



Incident Commander: Tom Kurth

Swan Lake Fire Update

www.akfireinfo.com

www.kpboem.com

Date: Monday, July 1, 2019

Start Date: 06/05/2019	Location: 5.5 Miles NE of Sterling, AK	Cause: Lightning
Fire Size: 70,330	Containment: 15%	Total Personnel: 467

The Swan Lake Fire remained active over a hot, dry weekend that tested fire lines. Warm dry weather combined with dry black spruce stands will challenge firefighters all week. In the Sterling area, fire containment lines held Sunday north of the highway and Homer Electric transmission line. Crews in this area continued suppression repair, restoration work and mop-up of the 4 day burnout across 17 miles designed to protect the community.

Fire activity increased Sunday in the muskeg northwest of the fire, within the burn scar of the short-lived 2017 East Fork Fire, which left a heavy load of dead and down trees on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Firefighters immediately moved resources to respond to the re-burn.

Fire crews along the East Fork Moose River continued to mop-up and burnout green pockets of black spruce. To the north, hotshot firefighters kept up progress Sunday protecting public use cabins and ENSTAR gas pipeline infrastructure. The Swan Lake Fire keeps slowly moving northeast, burning through thick black spruce.

Smoke and haze conditions on the Kenai Peninsula improved Sunday, when a cold front passed to the north. Smoke remains a concern, yet the fire brings a big benefit of long-term reduction of future wildfire risk to Sterling and neighboring communities. For forecasts of smoke from Alaska wildfires, visit UAFSMOKE at <http://smoke.alaska.edu>

Traffic moved well this weekend along the Sterling Highway, with only minor delays due to re-started road construction and morning fog. Please use lights and caution driving along the highway in the fire area, as firefighters and construction workers are working along the road. A night crew will be patrolling and monitoring for smoke and flare-ups. If conditions deteriorate due to nighttime inversions, traffic delays may be possible.

The Swan Lake Fire is burning in a mosaic pattern, removing hazardous black spruce and providing for a more fire-resilient landscape in the future. Fire crews completed work June 28 to improve safety along the Sterling Fire Break. To enhance community-wide safety, residents should remove needles from roofs and flammable vegetation from around buildings. This is one of the best ways to better protect your home from fire. For information about other steps you can take to increase defensible space around your property, please visit <http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/firewise>.

WEATHER: Conditions will continue to be very warm and dry, with light winds. Smoke will be moderate. Slightly cooler temperatures are forecast Monday. High pressure over the peninsula will return later this week, returning to hot and dry conditions.

SAFETY: For current road conditions visit <http://511.alaska.gov>. The Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) over the fire area includes the Sterling Highway corridor to support suppression efforts and firefighter safety. Pilots can confirm the current TFR restrictions at tfr.faa.gov. Personal drone operations are not permitted on the refuge.

KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE INFORMATION: The Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area is closed to public use, including campgrounds, trails and cabins. Skilak Lake Road, along with Jim's, Upper and Lower Skilak landings remain open. Contact the Refuge Visitor Center at 907-260-2820 or online at kenai.fws.gov.

Public Information:	www.akfireinfo.com	inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6387/
208-391-3488	www.kpboem.com	Facebook.com/AK.Forestry/