



DOF Daily WildFire Update

July 22, 2021



2021 Alaska Wildland Fire Numbers

As of Thursday, July 22



- **Number of wildfires: 329**
- **Acres burned statewide: 189,315**
- **New fires yesterday: 7**
- **Current active fires: 47**
- **Current number of staffed fires: 2**
- **Personnel assigned to fires: 56**
- **Human-caused fires: 213**
- **Lightning-caused fires: 95**
- **Natural-caused fires: 6**
- **Undetermined fire causes: 15**



The Black Hills Fire (#366) discovered yesterday approximately 56 miles southeast of Tok near Jatahmund Lake. Willy Nelson/Alaska DNR-Division of Forestry

Fire activity

Munson Creek #235, Fairbanks Area

- 41 personnel assigned to the fire.
- Last estimate based on helicopter recon flight was 47,500 acres but satellite imagery puts the fire at 49,508 acres.
- There is a good chance the Munson Creek Fire will assume the title of the largest wildfire in Alaska this season in the next day or two. It will likely overtake the 50,859-acre Dry Creek Fire.
- Firefighters were helicoptered into a mining camp on Ottertail Creek on Wednesday to turn pumps and sprinklers on to protect a cabin, miscellaneous other structures and heavy equipment on the site. The helicopter also did bucket work around the mining camp and cabin to protect them from burning over. Firefighters returned today to check on the camp and all structures were intact. They topped off the fuel



tanks in the pumps and kept them running to keep the area around the cabin and other values wet down.

- Fire activity has picked up in the area of Bear Paw Butte a little less than 1 mile east of Chena Hot Springs Road near Mile 53 but fire is still holding up in a creek drainage and riparian area.
- Fire perimeter continues to expand into Limited protection area on the north and east.
- Estimated cost to date is \$3 million.

Black Hills Fire #366, Tok Area

- Burning in Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge about 56 miles SE of Tok. Located in a Limited protection area.
- Fire grew significantly in last 24 hours, exploding from an estimated 60 acres Wednesday to 2,500 acres by Thursday afternoon.
- The fire has burned onto an Native allotment with a cabin about 2 ½ miles NE of where the fire started. Tanana Chiefs and Gannett Glacier crews are being flown in today to protect the cabin and allotment. First priority is safety of the firefighters, followed by cabin protection and allotment protection.
- Two Fire Boss water scoopers were making water drops on the fire at 6 p.m. to protect the cabin and allotment.
- Tanker 540 was enroute to the fire to assist with cabin and allotment protection as of 6 p.m.



Olympia Creek Fire #365, Fairbanks Area

- Reported late Tuesday night in Limited protection area approx. 40 miles NE Fairbanks and 15 miles NW of Munson Creek Fire. Fire is about 9 miles S of the Steese Hwy at Mile 69 and 13 miles E of the Steese Hwy at Mile 54.
- No suppression action taken at this time.
- Three cabins within 2-4 miles of the fire. Closest cabin is about 2 ½ miles NE of the fire.

Alaska IMT headed to the Bootleg Fire in Oregon

The Alaska Type 1 Incident Management Team will be taking over the largest wildfire in the United State this summer when it assumes command of the Bootleg Fire in Oregon on Tuesday, July 27. The Alaska IMT traveled to Boise, Idaho on a preposition order on Tuesday and were told on Thursday they would be headed to the 399,359-acre Bootleg Fire burning in the Fremont-Winema National Forest in southern Oregon.

The Team will be inbriefed on Friday at the incident command post in Klamath Falls and then shadow the PNW 2 Type 1 IMT on Saturday, Sunday and Monday before assuming command on Tuesday. The AK IMT will have its hands full. While containment on the fire is now reported to be 38%, there were 2,359 personnel working on the fire as of Thursday evening, including 49 crews, 199 engines and 20

helicopters. The fire has burned 184 structures and estimated cost as Thursday morning was \$41.5 million, making it the most expensive fire in the U.S. this season.

In addition to the operational and logistical workload with the massive number of personnel, the fire reported Thursday that nine personnel working on the fire have tested positive for COVID-19. The two IMTs managing the fire are working closely with local public health officials and the Oregon Health Authority. Due to the number of positive cases, the outbreak will be reported to OHA as a workplace outbreak and updates on the number of positive cases associated with this outbreak will be included in OHA's COVID-19 weekly report, which is issued every Wednesday. Individuals who test positive are quarantined away from the fire camp.

DOF helps out Canada with retardant drops in Yukon

Like a good neighbor, DOF is there. The Division of Forestry responded to a request for assistance from the Yukon Territory on Wednesday by making three retardant drops on a fire near Dawson City. DOF Air Attack Officer Tim Whitesell snapped the picture at right of Tanker 540's first drop on the fire.



The State of Alaska has a cross-border "splash and dash" agreement with Canada to provide aerial assistance with wildfire suppression, if resources are available. Tanker 540 and lead plane ASM A4 made the 1-hour flight to Dawson and dropped three loads of retardant around the Bell Creek Fire burning about 12 miles southwest of Dawson. The tanker and lead plane flew back across the border to the Tanacross Tanker Base to reload and refuel following the first drop and the tanker made two more drops to help buy more time for the Yukoners to get ground forces in place. ASM A4 also served as the lead plane for a Yukon Electra P3 air tanker that was making drops on the fire (photo at right by Tim Whitesell).



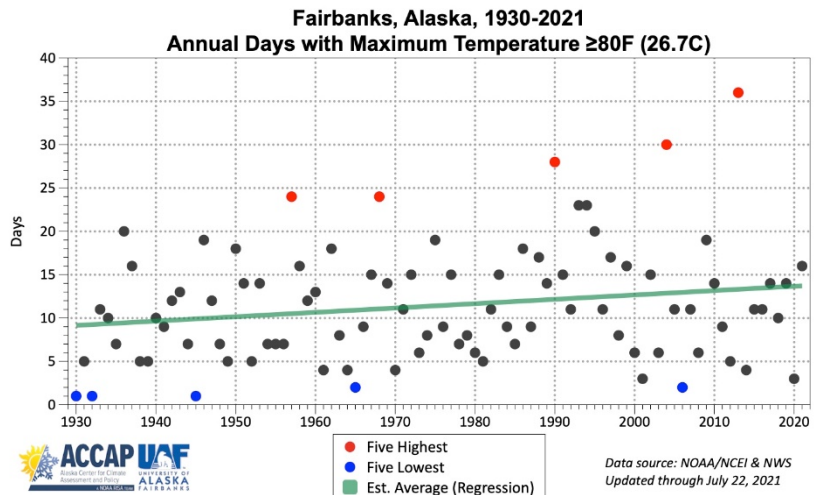
At last report, the Bell Creek Fire was approximately 37 acres. The Yukon Protective Services' wildland fire management division recorded 17 new wildfires on Wednesday across central and southern Yukon as a result of more than 3,800 lightning strikes. Nine of those new lightning strikes were in the Dawson district. In the last 3 days, a total of 33 new lightning-caused fires have been identified in the Yukon.

Eastern Interior continues to bake

The high temperature at Fairbanks International Airport as of 4 p.m.

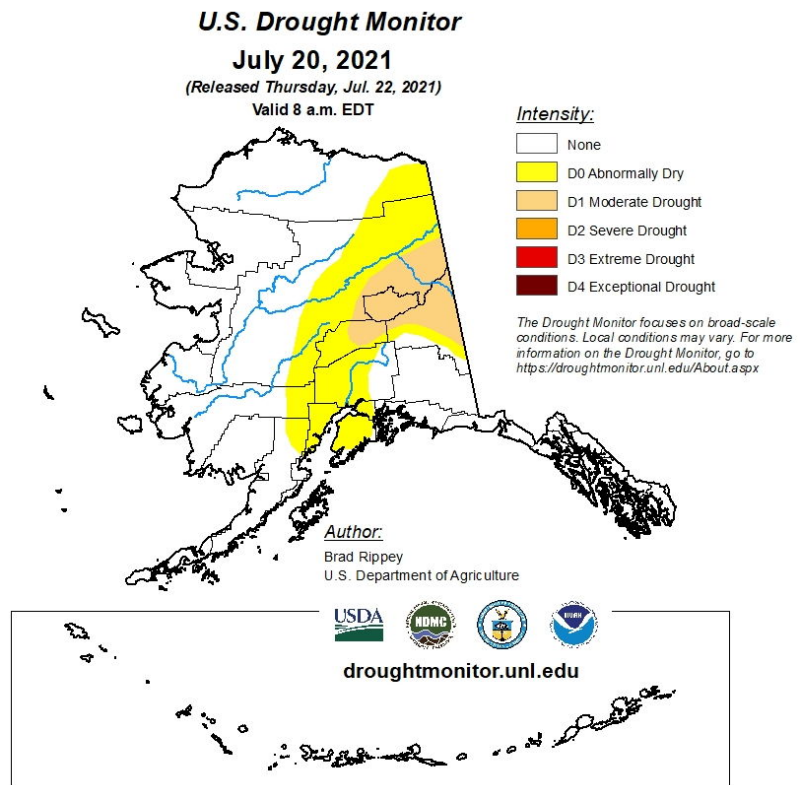
Thursday was 82 degrees, making this the 11th day this month and 4th day in a row the temperature in Fairbanks has hit 80 or higher. The temperature in Fairbanks has hit 80 degrees or higher nine of the past 11 days. It also brings the total number of days with an 80-degree or higher temperature in Fairbanks this summer to 16. As you can see from the graph to the right, there is lots of variability from year to year but

the trend is definitely moving to more hot days. Last year, there were only three days with an 80-degree or higher temperatures and two of those were in May. There were no 80-degree days in July last summer.



Parts of Interior now experiencing "moderate drought"

Due to hot weather and lack of rain for the past month, a portion of the central and eastern Interior, including all of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, has moved into "moderate drought" in this week's U.S. Drought Monitor analysis. The deeper duff fuels continue to dry, contributing to very high and even some extreme Buildup Indexes throughout much of the eastern Interior. Deeper drying in the duff layer allows fires to burn deeper and makes them more resistant to control and extinguishment. Firefighters have to dig deeper to find hotspots and it takes more water to penetrate the deeper fuels.



National Situation Report for July 22

National Preparedness Level 5

Initial attack activity: Light (173 fires)

New large incidents: 4

Large fires contained: 3

Uncontained large fires: *** 63

Area Command teams committed: 0

NIMOs committed: 1

Type 1 IMTs committed: 15

Type 2 IMTs committed: 18

Nationally, there are 30 fires being managed under a strategy other than full suppression.

***Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

Active Incident Resource Summary							
GACC	Incidents	Cumulative Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel	Change in Personnel
AICC	3	80,546	8	8	1	106	-2
NWCC	17	624,398	156	474	50	7,244	290
ONCC	5	236,024	86	379	23	4,816	80
OSCC	5	16,023	30	24	12	815	265
NRCC	39	291,018	91	333	32	5,200	153
GBCC	14	78,781	48	136	38	2,296	191
SWCC	9	60,197	1	4	2	82	-4
RMCC	7	19,286	15	55	8	887	-34
EACC	2	146	5	6	2	273	-4
SACC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	101	1,406,420	440	1,419	168	21,719	935

Fires and Acres Year-to-Date (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIRES	0	87	0	0	211	11	309
	ACRES	0	130,483	0	0	55,217	5	185,705
Northwest Area	FIRES	147	173	21	3	1,427	289	2,060
	ACRES	47,782	13,134	1,178	19	74,208	458,601	594,923
Northern California Area	FIRES	43	24	4	21	2,093	328	2,513
	ACRES	38	268	332	1	19,434	155,789	175,864
Southern California Area	FIRES	16	93	11	30	2,682	356	3,188
	ACRES	1,299	3,510	199	2,999	16,516	9,287	33,811
Northern Rockies Area	FIRES	1,027	58	19	3	937	525	2,569
	ACRES	73,528	2,640	2,520	20	165,473	114,271	358,453
Great Basin Area	FIRES	34	494	51	16	574	283	1,452
	ACRES	3,005	54,064	10	2,190	53,718	36,957	149,945
Southwest Area	FIRES	472	169	8	21	333	799	1,802
	ACRES	24,699	83,886	1,518	3,362	33,217	490,120	636,804
Rocky Mountain Area	FIRES	507	192	6	17	415	186	1,323
	ACRES	4,200	22,592	1,260	1,116	81,311	22,715	133,194
Eastern Area	FIRES	431	0	22	13	6,724	399	7,589
	ACRES	12,367	0	13,276	560	31,900	15,819	73,922
Southern Area	FIRES	376	0	53	36	12,334	371	13,170
	ACRES	28,685	0	11,844	8,321	261,775	27,347	337,975
TOTAL FIRES:		3,053	1,290	195	160	27,730	3,547	35,975
TOTAL ACRES:		195,604	310,580	32,138	18,590	792,773	1,330,913	2,680,600

Ten Year Average Fires (2011 – 2020 as of today)	32,466
Ten Year Average Acres (2011 – 2020 as of today)	3,482,174

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.