



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

Fire Update

BLM Alaska Fire Service

P.O. Box 35005 1541 Gaffney Road, Fairbanks AK 99703-0005

Contact: Beth Ipsen, epsen@blm.gov; (907)356-5510

Date: Aug. 5, 2021

Yukon Flats Fires See Significant Activity, Growth for Third Day

The **Marten Creek Fire (#386)** and the **Discovery Creek Fire (#388)** burning in the Yukon Flats had another day of significant activity and fire growth due to windy, hot, and dry weather. Both lightning-caused fires actively burned late into the night and saw significant gains in acreage over the past few days. The prolonged hot, dry spell has dried out the vegetation to the point that firefighters witnessed it burn not only the normally receptive spruce trees and tundra grass, but hardwoods which typically have a higher moisture content.

The Marten Creek Fire is still about 10 miles northeast of Venetie, but doubled in size for the second day in a row. Due to northeasterly winds, most of the fire growth has been on the southwest end closest to Venetie. It was reported Wednesday as creeping, backing and torching at a moderate rate of spread and putting up a lot of smoke. The BLM Alaska Fire Service North Star Crew finished work on an indirect line stretching from the dump to the old airport to help to protect the village in case the fire continues to push toward Venetie. They'll continue to reinforce the fire breaks around Venetie and assess what equipment is needed to protect structures at the edge of the village. Fire managers have formulated a plan that, once the fire reaches a certain point in relation to Venetie and three historical cabins south of the fire, firefighters will take action to protect these cabins and the village. The BLM AFS has requested two additional crews to help with the efforts on the fire that have not been filled due to the needs on higher priority fires in Eastern Alaska and in the Western U.S.

Meanwhile, the Discovery Creek Fire burning 30 miles northwest of Venetie in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge crossed a dry creek bed and is a little more than a mile north of a Native allotment. Smokejumpers that had initially responded to the fire conducted a burn operation to protect this allotment at the confluence of the Chekhechunnjik Creek and the North Fork of the East Fork of the Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River. The University of Alaska-Fairbanks Nanook Fire Crew installed a water-hose system along a saw fire break around the allotment to help create a protective buffer. Firefighters are considering another burn operation today to remove the burnable vegetation between the allotment and the fire to deepen that buffer to the northwest of the allotment.

Fire danger remains high in the Yukon Flats due to lingering dry conditions. However, cooler temperatures are forecasted with hopes of tempering these very active fires. Temperatures are expected to cool down to the 60s by Friday, giving the Yukon Flats a reprieve over the weekend from the hot, dry weather. Winds are also expected to shift to the southwest this afternoon, which will be favorable to keep the Marten Creek Fire away from Venetie.

Fire	Cause	Start Date	Estimated Acres	Personnel Assigned
Marten Creek	Lightning	July 25	3,000	27
Discovery Creek	Lightning	July 26	2,854	25

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