



Riley Fire Update



Fire Information: 2024.Riley@firenet.gov, 907-921-2556

388 acres, 5% contained, 165 personnel

Thursday, July 4, 2024

Power restored to Nenana Canyon on the Riley Fire

HEALY, Alaska – At 7:00 am, the Alaska Complex Incident Management Team 2 led by Incident Commander Ed Sanford took command of the Riley Fire, located in Denali National Park and Preserve a mile north of the entrance. The Riley Fire is 5% contained. There was miscommunication about percent containment—previously reported as 25%. While there is a substantial area of completed sawline, it is not considered containment until we have confidence that the fire will not breach that line. This usually means that 25 to 50 feet from the sawline into the fire area is completely extinguished. There was no loss of progress; we are continuing to improve the line to achieve containment.

Golden Valley Electric Association restored electricity to the Nenana River Canyon and Denali National Park at 8:00 am after testing the lines overnight and finding them safe. This allows businesses to reopen in the Nenana River Canyon while ensuring firefighting operations can continue safely.

Since the fire started on June 30, there has been a tremendous initial attack response. The McKinley Village Volunteer Fire Department, Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department, and the Alaska Western Area Fire Management Crew responded with resources. The Tanana Chiefs Initial Attack Crew and 22 Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service smokejumpers were the first crews on initial attack along with two fire retardant drops along the southern edges of the fire, and multiple water drops.

Current operations include the Tanana Chiefs and the Alta Interagency Hotshot Crew going direct on the southern edge of the fireline from the railroad west. On the eastern perimeter, the Smith River, Golden Eagle, and Mill Creek interagency hotshot crews are going direct on the fireline, working their way through thick alder and birch on steep slopes. Smokejumpers are being inserted into the northern “bowl” to go direct on the fireline there. The fire growth to the north is primarily following stringers of black spruce toward the upper rocky slopes of the terrain. Four helicopters will support firefighting operations, dropping water on the remaining smoldering hot spots of the fire.

Weather: A series of fronts will be moving through the area bringing cooler temperatures, rain, and gusty winds. The first of these systems is moving in today and is expected to bring rain to the fire most of the day.

Smoke: Cooler temperatures and the rain forecast today and into the weekend should help moderate smoke production. This should continue the overall trend of improving air quality. Winds will continue to be from the southwest today, pushing smoke northeast. Lingering smoke may potentially enhance any fog that forms and impacts visibility.

Evacuations: Some areas are in Evacuation Status with the Tri-Valley Community Center established as the Evacuation Information Center. Go to the Denali Borough [website](#) for more information.

Red – Go! All Bison Gulch and Antler Ridge hikers, Riley Creek Campground, and all employees housed at the Denali National Park Joint Venture facility: **ANYONE IN RED AREAS SHOULD EVACUATE.**

Yellow – Set: There are currently no locations in “set”.

Green – Ready: The Nenana Canyon area (aka Glitter Gulch), Denali National Park Headquarters, C-Camp. Anyone in GREEN areas should stay alert and monitor for evacuation status updates.

Park Closures: All visitor facilities and park operations in Denali’s entrance area are closed. Future dates will be assessed based on fire activity. The park will also continue to remain closed to personal vehicles and day use visitors until further notice. Employees evacuated from park housing are being sheltered in various facilities in the nearby town of Healy. Park officials continue to work closely with the Denali Borough and other partners to ensure everyone is taken care of. Go to the [Denali National Park and Preserve website for closure information](#).

Road conditions: The Parks Highway remains open. Go to <https://511.alaska.gov/> for road condition updates.

Temporary Flight Restrictions: A temporary flight restriction is in effect over the Riley Fire until July 15. Find more information at: [4/6067 NOTAM Details \(faa.gov\)](#).