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Donlin Gold mine evacuated



Donlin Mine (Courtesy Judy Patrick) (KTUU)

By Lex Treinen

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Hot, dry weather in Southwest Alaska has led Donlin gold mine to evacuate its remaining nine personnel from the mine, which is located 145 miles east of Bethel.

Division of Forestry public information officer Mike McMillan said that the fire, currently listed at 12,700 acres, may have doubled in size in the last day. While managers don't have an updated acreage, McMillan says that the fire has "grown significantly."

"It wasn't an emergency," he said of Donlin's decision to relocate personnel. "The smoke and the growth of the fire had increased to the point where it's making normal operations there difficult."

He said that until that point, Donlin Gold had been extremely cooperative with firefighters, lending equipment and space.

Throughout Southwest Alaska, fire growth was spurred by warmer weather. Already, an estimated 459,461 acres have burned.

"It really warmed up. A lot of fires that were smoldering and dormant are showing activity now -- significant activity," said McMillan.

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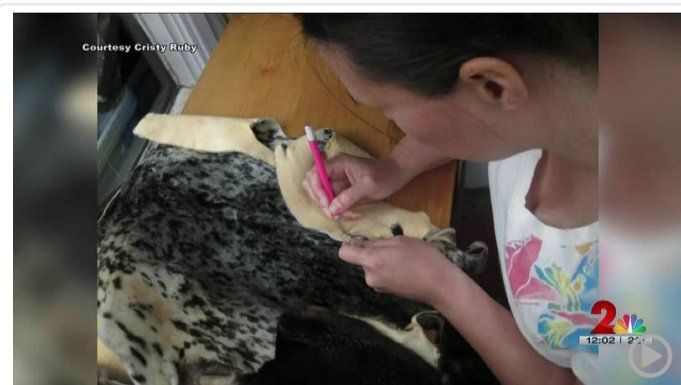




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