



# INTERIOR WILDLAND FIRE

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## Kopshesut Fire News Release

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### Cloudy Weather, Showers Help Firefighters Increase Containment of Kopshesut Fire

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** — Cloudy weather with isolated showers on Sunday helped firefighters secure more of the fire's edge. **Containment increased to 30%, and the fire remains estimated at 1,447 acres.** Although the area received more rain than expected, it likely wasn't enough to make a lasting difference. With warmer weather on the way and vegetation already extremely dry, conditions are expected to dry out again. As temperatures rise this week, firefighters also anticipate the possibility of additional afternoon flare-ups as the fire burns through pockets of unburned vegetation well inside the perimeter. The fire continues to burn through black spruce, mixed hardwoods, and tundra with tall grass, and is mostly creeping and smoldering.

There are now 68 personnel assigned to the Kopshesut Fire, including 24 smokejumpers, the Midnight Sun Hotshots, and the North Star Fire Crew. Twelve smokejumpers are scheduled to demobilize today now that the two crews are fully in place. It is the only staffed fire in Alaska.

With more crews on the line, firefighters are focusing on both the east and west sides to bring the entire fire under containment. This involves ensuring all hot spots are extinguished within the first 300 feet inside the fire's edge. This careful work is called mop-up, and it involves moving through the burned area to put out any remaining heat so the fire can't spread. Firefighters look for smoldering spots in dry grass, moss, duff, or under fallen trees, then dig them out, cool them with water, and make sure the ground is cold.

Fortunately, the fire is not burning deep into the ground, which often happens later in the summer when deeper layers dry out. Because the heat is mostly in surface fuels — such as dry grass and black spruce — firefighters are able to put out hotspots more easily.

This also means people will continue to see smoke coming from well inside the fire's perimeter as leftover heat burns off in various unburned spots. This is normal and can continue even after firefighters consider the fire contained and controlled. Contained and controlled means the fire is not expected to move outside the control lines that crews are strengthening around the entire perimeter, which is the goal firefighters are working toward.

**PREDICTED WEATHER** — A cold front is moving through the area today, bringing light rain and gusty winds. The rain will be light and not enough to soak the ground. Winds from the north and northwest may gust up to 30 mph but will start to weaken later tonight as the front moves away. After the front passes, the skies will clear and temperatures will get colder and drier. Humidity levels will drop to near-critical levels on Tuesday and may stay low into Wednesday. Wednesday will be warmer, and added cloud cover at night should help keep humidity higher on Thursday.

**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. Contact Public Affairs Specialist Beth Ipsen at [Elizabeth\\_ipsen@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Elizabeth_ipsen@ios.doi.gov) or (907)356-5510 for more information.