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Department of
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: July 17, 2019

State campfire closure in Southcentral Alaska to end Thursday

(Anchorage, AK) – With wildfire danger moderating as a result of cooler, moister weather, the Alaska Division of Forestry will end campfire closures on state, private and municipal lands in Southcentral Alaska, effective 8 a.m. on Thursday, July 18.

A similar state campfire closure was lifted for the northern half of Alaska on Sunday after cooler, wetter weather lessened wildfire danger in that region.

Reversal of the Southcentral Alaska closure means campfires under three feet in diameter will be allowed in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Copper River Basin and the Kenai Peninsula Borough. While campfires will be allowed in designated fire pits and rings in state campgrounds within the Municipality of Anchorage, the Municipality is retaining its ban on outdoor fires within the rest of the Municipality.

Likewise, while campfire closures are being lifted on state, municipal and private lands, campfire restrictions imposed on federal land by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or other federal agencies are being retained. The public needs to check with the appropriate federal agency to determine whether fire restrictions are in place on any specific federal land.

Today's lifting of the state campfire closure in Southcentral Alaska does not affect burn suspensions issued by local state forestry offices, however. Burn suspensions for local-area forestry offices are evaluated daily. People must check with their local state forestry office, or go online at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn> to determine if there is a burn suspension in effect in their area.

Campfires under three feet in diameter are allowed during a burn suspension, but open debris burning and the use of burn barrels are prohibited. As of Wednesday, burn suspensions remained in effect for the Copper River, Fairbanks, Kenai and Mat-Su areas.

Even though the campfire closure is no longer in effect, those using camp, warming or cooking fires should continue to be vigilant to ensure they are burning safely. Campfires must be less than three feet in diameter, and one should have water and tools nearby to keep them contained. Fires should never be left unattended and must be completely extinguished before leaving the site, by drowning the fire repeatedly with water and stirring it with a stick or shovel until it is cold to the touch. Fires over three feet in diameter require either a small- or large-scale burn permit from the Alaska Division of Forestry.

As of Wednesday, there were 205 active wildfires burning in Alaska, with more than 2,100 firefighting personnel working to contain them. Given the large number of fires and limited firefighting resources, the Division of Forestry implores Alaskans and visitors alike to be extremely careful using any kind of fire and to follow any and all burning restrictions. For more about burn permit suspensions, closures, and safe burning practices, go to <http://forestry.alaska.gov/Assets/pdfs/home/Safe%20burning%20practices.pdf>

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