



July Lightning Incident/Little Knife Fire Daily Update July 22, 2026, 10:00 am

Inciweb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mnsuf-july-2026-superior-nf-wildfires>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SuperiorNF> and <https://www.facebook.com/mnics.org>

Fire Information: 218-881-2091 (8:00 am–8:00 pm), 2026.JulyLightningEvent@firenet.gov

Recreation.gov Permit Questions: 218-626-4314

Media Inquiries: 218-219-0233

Canadian Fire Information: [Ontario Wildfire Information](#)

Fire and Smoke Map: fire.airnow.gov

Executive Summary

Combined acreage overall of the July Lightning Incident is 63,594 acres in the United States and an additional 8,412 acres in Canada. Estimated acreage of the Little Knife Fire is 4,598 acres. There are a total of 962 personnel on the July Lightning Incident. Containment estimates continue to increase based on current fire behavior, fuels, weather and natural barriers like lakes and waterways. Containment is a dynamic figure and can rise and fall based on fire activity. The public is being asked to support firefighters and public safety by adhering to all evacuations, closures, and fire restrictions; by refraining from flying drones, which endanger firefighting aircraft; and by keeping boats off the water in areas where water-gathering aircraft are operating. Fires reported on this update may change as some fires have merged or been moved into patrol status.

Evacuations and Closures

Lake County: “GO” status for Fernberg Corridor from the Garden Lake Bridge to the end of the Fernberg at Lake One due to the **Camp Fire**. Evacuate immediately.

St. Louis County: “GO” status was updated on July 18 for additional areas near the Echo Trail and “Ready” for the City of Winton north Burnside Lake. “GO” status for portions of the Echo Trail from Big Lake up to the 200 Road near the **Sioux Fire**. Other areas are under “SET” evacuation notice for **Marion Creek, Ridge, Beaver Tail, Coffin and Echo 2 Fires**

Cook County: “SET” status at the end of the Gunflint Trail due to the **Little Knife Fire**. The Midtrail area of the Gunflint Trail west of Hungry Jack Lake Rd. and the northern parts of the townships of Schroeder, Tofte, and Lutsen have moved into "READY" status.

Superior National Forest: has implemented a Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) Closure Order to protect public and firefighter health and safety through October 1, 2026, or until rescinded. The BWCAW permit issuance and forest closure is being evaluated daily. Notifications are being made to permittees seven days prior to permit entry date.

Temporary Flight Restrictions are in place over certain portions of the fire area. Visit the [Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#) website for more information.

Fire Restrictions

Superior National Forest [Forest-wide Fire Restrictions](#) are in effect.

[Minnesota DNR fire restrictions](#) are in effect.

Weather and Fire Behavior

Mostly sunny skies today will allow temperatures to warm into the 70s. The warmer temperatures create much drier air with relative humidities falling to 32-39% in the afternoon. While northwesterly winds will be slower than yesterday, gusts will still reach 12-18 miles per hour by late afternoon.

Vegetative fuels will continue to dry today and areas with more exposure to sun and wind will be the first to see open flames. Areas where smoldering and creeping occurred over the last few days will begin to transition to surface fire spread. Fire behavior is expected to become more active through the end of the week as temperatures climb and winds remain steady.

Operations

Non-Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Wildfires

- **Camp:** Approximately 4,402 acres. 23% contained. Location – 5 miles north of Winton. Crews will continue to build direct handlines and indirect dozer lines along the southern and western perimeters of the fire, connecting to Newton Lake on the east and other natural features on the west. Crews will continue to build and improve direct and indirect lines and structure protection along Fernberg Road.
- **Sioux:** Approximately 12,354 acres. 17% contained. Location – North of the Echo Trail and east of Jeanette Campground. Portions of the fire are burning in BWCAW. Crews have been clearing down trees and working along Forest Road 199. Crews will continue clearing vegetation along Echo Trail today and mop up of hot spots south of Echo Trail.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Wildfires

- **Little Knife:** Originated in Ontario and crossed into the United States. The approximate fire acreage in the United States has been reduced to 4,598 acres due to more accurate mapping. Crews are present to assist with structural protection needs. Additional crews are arriving today to implement strategic suppression actions around the fire. Managed by the National Incident Management Organization (NIMO).
- **Bear Trap (Bear Trap and Dark Fires combined):** Approximately 37,747 total acres (29,682 acres in the United States). 34% contained. Location – South of Lac La Croix, 20 miles north of Ely. Yesterday crews continued structure protection around Big Lake. Today, crews will continue structure protection with hose lays and sprinklers around Big Lake and along Echo Trail. Crews and equipment will continue clearing and widening Echo Trail to the east to connect the Echo Trail to the Camp Fire and to the west towards the Sioux Fire.
- **Thumb:** 17,088 total acres (16,747 acres in the United States). 58% contained. Remote and located 6 miles south of Gakijiwanong Anishnaabe Nation Canada. Crews will be inserted today to shore up the northern perimeter of the fire.

Wildfires West of Echo Lake and East of U.S. Hwy 53

The Chub Fire is the most active fire in this area. All the fires have firefighters and engines working on a variety of firefighting tactics including building line, mopping up, and patrolling and monitoring. There is a combined containment of 85% on these eleven fires. Crews have also been identified to assist with initial attack in this area for any new fires that are detected.

- **Chub:** 344.6 acres. 82.8% contained. Location – North of Chub Lake, southwest of Crane Lake. Fire acreage has decreased slightly based on information from an infrared flight. Crews will secure dozer line and handlines, followed by mop up and gridding to extinguish pockets of heat throughout the fire interior.
- **493:** 1.9 acre. Location – South of Long Lake. Crews will secure dozer line and handlines, followed by mop up and gridding to extinguish pockets of heat throughout the fire interior.

- **Echo 2, Beaver Tail, Ridge, Creek, Marion Creek Trail, Nine, Camp 5/Duck, Bug Creek, Coffin Fires:** 62.5 acres combined for all nine fires. All are 100% contained. Crews continue to patrol these fires, searching for smoke and hot spots and extinguishing any lingering heat.

History

On the evening of July 6, a dry thunderstorm moved across northeastern Minnesota and southern Canada resulting in more than 1,000 lightning strikes, causing dozens of fire starts. As unprecedented dry and warm conditions followed in the days after, fires were detected across Cook, Lake and St. Louis counties. Where fires were accessible by ground, firefighters were able to work to keep some of the fire perimeters small in size, however due to the number of fires, locations and number of firefighters and equipment, some of the fires continued to smolder and grow in the following days. Local fire managers ordered many additional resources including engines, hand crews, aviation resources and two incident management teams to support the firefighting efforts. While some of the fires were contained, several have continued to grow due to record breaking high temperatures and low humidity. Additional firefighters, equipment and support staff continue to be ordered including a Complex Incident Management Team.