

National Interagency Coordination Center

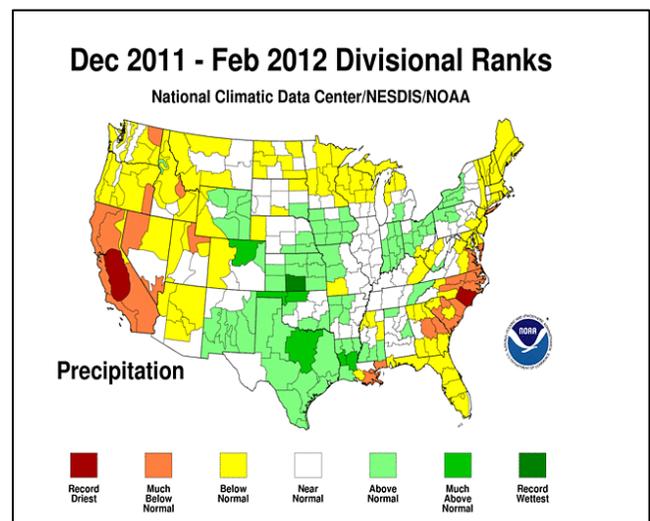
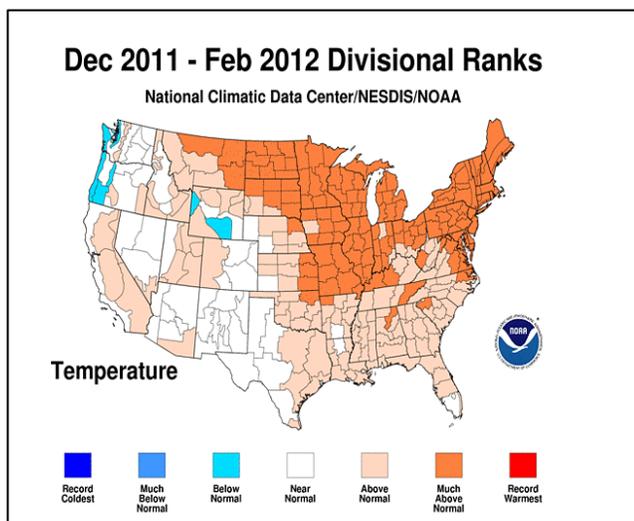
2012 Fire Season Summary

(Data current through August 31, 2012)

Winter (December 2011 – February 2012)

A moderate La Niña remained in place during the winter months. The winter (December through February) of 2011-2012 was warmer than normal across most of the eastern half and northern third of the nation, contributing to the fourth warmest winter on record over the contiguous United States. Many states experienced winters among their top ten warmest on record. Only five states all had normal winter temperatures: Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. Alaska was slightly below normal for the same period.

Despite the La Niña, typical precipitation patterns usually associated with La Niña episodes did not materialize. Most of the western U.S. ended drier than normal as did the eastern seaboard while the south central states were much wetter than normal for the period. The Northwest, which is typically wet during La Niña episodes, was dry. In total, 25 states received below normal precipitation, three of which fell among the top ten driest in 117 years of records, including: California (third driest); South Carolina (sixth driest); and North Carolina (ninth driest). This was especially critical in the West where a large proportion of annual precipitation falls as snow in the winter. At the other extreme, eight states (New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio) had above normal precipitation. Texas recorded its tenth wettest winter on record. This was especially significant as it marked the end of a 20-month drought that contributed to a devastating wildfire season during the 2011 summer. Alaska recorded its twelfth wettest winter.



January and February brought a transition to much of the U.S. The southern tier continued to see drier than normal fuel conditions, except across some portions of Texas. Across much of the West, fine fuels remained heavy and continuous and were largely dry. Significant fires occurred with the combination of ignitions and windy conditions. The northwestern quarter of the country saw significant moistening and snowpacks increased. In the east the northern tier saw near normal seasonal fuel conditions with some dryness lingering across the Great Lakes states. The Southeast continued to experience drier than normal fuel conditions south and east of the Tennessee Valley.

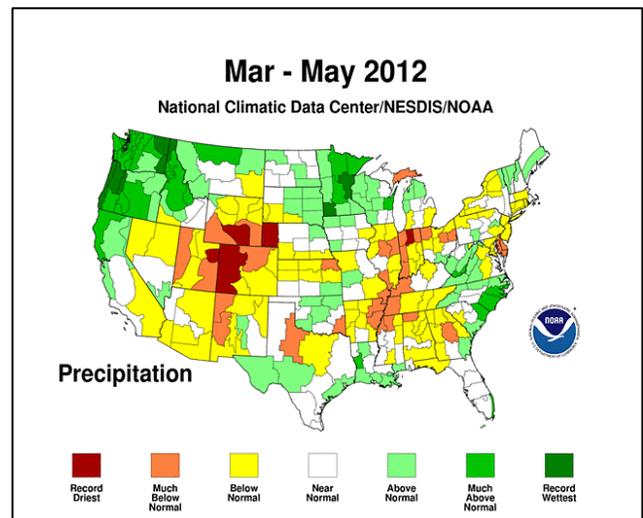
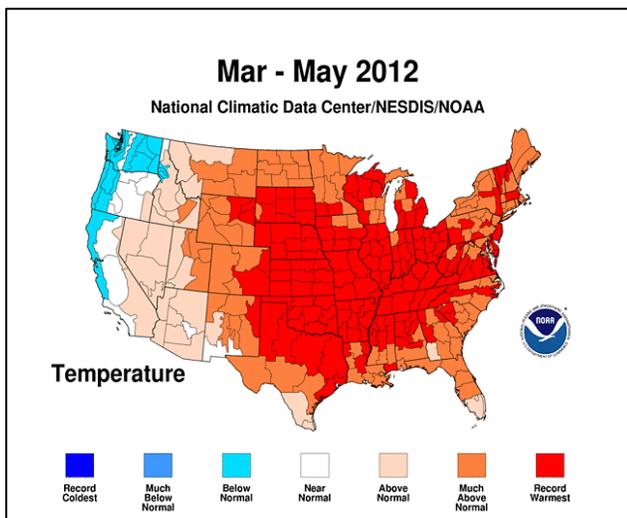
The initial seasonal outlook reports for the Southern, Eastern, and Southwest Areas called for above normal fire potential across the East and Gulf coasts from North Carolina to Louisiana, across deep southern Texas, and over much of western and central Minnesota and northwestern Iowa. Below normal fire potential was expected over much of the mid and upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys and across the Appalachians. Reports from the Seasonal Assessment workshops can be found at: <http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>.



Spring (March – May)

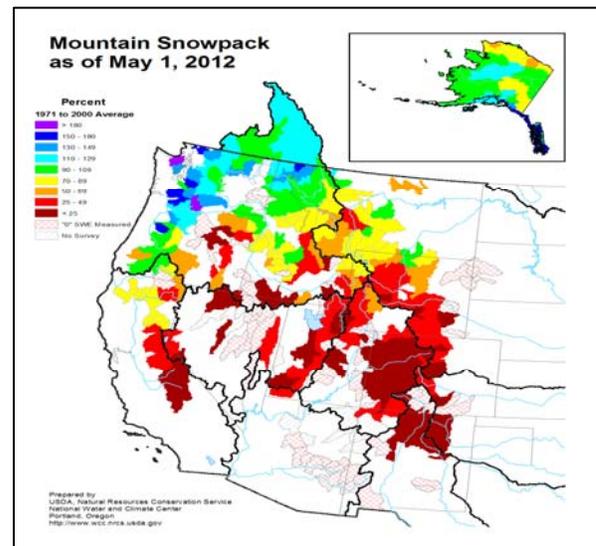
As La Niña began to weaken and equatorial Pacific conditions began moving toward neutral, a persistent trough pattern set up along the West Coast, bringing several wet storms to the Northwest and northern Rockies. Consequently, a broad ridge remained in place over the eastern two-thirds of the U.S., bringing very warm conditions to much of the nation. Temperatures were above normal for all but the West Coast states and much above normal for much of the eastern half of the country. In the contiguous 48 states, only six states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada and New Mexico) did not have spring temperatures among their top ten warmest and two of those (Washington and Oregon) were near normal for the three month period. Of the 42 states with spring warmth in the top ten, 31 recorded their warmest spring in 118 years of records. Nationally, spring 2012 was the warmest on record, surpassing the previous warmest spring (1910) by a full 2.0 degrees Fahrenheit. Alaska recorded below normal spring temperatures.

Precipitation was well above normal over much of the Northwest corner of the nation, across the upper Midwest and in scattered parts of the mid-Atlantic and south central regions. Oregon had its wettest spring on record while Washington and Minnesota recorded their third wettest springs on record. At the other extreme, the central Rockies experienced very dry conditions as did parts of the Ohio and



Mississippi Valleys. Colorado and Wyoming recorded their fourth driest springs and Utah and Delaware recorded their fifth driest springs. Alaska precipitation was slightly above normal. Drought conditions improved in the Southeast, aided largely by rain from Tropical Storm Beryl and marking only the third on record that tropical storms had formed in the North Atlantic basin before the official start of hurricane season. Drought conditions improved across Texas, but worsened and spread in the West.

Snowpack conditions by the beginning of May across the West indicated dire conditions heading into the summer months. With the exception of parts of the Northwest and northern Rockies, most of the western mountains would enter the summer season with less than 50 percent of normal snowpack. Vast sections of the Southwest and the Great Basin were already snow-free by the start of May. In the Northwest, snowpack exceeded 150 percent of normal in parts of Oregon, Washington, northern Idaho and northwest Montana. In Alaska, snowpack was near to above normal, except on the North Slope.



The southern U.S. continued to see drier than normal conditions. Across much of the West fine fuels remained heavy and continuous. Pre-greenup conditions caused control problems and led to some increased fire behavior when coupled with wind events. Across the northern tier near normal seasonal fuel conditions existed with some dryness lingering across the Great Lakes states early in the spring. In the southwestern quarter of the country a combination of prevalent fine fuels and drier than normal conditions began to develop, setting the stage for significant fires as the season progressed. Lack of significant snowfall at lower elevations in these areas left an abundance of standing grasses, making them available for this fire season. In the southeast drought continued to create abnormal fuel dryness.

By the end of May, fire season 2012 could be described as below normal nationally for both fires and acres burned. Nationally, 22,292 fires had been reported, burning 710,661 acres. This represents just 74 percent of fires, and 57 percent of acres burned, compared to the 10-year national average. However, the Northwest, Northern California, Southern California, Northern Rockies, Eastern Great Basin, Western Great Basin and Rocky Mountain Geographic Areas did experience above average fire activity by the end of May. Additionally, the Northwest, Northern Rockies, Eastern Great Basin, Western Great Basin, Southwest and Rocky Mountain Geographic Areas all experienced above average acres burned by the end of May. The Western Great Basin burned 722% of its 10-year average acres. The Northwest burned 600 percent, and Eastern Great Basin 465 percent of their average acres to date. Alaska, Northern California, Southern California, Eastern and Southern Geographic Areas all experienced below average acres burned.

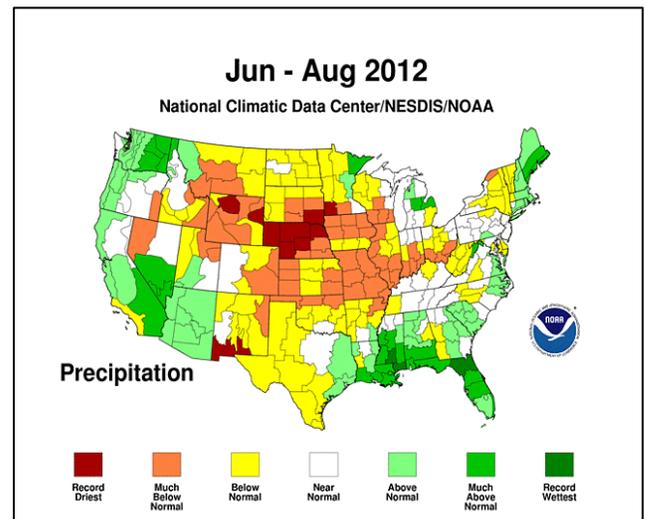
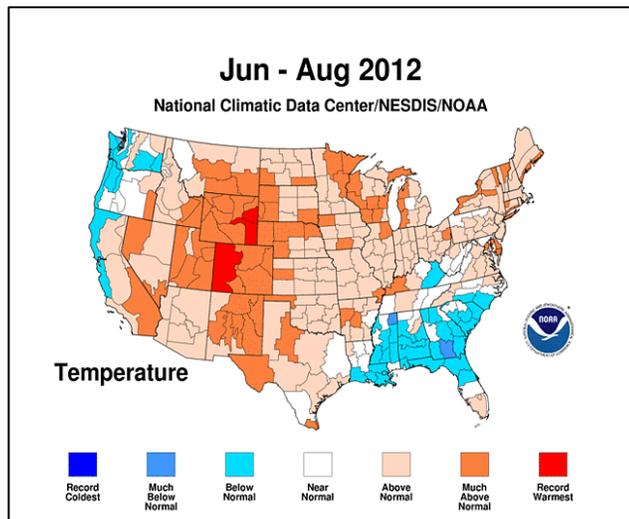
As of May 31 only the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs had experienced higher than their 10-year average number of fires (147 and 129 percent respectively). Both agencies also experienced above their 10-year average number of acres burned (217 and 164 percent respectively). The U.S. Forest Service experienced near normal number of fires (96 percent), but 231 percent of its 10-year average for acres burned.

Summer (June – August)

The summer pattern over the United States was largely dominated by a ridge over much of the western and central states and a weak trough that lingered over the southeastern states. This led to a much warmer than normal summer for most of the country with the Southeast falling below normal. The heat in the West and central U.S. placed 23 states in their top ten warmest summers on record, including seven New England states. Colorado and Wyoming recorded their warmest on record. Alaska had near normal temperatures for the summer. Nationally, the summer was the third warmest on record and included the warmest July on record in the United States.

Precipitation deficits continued across the interior of the nation, while the corners of the country experienced above normal precipitation during the summer months. Record to near record dryness affected most of the central U.S. where eight states recorded summers among their top ten driest including: Wyoming and Nebraska (driest); Iowa (second); Missouri (third); South Dakota (fourth); Illinois (sixth); Kansas (seventh); and New Mexico (eighth). At the other extreme, the Northwest, Southwest, Southeast and Northeast all had above normal precipitation. Florida recorded its wettest summer ever with the help of Tropical Storm Debby in June and Hurricane Isaac in August. Two other southern states recorded summers among their top ten wettest – Mississippi (fourth wettest) and Louisiana (seventh wettest). Even Maine had a very wet summer, recording its 11th wettest on record. Alaska recorded above normal precipitation.

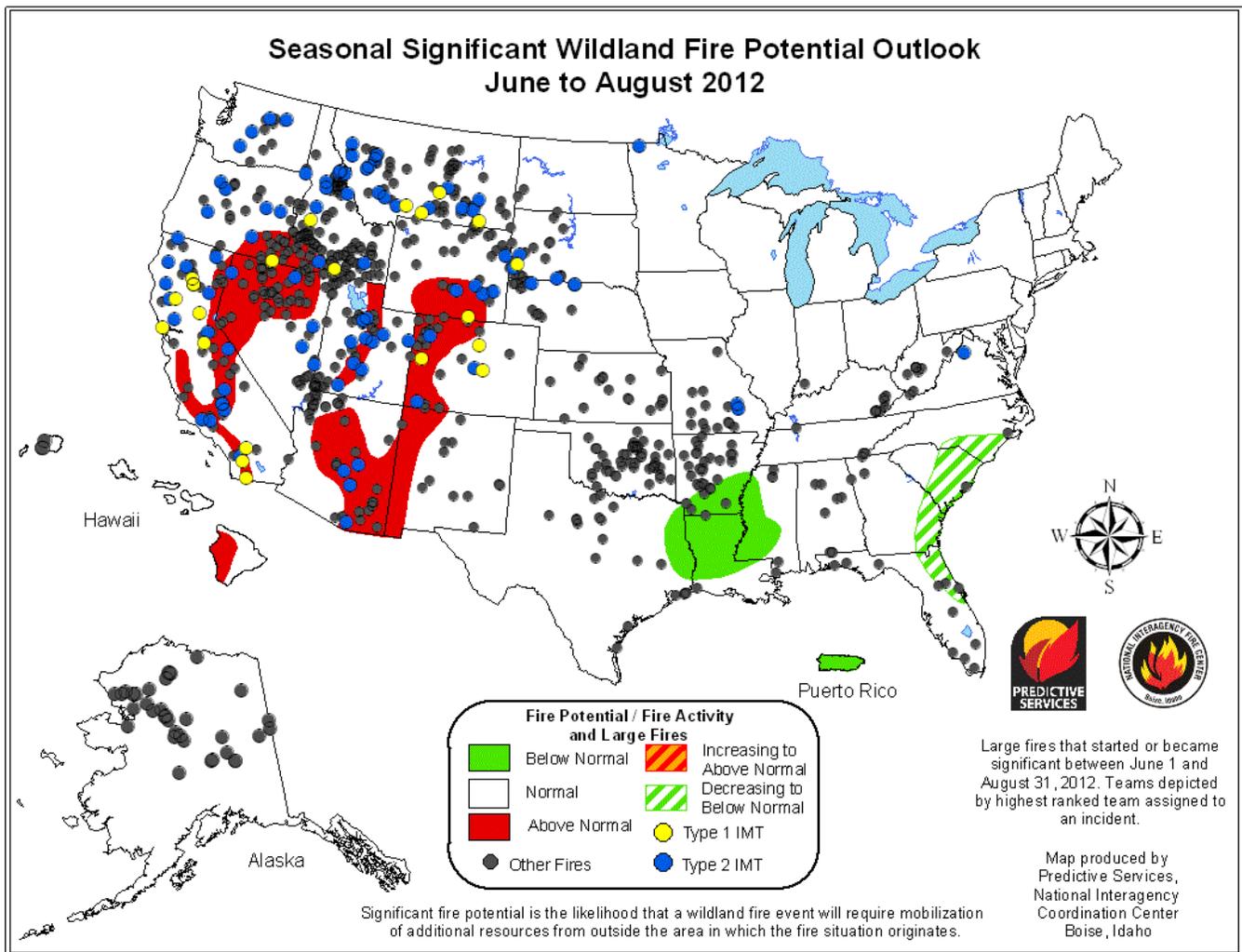
The dry conditions in the interior of the contiguous U.S. intensified and spread. By the end of August, severe to exceptional drought had spread to over 40 percent of the nation, with the worst conditions centered on the Plains and the mid- and upper Mississippi Valley. In the West, drought expanded rapidly to encompass most of the region, except the far Northwest. Meanwhile, improvement occurred along the Gulf States where rain from two tropical systems largely eliminated drought conditions from the upper Texas coast to the Carolinas with only central Georgia and eastern Alabama still in extreme to exceptional drought.



The National Seasonal Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for June through August called for above-normal significant fire potential through much of Arizona, western New Mexico, western Colorado, south central Wyoming, the mountains of central Utah, southwestern Idaho, southeastern Oregon, western and northern Nevada, and the southern mountains of California. Above normal potential continued on the western side of Hawaii.

Worsening drought conditions in the West led to below normal live and dead fuel moisture and above normal Energy Release Component indices extending from New Mexico west through California and north to southern Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming. Additionally, many of these areas saw increased fine fuel loading from lingering dead, standing fuels and below normal snowpack. In the northwestern quarter of the U.S., mild and moist conditions through the spring kept fuels somewhat moist, except the fine fuel areas. Greater than normal fire behavior and rates of spread were experienced in areas where fine fuels were dominant across the West, leading to fire burning a large number of acres relative to the number of fires that occurred. Some drought remained across the Great Lakes region. Periodic precipitation events continued across the Southeast.

The map below depicts the Seasonal Wildland Fire Potential Outlook with significant fires that occurred from June through August.



Fires reported by Geographic Area and Agency

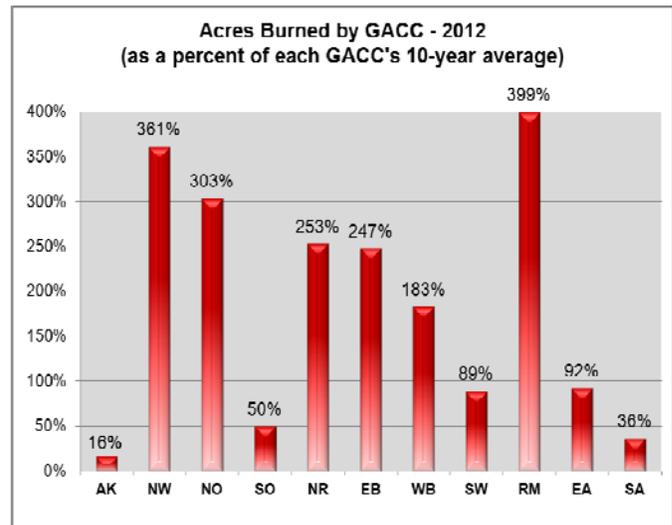
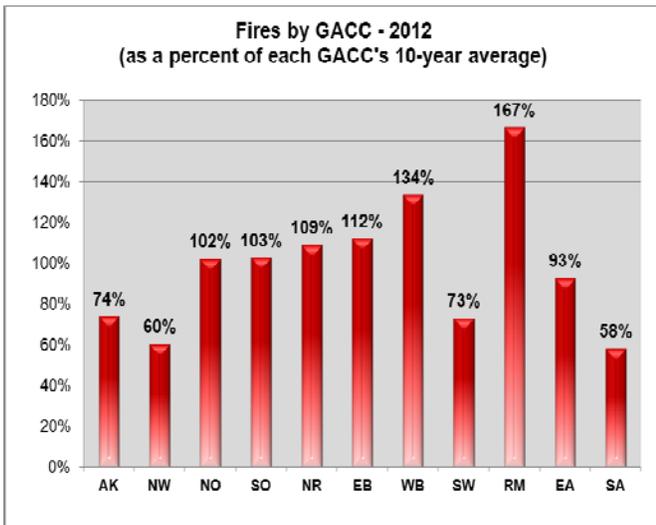
Nationally, by the end of August, 44,524 fires had occurred, burning 7,724,955 acres. This represents 79 percent of the total number of fires, but 130 percent of total acres burned compared to the 10-year national average. By comparison, last year 53,870 fires had occurred, burning 6,956,042 acres by August 31. Six Geographic Areas experienced above average fire activity: Rocky Mountain, Western Great Basin,

Eastern Great Basin, Northern Rockies, Southern California and Northern California. Six Geographic Areas experienced above average acres burned (see table below). Rocky Mountain was by far the most active Geographic Area by the end of August, burning nearly four times its annual average acres.

The Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs both exceeded 100 percent of their 10-year averages for both fires and acres. Both the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service experienced below average number of fires, but above average acres burned (see table below). The Fish and Wildlife Service burned just 17 percent of its 10-year average number of acres.

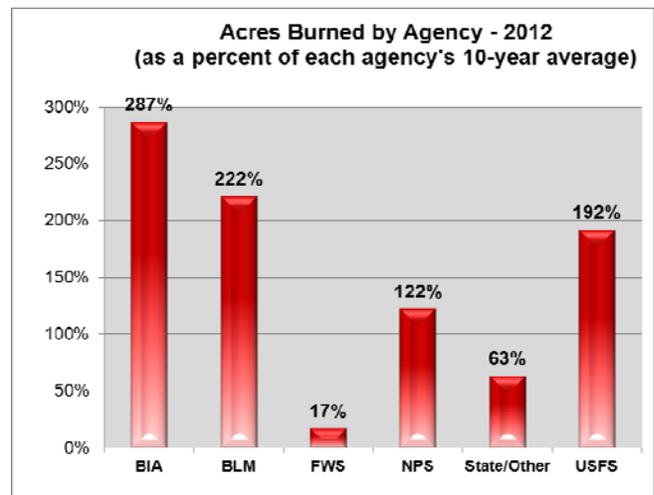
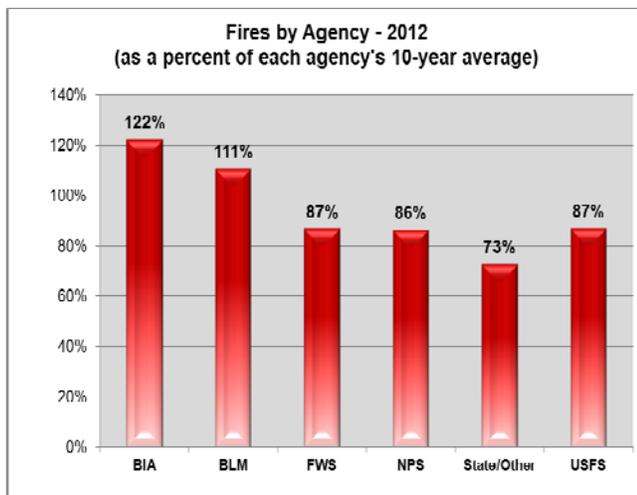
The table and charts below depict numbers of fires and acres for each Geographic Area and agency, comparing 2012 figures to each Geographic Area's 10-year average.

GACC	2012 - (to 8/31)	10-Year Average (to 8/31)	Percent of Average	
AK	348	470	74%	Fires
	249,021	1,552,356	16%	Acres
NW	1,504	2,489	60%	Fires
	1,329,912	368,476	361%	Acres
NO	2,868	2,805	102%	Fires
	648,793	214,163	303%	Acres
SO	3,290	3,200	103%	Fires
	69,133	139,521	50%	Acres
NR	2,539	2,327	109%	Fires
	952,305	376,864	253%	Acres
EB	2,027	1,806	112%	Fires
	1,788,313	722,553	247%	Acres
WB	900	673	134%	Fires
	761,601	417,127	183%	Acres
SW	2,431	3,324	73%	Fires
	535,692	604,873	89%	Acres
RM	3,833	2,297	167%	Fires
	863,676	216,316	399%	Acres
EA	9,154	9,870	93%	Fires
	96,657	104,991	92%	Acres
SA	15,630	26,825	58%	Fires
	429,852	1,202,457	36%	Acres
Nationally	44,524	56,085	79%	Fires
	7,724,955	5,919,697	130%	Acres



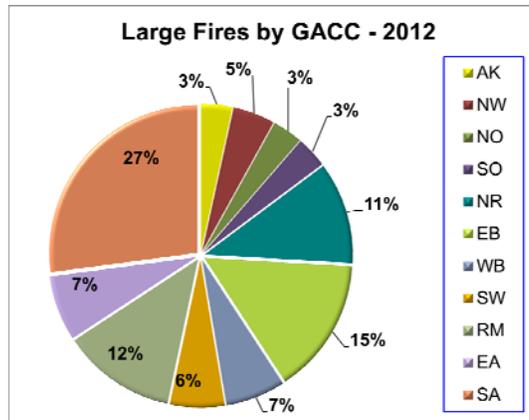
Percentages depicted above are year-to-date through August 31.

Agency	2012 (to 8/31)	10-Year Average (to 8/31)	Percent of Average	
BIA	4,433	3,624	122%	Fires
	559,703	194,918	287%	Acres
BLM	2,558	2,310	111%	Fires
	3,365,978	1,519,141	222%	Acres
FWS	275	317	87%	Fires
	94,367	551,974	17%	Acres
NPS	311	360	86%	Fires
	124,279	101,531	122%	Acres
ST/OT	31,395	43,094	73%	Fires
	1,592,327	2,516,512	63%	Acres
USFS	5,552	6,380	87%	Fires
	1,988,301	1,035,622	192%	Acres
Nationally	44,524	56,085	79%	Fires
	7,724,955	5,919,697	130%	Acres



Percentages depicted above are year-to-date through August 31.

By August 31, a total of 1,013 large fires were reported to the National Interagency Coordination Center (including fires managed for multiple objectives). This is down from 1,367 large fires reported for the same period in 2011, and well below the record 1,636 large fires reported for the same period in 2006. Comparing earlier years, the number of large fires reported by August 31 include: 552 in 2002; 739 in 2003; 540 in 2004; 765 in 2005, 1,096 in 2007; 984 in 2008; and 977 in 2009. August 2012 recorded 313 new large fires, third highest number for any month since 2002.



Large fires reported as of August 31.

Fires that exceeded 50,000 acres in size in 2012 (as of August 31).

By August 31, 32 fires exceeded 50,000 acres in size. The Whitewater-Baldy fire was the largest wildfire in New Mexico history. The Long Draw and Holloway fires were among the largest in Oregon history. (As of August 31 some fires were uncontained.)

Fire Name	Acres Burned	Geographic Area	State	Agency	Month Contained
Long Draw	557,628	NW	OR	BLM	July
Holloway	460,850	NW/WB	OR/NV	BLM	August
Rush	315,577	NO	CA	BLM	August
Whitewater-Baldy	297,845	SW	NM	USFS	July
Ash Creek	249,562	NR	MT	BIA	July
Mustang Complex	241,700	EB	ID	USFS	(uncontained)
Kinyon Road	210,874	EB	ID	BLM	July
Rosebud Creek Complex	171,444	NR	MT	ST	August
Miller Homestead	160,853	NW	OR	BLM	July
Trinity Ridge	145,697	EB	ID	USFS	(uncontained)
Flat Top 2	140,954	EB	ID	BLM	August
Halstead	135,779	EB	ID	USFS	(uncontained)
Chalky	131,000	NR	MT	BLM	August
Clay Springs	107,847	EB	UT	ST	July
Arapaho	98,115	RM	WY	CNTY	July
Minidoka Complex	97,616	EB	ID	USFS	August
Barry Point	93,071	NW	OR	USFS	August
High Park	87,284	RM	CO	CNTY	July
Region 23 Complex	86,201	RM	NE	ST	(uncontained)
Sarpy Hills Complex	82,000	NR	MT	BIA	August
Wellnitz	77,683	RM	NE	ST	(uncontained)
Region 24 Complex	76,242	RM	NE	ST	July
Southeastern Montana Complex	75,501	NR	MT	BLM	July
Chips	75,431	NO	CA	USFS	August
Cache Creek	73,500	NW	OR	USFS	(uncontained)

Fire Name	Acres Burned	Geographic Area	State	Agency	Month Contained
Fontenelle	64,220	EB	WY	USFS	August
Oil Creek	62,318	RM	WY	ST	July
Lost	61,541	NO	CA	BLM	August
Freedom Hill	58,500	SA	OK	ST	August
Bull Run Complex	51,366	WB	NV	ST	August
Jacks	50,816	EB	ID	BLM	July
Keith County Complex	50,000	RM	NE	ST	August

USFS – U.S. Forest Service

FWS – Fish and Wildlife Service

BIA – Bureau of Indian Affairs

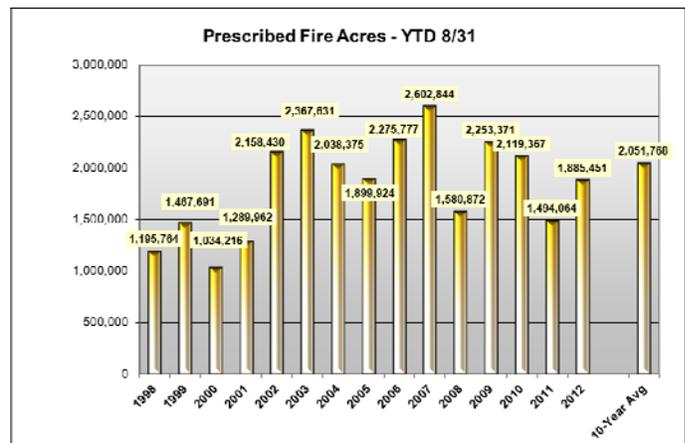
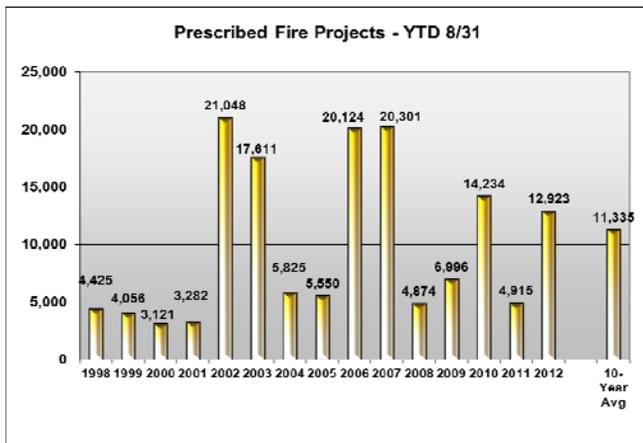
BLM – Bureau of Land Management

CNTY – County

ST – State

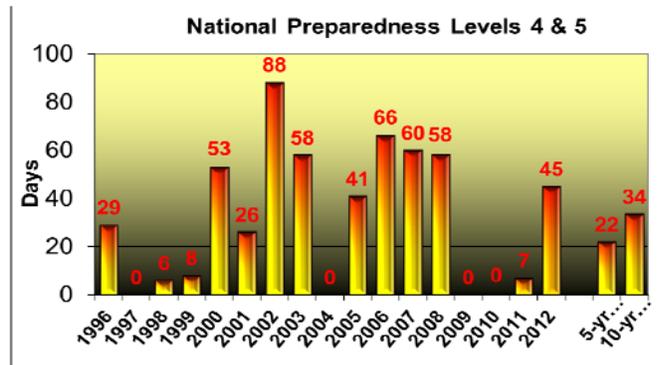
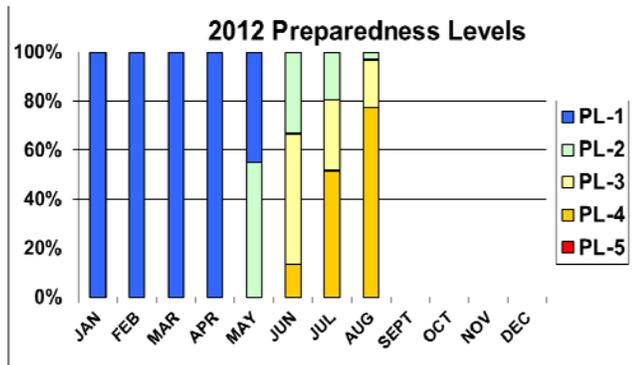
Prescribed Fire Activity

As of August 31, planned prescribed fire ignitions were 114 percent of the 10-year average. Accomplished acres were 92 percent of the 10-year average.



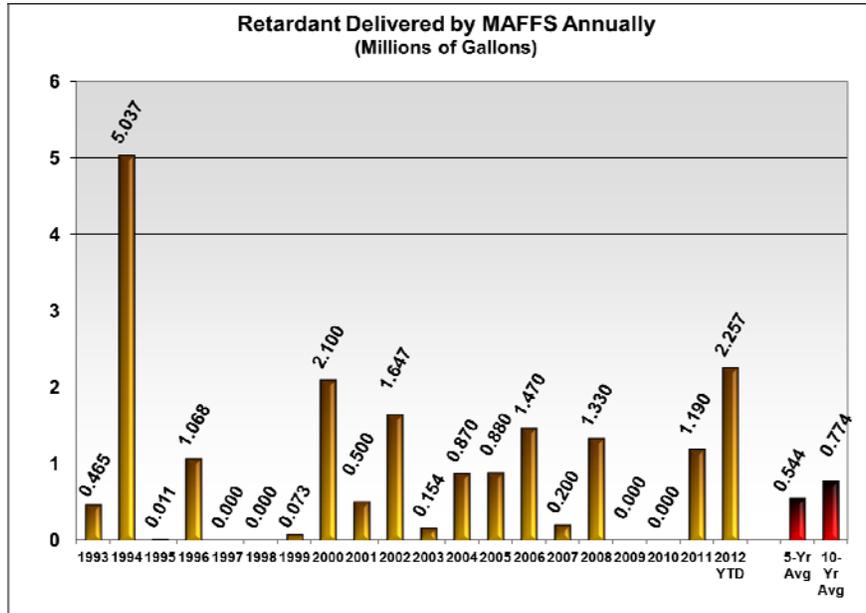
National Preparedness Levels

On May 15 the national preparedness level was elevated from 1 to 2, where it remained until June 11, when it was elevated to 3. On June 27, the preparedness level was raised to 4, but returned to 3 on July 17. It dropped to 2 on July 26, but went back up to 3 on August 2, where it remained until August 8 when it was again elevated to 4 for the remainder of August.



Military and International Assistance

On June 23, a Request for Assistance for four C-130 military MAFFS aircraft was approved, and the first MAFFS began flying fire missions on June 25 in Colorado. All available MAFFS aircraft (California, North Carolina, Wyoming and Colorado) were activated at various times during the fire season. By August 31, MAFFS had flown 845 sorties across the western U.S., and dropped 2,257,621 gallons of retardant. This is the highest number of gallons dropped by MAFFS since 1994. The last two MAFFS aircraft were released September 14 from Sacramento, CA.



Through the National Interagency Coordination Center, Canada provided five air tankers and three aerial supervision modules (“Bird Dogs”) from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan (including two liaison officers). The first aircraft were mobilized between June 6 and June 12 from British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Another air tanker and Bird Dog were mobilized July 9 from Alberta. These aircraft flew missions in many western states. The last aircraft were released back to Canada July 12 due to increasing fire activity in that country.

Hurricane Support

The 2012 Atlantic hurricane season experienced above-normal tropical activity for the summer; reaching 12 named storms in the North Atlantic basin by the end of August (six is normal). Five storms became hurricanes (three is normal) and none became major storms, category 3 or greater (one is normal). Three storms hit the mainland U.S. Tropical Storm Beryl (May 26-30) made landfall near Jacksonville Beach, FL, on May 28. Tropical Storm Debby (June 23-27) made landfall near Steinhatchee, FL, on June 26. Debby was the fourth named storm of the season, forming a full two months earlier than average for the fourth named storm of a season. The last to hit the U.S. was Hurricane Isaac (August 21-31) which made landfall near New Orleans, LA, on August 28. The early season forecasts called for a normal season with 9-15 named storms (11 is normal), four to eight hurricanes (six is normal), and one to three major (Category 3 or greater) storms (two is normal). No Type 1 or Type 2 incident management teams were assigned to Hurricane Isaac. Map courtesy of The Weather Channel (<http://www.weather.com>).

