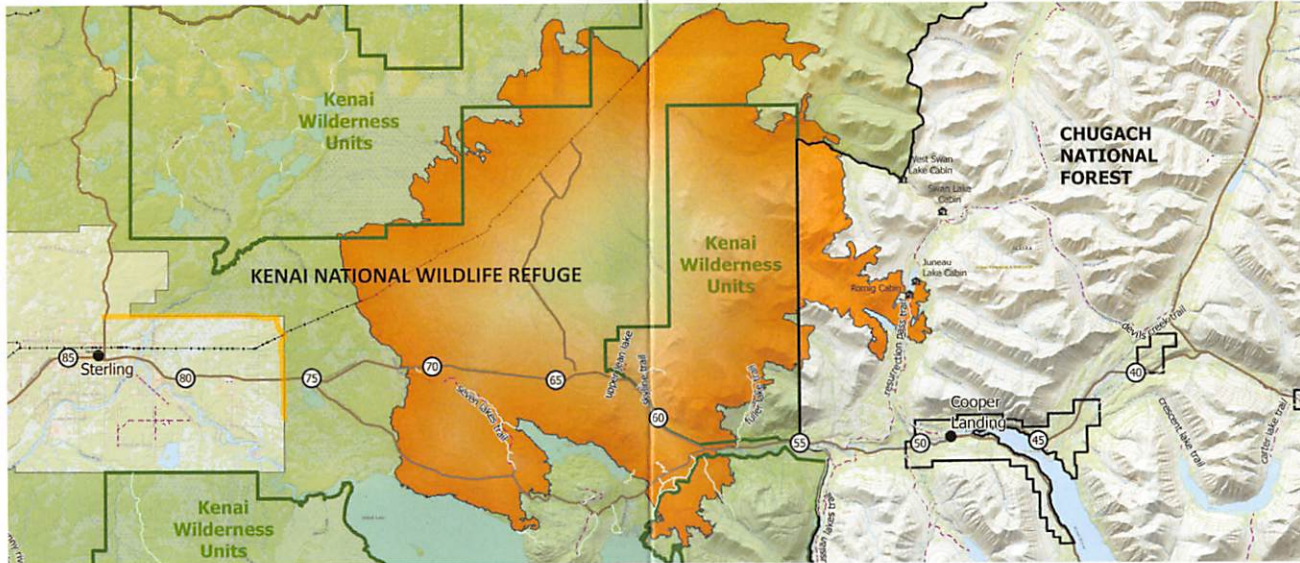


SWAN LAKE

PUBLIC INFORMATION

March 1, 2020
167,182 Acres



WHERE IS THE BURNED AREA?

The map (above) of the 2019 Swan Lake Fire perimeter does not show the details of its burn scar. The Swan Lake Fire burned with a variety of intensities over the four months it was active on the Kenai Peninsula, burning hot through black spruce stands while dancing lightly around wetlands.

Wildfire in Alaska's forests creates a *mosaic* of different landscapes. A visit to the area reveals where the actual "burned area" is accessible to visitors.

WHAT ABOUT WILDLIFE?

Animals in this fire-adapted ecosystem react to smoke just as humans do, moving away and seeking shelter in safe zones like wetlands and lakes. Though some individual animals may not avoid harm, their species' population benefits as a whole from the forest's rebirth after fire.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Regrowth of new plants has already begun within the Swan Lake Fire scar. The boreal forest restarts through a process called *succession*.

Young plants like fireweed and willow will feed a wide variety of wildlife species while trees sprout saplings, grow taller and later restore the forest canopy. Old trees prepare for fire's return by growing abundant seeds that will sprout in the recharged post-fire soils.

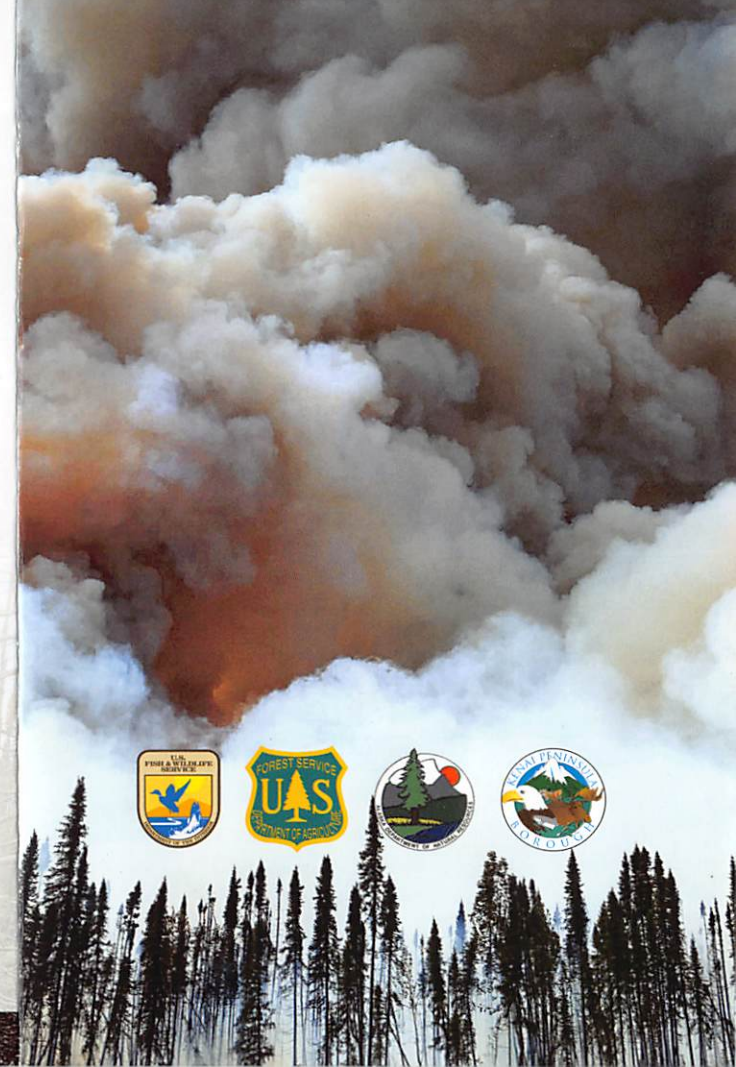
Mushrooms like morels are essential to this forest rebirth, decomposing organic material into new soil. Downed trees catch this soil and wind-blown seeds, creating the habitat needed for new plants to grow and reducing the risk of soil runoff after rains.



AFTER THE SWAN LAKE FIRE



HAZARDS, HARVEST & HOPE IN THIS MOSAIC LANDSCAPE



Know Before You Go: Learn more about potential hazards and risks to visitors inside this brochure.

DANGEROUS GROUND

HAZARD TREES

The duff that held tree roots in place has now been burned away leaving trees very unstable.

Duff layer. A layer of moderately to highly decomposed leaves, needles, fine twigs, and other organic material found between the mineral soil surface and litter layer of forest soil.



SAFETY TIPS

- Look Up, Down and Around!
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Do not walk on trails during windy days.
- Share your hiking plans with friends and family.
- Plan your trip! Avoid areas with hazard trees after storms.



ASH PITS

Ash pits may look like solid ground on the surface, but underneath can be inches to feet deep of smoldering ash.

Ash Pit. A hole in the ground filled with ash, possibly containing hot embers beneath. It may be imperceptible from the ground above, and can remain dangerous long after flames and smoke are no longer visible.



SAFETY TIPS

- Stay on designated trails.
- Keep Pets on trails.
- Do not allow children to play in burned areas.
- Carry a hiking stick to check the ground for ash pits.



TRIP HAZARDS

Fire has burned underneath trails in many areas leaving holes in and alongside of trails. Exposed roots have also been left behind since duff has been burned away.



SAFETY TIPS

- Be Aware of Trail Conditions
- Watch Your Step!
- Use Caution on Trails Affected By Fire

MUSHROOMS!

After fire, morel mushrooms grow in abundance. Mushrooms harvested on the Refuge may not be sold. Please visit the Chugach NF website for information on harvesting mushrooms of the forest. Closely inspect each mushroom to ensure it is a *true morel*.

False morels do grow here too.

TRUE MOREL

- Cap & Stalk are one unit
- Hollow Stem



FALSE MOREL

- Brain like pattern
- Stem through center
- Thimble-like cap
- Stem filled with cottony material

