



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Upper Yukon Zone Fire Update

BLM Alaska Fire Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Fire Information Office (208) 274-3316, 2019.AFS.FIRES@gmail.com Date: July 21, 2019

Upper Yukon Zone near red flag warning, high wind gusts predicted again

Temperatures moderated in the Upper Yukon Zone yesterday. Although cloud cover allowed an increase in relative humidity to 30-40 percent, 30 mph wind gusts erased much of the RH benefit. Temperatures today will begin a trend towards the warmer range once again. There is potential today for large fire growth as the Fine Fuels Moisture Content (FFMC) index in the Upper Yukon Zone are still very high.

Wind gusts will diminish today but are still predicted to be in the 20 mph range and are expected to increase fire behavior. Wetting rain over the Upper Yukon region remains elusive, and air quality levels continue to be negatively affected by several fires in the area.

Here is a summary of some of the more significant fires burning in the Yukon Flats and surrounding areas:

Hadweenzic River Fire (#337) – 54,300 acres, 94 personnel

Cooler temperatures prevailed today but wind greater than 30 mph dominated the landscape, kicking up quite a lot of dust. Safety is the #1 priority on any fire, and firefighters moved out of some areas as trees weakened by fire were blown over. Helicopters were grounded for firefighting efforts for part of the day due to high winds but remained available for medical emergencies or initial attack on new fires near cabins and other values at risk. Crews are laying hoseine around allotments, and looking for opportunities to perform burnout operations on perimeter areas as weather conditions allow. Fire is burning about 5½ miles northeast of Nahshii Bible Camp, and about 19 miles west of Fort Yukon.

A Temporary Flight Restriction has been placed over the Hadweenzic and Tony Slough fires. Go to <https://tfr.faa.gov> for more information on the TFR.

Tony Slough Fire (#493) – 4,000 acres, 57 personnel

Crews have set up a supply staging area in the village of Beaver which is much closer to the Tony Slough and Hadweenzic fires than the staging area in Fort Yukon. This allows helicopters to land, refuel at the airstrip, and transport crew or supplies to the fire area much more quickly. Fire activity today was mostly at ground level, but also had single tree torching in some locations. Burning a perimeter section around Camp Nahshii remains a priority, with crews looking to ignite it at the earliest opportunity when weather allows. Fuel index measurements in the areas are still very high, which means fuels can burn very easily. The fire is about 1 mile from Camp Nahshii and 8 miles northeast of the village of Beaver. A National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) will assume management over the Cornucopia Complex of 10 fires in the Upper Yukon Zone, which will include Tony Slough and Hadweenzic fires.

A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for the Hadweenzic and Tony Slough fires. Go to <https://tfr.faa.gov> for more information on the TFR.

Chandalar River Fire (#349) – 11,000 acres, 87 personnel

High winds once again prevented firefighters from conducting burnout operations designed to more fully protect allotments north of the fire perimeter. All protections are in place around the allotments. Southwest winds are predicted to continue today, which could prevent the start of the planned burnout until wind and fuel conditions change. The fire is still holding about 1 mile southwest of Venetie, with the Chandalar River serving as a natural barrier between the fire and the village.

East Fork Chandalar Fire (#572) – 143 acres, 56 personnel

The incident commander walked the perimeter of the fire yesterday to get a more accurate measurement of its size, resulting in a reduction in reported acreage. The fire is 70 percent contained. Yesterday's high winds made it unsafe for firefighters to work inside the fire perimeter due to danger posed by falling trees. The same high winds are predicted for today, but are expected to ease up beginning tomorrow. The fire is still 25 miles northwest of Venetie.

Crater Creek (#585) – 4 acres, 8 personnel

Despite yesterday's high winds, the fire saw no new growth. The eight smokejumpers on the fire expect to declare it out today. They are slated to leave the fire tomorrow, making them available for reassignment.

Information on wildfire smoke predictions can be found at the Geophysical Institute of the University of Alaska Fairbanks website located at <http://smoke.alaska.edu/>.

For more information, contact the Alaska Interagency Fire Information Office at (208) 274-3316 or email 2019.AFS.FIRES@gmail.com.

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