



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias  
National Park/Preserve

P.O. Box 439  
Mile 105.5 Old Richardson  
Highway  
Copper Center, AK 99573

907-822-5234 phone  
907-822-7216 fax

## Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve News Release

July 22, 2009  
For Immediate Release  
Contact: Fire Information Office (907) 529-0511

### LOCAL RESIDENTS BECOMING FIRE WISE

**There will be a public meeting held tonight, July 22, at 6:00 pm in front of the Tony Zak building in McCarthy, to discuss current fire status and suppression efforts.**

**McCarthy, Alaska**— Today, on the Chakina Fire, the McCarthy and Strelna Volunteer Fire Departments are working with the Pioneer Peak hotshot crew and a strike team of six engines. These groups are working with residents identifying fire hazards and supporting suppression efforts as needed. Priorities are to establish safety zones and water sources in each of the six community areas established.

The Augusta Hotshots are being divided between Jake’s Bar and a landing strip on the northeast end of the fire, near the confluence of the Chitina and Nazina rivers to respond as needed to situations along the northern and northwestern perimeters.

Yesterday, activity remained at a moderate level, with some areas of isolated torching. Firefighters were aided Tuesday night with a small amount of precipitation. The northeast corner of the fire had higher activity, with individual trees torching. Helicopters assisted with bucket drops to minimize spotting and slow fire spread adjacent to the Chitina River.

Smoldering and creeping fire behavior continues to create a mosaic of burn severity across the fire area. These conditions will contribute to having a range of fire effects that improve regeneration of forage for wildlife while maintaining vertical cover. This mosaic will also aid in reducing the severity of future fires. Firefighters warn that even though the fire seems cooler, there is still potential for a drying spell to bring the fire activity to a level of concern.

Total Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel
32,000	2 Type 1	7	3	108

**Weather conditions** vary based on local wind patterns and fire activity. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation website serves as a resource for air quality information and how you can protect yourself from smoke: [www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm)

**The road from Chitina to McCarthy is open.** Drive with headlights on and exhibit caution as you may encounter areas of heavy smoke and low visibility. **Pilots should check NOTAMs and Temporary Flight Restrictions.** For those who fly in the vicinity, be aware of fire related helicopter and fixed-wing traffic and the possibility of sudden decreased visibility. The local victor frequency is 122.9.

**For additional information,** visit [www.nps.gov/wrst/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm) or contact the local Fire Information Office at (907) 529-0511 or Morgan Warthin, NPS contact in Anchorage for interviews: (907) 644-3418.

-NPS