



Wilderness Fire Grows at Kenai NWR

ALASKA - The King County Creek Fire, which is burning in wilderness across from Skilak Lake at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, grew to more than 2,800 acres on June 27, prompting fire managers to dispatch a Type II Incident Management Team to the area, including Hot Shots and handcrews.

The fire was started by a lightning strike on June 26, and for several reasons managers implemented plans to fight it rather than let it burn under managed conditions: the fire was within five miles of dwellings and the area burning contained continuous tracts of mature black spruce, which is a volatile fuel-type; the fire was expected to burn a long time because it is early in the season; the weather was expected to be warm, dry and windy; resources to fight the fire were already stretched thin due to the fire at Ft. Yukon; there was a risk of additional fires due to thunderstorms and the upcoming 4th of July weekend; if the fire were allowed to burn smoke in that area at this time of year could cause human health and safety issues.

While the fire will be fought, it will be done with minimum impact suppression tactics to protect wilderness values. Also, a rehabilitation plan will be prepared if necessary.

Contact: Robin West, 907/262-7021
