



**United States Department of the Interior
KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

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09082mf

Saturday, July 11, 2009, 10:45 a.m.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIRE INFORMATION: (907) 260-2338 or (907) 260-2342

SUBJECT: Shanta Creek Fire Morning Update

Fire Information Website: <http://kenai.fws.gov> - **Email:** r7shanta@fws.gov

Shanta Creek Fire Spread Slows

The Shanta Creek fire continues to burn in heavy “dead and down” beetle killed spruce. Cool wet weather has meant that the latest fire activity is primarily within the fire’s interior. Some torching and short fire runs are expected today within pockets of black spruce as the clouds moderate. The fire continues to burn in pockets of dry, heavy fuels in an area designated Limited suppression zones within the Refuge.

Residents can expect to see an increase in firefighters and firefighting equipment along the entire length of Funny River Road for the next several days. Bull dozers are being used to construct firebreaks along the north side of the fire. For safety reasons, residents are asked to drive with headlights on for visibility and reduce their speed while using this road.

Aircraft are being used to contain the fire within wet areas and further plans for their use are being drafted as the weather becomes hotter and drier. Their use Friday along the west edge of the fire was particularly effective.

A formal Structure Protection Group is making assessments of private property and structures north of the fire, along Funny River Road. Fire managers are working closely with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management on this effort.

Closure orders for trails or roads have not been issued as a result of the Shanta Creek Fire. There currently are no evacuation orders. A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) remains in place and is being monitored by the local Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This restriction bans private aircraft from flying over or near the fire perimeter below 5,000 foot altitude within a 5 mile radius of the fire. Pilots may contact the FAA for further explanation of this restriction. The TFR will remain in place until further notice.

Currently there are more than 350 firefighters and support personnel assisting with the fire suppression efforts. In addition, air tankers and helicopters continued to drop water during the day on the head and flanks of the fire to slow spread to the north.

The National Incident Management Team (NIMO) managing this incident, (Steve Gage, Incident Commander) has set up their Incident Command Post (ICP) at Skyview High School, just south of the community of Soldotna.

A Fire Information Center will be open from 7:00 am and will be staffed until 10:00 pm, daily until further notice. The phone numbers are as follows: (907) 260-2338 and (907) 260-2342.

For additional information on this incident please visit the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge web site at <http://kenai.fws.gov> then click of the link for the Shanta Creek Fire. To comment or ask questions on the incident, please use the fire email address at r7shanta@fws.gov.

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