

National Wildland Fire Outlook

October 1 to October 31, 2004

***ALASKA - Potential: Normal:** Recent rainfall and precipitation has brought much of the state into normal fire potential for this time of year, although some dryness persists in the Upper Yukon Valley of eastern Alaska. Light rainfall and snow there has eliminated the possibility of new starts in October, but deeper drying in ground fuels will sustain burning on ongoing fires. It will take rainfall amounts of near one inch over several days to make a significant difference in dryness. With the current weather outlook for early October calling for above normal rainfall over the Upper Yukon Valley, normal fire activity is expected throughout the entire Area.

***NORTHWEST - Potential: Normal:** Due to greater than normal live fuel moisture and above normal precipitation, September saw another month of much below average burning across the Area. The forecast for October calls for equal chances of above, normal or below normal temperatures and precipitation. However; shorter daytime burning periods, better overnight relative humidity recovery, and a low probability of lightning occurrence are expected to keep fire potential low.

***SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - Potential: Normal to Above Normal:** For October, the northern portions of the Area should see normal rainfall with near to slightly cooler than average temperatures. The south can expect near to slightly above normal temperatures with near to slightly below normal precipitation. October is usually the beginning month for Santa Ana wind events, with one or two significant Santa Ana's anticipated this month. Since the Santa Ana winds are expected to arrive before significant precipitation starts, above normal fire potential exists over portions of the Area.

***NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - Potential: Normal:** High pressure should continue to dominate Area weather for at least the first half of October. The second half of October will likely see a stronger Pacific jet stream, with weakening of the high pressure. This would bring one to three Pacific weather systems across northern California, with a good chance of at least one significant rain event. At this time, no significant lightning occurrence is forecast. There may be fewer dry, offshore wind events than usual for October, with possibly just one or two episodes reaching moderate strength. As a result, normal fire potential is projected.

***NORTHERN ROCKIES - Potential: Normal to Above Normal:** A trough of low pressure developed over the Pacific Northwest during September and brought widespread wetting moisture to the Area. A northwesterly flow will develop over the Area in October and will bring below normal temperatures while precipitation is expected to be near normal. However, fuel moistures continue to be below normal in the southeast portion of Montana. Even with normal rainfall for October, southeast Montana will remain with above normal fire potential. For the rest of the Area, significant fire activity is not expected.

***WESTERN GREAT BASIN - Potential: Normal:** At the end of September, fire danger values were below the critical level across much of northern and eastern Nevada, while the Sierra Front and the lower elevations of western and southern Nevada were normal to critical. A forecast of more storms through October will cause fire danger to continue to fall through the month with many portions of the Area currently experiencing above normal fire potential falling to a more normal range for this time of year.

***EASTERN GREAT BASIN - Potential: Normal:** Most locations throughout the Area received periodic moisture surges and cooler temperatures at the end of September and fine fuel moistures have moderated with increased humidity and precipitation. As a more normal fall weather pattern develops, fuel moistures will continue to moderate. Large fuel moistures have moderated throughout the Area and are running near average. The combination of shorter days and expected normal temperatures and rainfall should lead to normal fire potential for October.

***SOUTHWEST - Potential: Normal:** The precipitation outlook for October calls for equal chances of wet or dry conditions across much of the Area. However, drier than normal conditions are expected across western Arizona, with wetter than normal conditions across northern and eastern New Mexico. Temperatures are expected to be above normal across Arizona and the western half of New Mexico with the best potential for warmer temperatures across western Arizona. Fire danger levels through October are expected to remain near normal across New Mexico and west Texas, but will be normal to above normal across much of Arizona. Any fire activity that does occur is more likely to be concentrated in western Arizona. Despite the elevated danger levels in Arizona, the potential for large fires will be normal in October. Prescribed fire activity during October will be on the increase, especially across parts of Arizona, due to a higher likelihood of overall drier conditions prevailing.

***ROCKY MOUNTAIN - Potential: Normal:** October is on average one of the drier months of the year. A significant number of wind events normally occur during the month due to a strengthening jet stream and associated cold frontal passages. The weather outlook points toward equal chances of either above normal, near normal, or below normal temperatures across most of the Area. The exception is cooler than normal temperatures forecast in northern Wyoming, South Dakota, and northern Nebraska. Recent weather trends and some long range forecast models point towards a normal to above normal precipitation pattern in October. Despite this outlook, the chance of a dry period in combination with strong pre-frontal winds is still a possibility in October. Generally, fuels in portions of southern and western Colorado and northeastern Wyoming are drier than the rest of the Area. However, fire potential is expected to be normal.

***EASTERN - Potential: Below Normal to Above Normal:** Above normal fire potential is forecast for October across portions of Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. Long duration precipitation deficits were noted over these locations at the end of September. In addition, short term soil moisture values were also below normal. Most of these areas have gone 30 to 45 days without significant precipitation, with no indication of above normal precipitation in October. Heavy rainfall from the remnants of tropical systems has produced below normal fire potential across portions of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast States. Normal fire potential is forecast across the remainder of the Area.

***SOUTHERN - Potential: Below Normal to Normal:** Two completely different precipitation patterns occurred in September across the Area. Hurricanes created extremely wet conditions in the east, while the western half of the region has had very little rainfall. Many western locations have seen 20 or more days without appreciable rains. October rainfall should be at or slightly above normal in the Red River Valley of Oklahoma and northern Texas. Other portions of Area should remain close to normal although Virginia is expected to see above normal rainfall. Excluding future hurricane activity; Florida, southeast Georgia, and extreme southern South Carolina are expected to be drier than normal. However, any hurricane occurrence would change this significantly. With temperatures expected to be cooler than normal in Texas and Oklahoma, and above normal rains expected in the western portions of the Area, fire potential will remain normal in the west and below normal elsewhere.

National Note: Based on reported data, nationally there has been 90% of the average numbers of fires, which have burned 172% of the average acres to date. The following table displays historical, current and predicted information pertaining to fire statistics.

National Reported and Projected Wildland Fire Statistics

The information above was obtained *primarily* from the Incident Management Situation Report from 1994-2004, however, some inaccuracies and inconsistencies have been corrected. Therefore, the data may not reflect other historic records and should NOT be considered for statistical purposes.

	SEP 30, 2004 Reported Year-To-Date	Average reported for OCT	Projection for October YTD+Forecast	Average Reported YTD OCT 31	Historical Low YTD OCT 31	Year of Low	Historical High YTD OCT 31	Year of High
ALASKA								
Fires	676	5	681	520	349	2001	724	1996
Acres	6,398,136	484	6,398,620	777,101	43,946	1995	2,186,677	2002
NORTHWEST								
Fires	3,738	291	4,029	4,044	2,943	1997	5,878	1994
Acres	121,825	10,116	131,941	445,420	39,658	1997	1,099,430	2002
SOUTH OPS								
Fires	3,876	724	4,830	5,024	3,801	2000	8,520	1994
Acres	87,223	72,118	191,209	269,330	84,747	2001	578,171	2003
NORTH OPS								
Fires	3,798	370	4,168	3,639	1,566	1994	4,839	2001
Acres	70,857	19,868	90,725	139,900	19,124	1997	475,404	1999
NORTHERN ROCKIES								
Fires	2,703	78	2,781	3,061	1,091	1993	4,879	1994
Acres	38,097	3,749	41,846	343,770	7,584	1993	1,355,841	2000
WEST BASIN								
Fires	933	30	963	924	576	1993	1,548	1996
Acres	42,416	3,408	45,824	394,548	16,890	2003	1,612,902	1999
EAST BASIN								
Fires	2,246	118	2,364	2,413	1,408	1997	3,167	2001
Acres	88,088	3,396	91,484	603,259	71,341	1997	1,510,704	2000
SOUTHWEST								
Fires	3,371	162	3,533	4,826	3,364	1999	6,871	1994
Acres	301,595	7,839	309,434	351,898	61,074	2001	974,263	2002
ROCKY MOUNTAIN								
Fires	1,806	497	2,303	3,221	1,951	1998	6,050	2003
Acres	44,262	17,256	61,518	196,619	23,750	1998	668,079	2002
SOUTHERN AREA								
Fires	26,582	1,877	27,121	32,618	13,336	2003	49,511	1996
Acres	443,942	22,637	466,579	670,254	241,412	2003	1,263,921	1998
EASTERN AREA								
Fires	11,626	631	12,225	13,211	10,444	1994	16,654	1999
Acres	95,791	5,282	101,073	124,634	59,657	1997	199,800	1995
NATIONALLY								
Fires	61,355	4,782	64,998	73,501	56,036	2003	94,407	1996
Acres	7,732,232	166,152	7,930,253	4,316,734	1,794,892	1995	7,048,206	2000

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