



Coffee Brief

Date: June 16, 2022

Preparedness Levels & Alaska Fire Activity

Alaska	
National	

Light Initial Attack Activity New Fires and Acres: 5 Fires for 103 Acres

There are currently 14 staffed fires with 508 personnel. Yesterday's large fire growth was 28,371 acres.

Sources: National and AICC Situation Report

Resources

Aviation within Alaska	
Jumpship	5
Air Tactical	18
Air Tankers	3
SEATS	2
Utility	6
T1 Helicopter	
T2 Helicopter	11
T3 Helicopter	6

Crews Committed within Alaska		
Type 1	1	AK
Type 2	5	AK
Type 2IA	3	AK
Module	1	AK
Type 1	10	L-48
Type 2		L-48
Type 2IA		L-48
Module		L-48
Total Crews	20	

AVIATION: 12 SMJ's available ~ 74 SMJ's committed.

CREWS: Nothing in addition to table.

MISCELLANEOUS:

AK IMT2 Black Team is currently in command of the Lime Complex.

AK IMT2 Green Team is currently in command of the East Fork incident.

Source: IROC Reports

Weather Summary

With short wave ridging, Southwest and the Northwest are on a warming and drying trend today and tomorrow. Temperatures will be heading back to the upper 60s and lower 70s and RHs will be below 30 percent again in some areas. Expect to see fire activity increase through Thursday evening.

Meanwhile, the eastern half of the state is in a significant warming trend under a larger high pressure system. Temperatures are forecast into the 70s with a few 80s for much of the central and eastern Interior through the week. With this somewhat disorganized ridge that sets up over the east, instability will abound. Thus the chance for afternoon showers and thunderstorms will exist for the next few days, with Friday seeing an influx of moisture to fuel a big uptick in storms. Today, wet thunderstorms are expected in much of the eastern half of the mainland with a focus from Fairbanks south to the Talkeetna Mountains.

Smoke is an issue for the western half of the state, and even as far east as Fairbanks, smoke is making for poor air quality. At this time, the pattern will continue to bring smoke into these areas, though a system moving in on Friday will start to move smoke out over the Bering instead of the Interior.

On Friday, low pressure advancing up the Aleutian Chain will begin to bring more moisture into first Southwest (Friday) and then South Central (Saturday), with more clouds, an increased chance for showers, cooler temperatures, and a change to southeasterly flow. The timing and extent of its impacts are still uncertain at this time. In the east, warm and dry with afternoon showers and thunderstorms will continue.

Source: Alaska 7-Day Outlook

Fuels/Fire Potential

Surface fuels continue to moderate in the Panhandle, while Copper River Basin is beginning to rebound. Much of South Central has received little rain in the last week, and many stations are showing that fine fuels are burnable. Mid and deeper duff layers there have continued to dry over the last week and BUIs in South Central and the Kenai are at Extreme values in many locations.

The most concerning fuels are in the central and eastern Interior. Surface fuels around the Yukon Flats are Extreme and expected to continue to be in the near future. Portions of western Alaska received moisture, dampening surface fuels, but the Y-K Delta is still dry. ISIs have increased in the northeast Interior and around Fairbanks.

The deeper duff layers continue to dry in the Interior, Southwest, and South Central. Many stations in these areas now have Buildup Index (BUI) values above 100, indicating that the deeper layers will easily contribute to wildfire behavior and lightning holdover potential. Many fires will be increasingly resistant to control. Three weeks of drying has made subsurface fuels across the Interior very flammable as we approach the solstice. BUI at St. Mary's near the East Fork fire is at all time record highs.

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Source: Alaska 7-Day Outlook

Fuels Status [Alaska Fire and Fuels Map](#)

A Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory has been issue for Alaska.

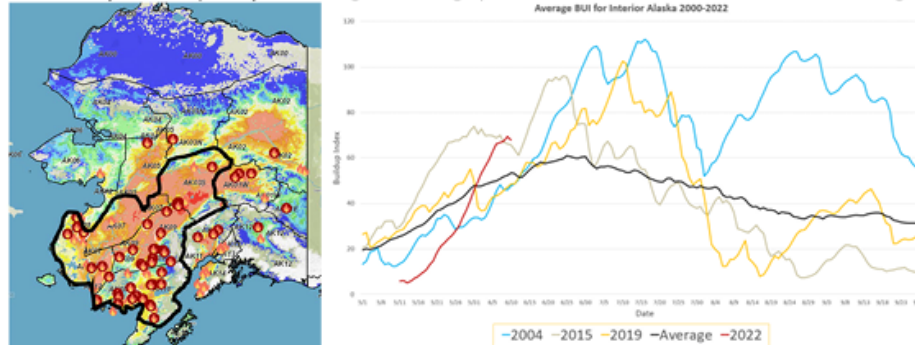
Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory Southwest and Central Interior Alaska

Valid: June 12 – June 25, 2022

Subject: Exceptional landscape flammability and widespread ongoing large fire growth.

Discussion: The Buildup Index (BUI) is the best indicator of seasonal severity and overall flammability of fuels in Alaska. It represents deeper drying in the duff layers and greater fuel availability. Large fire growth occurs from mid-June to mid-July surrounding the summer solstice when long days and rapid drying can produce elevated BUI levels. Southwest Alaska normally experiences shorter periods of high flammability as they are prone to intermittent rain due to marine influences. Beginning in the middle of May, southwest Alaska has experienced continued hot, dry, and windy conditions, drying out fuels, retarding green-up and producing significant large fire growth. Many fires in southwest Alaska have experienced exceptionally large fire growth over the last week, which is unusual for the area.

Difference from normal conditions: The attached graph shows the current 2022 BUI trend for the Interior of Alaska compared to other busy fire seasons. 2022 has been above average BUI since May 31, and higher than 2015 levels since June 6. Southwest Alaska has already experienced abnormally large fire growth for this time of year. Multiple days of wetting rain adding up to more than one inch will be needed for lasting relief.



Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:

- Spruce stands are extremely flammable, will ignite readily, exhibit rates of spread more than one mile per hour, torch, and spot prolifically up to ¼ mile or more, and exhibit intense crown fire behavior.
- Temperatures above 80 degrees and RH below 30% are important thresholds for rapid spread and crown fire behavior.
- Green fuels are stressed and encouraging spread into riparian areas and less flammable hardwood forests.

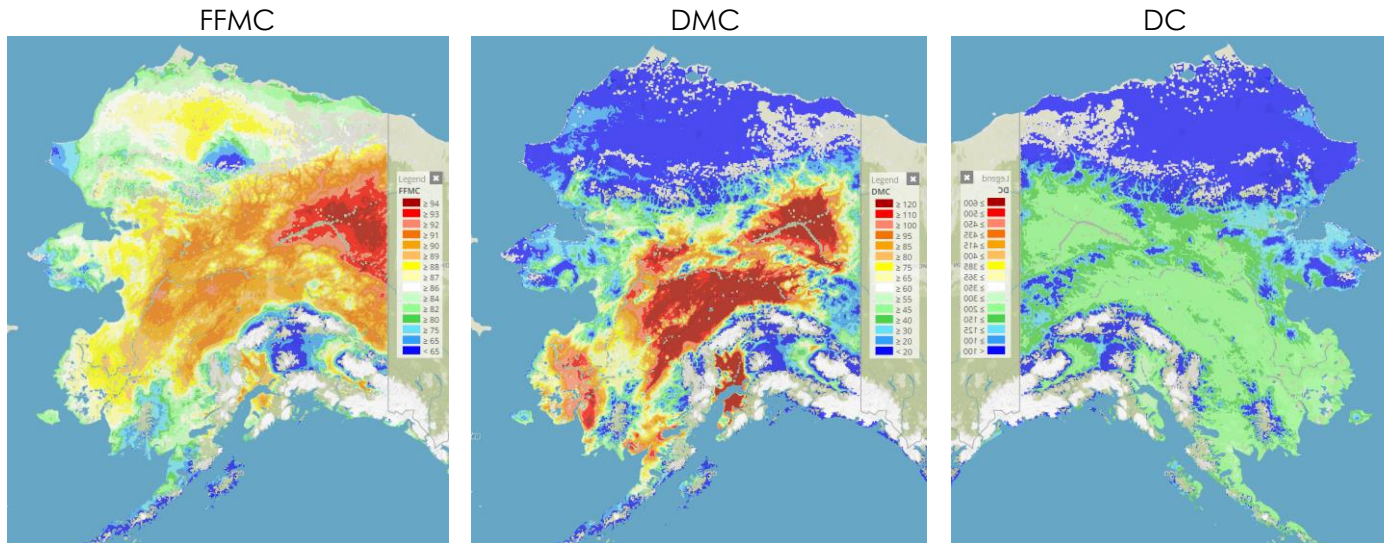
Mitigation Measures:

- Ensure that you can recognize hazardous fuel types including tundra that is exceptionally dry.
- Understand the triggers and thresholds for problem fire behavior.
- Monitor forecasts and indices to anticipate areas of increased flammability and extreme fire behavior.
- Maintain clear communications when working around active fires.

Area of Concern: Southwest Alaska, and the central Interior. Conditions over the next few weeks may spread to include a wider portion of Alaska.

Issued By: Alaska Interagency Coordination Center Predictive Services

Click on the following images for direct links to the maps.



For additional fuels information visit <https://akff.mesowest.org/>

Sources: AICC Predictive Services – Fuels/Fire Danger web page, Alaska Fire & Fuels web page

Prioritized Incident Details

This information will be available after the next AMAC meeting.

Source: AMAC Incident Prioritization List, ICS-209s

The Coffee Brief is posted at PLs 4 and 5 only.

