



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# News Release

BLM Alaska Fire Service

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Smokejumpers respond to third human-caused fire west of Fort Yukon**

*Firefighters urge public to be careful outdoor activities don't ignite a fire*

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** – BLM Alaska Fire Service smokejumpers are working the third human-caused fire found west of Fort Yukon in the past two weeks. In the case of the **Yukon Slough Fire (#103)**, discovered yesterday, and the **Marten Fire (#082)**, discovered on May 17, firefighters found evidence of a hunting camp at the point of both fires' origins. The Yukon Flats area has recently experienced dry and warm conditions that make the pre-green-up dead grass easy to ignite and quickly spread after an abandoned campfire rears back to life.

The public plays a valuable role in preventing wildfires. Given the potential implications of COVID-19 on Alaska's wildland firefighting resources this summer, it is more imperative than ever that the public be vigilant in reducing human-caused wildfires to help keep firefighters and communities safe. The fewer fires we have will give our resources the best chance to successfully contain new starts before they develop into large wildfires that require massive amounts of resources and produce smoke that impacts air quality. Being safe with fire will reduce the number of people that have to come out to the area and assist on wildfires.

Here are some tips for preventing a wildfire:

- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Clear areas around campfires down to mineral soil to reduce the chances of escapement.
- Keep campfires small and manageable.
- Have tools and water on hand to prevent fires from escaping.
- Make sure campfires are completely extinguished before you leave them, by repeatedly drowning them with water and stirring the coals/ashes until they are cold to the touch.

All three fires triggered a response from smokejumpers because they are burning on Native corporation land and within a full protection area. While none were immediately threatening structures or resources, they were burning within miles of Native allotments. All three were burning on the edge of sloughs branching off of the nearby Yukon River. They were found burning in timber and dead, dry tundra grass.

The Yukon Slough Fire was discovered by a passing aircraft about 15 miles west of Fort Yukon Saturday. Eight smokejumpers were mobilized Saturday evening and got a line around the fire to stop the fire's growth at 2 acres. They will spend the next few days working to put the fire completely out. The Marten Fire was discovered by BLM AFS personnel aboard an aircraft in support of firefighters working on the [Mink Fire \(#073\)](#). The Mink Fire was discovered on May 12 and was burning about 5 miles from the Marten Fire.

The latest fire was originally logged as a lightning-caused fire, but based on the absence of lightning detected in the area so far this year and the remnants of a hunting camp found later at the point of origin, firefighters believe it is human-caused.

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