



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Superior National Forest

Forest Service Press Release



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Inciweb at [Mnsuf Spice Lake Fire Information | InciWeb \(nwcg.gov\)](https://www.nwcg.gov)

or the Superior National Forest website at
www.fs.usda.gov/superior

BWCAW ‘Spice Lake Wildfire’ Closure Area Decreased

Six lakes with thirteen campsites and eight portages remain closed effective Thursday 12:01am, decreasing the closure to 1,000 acres

Duluth, Minn. June 21, 2023— The Superior National Forest will decrease the emergency closure area as the Spice Lake fire is now 100% contained. Deputy Forest Supervisor (Acting), Earlene Jackson, has officially decreased the closed portion of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) to 1,000 +/- acres with Emergency Forest Order # 09-09-23-04. The new forest order and restrictions go into effect beginning Thursday morning (12:01) a.m., June 22, 2023. The closure may be modified or extended as conditions indicate.

Per the Emergency Forest Order, public entry (including day and overnight paddle and camping) is prohibited on the following six lakes with thirteen campsites, and eight portages (see Exhibit A of the Forest Order for a map of the area linked below):

BWCAW Lakes:

- Annie Lake
- Kingfisher Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake
- Skindance Lake
- Spice Lake
- Tickle Lake

BWCAW Portages:

- Jasper Lake to Kingfisher
- Kingfisher Lake to Ogishkemuncie Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake to Holt Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake to Skindance Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake to Spice Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake to Annie Lake
- Ogishkemuncie Lake to Mueller Lake
- Annie Lake to Jenny Lake

With the Spice Lake Fire now 100% contained, the Type 3 team brought in to manage suppression actions is transitioning out of the area and turning the fire operations back over to the Superior National Forest on Wednesday, June 21. A reduced emergency closure for the Spice Lake fire area is still necessary for the safety of our visitors. Additional emergency support is on standby as the forecasted conditions increase the opportunity for new wildfire activity.

Northern Minnesota continues to face severe to extreme drought conditions, causing increased fire potential across the landscape. The Superior National Forest currently has a campfire restriction in place, see [forest order 09-09-23-02 for details](#).

Cooperating Agencies to the Forest Service on the Spice Lake fire included the Gunflint Trail Volunteer Fire Department, National Park Service, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Background: Late in the afternoon on June 13, 2023, a 20-30-acre wildfire was detected between Spice Lake and Ogishkemuncie Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) on the Gunflint Ranger District of the Superior National Forest. Spice Lake is located east of Knife and Kekekabic Lakes and southwest of Seagull Lake, approximately 10 miles west of the Gunflint Trail. At the time of detection, the fire was actively burning in a mixed Boreal Forest with aspen, pine, and balsam fir tree species. Within the forested landscape of the fire area, there are Spruce Budworm affected trees, both standing and dead laying down that can increase fire behavior. Aircraft dropped water on the fire. Firefighter resources including a 19-person hotshot crew were transported to the fire area using float planes (remote wilderness) and worked the fire on-the-ground. Public safety staff swept the area for any visitors located near the fire area. Effective June 16, a 100,000-acre emergency closure #09-09-23-03 was issued around the area for safety of the public and firefighters (included 80 campsites). Fire activity continued to smolder in mixed timber and brush while fire crews mopped up hot spots on the fire and gridded the area. June 17, the fire was initially determined to be human caused and remains under investigation.

• **Mopping** up involves putting water on the fire, and using tools to mix it into the soil and duff to extinguish the heat until the area is cooled. Firefighter and public safety are the number one priority.

• **Gridding** is walking through the burned area in an organized pattern to seek out and extinguish pockets of heat and smoke.

For additional information regarding fire-related and/or forest closures and updates:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for this NEW closure will be available on the forest website homepage hotlink this afternoon (and available as a pdf at the bottom of this release):

- www.fs.usda.gov/superior

Inciweb for this incident can be found at (updates, maps, photos, etc.):

- <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/mnsuf-spice-lake-fire>

SNF Forest Orders are available here:

- <https://bit.ly/SNFforestorders>

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory:

- [www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/Fuels Fire Behavior Advisory EA NortheastMN WI MI 20230612.pdf](http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/Fuels_Fire_Behavior_Advisory_EA_NortheastMN_WI_MI_20230612.pdf)

Superior National Forest social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/SuperiorNF
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/SuperiorNF
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/superiornationalforest (Spice Fire Photos will be uploaded soon)

[Copy of Closure Decrease Press Release](#)

[Copy of Closure Decrease FAQ](#)

[Copy of Closure Decrease Order](#)

[Copy of Closure Decrease Exhibit A: Areas Closed](#)

[Copy of Closure Decrease Exhibit B: Map](#)

Photo Credit:

USDA Forest Service - Superior NF, Mike Crook - Spice Lake Fire, Beaver Loading, June 14.

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