



Division of Forestry

Alaska Department of Natural Resources

United States Department of the Interior KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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Shanta Creek Fire Information Update

Monday, July 13, 2009, 8:00 a.m.

Fire Information: (907) 260-2338 or (907) 260-2342

Fire Information Website: <http://kenai.fws.gov> or www.inciweb.org/incident/1724/

Fire E-mail Address: r7shanta@fws.gov

Work Continues in Anticipation of Possible Fire Movement

While the Shanta Creek Fire grew by about 1,000 acres on Sunday afternoon, the growth experienced was primarily on the east side of the fire. The fire now covers 13,118 acres completely within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Firefighting aircraft reported some movement on that east side, toward the Killey River drainage and lower Skilak Lake. Yet even in this area, the fire burned slowly along stringers of black spruce and areas of “dead and down” beetle killed spruce. Most of the smoke drift was also to the east and little smoke was impacting the western Kenai or the Sterling Highway.

Work continued on defensive contingency lines within the “Full Suppression” areas within the Refuge as well as on some private property along Funny River Road. These lines are a combination of clearing with hand tools and bulldozer work. They are designed to be used if the fire changes direction and moves north toward private land and developed areas. Some of this protection could involve “burnout” operations under controlled conditions.

A community meeting held at the Funny River Community Center on Sunday evening drew nearly 250 seasonal and permanent residents. Fire managers and local officials discussed the fire situation, planning efforts and successes to date. Of special note were plans for possible evacuation actions, which emergency managers stressed were not being implemented at this time.

The next community meeting will be held at the Funny River Community Center on Tuesday, July 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Currently there are some 476 firefighters and support personnel assisting with the fire suppression efforts, including: 10 fire engines; 4 bull dozers; 7 helicopters; air tankers as needed; five Type 1 Hotshot crews; and 11 Type 2 Alaska Crews.

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.

A Fire Information Center is open from 7:00 a.m. and staffed until 10:00 p.m. daily until further notice. The phone numbers are: (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 on the link for the Shanta Creek Fire or visit the Shanta Creek fire information on "InciWeb" at www.inciweb.org/incident/1724/.

To comment or ask questions on the incident, please use the fire e-mail address at r7shanta@fws.gov.

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