



# INTERIOR **WILDLAND FIRE**

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## **Kopshesut Fire News Release**

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### **Containment of Kopshesut Fire Continues to Increase as Warmer Weather Moves In**

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** — Firefighters are continuing to make steady progress on the Kopshesut Fire as warmer weather settles over the area. Containment reached 50% on Tuesday. Firefighters successfully connected control line along the fire's edges down to the Kobuk River. Work is now focused on extinguishing interior hot spots beyond the perimeter. The fire footprint remains unchanged at an estimated 1,447 acres, based on satellite mapping completed Saturday. The fire is located roughly one mile west of Ambler.

Along the completed control line, firefighters are actively locating and cooling remaining hot spots. Work will continue up to 300 feet into the interior to ensure all heat is extinguished before those areas can be declared contained. Because heat is largely limited to surface fuels — such as dry grass and black spruce — firefighters are able to identify and put out hot spots more efficiently.

This phase of work, called mop-up, involves carefully checking the burned area for any lingering heat that could spark new fire activity. Firefighters dig out smoldering patches of grass, moss, duff, or material beneath fallen trees, apply water, and confirm the ground is cold to the touch. Fortunately, the fire is not burning deep into the soil layers, which is more common later in the summer when the ground becomes drier.

Temperatures are expected to rise about 10 degrees today as a strong high-pressure system remains over the region. With vegetation already extremely dry, the warmer and drier weather will allow fuels to readily dry out. Firefighters anticipate the possibility of small flare-ups within the perimeter as unburned pockets heat up. The fire continues to creep and smolder in black spruce, mixed hardwoods, tundra, and tall grass. As temperatures increase, Ambler residents may notice more smoke coming from inside the established perimeter. This is normal, even after a fire is considered contained or controlled, and does not indicate movement outside the control line. Containment and control mean the fire is not expected to spread beyond the reinforced lines firefighters have built around the perimeter.

There are now 57 personnel working on the fire including 11 smokejumpers, the Midnight Sun Hotshots, and the North Star Fire Crew. It is one of two staffed fires in Alaska.

**PREDICTED WEATHER** — Humidity will drop to near-critical levels today, but conditions should start to improve this evening as cloud cover moves in over the fire. Cooler air is expected to arrive Thursday, and the added cloudiness should help keep humidity higher throughout the day. By Thursday afternoon, winds from the south and southwest may mix down into the valley, bringing occasional gusts between 15–25 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. Smoke from the Kopshesut Fire has not significantly drifted into Ambler. 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/>