On Friday, firefighters on the Shovel Creek Fire began firing operations along the west side of the 7 Mile Trail. Using the trail as a control line, fire was applied via drip torches and other incendiary devices to consume the fuel between the main fire and the trail. With the aid of retardant and water drops from planes pretreating the area along the trail; they were able to conduct the firing operation along the 7 Mile Trail to the north where they connected with the northeast corner of the fire. Firefighters then continued firing west from Murphy Dome along the Murphy Ridge towards the 2009 Hardluck Fire scar. These firing operations were necessary to contain the fire within the Shovel Creek drainage and keep the fire as small as possible. The fire continued to burn actively in the upper Shovel Creek drainage, with torching and crown runs in black spruce; making short runs uphill testing the fire line. However, on the upper slopes the fire is not burning as aggressively due to more sparse and mixed vegetation.

Point protection operations continued in the Chatanika River corridor and crews are now shifting focus to the structures on the north side of the river. Point protection preparations in the Martin subdivision are complete; and will continue in the other subdivisions south and east of the fire.

On Saturday, crews will continue improving fireline on the north side of the Murphy Ridge to the Hardluck Creek Fire scar and the 7 Mile Trail. Because of this work, travel on the Bennet Highway may be delayed from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm due to fire operations. Motorists should plan accordingly. Mop-up and patrolling will occur on the eastern edge of the fire along the 7 Mile trail. Mop-up consists of ensuring that there is no active fire along the edge of the fire.

Crews will continue direct attack on the north flank in order to connect that section of line to the Hard Luck Fire scar. Construction of an alternate containment line will continue east of the fire in the Murphy Creek drainage.

The Alaska Incident Management Team managing the fire has recommended to Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Operations to raise the evacuation alert for the Lincoln Creek subdivision from a Level 1 (READY) to a Level 2 (SET). The Lincoln Creek subdivision is located in a rural area dominated by black spruce with approximately 64 structures. A Level 2 evacuation alert means people should be SET to evacuate. This means assembling a kit of important items that you will take with you in the event of an evacuation. Firefighters are aggressively working to contain the Shovel Creek Fire while providing for their safety and the safety of the public. The areas of Martin subdivision, McCloud subdivision, Murphy subdivision, Perfect Perch, and the Chatanika River corridor remain in Level 1 (Ready) evacuation status.

A Level 2 Evacuation is not a notice to leave, but it means that you must be ready and prepared to leave at a moment’s notice. A Level 2 signifies that there is significant danger in your area. GET SET by loading your 6 P’s (see below) and a 7-day kit into your vehicle. You may have time to gather necessary items, however remember you must be prepared and ready to relocate. At Level 2, this may be the ONLY notice you have to finish getting ready to evacuate. A call center is available for additional information at (907) 459-1308.

Remember the 6-P’s; People, Pets, Pills, Photos, Personal (computer back-up info), and important Papers.

WEATHER: A ridge aloft will build over the area Saturday. Near Red Flag conditions as temperatures will rise into the 80s. Good overnight recovery will continue this evening. A weather front will spread wetting rains across the fire Sunday night and Monday. After this moderating event, a ridge is predicted to re-build into next week, bringing hotter and drier conditions.

SAFETY: An increase in fire activity for several area fires is contributing to increased smoke in the Fairbanks area. With cooler temperatures and higher relative humidity values overnight, motorists should expect smoke to settle in the low lying areas – particularly in the morning hours. Residents in the area are asked to avoid the Murphy Dome area due to the firefighting activity and the potential for interfering with fire personnel. A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place in the air space over the fire. Pilots are advised to check NOTAMS at https://tfr.faa.gov/save_pages/detail_9_0263.html.