



# McDonald Fire Update

[BLM Alaska Fire Service](#)

**Information:** 2024.McDonald@firenet.gov, 907-356-5511

July 1, 2024

## Thick smoke helps temper McDonald Fire behavior

<b>Size:</b> 160,818 acres	<b>Personnel:</b> 96	<b>Start Date:</b> June 8, 2024	<b>Cause:</b> Lightning
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**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** – The McDonald Fire was active on Sunday, gaining another 15,000 acres. Winds were gusty in the afternoon as thunderstorms moved around the area. Fire activity slowed later in the afternoon when the layer of smoke thickened and settled over the fire.

Crews are making progress on structure protection and securing direct line through tree cutting and stacking, gridding, and mopping up heat. Firefighters continue to scout and construct secondary line and patrol the river corridor for any sign of flanking or spotting beyond the perimeter.

Alaska moved to Preparedness Level 5 on Sunday night at 8 p.m. Level 5 is the highest level of preparedness and reflects extreme fire conditions, a high number of fires on the landscape, and the number of people dedicated to firefighting. A higher preparedness level designation helps make more national federal and state resources available to Alaska.

**Weather:** Scattered rain showers are possible Monday morning with isolated afternoon thunderstorms. Temperatures are cooler with southwest winds. Early this week there is an expected weather shift to cooler temperatures and higher chances of wetting rain.

**Burn Permits:** The Division of Forestry and Fire Protection has issued Burn Permit Suspensions for Fairbanks, Salcha, Delta, Tok, and Railbelt areas. The fire danger in these areas remains HIGH. Please check <https://dnr.alaska.gov/burn/fireareas> or call the burn permit hotline for the Fairbanks Area Forestry at (907) 451-2631 for the most current updates.

**Air Quality:** Sunday, following a week of poor air, the region saw the most significant smoke of this fire season. The air quality was Unhealthy to Hazardous much of the day and overnight. Fluctuating visibility dropped to less than 1 mile, impacting aviation and roadways. The conditions are slowly improving Monday morning as southwesterly winds and scattered showers begin to clear the air. With multiple fires around the Interior, expect to continue to see increased periods of smoke, especially overnight in communities that are downwind with the southwest flow. Stronger winds on Tuesday will bring more widespread improvement. Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (1650 Cowles Street) has clean-air rooms available for people impacted by smoke open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Find information on how to protect yourself from wildfire smoke at the [Smoke Management](#) page on <https://akfireinfo.com/smoke-management/>.

**Evacuation Notices:** A Level 2: SET evacuation notice is in effect for the approximately 20 cabins near the fire’s southeastern edge, west of the Tanana River. The communities east of the Tanana River are in READY status, including the Johnson Road neighborhoods, Canaday, Harding Lake, Salcha, the lower Salcha River, Hollies Acres, and south to Birch Lake. Find more information and [an interactive map](#) of these areas on the [Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Services](#) website.

**Temporary Flight Restriction:** New temporary flight restrictions were requested Sunday evening and a TFR is pending to help ensure safe aviation operations.

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Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Fire Service, P.O. Box 35005, 1541 Gaffney Road, Fort Wainwright, AK 99703

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*The Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (AFS) located at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, provides wildland fire suppression services for over 240 million acres of Department of the Interior and Native Corporation Lands in Alaska. In addition, AFS has other statewide responsibilities that include: interpretation of fire management policy; oversight of the BLM Alaska Aviation program; fuels management projects; and operating and maintaining advanced communication and computer systems such as the Alaska Lightning Detection System. AFS also maintains a National Incident Support Cache with a \$18.1 million inventory. The Alaska Fire Service provides wildland fire suppression services for America's "Last Frontier" on an interagency basis with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Military in Alaska.*