

McKinley Fire

Update – Tuesday, August 27, 2019 @ 9:00 a.m.

Norm McDonald, Incident Commander

Fire Information: 907-313-9826

Email: 2019.mckinley@firenet.gov

Web: www.akfireinfo.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AK.Forestry/>

Acreeage: 3,318

Containment: 67%

Personnel: 565

Start Date: 8/17/2019



There will be a community meeting TONIGHT, Tuesday August 27th at the Willow Elementary School at 6:30 p.m.

Evacuation levels were lowered yesterday at noon. Residents evacuated last Sunday, August 17th were able to re-enter their properties. Current evacuation levels are:

- **“Level 2 – Set”** between milepost 81.5 and 92. This level means having your items ready and being prepared to leave within minutes of a notification to leave.
- **“Level 1 – Ready”** between mileposts 79 and 91.9. This level means having an evacuation kit, family emergency plan, and evacuation plan.

The Parks Highway is open through the burned area with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. Traffic flaggers will be in areas where fire crews and residents are entering and exiting the roadway. Please use headlights to increase visibility and abide by the speed limit. Alaska State Troopers will patrol the highway and enforce speed limits to ensure firefighters and public safety.

Firefighters have been working closely with the Matanuska Electric Association moving south along the Parks Highway. They have been removing fire-damaged trees and repairing power lines to restore electricity as quickly as possible. Firefighters continue working to secure the uncontained fire to increase containment. During the last 3 days containment has increased from 11% to 67%. Despite these increases in containment, there is active fire inside the perimeter. Visitors and residents will see smoke from flare ups and interior pockets of heat into the foreseeable future.

Near homes and other structures inside the fire boundary, firefighters, excavators, and feller bunchers are removing dangerous, fire-damaged trees that can fall unexpectedly. A feller buncher is an excavator with an attachment that can cut, lift and stack trees in a manner that minimizes damage to neighboring root systems.

Recently burned areas are very dangerous. Fire burns deeply in extremely dry duff layers and has weakened many trees that continue falling unexpectedly. Ash pits have caused minor burn injuries to firefighters. Ash pits are deep holes in the ground filled with hot ash and embers and are often hard to see. These conditions create a very dangerous environment for firefighters and residents.

Weather: Warm and dry weather will continue although there will be some clouds. Winds should remain light. Precipitation for the month of August in Anchorage is normally just over three inches. No measureable rain has been reported in August of 2019.

The Red Cross will be distributing emergency relief supplies through a fixed site at the Upper Susitna Senior Center (16463 Helena Drive, Talkeetna) starting Tuesday, August 27 from 10 am - 7 pm, and at the Curtis D Menard Memorial Sports Center (1001 S Clapp St, Wasilla) alongside Red Cross recovery casework and planning services, starting Tuesday, August 27 at 10 am. They will also distribute relief supplies via emergency response vehicles in neighborhoods affected by the fire, starting Tuesday, August 27 at 10 am. The distribution of relief supplies will continue until the needs of those affected are met.

Closures: A portion of Willow Swamp (Game Management Unit 14A) is closed due to the Deshka Landing Fire. For more info, visit the Alaska Department of Fish and Game website at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/>. A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) exists over the McKinley Fire. Pilots are advised to check NOTAMS at <https://tfr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.jsp> before flying near the fire area.