

July 8, 2008
Morning Highlights 2008-45

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ALASKA FIRE UPDATE



Smokejumpers in McGrath with the Porcupine Ridge Fire burning in the background.

NEW FIRES

Fifteen fires were reported burning in Limited Management Options, primarily in the western portion of the state. Limited Management Options recognize areas where the cost of suppression may exceed the value of the resources to be protected, the environmental impacts of fire suppression activities may have more negative impacts on the resources than the effects of the fire, or the exclusion of fire may be detrimental to the fire dependent ecosystem. Actions may be taken to keep a fire within the boundary of the Management Option or to protect identified higher value areas/sites, otherwise the fires are not staffed.

The Porcupine Ridge Fire (pictured above), burning near McGrath, grew from 15 acres to 150 acres in an hour. Firefighting aircraft, including a retardant tanker, and smokejumpers responded. A total of 16 loads of retardant were dropped. The fire grew to 300 acres. The fire did not get precipitation last night.

The .1-acre Little Bear Fire received heavy precipitation after smokejumpers and a water-dropping tanker responded. The North Star fire crew replaced the

smokejumpers and was then moved to the nearby Bear Creek Fire, which was 7 acres and burning to the west of the Parks Highway, near mile 267. The Bear Creek fire received an aggressive response as it was burning in black spruce and structures and a remote subdivision were threatened. Aerial support, retardant and water dropping tankers, and smokejumpers were dispatched. Precipitation helped the resources secure the perimeter. The North Star fire crew and initial attack squads of firefighters worked the fire through the night. There is no estimate of containment at this time.

Firefighters responded to three other small fires, two in the Fairbanks area and one in the southwest. One fire is out, one contained, and the status on the other is unknown as it was never located. Personnel will look for it today.

GENERAL SUMMARY

According to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, so far this year 288 fires have burned 27,675 acres statewide. Roughly 2/3 of the acres burned have been in the past week due to lightning-caused fires that have grown quickly due to wind and weather conditions. Currently 38 fires are active in Alaska, five are staffed.

Yesterday 4,354 lightning strikes were recorded statewide. A low pressure system is moving towards Alaska from Siberia. Combined with a weak ridge pushing up from the southern portion of the state, thunderstorms and precipitation continue to be in the forecast for large portions of the state.

ATTENTION PILOTS!

Two Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) are in place. Please check NOTAMS for the most current information. One is in place near Clear, the other near McGrath. Please see: <http://airspace.nifc.gov/mapping/nifc/>

NATIONAL SITUATION

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, wildland fire activity remains moderate throughout the country. Two new large fires were reported: one each in Arizona and Texas. Three fires were contained: one each in California, Texas, and Georgia. The military continues to be involved in the suppression efforts.

ALASKA RESOURCES IN THE L-48

Currently 638 people from State and Federal agencies throughout Alaska are on fire assignments in the Lower-48.

BURN PERMIT INFORMATION

Burn permits are issued by the Alaska Division of Forestry. To obtain burn permits and information about permitted burn restrictions, please contact your local Division of Forestry office:

<i>Fairbanks Area:</i>	907-451-2626
<i>Delta Area:</i>	907-895-2106
<i>Tok Area:</i>	907-883-5134
<i>Mat-Su District:</i>	907-761-6312

Kenai-Kodiak Area: 907-260-4269
Valdez/ Copper River Area: 907-822-5536
Northern Southeast Area (Skagway/ Haines): 907-766-2120

For additional State of Alaska burn permit information, please visit:

<http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn/>

*In Anchorage, please contact the Anchorage Fire Department's Wildfire Mitigation Office at 267-5020.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Alaska Interagency Coordination Center: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/>
 - Map of Current Fires: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/maps.php>
 - Situation Report: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/aicc/sitreport/current.pdf>
 - National Fire Situation: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>
- Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group- Education and Reference Materials: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php>
- Creating Defensible Space: <http://firewise.org/> and <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/06Firewise.pdf>
- Department of Transportation (Road Closure Info): (907) 451-2240, <http://511.alaska.gov/>
Alaska Division of Forestry (Burn Permit Info): <http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn/>
- Department of Environmental Conservation (Smoke Concerns): <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm>
- National Parks Service: <http://www.nps.gov/akso/Fire/firehome.htm>
- National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife: <http://www.fws.gov/fire/>
- USDA Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/>
- Anchorage Fire Department: www.muni.org/fire
- Temporary Flight Restriction Information: <http://airspace.nifc.gov/mapping/nifc/>
- Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov/>

AICC Morning Highlights is compiled by Maggie Rogers, Alaska Division of Forestry, and Doug Stockdale, Alaska Fire Service. Note: Fire acreage estimates frequently change due to more accurate mapping and other factors.

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