

McKinley Fire

Update – Friday, August 30, 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: 3,316

Containment: 78%

Personnel: 564

Start Date: 8/17/2019

Firefighters have been helping Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) restore power and remove fire-damaged trees near power lines. They have made major progress this week and are very close to having power fully restored.

Slow, tedious mop up work continues as firefighters search for hot spots and extinguish them. They have been mopping up along the fire perimeter, around structures, and along utility corridors. To find remaining hot spots they typically run their bare hands through the ash but also use hand held infrared sensors and infrared cameras on a drones.

Because fire damaged trees can fall unexpectedly on people, structures, roads or powerlines, firefighters have been removing these trees. Many trees remain standing throughout the fire area making it a dangerous place. Ash pits are deep holes filled with hot ash, and they exist throughout the area. These ash pits are hard to see and have caused burns on firefighters and the public when they accidentally step into one.

A “Level 2 – Set” evacuation level exists between milepost 81.5 and 92. A “Level 1 – Ready” evacuation level exists between mileposts 79 and 81.5. Crews have used the Sheep Creek Lodge as a staging area for equipment and supplies. With the lodge reopening on Saturday, the staging area will move to a gravel pit across the street.

Weather: A broad low pressure system is approaching the area. For today this low pressure will start bringing clouds over the area. Rain this weekend should only be light showers with a better chance for more rain on Monday. With this storm system, some wind will arrive but it will generally be 10 mph or less.

Closures: A portion of Willow Swamp (Game Management Unit 14A) is closed due to the Doshka 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.

Disaster Assistance Information

Matanuska Electric Association. Members needing to be reconnected can call 907-761-9300 or visit www.mea.coop

State of Alaska Homeland Security Disaster Assistance. For individuals and families with damaged primary residences or essential personal property lost in 2019 Mat-Su fires. Register online at ready.alaska.gov

Alaska Red Cross will be distributing emergency relief supplies and providing recovery casework and planning services at the Upper Susitna Senior Center and Curtis D Menard Memorial Sports Center. Relief supplies will also be available at Sheep Creek Lodge. To reach a recovery caseworker call 907-764-2407

The Parks Highway remains open through the burned area with a speed limit of 45 mph. Be prepared to stop in this zone where crews and equipment continue working. Road updates available at 511.alaska.gov

Matanuska Susitna Borough will accept debris caused by the McKinley and Doshka Landing Fires at no cost at specific locations. For more information the Solid Waste Division can be reached at 907-761-3700

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) can assist with health and safety issues including air quality, drinking water, food safety and sanitation, wastewater, solid waste, and hazardous substances. Reach the ADEC Disaster Coordination Team at 907-269-4198

Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) collects and distributes donations like clothes, shoes, winter gear, bedding, and food. They have locations in Big Lake, Wasilla, Talkeetna, and Willow. 907-745-5827

Team Rubicon can provide assistance with debris removal and clean up. Team Rubicon unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams. 360-975-7944

