



Alaska Large Fire History Database: Where to Find it and How to Download it

The Alaska Large Fire History Database, containing current and historical fire and lightning information, is available for download. The fire history (point of origin and perimeter) database has undergone many changes—especially in the 2007- 2009 seasons, when state wide fire records from 1939 to 1949, a ‘Fire Origin Locations’ layer, and over 200 additional old perimeters were added. It is highly recommended that users download the latest version of the database. The active fires and lightning data is updated daily throughout the fire season.

How to download the Alaska Large Fire History Database from AICC:

- Step 1. Navigate your web browser to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC) web site: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/> Select the “Maps/Imagery/Geospatial” link on the left hand side then click on “Fire Locations and Information.”



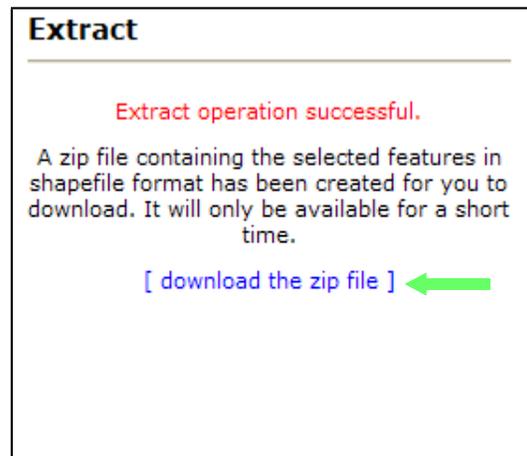
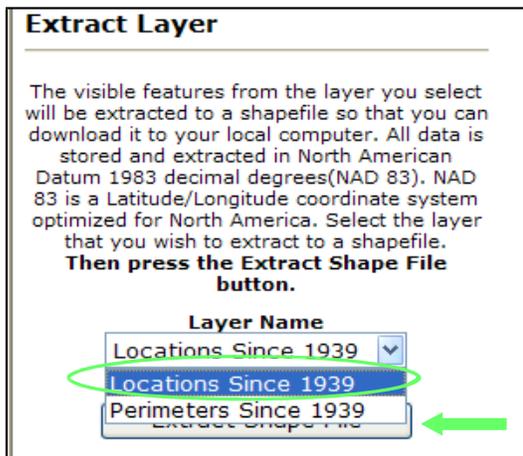
- Step 2. After the ArcIMS page loads, select “Fire History” from the “Select a Theme” drop down box.



From this point there are three primary options to download/manipulate the data including downloading the entire database, performing selections before downloading, and manipulating the data within the ArcIMS site.

Option 1: Downloading the Entire Fire History Database

1. To download the database in its entirety, you **MUST** zoom out to the full extent of the map or click on the “Show All of Alaska” button.
2. Check the boxes to display the “Locations Since 1939” and “Perimeters Since 1939” layers on the right hand side. (Note: Also *uncheck* the “<year> Fires”-this year’s layer.)
3. Click the “Extract to Shapefile” button in the upper tool bar.
4. In the “Layer Name” drop down box, select either Locations or Perimeters layer and click “Extract Shape file.”



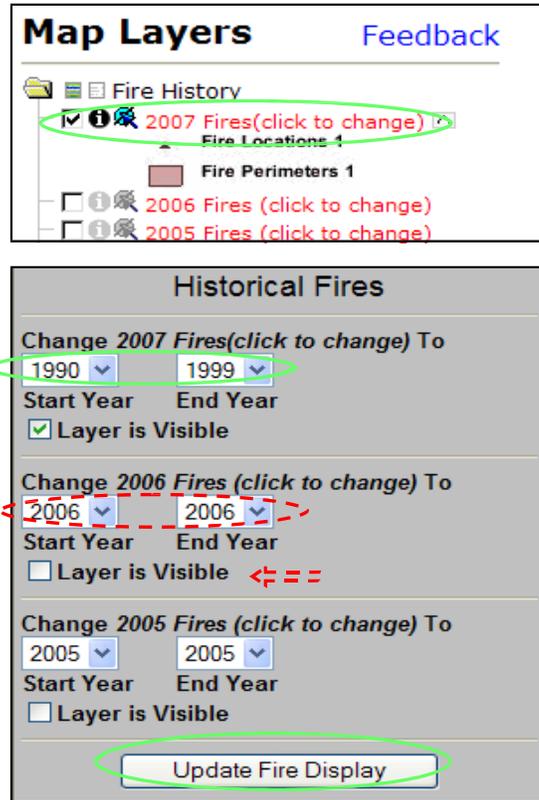
5. Click “download the zip file”.
6. Repeat steps 3 through 5 above, this time selecting whichever layer (either Locations or Perimeters Since 1939) was not selected for the first extract.
7. Once the shapefiles have been unzipped and saved to your computer, they can be added as layers to your ArcMap project.

Option 2: Performing Selections Before Downloading

There are several ways selections can be performed to eliminate unwanted data. Below are just a few examples. Creating these selections may take some prior knowledge of the tools and functions available on the ArcIMS site. Links to both “*Tool and Button Help*” and “*GIS Tutorial*” can be found in blue above the main tool bar.

Selecting Range of Years or Groups of Ranges:

1. Click on the <year> Fires layer shown in red to change the years displayed, e.g. 2007.
2. For example, if interested in only in years from 1990 to 1999, select the appropriate years in the drop down boxes. Check the box (if not already checked) to make sure the layer is visible and click “Update Fire Display”.
3. To select only a single year, set the start year and end year to the year of interest.
4. To select groups of ranges, for example 1990 to 1999 and 1960 to 1969, repeat step 3 in the second <year> Fires box and select 1960 for “Start Year” and 1969 for “End Year”. Make sure the “Layer is Visible” box is checked for both groups of years.
5. Another set of data (by year) can also be selected from the third <year> Fires box.
6. The database can be extracted at this point by clicking the “Extract Shapefile” tool (follow directions for Option 1 with the exception of step 2) or continue on to select by additional attributes/geographic areas.



Selecting Fire Locations and Perimeters by Other Attributes or Geographic Areas:

Fires can be selected by other attributes (ownership, size, etc.) from the entire database (1939- current year) or after the desired years have been selected (as shown above).

1. Click “Select” in the top red toolbar.
2. There are 6 different selection methods to choose from:
 - Select by Point, Box, Polygon, Attribute or Layer, or
 - Select using Query Builder
2. The best method to select the optimum set of data will strongly depend on the attribute

or area desired. For example, if only interested in fires that started in the Military Fire Management Zone from 1939 through 2007, one applicable selection method would be the query builder.

3. Click on “Select using Query Builder” under Selection Methods.
 - A. Select “Locations Since 1939” layer from “Find features from layer” drop down box.
 - B. Select “Office” from “Having:” drop down box.
 - C. Select “=”.
 - D. Click “Get Samples”, then select MIL (for Military Zone) from 4th drop down box.
 - E. Click “Add to Query”.
 - F. Click “Execute”.

** Check box “Within visible extent” to only select features within the visible extent.**

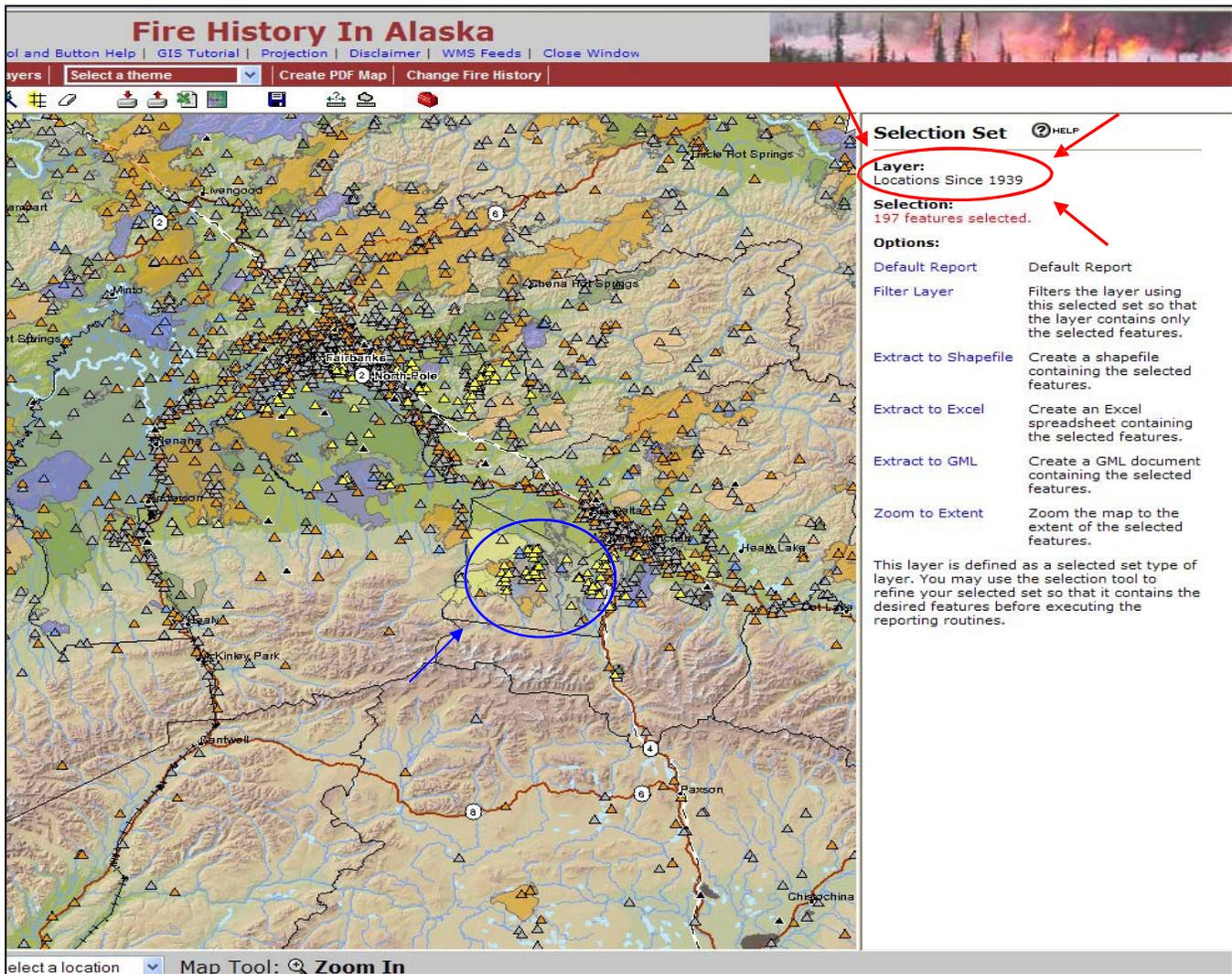
The image shows a screenshot of the 'Query Builder' dialog box. The dialog has a title bar 'Query Builder'. Below the title bar, there are several sections:

- Find features from layer:** A dropdown menu showing 'Locations Since 1939'. This is annotated with 'A.'.
- Within visible extent:** An unchecked checkbox.
- Having:** A dropdown menu showing 'Office'. This is annotated with 'B.'
- Operator:** A dropdown menu showing '='. This is annotated with 'C.'
- Value:** A dropdown menu showing 'MIL'. This is annotated with 'D.'
- Add To Query:** A button. This is annotated with 'E.'
- Case sensitive:** An unchecked checkbox.
- Query:** A text area containing the query: 'upper (FIRESADMIN.FIRE.MGMTOFFICEID) = 'MIL''. To the right of the text area are buttons for 'And', 'Or', 'Not', '(', and ')'. This section is annotated with 'F.'
- Execute, Undo, Clear:** Three buttons at the bottom of the dialog.

(Example Only)

Note: The “Select” function has a maximum threshold of 500 records.

4. Features selected from “Locations Since 1939” will appear in yellow. There are several options to choose from at this point, including extracting data to an excel file or extracting to a shapefile. Explore different options to get the desired output. **Remember**, only Fire Locations Since 1939 within the parameters established in the query builder are available for extraction in this example. To also download the Perimeters Since 1939, go back to step 3A and select the appropriate layer from the drop down box.



Option 3: Using the ArcIMS Site Only

It is not necessary to download the entire Fire History Database or selected sets for users with limited needs. By using the skills explained in Options 1 and 2, users can navigate to the desired fire locations and/or perimeters, and create specialized maps without ever having to use an ArcGIS application.

1. Navigate to the desired fire locations and/or perimeters
2. Select additional layers to be displayed if desired (roads, fire management zones, etc.)
3. Upload shapefiles to ArcIMS site if not all background layers available suite user needs (Optional). 

4. Click on “Save Map Image” in the upper toolbar or click on “Create PDF Map” in top red toolbar.



Things to Remember:

The Alaska Large Fire History Database contains fire origin locations and perimeters for fires 1,000 acres and larger from 1939 to 1987, 100 acres and larger from 1988 to 1989, and all fire locations and available perimeters, regardless of size, from 1939-1950 (given limited availability of mapped fire perimeters in those early years) and 1990 to present. Keep in mind, not all fire locations in the database have an associated fire perimeter—they may only be represented by the reported point of origin in the “locations” database.

Also, more detailed step by step instructions explaining the tools and functions available on the ArcIMS site can be found by clicking on “*Tool and Button Help*” and “*GIS Tutorial*” found in blue type above the red tool bar. If further assistance is needed, contacts are given at the end of the “*Tool and Button Help*” information page.

Created by: Jennifer Northway 03/21/2008
Updated by Randi Jandt 2/28/2015
rjandt@alaska.edu