Containment grows as Bering Sea weather brings scattered showers to the East Fork Fire

June 17, 2022, Daily Update, 10:10 AM

**East Fork Fire**
**STATS:** 153,271 acres  
**Location:** 3.7 miles northwest of St. Mary’s  
**Personnel:** 241  
**Start Date:** May 31, 2022  
**Cause:** Natural, Lightning  
**Fuels:** A mix of tundra, brush, and black spruce

**Aapon Pass Fire**
**STATS:** 66,959 acres  
**Location:** 24 miles north of Mountain Village

ST. MARY’S, Alaska. – The East Fork and Aapon fires continue to advance slowly in the northwest, driven by the predominant wind direction. Scattered rain showers provide favorable weather to dampen fire activity and significant stretches of the fire edge have been contained. The team continues to conduct assessments of allotments and other values that could be in the path of the northerly expanding fires.

A community meeting will be held today at 4PM at the St. Mary’s Elementary School with the Alaska Incident Management Team providing an update on fire operations and expectations for both fire and smoke behavior over the next week.

**Operations:** The strategy for the East Fork Fire is to confine or suppress approximately 58% of the fire boundary, the southern portion outside of the wilderness boundary. The northern portion of the fire (about 42%) is burning into the Andreafsky Wilderness and the strategy there is point protection of allotments, but not to control spread of the fire. Of the 58% of the boundary that will be contained, 67% has been completed. When the fire boundary is marked as contained, it means we have confidence the fire will not cross that line again.

Fire personnel have contained the fire around the southern portion of the East Fork Fire in the area closest to the communities of St. Mary’s, Pitkas Point, Pilot Station, and Mountain Village. Containment line has also been achieved in the area between the Andreafsky River (North Fork) and East Fork and on the northern portion of the fire along the east side of the Andreafsky River. Crews prepped structures at the St. Vladimir’s Youth Camp yesterday. Crews also finished brushing out the line around Pilot Station and completed a burnout operation on the east edge.

Today, crews will continue to work the active edges of the fire on the western flank and on the southeastern edge to gain further containment. As the fire moves north into the wilderness, the Team will focus on the protection of allotments along the Andreafsky River north of the East Fork Fire and northwest of the Aapon Pass Fire. Crews are moving upriver from Pilot Station to assess allotments to the east.

The Aapon Pass Fire has expanded north as pushed by the prevailing winds over the last few days. Aerial monitoring of both the East Fork and Aapon Pass fires will continue regularly in order to identify any allotments, structures, or cultural sites that may be at risk. As a reminder, temporary flight restrictions remain in effect (https://tfr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.jsp).

**Evacuations:** St. Mary’s and Pitkas Point are currently in “Ready” position. Some residents have chosen to shelter temporarily in Bethel with support from the Red Cross and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. No communities are in “set” or “go” status.

**Weather:** Light northeasterly winds overnight pushed smoke into St. Mary’s, similar to yesterday. A slow-moving low-pressure system is coming in from the Bering Sea and bringing scattered showers from the southeast. There is a chance of scattered thunderstorms today through the evening and lingering into Saturday. Winds will be from the east-northeast on Saturday and shifting from the east on Sunday.

**East Fork Fire Information:** Phone: (907) 290-2852; Email: 2022.eastfork@firenet.gov  
Statewide Fire Blog: akfireinfo.com/ Facebook: facebook.com/BLMAFS, and Website: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8148/