

DOF Daily WildFire Update

June 22, 2021

2021 Alaska Wildland Fire Numbers

As of Tuesday, June 22



- **Number of wildfires to date: 231**
- **Estimated acres burned statewide to date: 36,615**
- **New fires yesterday: 4**
- **Current active fires: 54**
- **Current number of staffed fires: 8**
- **Personnel assigned to fires: 455**
- **Human-caused fires to date: 164**
- **Lightning-caused fires to date: 54**
- **Natural-caused fires to date: 5**
- **Undetermined fire causes to date: 8**



The last load of personnel flown off the Loon Lake Fire arrives at the Kenai/Kodiak Area forestry station on Monday, June 21. The fire was placed into monitor status at 4:30 p.m. Howie Kent/DOF

Quick Hits

- 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.
- 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. Currently there are 79 large fires in the United States.
- Although conditions have moderated south of the range, fire weather is predicted for north of the range and interior Alaska. Gap winds could include gusts of up to 60 MPH in Delta Junction beginning Wednesday and deteriorating late Thursday.
- 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 arrived in Palmer Sunday and will be routed to Fairbanks today (weather permitting) to assist with active fires and new starts in the Interior.
- 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.



Members of the Alberta scooper group that arrived in Palmer on Sunday to assist on wildfires in Alaska. The group consists of four Fire Boss water-scooping aircraft and a Bird Dog plane to coordinate them.

Haystack Fire (#196)

Acres: Estimated 927

Containment: 48%

Personnel assigned: 259

Location: 18 miles N of Fairbanks

Weather: Return to warm and dry weather today with highs forecast in the low 80s. High winds expected Wednesday afternoon and into Thursday and Friday.

- No new fire growth and increase in containment of 17%. That should continue to go up.
- Return to hotter, drier weather today could reveal hot spots or lightning holdovers and produce smoke in unburned pockets on interior of fire.
- High winds forecast to move in Wednesday, Thursday and Friday could test containment lines.
- Public meeting scheduled tonight at 7 p.m. in laundromat in Haystack subdivision.
- Operational priorities today include searching for hot spots within the perimeter and monitoring for lightning holdover fires in the vicinity.
- Firefighters are constructing hand line in steep terrain that bulldozers cannot access. Approximately 40% of the line is constructed on the east side of the fire and 50% of the line on the north end should be complete by end of shift. Once those lines are complete, crews will begin mopping them up.
- The Snake River Valley crew will arrive today from Oregon, as the White Mountain Crew heads home to Fairbanks for much deserved rest.
- 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.

- The Moose Creek Cabin in the White Mountains National Recreation Area is closed due to proximity to the fire.
- Zero injuries or accidents reported on the fire.
- Resources assigned:

Straight Creek Fire (#244)

Acres: 24

Containment: 20%

Personnel assigned: 37

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: Return to warm and dry weather today with highs forecast in the low 80s. High winds expected Wednesday afternoon and into Thursday and Friday.

- No new growth; 20% containment achieved on Monday. 50% containment expected by end of shift today.
- Incident commander walked the perimeter today with a GPS to ground truth acreage and new acreage estimate is 24 acres, a 4-acre increase.
- Fairbanks #1 Type 2 crew flown in Monday to assist with suppression and mop up.
- Fire behavior described as smoldering and creeping.
- Crews will be working to get a hose line around the entire perimeter today to provide a water source for extinguishing hot spots. Goal today is mop up 50' inside the perimeter.

About Mountain Fire #193

Acres: 2,135

Containment: 80%

Personnel assigned: 80

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

Resources assigned: 14 smokejumpers, Pioneer Peak Hotshot Crew, 2 type 2 contract crews, 1 Type 3 helicopter.

Weather: Still damp and cool in southwest Alaska.

- No new fire growth; containment increased from 60 to 80%.
- Crews continue to access hard-to-reach areas of the fire on foot and with packrafts.
- Fire managers were able to see the fire from the air on Monday and assess the work done and to see what areas still need work.
- Continue to utilize local hire boat operators for transport of supplies and food to crews along the Kuskokwim River.
- 10 smokejumpers were demobilized on Monday and returned to Fairbanks to be available for initial attack on other new fires in Alaska.
- No current threat to McGrath.

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: Warming and drying today with return to 80-degree temperatures. High winds with gusts of 60-70 mph forecast starting late afternoon Wednesday and continuing through Friday.

- No fire growth and 5% increase in containment.
- Fire behavior described as smoldering.
- Fire received light precip on Monday to help keep fire activity minimal.
- Personnel continue gridding for hot spots around fire perimeter and no heat has been found to this point.
- Anticipate full containment by end of shift Wednesday.

Loon Lake Fire #180

Containment: 100%

Acres: 102

Personnel: 0

Location: Remote part of Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, 10 miles northeast of Sterling

Resources assigned: Fire being monitored by Kenai/Kodiak Area station.

Weather: Cool and overcast with possible precip.

- No new growth or fire activity with help from cloud cover and precip.
- Transitioned from Type 3 to Type 4 organization Saturday.
- UAF Nanooks Crew have completed mop up and is wrapping up some rehab items before being released from the fire today.
- Fire will be placed in monitor status once Nanooks are demobed.

North Fork #216

Containment: 100%

Acres: 3.2

Personnel: 23

Resources assigned: Mat-Su Type 2 Crew and six-person squad from Nikolai.

Location: 20 miles NE of Nikolai.

Weather: Cloudy and cooler today with possible precip.

- Crew gridded the fire for hot spots on Monday and no heat or smoke was found.

- A final grid will be conducted today and demobilization of resources is planned for Wednesday.

Winter Tail #194

Containment: 100%

Acres: 37

Personnel: 0

Location: 14 miles NE of Fairbanks, less than 1 mile from Ft. Knox Gold Mine.

Weather: Return to warm and dry weather today with highs forecast in the low 80s. High winds expected Wednesday afternoon and into Thursday and Friday.

- Fire was declared contained, controlled and out at 2:40 p.m. on Monday.
- Fairbanks #1 crew was demobilized and flown to assist with suppression of Straight Creek Fire south of Fairbanks.

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.