

National Wildland Significant Fire Potential Outlook



National Interagency Fire Center
Predictive Services



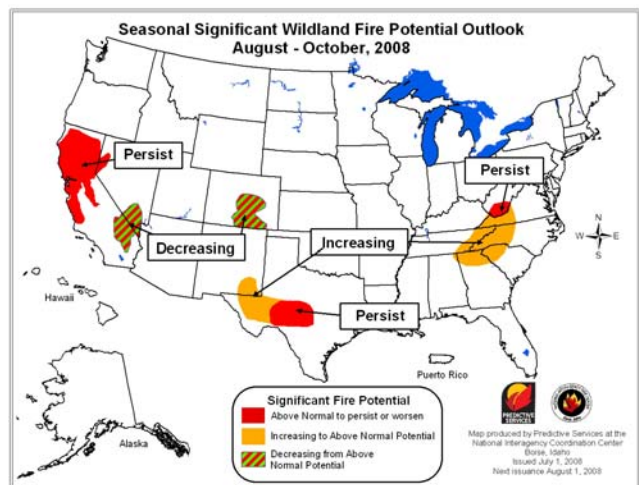
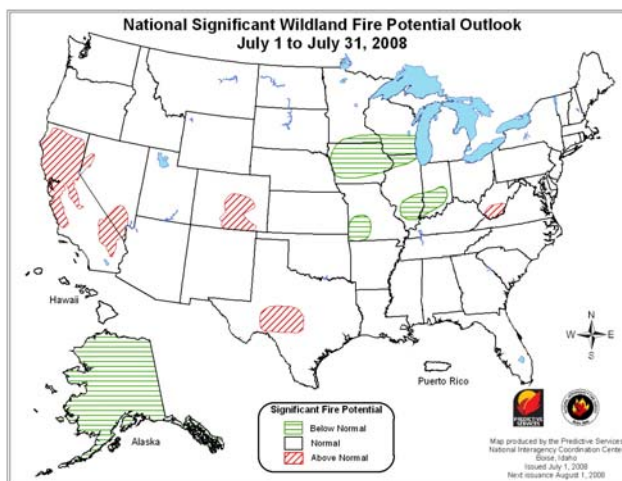
Issued: July 1, 2008

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Wildland Fire Outlook – July 2008 through October 2008

During July, above normal significant fire potential is expected across portions of California, Western Great Basin, Rocky Mountain, Texas and West Virginia. Below normal significant fire potential is forecast for Alaska and portions of the Eastern Area. For August through October, significant fire potential is forecast to persist or increase in portions of California, Western Great Basin, Southwest, Southern, and Eastern Areas. Significant fire potential will decrease across portions of Southern California, southern Nevada, and central Colorado. The primary factors influencing fire potential this outlook period are:

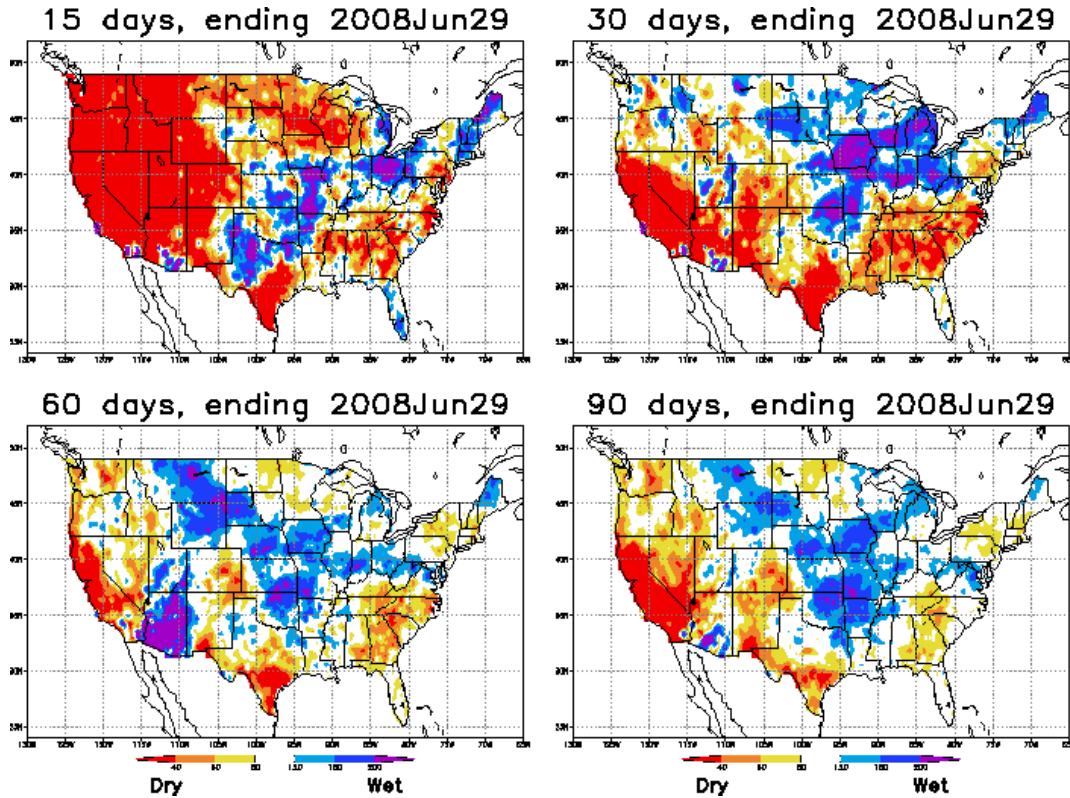
- Much of the West has been very dry this spring through early summer with precipitation deficit records being set in many areas of northern California.
- Drought conditions continue over portions of the West and Southeast. However, improvement is expected in some areas of the Southeast, Texas and New Mexico.
- Abundant fine fuels across portions of Texas, southern Nevada, the southern California deserts and Front Range of Colorado will enhance the likelihood of large fires in these areas.
- Fire potential should begin to wane over the Southwest and Colorado the second half of July due to the onset of the Southwest monsoon.



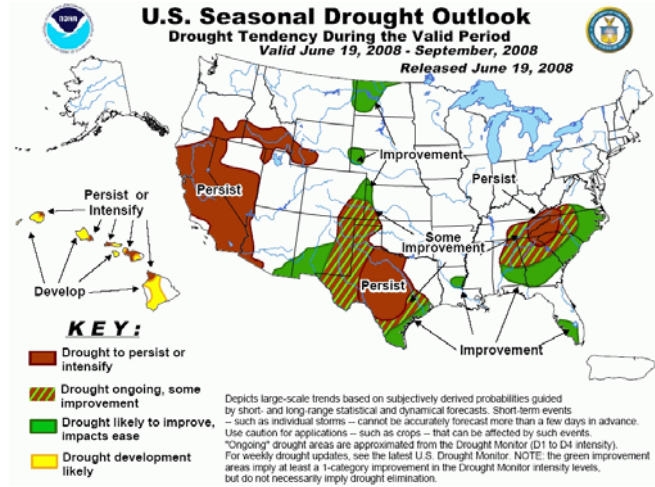
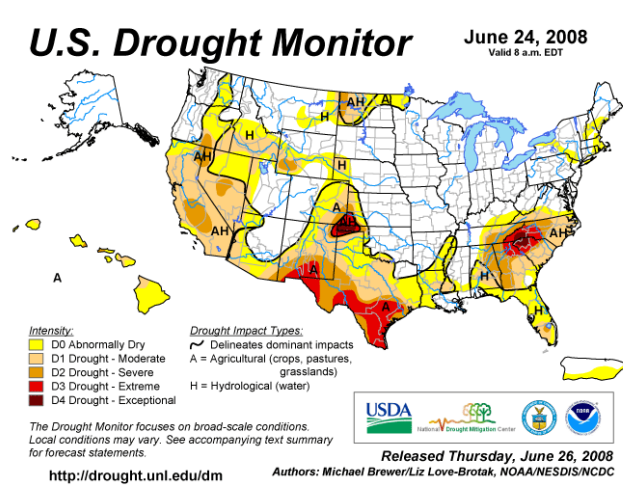
Note: Significant fire potential is defined as the likelihood that a wildland fire event will require mobilization of additional resources from outside the area in which the fire situation originates.

Past Weather and Drought

Much of the country experienced above normal temperatures for the month of June with heat centered in the East early in the month and in the West the latter half of June. Dry conditions continued to persist across the West and southern tier of states with very wet conditions, and associated flooding, from the central Plains into the Midwest. Florida transitioned into a seasonal wet pattern by mid-month. Drought conditions are expected to persist in portions of the West, central Texas and the southern Appalachians. June was cooler and wetter than normal across much of Alaska, particularly across central and northern portions.



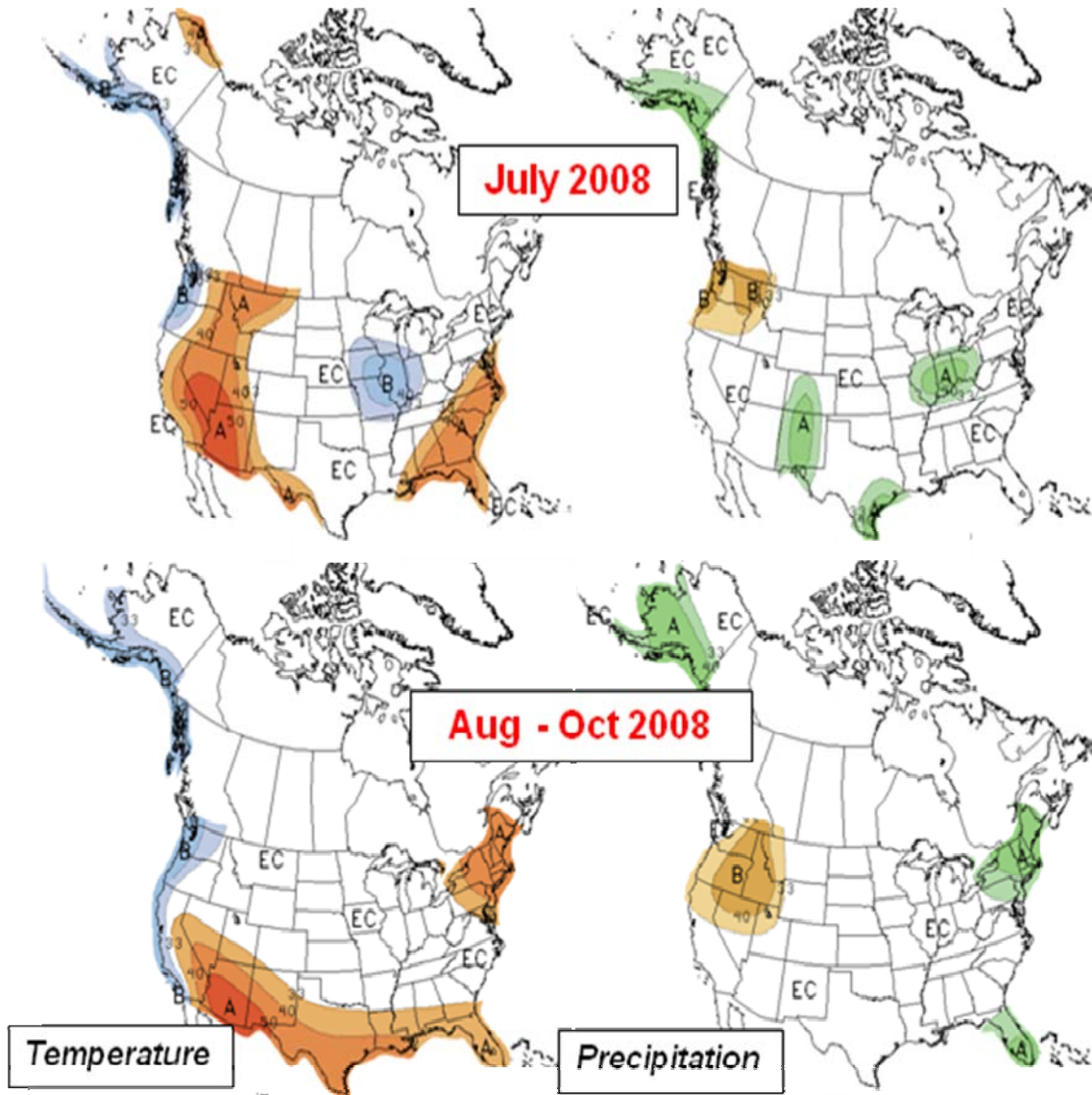
www.cdc.noaa.gov/Drought/images/prec4.gif



www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html

Weather and Climate Outlooks

The National Weather Service (NWS) Climate Prediction Center, predicts La Niña will continue to weaken to near neutral conditions by mid-summer. The outlook for July (below) shows warmer than normal weather for much of the interior West with drier than normal conditions over the Pacific Northwest. Monsoon moisture during the month is expected to be focused over New Mexico and Colorado. For August through October, the above normal warmth shifts to the southern tier of states with dryness persisting in the Northwest. The relatively cool weather along the West Coast is due to colder than normal Pacific waters.



A = Above normal, B = Below normal, N = Normal, EC = Equal Chances of Above/Below/Normal.
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/page2.gif

Area Discussions

Alaska: Below normal significant fire potential is projected across Alaska during July. Normal significant fire potential is expected the remainder of the outlook period. A long wave trough continues to position itself over the state bringing unsettled weather and scattered precipitation into early July. Year-to-date burned acres as of the end of June are well below normal. The main fire season in Alaska usually ends by mid-August.

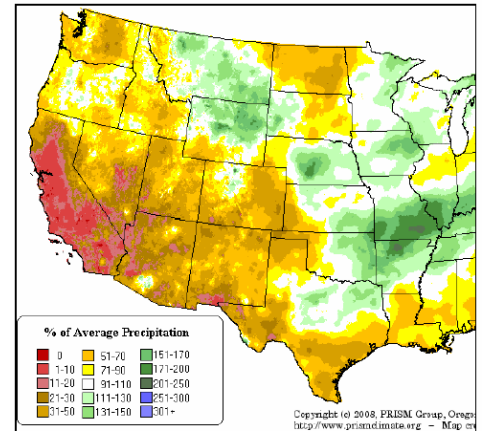
Southwest: Normal significant fire potential is expected across the Southwest Area during the month of July as the arrival of the seasonal moisture is anticipated sometime during the first part of the month. Monsoonal moisture will begin to occur as the upper level high center heads northward into the central Rockies allowing an infiltration of moisture from both the east and south. This will quickly lessen significant fire activity. Areas missing or receiving less precipitation will exist across the region, but increased humidity values are expected to help to abate above normal significant fire activity. During the August to October timeframe normal fire activity is anticipated across most of the Area. However above normal significant fire potential will gradually increase again in southwest Texas and southeastern New Mexico where drier than normal conditions are expected to persist into late summer.

Northern Rockies: Significant fire potential is expected to be normal during July through the outlook period across the Area. A very wet and cool spring mitigated earlier concerns about fire potential in southern Montana and western North Dakota. Large fuels will continue to dry and fine fuels will cure by mid-July, especially across eastern Montana. Much above average snow pack will keep higher elevations relatively moist through July. A wet spring and slow snowmelt has produced moderate to heavy grass loading. Some large fire activity is expected in south-central and southeast Montana by the end of July as these fine fuels cure. Current climatic outlooks call for seasonably warm but abnormally dry conditions during July through September. Above normal wind events are common in late August and early September during La Niña waning summers. Large grass fires are anticipated in October on the east side of the Area due to dry cold front/wind events and agricultural activity.

Great Basin: Significant fire potential is expected to be normal through October across most of the Area. The exceptions are areas of above normal significant fire potential across a small section of western Nevada, which will persist through October, and a portion of southern Nevada during July. Much of southern Nevada and portions of southern Utah experienced 0% to 25% of normal precipitation during June. Moderate to severe drought persists across western and southern Nevada. Fine fuels are cured in the southern two-thirds of Nevada and across the lower and mid-elevation areas of southern Utah and the Arizona Strip. A transition to increased rain and higher relative humidity associated with the onset of the monsoon should begin to mitigate fire potential across the southern Great Basin after mid-July. Recent hot temperatures have caused fire danger indices to climb rapidly across some northern sections of the Great Basin, however live fuel moistures remain elevated in the higher mountain areas, which will help abate large fire activity until late July.

Northwest: Normal significant fire potential is expected through October. June precipitation averaged near to slightly below normal in Washington and near to above normal in Oregon with cooler than normal temperatures across the Area. Accumulated snow pack (snow-water equivalent) remained well above normal at higher elevation SNOTEL sites across the west slopes of the Oregon Cascades in late June. Fire danger indices are tracking near normal for late June over the region. Warmer weather anticipated in early July will likely push the risk of significant fires to near normal levels. Seasonal outlooks suggest cooler than normal conditions returning in late summer and fall. This could lead to an early end to fire season in the Area due to higher humidity levels and more stable atmospheric conditions, which would tend to lower the threat of lightning.

California: Above normal significant fire potential is expected for most of northern California and portions of southern California through October. Near average mountain snow packs and precipitation through early February quickly dwindled by the start of June. This was primarily due to the lowest March through May accumulated precipitation on record in many locations across the northern part of the state and below average precipitation in most other locations (see image). June precipitation across most of the state ranged from 0% to 25% of normal with above normal temperatures across the southern half. The late winter to spring dryness caused early curing of low elevation annual grasses and led to lower than normal peak values in springtime live fuel moistures, both of which contributed to the early and active fire season at lower elevations. Climatologically, July is the hottest month across the interior sections in northern California. Northern California will see the potential for large fire emergence and growth continue across lower elevation areas and progress into higher elevations during July, except along the Oregon border, where large dead fuel moistures below 5,000 feet remain below normal. Above normal significant fire potential is also expected in southern California across portions of the Sierra foothills, the central coastal mountains, and the central Mojave Desert region, where higher than normal grass fuel loadings exist. Many existing fires will likely become long duration events due to the dry fuels and drought conditions. Fire potential will decrease across the deserts during the August to October time period.



March to May 2008 Percent of Normal Precipitation

Rocky Mountain: Above normal significant fire potential is forecast across southeast Colorado (east of the divide below 8,000 feet) during the first half of July, with some moisture relief anticipated by mid month from the southwest monsoon. The remainder of the Area is expected to see average fire potential through October, however short periods of dry fuel and fire weather conditions that support large fire activity are anticipated. Precipitation during the last 30-days has been average to above average across much of the Area, except across southeast sections of Colorado where deficits continue. Abundant fine dead fuel is available at lower elevations, especially across foothills and plains east of the divide in eastern Colorado and western Kansas. Grass will also be abundant this year over portions of Wyoming and South Dakota. Climate outlooks indicate below average rainfall for Wyoming and western South Dakota July through August, however recent precipitation and temperature trends have decreased the threat for extended periods of above average fire potential in those areas.

Eastern Area: Normal to below normal significant fire potential is forecast for the Area except for a small area of above normal significant fire potential in southern West Virginia during July. For the August through October time period, the Area will see normal fire potential except for southern West Virginia where above normal significant fire potential is expected to persist. Much of Iowa, southeastern Minnesota, far northern Illinois, and southern Wisconsin received well above normal precipitation amounts during June 2008. This led to widespread flooding over many of these areas, which is expected to keep significant fire potential below normal through July. Portions of southwestern Missouri, southern Illinois and Indiana also experienced above normal precipitation amounts which should result in below normal significant fire potential during July. The coal fields of southern West Virginia missed out on some of the heavier precipitation events. With negative soil moisture anomalies indicated over this area, any periods of dry and warm weather will result in elevated fire potential as well as problematic fire behavior.

Southern Area: Portions of Texas will continue to see above normal significant fire potential from July through October. The Southern Appalachian Mountains extending from Virginia to northern Georgia is expected to see significant fire potential increase later this summer and fall. Increased rain activity has improved fuel moistures across the Texas panhandle; however abundant cured fuels and precipitation anomalies across the Southern Plains and Hill country will lead to above normal fire

potential through the extended outlook period. A drier than average precipitation pattern (with July the likely exception) is expected to dominate the extended outlook period across the southeast. This, and the continuing drought conditions, is likely to cause an early fire season and above normal fire potential across portions of the Appalachian Mountains this fall.

Note: This national outlook and some geographic area assessments are currently available at the NICC and GACC websites. The GACC websites can also be accessed through the NICC webpage at: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive/outlooks/outlooks.htm>

Historic and Predicted Wildland Fires and Acres Burned Data

Based on reported data so far this year, nationally there were 89% of the average numbers of fires, burning approximately 124% of the average acres. The following table displays historical, current and predicted information pertaining to fire statistics.

	JUN 30, 2008 Reported Year-To-Date	Average reported for July	Projection for July YTD+Forecast	Average Reported YTD JUL 30	Historical Low YTD JUL 30	Year of Low	Historical High YTD JUL 30	Year of High
ALASKA								
Fires	228	104	311	412	267	2006	523	1999
Acres	6,896	659,613	204,780	1,015,283	121,873	1998	4,431,391	2004
NORTHWEST								
Fires	431	1,158	1,300	1,763	1,073	2005	2,162	2001
Acres	7,830	157,917	134,163	182,425	16,275	1999	419,537	2002
NORTH OPS								
Fires	2,294	1,033	3,843	2,073	1,099	1998	2,740	2001
Acres	269,091	29,010	791,264	38,607	2,830	1998	115,300	2001
SOUTH OPS								
Fires	2,267	799	3,386	2,375	1,567	1998	3,161	2002
Acres	84,402	49,454	232,765	82,004	17,836	1998	199,101	2002
NORTHERN ROCKIES								
Fires	1,056	731	1,860	1,586	894	2005	2,213	2000
Acres	50,069	117,121	178,902	136,596	21,451	2004	521,782	2006
EAST BASIN								
Fires	235	815	887	1,257	677	1998	1,666	2001
Acres	8,129	332,711	257,662	393,040	68,496	2004	1,463,478	2007
WEST BASIN								
Fires	139	324	495	536	360	1998	791	2000
Acres	11,283	220,489	231,772	327,382	14,933	2003	987,743	2000
SOUTHWEST								
Fires	1,686	1,253	3,190	3,438	2,599	2004	5,035	2006
Acres	398,031	101,310	484,145	383,092	50,368	2001	925,086	2002
ROCKY MOUNTAIN								
Fires	623	868	1,578	1,755	1,246	1998	2,834	2006
Acres	116,716	40,616	169,517	112,142	11,695	1998	479,992	2002
EASTERN AREA								
Fires	7,289	1,180	8,115	10,160	7,153	2004	13,872	1999
Acres	45,323	7,008	50,929	105,592	60,024	2001	173,506	2003
SOUTHERN AREA								
Fires	20,408	2,521	22,551	26,809	11,277	2003	40,193	2006
Acres	1,175,383	93,559	1,306,366	800,024	193,465	2003	2,335,375	2006
NATIONALLY								
Fires	36,656	10,785	47,515	52,163	35,987	2003	70,948	2006
Acres	2,173,153	1,808,807	4,042,264	3,576,186	1,531,121	2001	5,614,770	2006

Prepared July 1, 2008 by the National Interagency Coordination Center Predictive Services Staff. The information above was obtained *primarily* from Incident Management Situation Reports from 1998-2007, however some inaccuracies and inconsistencies have been corrected. Therefore, the data may not reflect other historic records and should not be considered for official statistical purposes.