

**Daniel S. Sullivan**  
*Commissioner*  
550 W. 7th Ave., Ste 1400  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-269-8431



**Public Information Center**  
550 W. 7th Ave., Ste. 1260  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
[www.dnr.alaska.gov](http://www.dnr.alaska.gov)  
907-269-8400

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 29, 2012**

**CONTACT:**

**Division of Forestry, Mat-Su Area Forestry**  
**Norman McDonald, Fire Management Officer, 907-761-6302,**  
[norman.mcdonald@alaska.gov](mailto:norman.mcdonald@alaska.gov)

**Strong winds increase fire danger in the Mat-Su**

(Palmer, AK) – Dry, windy conditions in the Mat-Su area have led to multiple fires that have been caused by different sources including powerlines, structure fires, and a vehicle fire that have spread into the wildlands.

Firefighters from the Division of Forestry are responding to the Palmer Fishhook Fire which is burning north of Palmer, west of the Glenn Highway and Matanuska River, and is currently growing to the south. The fire started at approximately 2:00 p.m. and has required a significant response from emergency responders including fire departments (including Palmer, Butte, Central, West Lakes, Anchorage, Chugiak), Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services, Police, and Troopers. As of 3:00 p.m., the size of the fire was unknown. The grass fire has involved structures and has led to an evacuation in the Cedar Hills Subdivision.

The late-season fire danger warrants extra caution by residents. Low to no snowpack in areas of the Mat-Su, combined with strong winds, has elevated fire danger, especially in dry grass. Open burning is discouraged as the high winds and dry vegetation mean that any fire that starts may spread quickly. The National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for the Mat-Su Valley for high winds and low humidity, with the highest winds expected to be through Wasilla and Palmer. Trees may be blown over by wind gusts and residents are asked to keep an eye out for new fires starts and call 911 to report fires.

Because it is late November, fewer wildland firefighting resources are available. The Division of Forestry in Mat-Su is working with other Forestry Offices and the BLM Alaska Fire Service to increase forces. Cold temperatures have limited the use of Forestry engines for water delivery and firefighters are using backpacks with hoses and beaters to knock down flames.

Residents in the area may experience smoke; information about wildfire smoke is available at [http://dec.alaska.gov/air/smoke\\_qa.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/air/smoke_qa.htm).

For more information about the Palmer Fishhook Fire or other fires, contact Norman McDonald, Fire Management Officer, Mat-Su Forestry, 907-761-6302. Additional information sources include: Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 907-745-9577; Matanuska-Susitna School District <http://www.matsuk12.us>.

###