



# INTERIOR WILDLAND FIRE

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## Kopshesut Fire News Release

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### Firefighters, Aircraft Hold Afternoon Flareup on Kopshesut Fire

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** — Firefighters were already working on the ground when a small section on the west side of the fire near the Kobuk River flared up Saturday afternoon, sending a large plume of smoke into the air. The two water scoopers were quickly deployed, and crews were able to get around the flare-up and stop it from gaining more than about 20 acres. With vegetation in the area extremely dry, crews are expecting the possibility of additional afternoon flare-ups.

The fire remains just under 1,500 acres and 20% contained.

There are now 68 personnel assigned to the Kopshesut Fire, including the 24 smokejumpers, the Midnight Sun Hotshots, and the North Star Fire Crew, who arrived in Ambler yesterday and will begin work today. The fire continues to burn through black spruce, mixed hardwoods, and tundra with tall grass, and is mostly creeping and smoldering with occasional torching, such as Saturday's west-side flare-up.

Thankfully, the fire is not burning into deeper ground layers, making flames easier to extinguish. Water —whether applied by smokejumpers on the ground or dropped from aircraft — is having a visible impact on calming fire activity. The fire has reached the edge of the Kobuk River about a mile southwest of Ambler.

On Thursday, gusts up to 30 mph pushed flames from the landfill ignition point southeast toward the river rather than directly toward the community. The fast-moving fire did burn a nearby Native allotment.

With additional crews now on scene, firefighters are working both the eastern and western edges of the fire, with the goal of bringing the entire fire contained and controlled.

**PREDICTED WEATHER** — Cooler weather will continue today as a front moves in from the north. Light showers are possible late this morning, with rain becoming more likely this afternoon. Total precipitation through tonight is expected to range from 0.05 to 0.15 inches, and some showers may change to snow overnight. Rain and snow will taper off by early Monday afternoon. Highs will stay in the upper 40s. Minimum relative humidity will be around 50% today before dropping to about 35% on Monday. Winds will shift from the southwest tonight to the north and northwest by midday Monday, increasing to around 20 mph with gusts up to 30 mph.

**AIR QUALITY** — There is considerable concern about the noxious smoke produced by the burning material in the landfill where the fire began. Both wildfire smoke and smoke from burning trash contain fine particles and other pollutants that can be very harmful to people's health. These particles can irritate the eyes and lungs and are especially dangerous for Elders, young children, and people with heart or respiratory conditions. Even short-term exposure can worsen breathing problems. At this time, smoke from the Kopshesut Fire has not significantly drifted into Ambler, but residents should stay alert to changing conditions and take steps to protect their health if smoke moves into the community. Find more air quality information at <https://dec.alaska.gov/air/anpms/wildfire-smoke/>

For updated fire information, visit Alaska Wildland Fire Information ([akfireinfo.com](http://akfireinfo.com)) and [Alaska Fire Service](#) on Facebook.

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