



# INTERIOR **WILDLAND FIRE**

**June 6, 2026**

## **Kopshesut Fire News Release**

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### **Kopshesut Fire Slows as Firefighters and Aircraft Strengthen Firelines**

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska** — Winds and fire activity decreased Friday as U.S. Wildland Fire Service personnel and aircraft made progress toward containing the Kopshesut Fire (#137), burning about a mile west of Ambler.

Water dropping aircraft and smokejumpers made solid progress on the eastern side of the fire and are reporting about **20% containment**. Satellite images show the fire's perimeter now covers nearly **1,500 acres**. Especially because this is an early-season fire, it is not burning all the vegetation within that area. Hardwoods, willows, and alders usually don't carry fire well this time of year. Instead, the fire has mainly spread through black spruce — the dominant tree across much of the area — and is not burning into deeper ground layers, making the flames easier to extinguish. The fire has reached the edge of the Kobuk River about a mile southwest of Ambler.

On Thursday, wind gusts up to 30 mph pushed the flames from their starting point at the nearby landfill, carrying the fire through black spruce to the southeast toward the Kobuk River rather than directly toward Ambler. Those winds decreased to 15 mph on Friday. The fast-moving fire did burn a nearby Native allotment.

Water, whether coming from hoses used by smokejumpers on the ground or dropped from helicopters and airplanes, is having a noticeable impact on calming the flames. Two single-engine water scoopers delivered more than 100,000 gallons on Thursday and Friday, with 70,200 gallons dropped on Friday alone. Each AT-802F aircraft can scoop up to 800 gallons in about 15 seconds by skimming across a waterbody at roughly 75 mph. With favorable conditions — such as a clear, debris-free stretch of the Kobuk River at least 2,200 feet long — the aircraft have been able to increase the number of drops per fuel cycle to 27, resulting in a higher volume of water delivered before needing to refuel.

The USWFS Midnight Sun Hotshots arrived in Ambler on Friday and will take over work on the eastern edge while smokejumpers shift to the western side. The North Star Fire Crew — the USWFS Alaska training crew — is shuttling to Ambler today and will join smokejumpers on the west edge of the fire Sunday. Each federal firefighting hand crew has just over 20 firefighters.

**PREDICTED WEATHER** — Cooler temperatures are expected Saturday, with a small chance of afternoon showers. Minimum humidity should stay around 45% through the start of the week. Winds will come from the south to southwest at about 10 mph. Another weather system is expected Sunday afternoon and evening, bringing more widespread showers and a better chance of meaningful rainfall, with totals between 0.05 and 0.15 inches through Sunday night.

**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 Kopsheut 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.

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

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-USWFS-

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