



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias
National Park/Preserve

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Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Maggie Rogers or Tacy Skinner (907) 590-4038

Chakina Fire Update- Public Meeting Tonight!

McCarthy, Alaska— A public meeting is being held tonight by the Alaska Division of Forestry, National Park Service, and local cooperators at 6:00 in the Zak building. Fire managers will discuss the day's operational and weather events, long-term strategies, and community protection tactics.

Fire activity was subdued this morning, but is expected to increase throughout the day as temperatures warm. It is roughly 7,000 acres. A chance of thunderstorms and associated winds may increase fire growth, should they occur. Firefighters will be monitoring the weather as they fly to and from the fire to map it, take photos, and visit the identified sites. Safety is the priority for the fire personnel, the local public and visitors.

Fire personnel from the National Park Service and Alaska Division of Forestry continue to gather information about structures and historical sites in the fire's vicinity. An additional historical cabin was identified Wednesday. Firefighters will fly over the site today and make decisions about actions to be taken, as it is roughly a mile from the fire's eastern perimeter, near Louise Lake. At least two additional sites, not currently in danger of the fire, will be set up with pumps and hoses to be prepared should future wind patterns push the fire to the north.

Fire personnel are also working to establish a radio communications repeater. Yesterday, the temporary communications network was put in place on a local mountain top; due to the rugged terrain, it may be re-located.

The Alaska Division of Forestry and National Park Service fire managers continue work on a long-term operational plan. Should the fire reach pre-established natural landmarks to the north, one strategy will be to burn, using aerial ignition, vegetation between the Chitina River and the fire, keeping it south of the river.

Seventy-one fires are burning throughout Alaska. With the current weather conditions, smoke from the Chakina Fire has some local impact, but the majority of the smoke is coming from interior fires. For information about protecting yourself from smoke, please visit: www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm.

For additional information, visit www.nps.gov/wrst/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm or contact:

- Mark Keogh, NPS Public Affairs Officer for the Wrangell St. Elias, (907) 822-7223
- Morgan Warthin, NPS contact in Anchorage for interviews, (907) 644-3418
- The local Fire Information Office, (907) 590-4038

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