

ALASKA INTERAGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT
TYPE 2 TEAM
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FUNNY RIVER FIRE UPDATE

Funny River Fire Grows to 20,000 acres

The Funny River Fire is sending significant smoke into Soldotna and Kasilof today and as far as Anchorage and Homer. The fire, currently estimated at 20,000 acres, is burning within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Despite cooler temperatures and higher humidities overnight, the fire was active, with significant movement on the eastern flank of the fire.

Crews with the Alaska Division of Forestry and Central Emergency Services worked overnight to keep the blaze from crossing the Funny River Road at about Mile 7. Recent efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reduce the buildup of beetle-killed spruce along the Funny River Road helped stop the advance of the fire.

The Alaska Type 2 Incident Management Team took over management of the fire this morning. Fire managers are focusing efforts today on the northern flank to keep it from crossing the Funny River Road and on the western flank to keep it from reaching the Sterling Highway and the communities of Kasilof and Sterling. It remains at least three miles from the Sterling Highway. Fire managers are also working to better map the fire and provide maps to the public.

Significant resources are being deployed on the fire, including air tankers, wildland firefighting crews and engine crews with experience fighting structural fires. Heavy smoke is affecting visibility and efforts to fight the fire from the air.

An early spring with very little precipitation has left vegetation extremely dry on the Kenai Peninsula. Residents and visitors are urged to use extreme caution with anything that could ignite a fire.

Air Quality Advisories are in effect for Southcentral Alaska. Information about smoke is available from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation at <http://dec.alaska.gov/air/am/smoke.htm>

Central Emergency Services is urging residents who live near the fire to stay aware and be prepared. Information is available at <http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency-mgmt/fire>

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