Fort Wainwright, the Fairbanks Area exclusive-use helicopter and two other helicopters to make water drops while eight smokejumpers and four crews were mobilized to the fire. The aggressive aerial attack knocked down the fire until ground troops arrived at 4:30 p.m. Alaska State Troopers were called in for traffic control and Yankovich Road was closed down for about 4 hours to ensure a safe working environment for firefighters. Multiple engines from local fire departments also arrived on scene to assist with structure protection, if needed. Crews were able to get a hose line around the fire by the end of the night and one crew camped out on the fire overnight to monitor it. Crews returned the next day to mop up the fire. It was declared fully contained at approximately 3.5 acres and placed in monitor status at about 8 p.m. Saturday. The cause of the fire is undetermined and under investigation.

- **Munson Creek Fire (Fairbanks Area), 43,476 acres, discovered June 18, lightning caused, 44 personnel**
 - Transitioned to a smaller Type 4 incident management team on Saturday with incident commander Ernest Prax taking charge. The fire continues to grow to the east deeper into Limited protection and is being monitored by ground and air. Engines are patrolling along Chena Hot Springs Road and the White Mountain Crew is stationed at lookout points south and east of Chena Hot Springs. Fire activity increased significantly Monday afternoon and the fire was putting 4-5 significant smoke columns as a result of green pockets burning in the interior of the fire east and south of Chena Hot Springs. Two engines were posted at Chena Hot Springs Resort due to the increased activity and a helicopter reconnaissance flight was ordered to gauge activity and determine if bucket work was needed to cool hotspots.

- **Milepost 66 Fire (Kenai/Kodiak Area), Mile 66 Sterling Highway, reported on Saturday, 0.3 acres, human caused**

- Fire was reported near Mile 66 of the Sterling Highway at around 5 p.m. Saturday. Forestry personnel responded to the scene and took quick action to suppress the fire within a half hour. The fire was gridded for hotspots and none were found but Alaska State Troopers called Kenai Interagency Dispatch Center at 9:15 p.m. to report smoke visible at the fire. The duty officer was notified and an engine was sent to the fire, arriving at 10:15 p.m.



Firefighters from the Kenai/Kodiak Area station grid the Milepost 66 Fire for hot spots on Saturday.

Firefighters gridded the fire and found two hotspots that were suppressed. They

departed the fire at 10:45 p.m. The fire is believed to be human caused and there was evidence of a freshly blown tire in the area where the fire started. The fire remains under investigation.

Alaska Incident Management Team

- Two days after it became available as a national resource, the Alaska Type 1 Incident Management Team commanded by DOF Fire Program Manager Norm McDonald has been ordered on a preposition order to Boise, Idaho to assist with management of large fires in the Lower 48. The Alaska IMT is scheduled to fly out of Alaska early Tuesday afternoon. The jet will pick up 24 IMT members in Fairbanks and then land in Anchorage to pick up another 20 IMT staff, as well as the Pioneer Peak Interagency Hotshot Crew. The jet will land in Boise and both the IMT and Pioneer Peak Crew will receive their respective assignments. Stay tuned to see where both resources will be headed. IMT members living in the Lower 48 will mobilize with the team once it gets an assignment.

Alaska crew update

- As noted above, due to declining fire activity in Alaska and adequate resources to cover the State's needs, the **Pioneer Peak Interagency Hotshot Crew** was made available as a national resource on WHEN and has been ordered to preposition for a fire assignment in Boise, Idaho. They are the second Alaska crew to be made available for national assignments. Judging from the current level of activity level in the western U.S., the Pioneer Peak Crew shouldn't have to wait long before getting an assignment. The crew will be outfitted with rental trucks for transportation to and from assignments. We'll try to keep you posted as to what fires the crew is working on. Chances are good they will spend the better part of the next three months in the Lower 48.
- The BLM Alaska Fire Service **Chena Hotshots** left Alaska for the Lower 48 on Thursday and are currently assigned to the Green Ridge Fire in the Umatilla National Forest in northeast Oregon, which was listed at 1,569 acres with 15% containment as of Monday morning. The fire is being managed by a Pacific Northwest Type 2 IMT.
- The Fairbanks-based **White Mountain Type 2 Initial Attack Crew** is the only Alaska crew currently assigned to a fire in Alaska. The White Mountain Crew is assigned to the 43,XXX-acre Munson Creek Fire about 50 miles east of Fairbanks. They are the only crew on the fire, which is being managed by a Type 4 team from Fairbanks Area Forestry with Ernest Prax as incident commander. The crew is monitoring the fire from various lookout points.
- Here's a rundown of the state's remaining agency crews:
 - The DOF **Gannett Glacier Type 2 Initial Attack Crew** is available for initial attack from their home unit at Mat-Su Area Forestry.

- The **Midnight Sun Interagency Hotshot Crew** is available for initial or extended attack from their home unit at the BLM Alaska Fire Service on Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks.
- The **Tanana Chiefs Type 2 Initial Attack Crew** is assigned to project work in Tok and is available for initial attack.
- The Soldotna-based **Yukon Type 2 Crew** is on a preposition order in Delta Junction.
- The **Fairbanks #1 Type 2 Crew** (EFF) is on a preposition order for Fairbanks Area Forestry.
- The **DOF UAF Nanooks Type 2 Crew** is on days off after coming off the Munson Creek Fire east of Fairbanks on Sunday.
- The BLM Alaska Fire Service **North Star Type 2 Crew** is on days off after coming off the Dry Creek Fire south of Manley Hot Springs.
- Two BLM AFS Type 2 crews – **Scorched Earth Services K-River 1 and Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments** - are available for assignment.

Alaska Weather

- LIGHTNING

- There were over 2,100 lightning strikes recorded in Alaska on Sunday, the most lightning activity in a couple of weeks. The lightning spanned a region that covered west of the Alaska Range into the Yukon Territory. DOF Area offices in Tok and Copper River Basin were planning detection flights on Monday to search out any possible new starts from the lightning.

- SHORT-TERM FORECAST

- Watch for starts from yesterday's lightning outbreak over the southern mainland, though deeper fuels not dry enough to support large fire growth.
- Wet thunderstorms in western and southern mainland Alaska today, fewer lightning strikes than yesterday.
- Hottest weather moving north to the Interior.
- Not too dry despite the heat: humidity generally at or above 30%

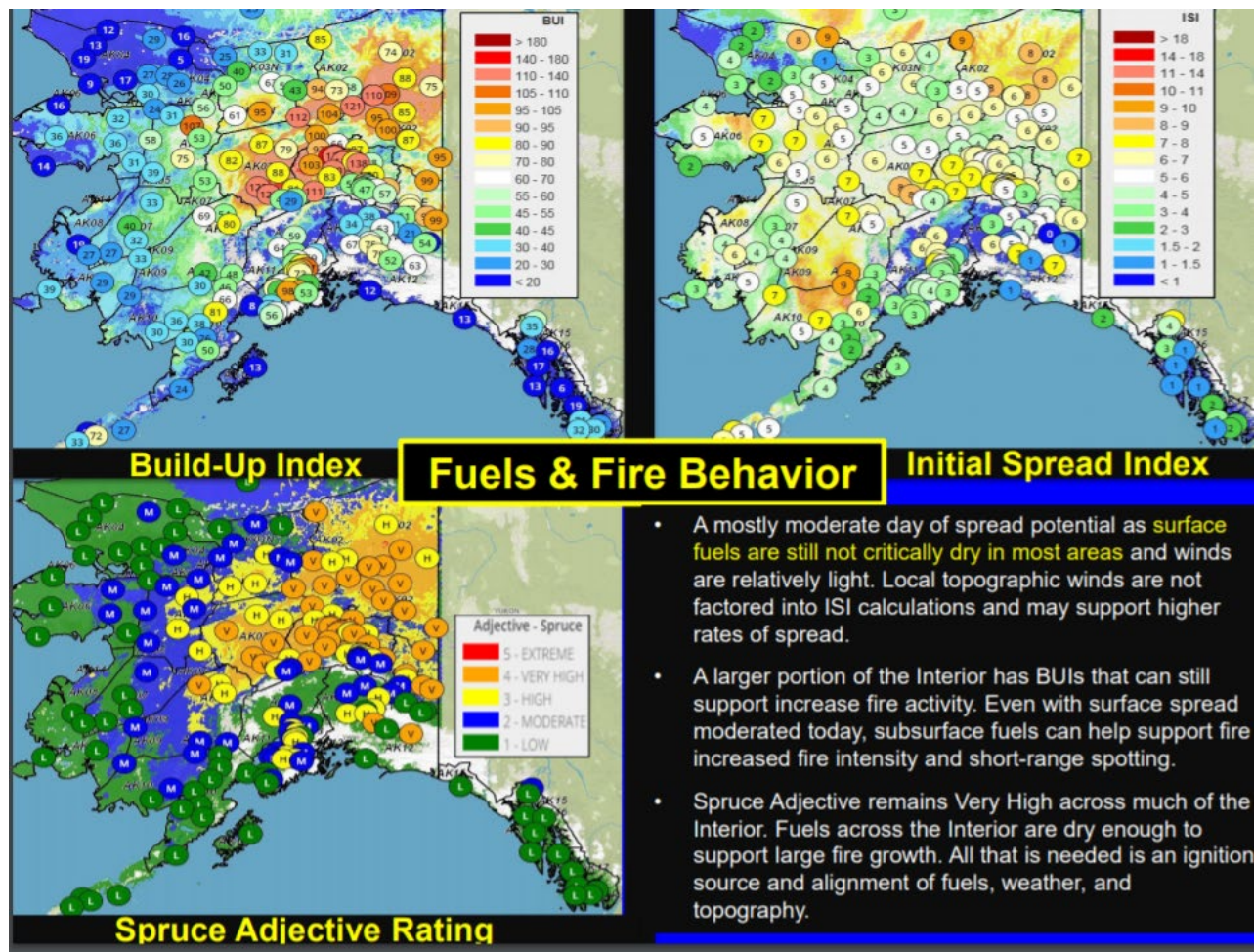
- LONG-RANGE FORECAST

- Thunder moving into the Interior Tuesday and Wednesday.
- South winds 15 to 25 mph through Alaska Range passes Tuesday but no Red Flag with current humidity levels.
- Cooler, windier, and wetter in the west and along the North Gulf Coast and Panhandle for the next several days and possibly into the weekend. Warmer (but not hot) with isolated thunder for the Interior.

Fire danger/potential

- A high-pressure ridge remains anchored over northwest Canada, bringing warm, dry conditions to the eastern Interior. Highest fire danger remains in the eastern Interior where hot, dry conditions continue drying the deeper fuels that promote large fire spread and resistance to control. Relative humidity has been in the 30+ percent range, however, which tends to keep

fire activity low. Despite recent record temperatures in Anchorage, conditions in Southcentral and Southwest Alaska are damper and drier than the eastern Interior.



Lower 48 situation

- The wildfire situation remains dire in the Lower 48 with a shortage of firefighting resources impacting several states including Idaho, Washington, Oregon and California. As of Monday morning, there were 14 Type 1 Incident Management Teams and 21 Type 2 IMTs assigned to fires in California, Colorado,

Active Incident Resource Summary

GACC	Incidents	Cumulative Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel	Change in Personnel
AICC	3	76,522	8	7	1	109	-26
NWCC	19	484,952	150	450	46	6,749	-358
ONCC	7	174,073	98	224	31	4,018	-384
OSCC	4	13,840	16	79	10	1,093	-98
NRCC	41	262,622	94	302	36	5,050	405
GBCC	10	48,392	33	83	20	1,534	331
SWCC	15	152,764	3	16	4	208	0
RMCC	4	12,510	10	24	11	615	-35
EACC	2	146	5	7	2	261	12
SACC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	105	1,225,822	417	1,192	161	19,637	-153

Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, There are nearly 20,000 firefighting personnel assigned to fires in 11 states, including 417 crews, 1,192 engines and 161 helicopters. See the charts below for a breakdown of how many personnel and resources are assigned to each Geographic Area. Go to <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf> for more information on the national situation.

- As of yesterday, a total of 35,086 fires had burned 2,537,744 acres in the Lower 48 and Alaska this year. That compares to the 10-year average of 31,774 fires and 3,347,133 acres. Here are the acreage totals by GACC
 - Southwest Area (Arizona and New Mexico) – 626,334 acres
 - Pacific Northwest Area - (Washington and Oregon) – 525,820 acres
 - Southern Area (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina) – 337,741 acres
 - Northern Rockies Area - (Idaho and Montana) – 332,725 acres
 - Alaska Area – 178,754 acres
 - Northern California Area – 163,688 acres
 - Great Basin Area (Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Utah) – 138,139 acres
 - Rocky Mountain Area (Colorado, Wyoming) – 126,936 acres
 - Eastern Area – 73,851 acres
 - Southern California Area -33,743 acres