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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**State, local firefighters respond to wildfire near Harding Lake**

(Fairbanks, AK) – A new wildfire, the Old Valdez Trail Fire (#248), started near Harding Lake on Sunday afternoon. The fire is located in an urban interface area around structures and grew rapidly. The Division of Forestry is working with the Salcha Volunteer Fire Department to protect homes and keep the fire from spreading north to the Richardson Highway. Firefighting aircraft are being used to drop loads of retardant and water on the fire and are succeeding in cooling the head of the fire down. Wildland firefighting crews and other resources are arriving to the fire to assist containment efforts.



Photo by: Tim Whitesell - Division of Forestry

The National Weather Service is predicting continued hot and dry conditions statewide for the next couple days. Red flag warnings have been issued for the majority of Alaska. A red flag warning means that weather conditions are ideal for the ignition of wildland fires and for rapid spreading.

Due to the current weather conditions Division of Forestry recommends Alaska residents to review the **FireWise** checklist:

- Rake any debris or leaves from buildings, under decks, porches; clean roof and gutters.
- Firewood and fuels should be moved well away from your house. This includes ATV's, snow machines, and vehicles.
- Grass around buildings should be mowed and watered.
- A hose should be available that will reach to all parts of the house with a reliable water supply.
- Tools, such as a shovel, and a ladder which can reach the roof should be readily available.
- Smoke detectors should be properly placed and working. Practice your already established family evacuation plan.

More Alaska Firewise information is available at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/firewise09.pdf> . Current statewide fire information is available at 907-356-5511 or visit <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>.

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