



National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

Predictive Services
National Interagency Fire Center



Issued: June 1, 2018
Next Issuance: July 1, 2018

Outlook Period – June, July, August and September 2018

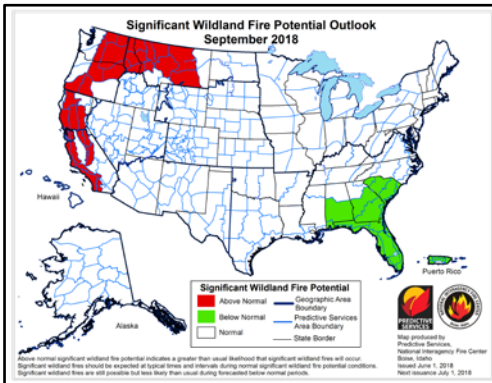
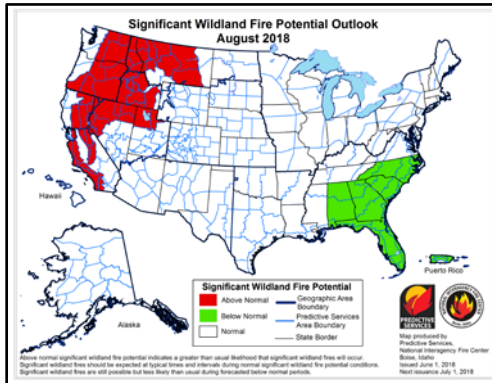
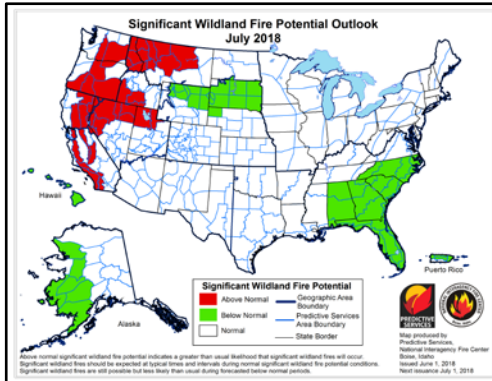
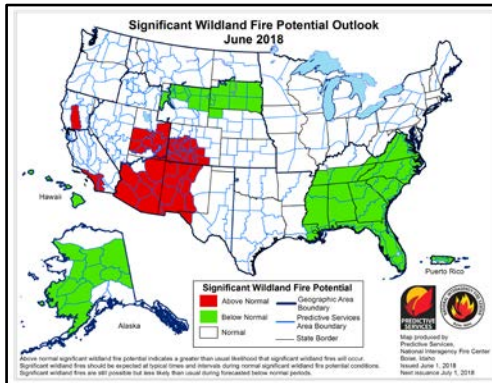
Executive Summary

The significant wildland fire potential forecasts included in this outlook represent the cumulative forecasts of the ten Geographic Area Predictive Services units and the National Predictive Services unit.

Preexisting drought conditions along with continued drier than average conditions across the Southwest allowed for a normal progression of the western fire season across the Four Corners Region and West Texas in May. By month's end, the focus of activity began to shift westward into Arizona and Southern California. Northern Minnesota and North Dakota experienced above average fire activity as drought conditions took hold. Alaska experienced a slight uptick in fire activity as fuels began to dry. However, the occurrence of periodic precipitation events allowed for a gradual entry into its fire season. Concerning precipitation trends were emerging across California, Oregon, and Washington as most locations received 50 percent of average precipitation or less during May. In the East, many locations across the Southeast, including Florida, received more than 300 percent of average precipitation during the month.

The combination of deepening drought and the carryover of fine fuels from 2017 is expected to lead to a continuance of Above Normal Significant Large Fire Potential across western portions of the Four Corners Region and Southern California during June. Late June through early July are the peak of fire season across the Southwest and Alaska. During July, activity begins to spread west and north with the drying and curing of the fuels. The Southwestern monsoon begins and reduces fire activity across the Southwest while wetter patterns across Alaska become better established through the month thus drawing its season to a close. These climatologically normal transitions are expected to occur this year as the Western fire season begins to expand and intensify northward. Areas of heightened concern will be locations shown on the maps to the left that have both a significant carryover of fine fuels from 2017 and a normal growth of fine fuels this year. In addition, winter snowpack in the higher elevations along the West Coast was well below average, except in Washington State where it was near normal. However, a drier than average spring may offset the average snowpack and melting rates. This should allow for fuels in the mountains to become critically dry by mid-late July. Further inland, the Northern Rockies experienced a very snowy winter, and snowpack is melting at an average rate. However, a wet spring has promoted the growth of a very healthy, continuous crop of fine fuels that should become receptive to fire in the lower and middle elevations by mid to late July.

August is the peak of the Western fire season. Seasonal transitions focus the fire activity over the northwestern quarter of the country, though California also continues to experience significant activity. With significant carryover of fine fuels from last year and average grass crop growth this year, elevated fire potential is expected through August and early



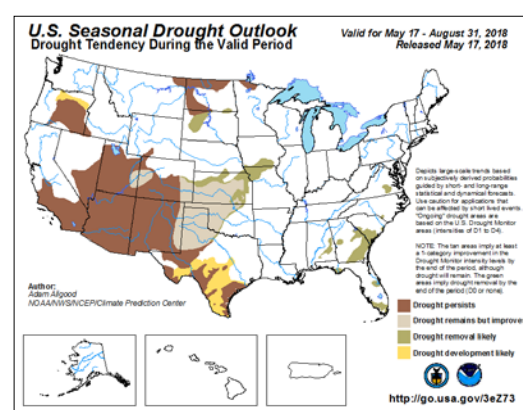
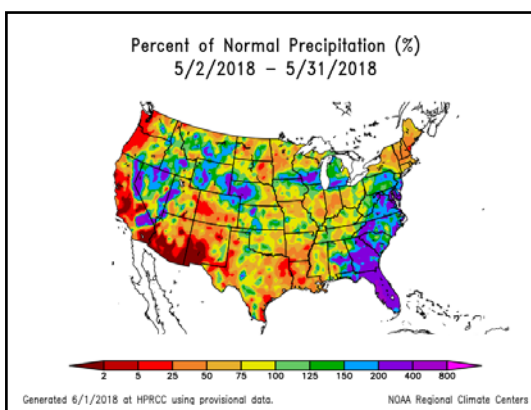
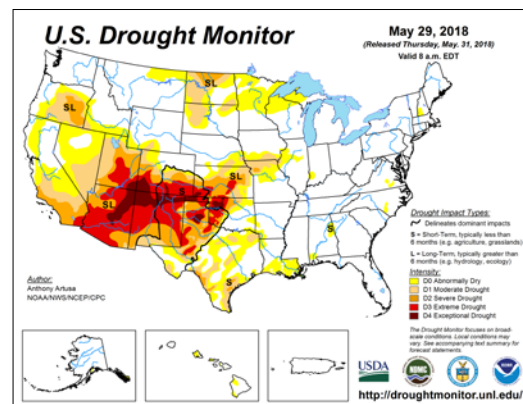
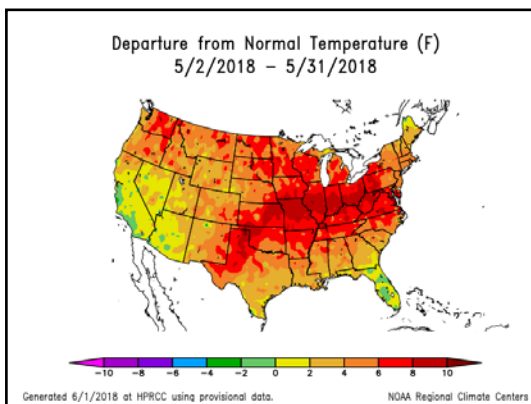
September across many of the lower and middle elevations from the central Great Basin and California northward to the Canadian border. Higher elevations in the mountains may also see elevated fire potential as well should warmer and drier than average conditions develop as expected.

Typically, a weather event occurs in mid-September that brings moisture to regions experiencing significant fire activity which allows for the western fire season to begin to decrease in activity. Anticipated trends in long range weather data suggests this to be the case this September as ENSO Neutral conditions begin to shift toward El Niño for the fall and winter months.

Past Weather and Drought

April's cooler than average conditions across the northwestern states and the Great Plains were replaced by generally above average temperatures in May. Nearly the entire country experienced temperatures that were two to six degrees above average for the month. Temperatures across Alaska were above average; however, the warmer temperatures were often offset by frequent precipitation episodes that kept fuels moist. Across the Lower 48, precipitation trends were generally below climatological averages with extremes being observed along both coasts. Along the West Coast and the Mexican Border, amounts were generally fifty percent of normal or less except across portions of the Sierras where a few pockets of above average precipitation were received. Along the East Coast, rainfall amounts received were generally in the one hundred fifty to three hundred percent of average. While conditions along the Canadian Border with Minnesota were very dry for the month, helpful rainfall events late in the month allowed for the deficits to generally fall in the fifty to seventy-five percent of average range.

The U.S. Drought Monitor showed three primary areas of drought across the nation: The Southwest, Oregon, and portions of the northern Great Plains. Of most concern was the worsening drought observed across the Southwest where areas encompassed by exceptional drought expanded across the Four Corners Region. While intensification was occurring in this area, the eastern fringes of the long-term drought began to show improvement across the southern Great Plains. Another area of moderate drought continued to persist across central Oregon. This area should be monitored closely in the coming months for possible intensification and expansion. The drought conditions across eastern Montana, the Dakotas, and northern Minnesota lingered.



Left: Departure from Normal Temperature (top) and Percent of Normal Precipitation (bottom) (from High Plains Regional Climate Center). Right: U.S. Drought Monitor (top) and Drought Outlook (bottom) (from National Drought Mitigation Center and the Climate Prediction Center)

Weather and Climate Outlooks

El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) shows a very gradual warming of the preexisting ENSO Neutral conditions. Latest model forecasts show a slow trend toward a weak El Niño by mid-fall. The atmospheric response to the recent La Niña transition to ENSO Neutral Conditions appears to be in sync with changes to the ocean's sea surface temperature profile. The transition from overall dry conditions to wet across the Southeast has been swift. The southern Great Plains have also experienced a transition toward more frequent precipitation events. Only the Southwest continues to experience drier than average conditions in areas that typically experience very dry conditions during La Niña episodes.

Overall, warmer and drier than average conditions are expected to develop across the west beginning in June and lasting through September. Exceptions to this will be during July and August across portions of the Southwest and Great Basin where a strong monsoonal push may create periods of wetter and possibly cooler than average conditions. Some of the data suggest the possibility of very hot and dry conditions developing along the West Coast during the peak of summer. In the East, generally warmer than average conditions are expected in June and July, cooler than average conditions for August, and a return to warmer than average conditions for September. Wetter than average conditions are expected to continue near and across the Floridian Peninsula through September as tropical patterns augment that seasonally average amounts brought by passing fronts and sea/land breeze induced convection. Wetter than average conditions are also expected across the Great Lakes Region in June and July followed by a transition to below average precipitation by September.

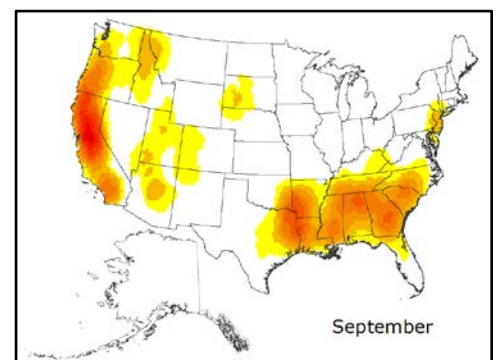
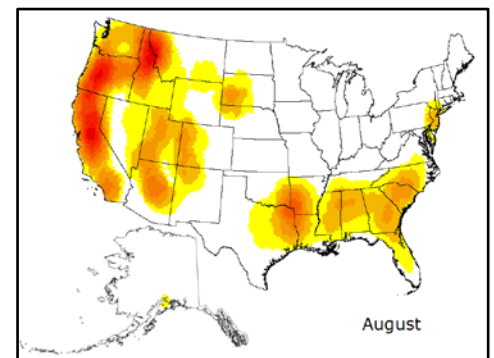
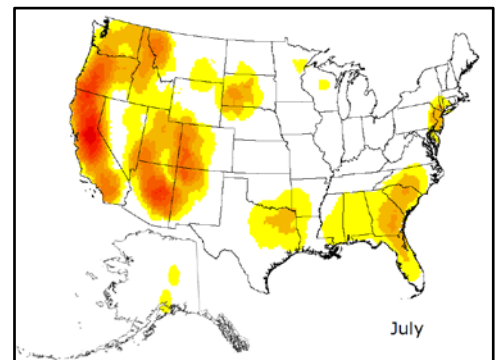
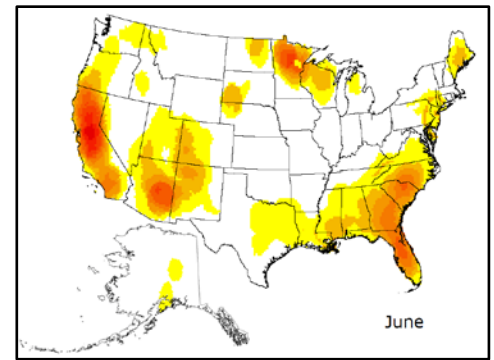
Geographic Area Forecasts

Alaska: Below Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the Interior for June followed by Below Normal significant wildland fire potential for western portions of the state for July. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

The U.S. Drought Monitor shows an area of Abnormally Dry through the Anchorage area and Kenai Peninsula. There is also an area of Abnormally Dry conditions being observed across the southern panhandle. Neither of these areas seems to be a concern at this point in time as there has been ample rainfall over the last week. Across the Interior, it has been damp. The above average snowpack has melted at a slower than average rate.

Climate outlook maps are forecasting warmer than normal conditions for the entire state through the summer. Wetter conditions are also expected to be likely for much of Alaska, with the exception being the panhandle and the southeastern Interior. Other forecast data supports these indications. Given this and the persistence of this forecast we can expect a slower than normal fire season in most of Alaska.

Calculations of the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating system show that fuels remain fairly damp for this time of year due to later than



Normal fire season progression across the contiguous U.S. and Alaska shown by monthly fire density (number of fires per unit area). Fire size and fire severity cannot be inferred from this analysis. (Based on 1999-2010 FPA Data)

average snowpack melting rates, increased precipitation and cool temperatures. Even fine fuels are relatively damp.

The Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System indices indicate that the Alaskan fire season is about 1-2 weeks behind. Alaska is currently more than halfway through the early, human-ignition dominant part of fire season. Nearly all areas are snow-free south of the Brooks Range, and the long daylight hours and high sun angle contribute to maximum solar heating. June is typically the busiest month of the fire season, with stretches of hot, dry weather followed by increased lightning around the solstice starting fires. However, this year the later start to the season and lack of dry periods so far may delay the season further. Alternatively, substantial afternoon showers may drastically slow fire behavior.

Alaska is moving into the heart of fire season, and shifting into the phase where lightning ignitions can play a role. The forecast for June is for below normal fire potential through most of the state due to the late start to fire season and the lowered chances of periods of drying that are necessary for large fire growth. The forecast for July is for below normal in western Alaska due to the forecast persistent wet pattern. The forecast for August and September is for normal conditions. These months usually see a decrease in fire activity and we will see if the longer-range forecasts hold steady.

Northwest: Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected for the region in June followed by Above Normal significant large fire potential for south southeastern Washington and southern and north central Oregon for July. Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected east of the Cascade Crest in Oregon and Washington as well as southwestern Oregon in August and September, though southeastern Oregon is expected to return to Normal significant wildland fire potential in September. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

May temperatures were above average for the northwest geographic area with the highest anomalies, seven to ten degrees above average across central Washington. Precipitation was well below average for the majority of the geographic area. The exception was eastern Washington, where at or above normal precipitation fell during the month. Cumulatively, since the start of the water year (1 Oct 2017), Oregon remains drier than average, while northern and eastern Washington have been a bit wetter than average.

Snow pack at higher elevations across Washington remains above normal, while Oregon is well below normal for snow to water equivalent. Corresponding to the low precipitation and snow pack, the US Drought Monitor shows abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions covering much of eastern Oregon. Weather outlooks show the drought conditions in Oregon persisting through August.

Outlooks for the region for June suggest warmer and drier than average conditions continuing throughout the Pacific Northwest. The seasonal outlook for July through September show even higher probability of above average temperatures and continues to carry below average precipitation.

For most of the region, fire danger remains low for large, costly fires that are naturally ignited for the geographic area. Southwestern Oregon is the outlier, with 1000-hr fuel moisture now falling one standard deviation below average, but the climatologically low risk of wide-spread ignitions in June drives us to keep that area at normal risk of significant fires. Lightning strikes ignited some fires in May, but initial attack has successfully prevented the fires from becoming large and costly.

Northern California and Hawaii: Above Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the Sacramento Valley and Foothills as well as the eastern Bay Area in June. For July and August, the Above Normal potential in these areas will expand to include the northern Sierra, northeastern California, and the far east side of the Sierras and Siskiyou Mountains. In September, Above Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the Sacramento Valley and Foothills, eastern Bay Area, Mid Coast, northwestern mountains, and northern Sierras. Across Hawaii, Below Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected in June and July followed by Normal potential for August and September. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

The outlook for the region for June through September is for below average precipitation and above average temperatures. A semi-persistent low pressure trough is expected to set up along the west coast this summer, and that may lead to less than average lightning across western areas, while lightning activity in our eastern areas is expected to be closer to average. The spring has been wetter than average and has led to an above normal loading of fine fuels that are now curing. Overall, the majority of the region has recorded significant precipitation but a snow pack deficit since the beginning of the rain year on October 1, 2017. The fuel moisture decline phase is expected to be steeper than average and fuels will be available for wildfire at all elevations earlier than average this year. Initial attack on grass and brush fires will increase in June, especially at lower elevations, as warm and dry weather speeds up the curing process of the fine fuels. Any lightning could cause new ignitions, but spread rates at middle and upper elevations will be slow until July. Cold weather in late February and early March produced areas of frost kill at lower elevations that could add to fire potential beginning in June. Convective activity in May produced enough rainfall in northern and eastern areas to enter June with fairly high fuel moisture values there. The areas with Above Normal large fire potential in June are the Sacramento Valley and nearby foothills and the eastern Bay Area. In July-August the Far East Side, northeastern California, and northern Sierra PSAs should be added to the Above Normal areas due to the potential of dry fuels, a bit more wind, and occasional lightning events. In September, as "offshore wind season" begins and lightning becomes less frequent the Above Normal area includes the entire Bay Area, the Mid Coast, Northwest Mountains, Sacramento Valley and Foothills, and Northern Sierra Predictive Services Areas (PSAs.)

Sea surface temperatures surrounding the Hawaiian Islands have warmed slightly in the past month and average temperatures throughout the region were above normal in most areas in May. Rainfall has been above average throughout the islands this spring. The outlook for June through September calls for continued above average temperatures and normal to above average rainfall. The Large Fire Potential Hawai'i is Below Normal in June and July and Normal in August and September.

Southern California: Above Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected along the coast and foothills across Southern California in June. This area of Above Normal potential will expand to include the foothills and mountains surrounding the Central Valley in July followed by a further expansion into the higher elevations and to the West Coast in August and September. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

An unusually cool and damp month occurred this past May as a series of weak cutoff low pressure areas were steered into the state. These systems arrived on a three to four day interval which maintained onshore flow and moderate levels of humidity during the last several weeks. The high frequency of these systems also kept drying conditions moderate for May as there were few extended period of sunny, warm weather. Some precipitation was recorded across most areas outside the desert. Areas from Tuolumne County northward in the high country recorded several inches of rain which closed area roadways due to mudslides. Most other areas only experienced light precipitation, but it was enough to cause delays in burn projects over much of Central California.

Live fuel moisture continues to remain at or slightly above normal roughly from Los Angeles County northward. In the Sierras north of Fresno County, seasonal grasses are still green in many areas as rains arrived in time to avoid widespread curing. Other areas across central California, such as interior sections of Monterey and San Luis Obispo, have seen most grasses cure for the season. Native shrubs are showing flowering and are still showing new growth over all but the far southern part of the state. However, areas from Orange and Riverside County southward are much drier and live fuel moisture continues to lag behind the rest of the area. Expect curing to continue to progress from south to north in the coming month with all but the highest elevations of the Sierras seeing seasonal grasses become available for burning by the middle portion of July.

The cool weather the past few weeks has halted fire activity over most areas. Therefore, the slower drying of fuels will not allow the spike in grass fire activity that was expected earlier this spring. Instead, fuels and climatology support a slower progression of fire activity northward in coming months. At the time of this writing, most long term model guidance indicates this summer will be warmer and drier than normal. The summer monsoon may be quite active over the Southwest, but most of the moisture is expected to remain

east of the district. There will likely be more storms than last year – 2017 was one of the most storm-free summers in recent memory – but overall, expect fewer storms than normal again this year.

Northern Rockies: Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected for the Northern Rockies in May and June. For July, Above Normal Significant Wildland Fire Potential is expected from north central Montana west through the Idaho Panhandle, excluding the Beaverhead Deer Lodge National forest. In August and September, this area of Above Normal potential will expand to include south central Montana. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

During the month of May, the region saw temperatures about 5 degrees above average, which was an abrupt shift from the colder-than-normal winter and early spring. Precipitation during the past month was well below average across most of North Dakota until the last week of the month, where convective storms caught up on rainfall deficits in some areas. Western North Dakota was the driest part of the region with less than twenty-five percent of average for the month. On a longer-term basis drought conditions continued to persist in these areas. A few other isolated dry pockets occurred in north central Idaho and northern Montana. In contrast, many areas in Montana continued to see above average precipitation in May.

The final La Nina Advisory was issued in late May as the ENSO conditions transitioned to a neutral state with an expectation that they will persist through the summer and into the coming fall. This will lead to a seasonably drier pattern beginning in June with near average temperatures, which is consistent with climate patterns from previous ENSO Neutral summers. Further into the summer, monthly and seasonal weather forecasts continue to depict a strong high pressure ridge over/near the region, which would lead to above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation for the western half area in July peaking in August. All indications favor warmer and drier than average through September in the western half.

During the month of May low elevation snow below 6,000 feet melted out without interruption due to a lack of frost or freeze. It was also warmer than average, which led to significant river flooding in the valleys. This is also providing a head start for fuels to begin greening up and in some cases already drying out in lower elevations. No significant snowfall was measured during the month, so it is expected that all of the higher elevation snow will melt out by the second week in June, allowing the heavier fuels to be available three to four weeks later by mid-July.

Slow-moving showers and thunderstorms with high precipitation totals during late May provided much needed precipitation to eastern Montana and North Dakota and this should help relieve drought conditions, but green-up may still lag behind by a few weeks in those areas. Further west into central Montana where winter and spring precipitation was above average, fine fuel loading will be a significant factor once conditions dry out in June, particularly with any drying wind events east of the Continental Divide. By the latter part of July and continuing through September, fuels conditions will be much drier than average due to the expected temperature and precipitation outlooks.

Normal significant wildland fire potential is forecast across the NRGAs in June through mid-July because it will still be drying out due to the above average snowpack and recent rainfall events in late April and May. By mid-July heavy fine fuels will be dried out at lower elevations in North Idaho and Western/Central Montana. Higher elevations will be drier than average in the latter half of July, which warrants an increase to Above Normal significant wildland fire potential in the Idaho and western/central Montana. Above Normal potential will continue in August and September in areas as shown on the maps, but the areas with elevated potential will be expanded to include southern Montana. Across southwest Montana and Yellowstone National Park, an active monsoon this summer will provide Normal potential due to wetting rain closer to the core moisture feed, despite abundant lightning activity. This tends to keep temperatures and precipitation near average in these areas through July and August.

Great Basin: Above Normal significant wildland large fire potential is expected for southern and eastern Utah for June, while Below Normal significant large fire potential is expected across western Wyoming. The Above Normal potential area expands in July and August to cover much of northern Nevada and southern and western parts of Idaho and northern Utah. By July southern Utah should return to normal

conditions with monsoonal effects possibly a bit stronger and earlier than normal. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

A prolonged wet and cool period has occurred over the last several weeks across the northern and western portion of the region. Near to slightly drier than average conditions continue across southern and eastern areas. This, combined with a dry water year, has produced severe to exceptional drought across much of Utah along with abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions being observed across southern parts of Nevada. Further northeastward, recent above average precipitation has combined with lingering effects of last winter's above average winter precipitation and snowpack across western Wyoming. Looking forward, there are strong indications that above average temperatures and dryness will develop and continue into the early summer months for most areas. The monsoon season could begin slightly earlier than average for southern and eastern Utah.

The main area of concern heading into the early part of fire season is across southern and eastern Utah. Despite a lack of fine fuels, 1000-hour fuels are much drier than average, affecting timbered areas above 7500 ft. There is a concern across northern Nevada and southern Idaho, where many areas that did not burn last year still have the remnants of last year's fine fuels bumper crop. However, prolonged wet, cool conditions there have slowed curing of fine fuels, with many areas having a new grass crop still emerging. Elsewhere, heavier fuels are moist across the mountains of central Idaho and especially into western Wyoming, where additional May moisture indicates that below average fire activity is likely there

Above Normal significant wildland large fire potential is expected for southern and eastern Utah for June, while Below Normal significant large fire potential is expected across western Wyoming. The Above Normal potential area expands in July and August to cover much of northern Nevada and southern and western parts of Idaho and northern Utah. By July southern Utah should return to normal conditions with monsoonal effects possibly a bit stronger and earlier than normal. It is too early to tell what deviations from normal will occur in September which is typically a transition month.

Southwest: Above Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the western two thirds of the Southwestern Region in June followed by a return to Normal potential from July onward. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

Above Normal significant fire potential is forecast for much of the western two thirds of the Southwest Area in June while approximately the eastern third of the region will remain normal. Much of the eastern plains of New Mexico into West Texas has recently experienced more moist conditions. Despite a short term drying/warming trend, they should gradually see more backdoor cold frontal activity with periods of increased humidity values compared to the rest of the region as June moves forward. As usual in June, the arrival of the subtropical ridge from Mexico will herald a lengthy period of heat and dryness for much of the region. Expect periods of near record to record heat during the last two weeks of the month as the ridge builds overhead followed by a likely timely summer thunderstorm season that will diminish the region's large fire season in early to mid-July. By July through September...all areas will see Normal Significant Fire Potential.

Confidence in this overall outlook is slightly above average as ENSO Neutral conditions have developed in both the eastern and central tropical Pacific ocean with signs of a return to an El Nino state by mid-fall. The expectation is for overall temperatures to generally remain warmer than average with drier than average conditions to remain intact overall for much of Southwest Area through June. As June evolves, increased moisture from both the south and east will nudge into the region leading to periods of increased lightning. This will combine with periods of heat and perhaps a wind event or two to provide the impetus for the Above Normal significant fire potential forecast for much of the Southwest Area for the month of June.

Present thoughts suggest an on-time arrival of the monsoonal season with more than likely a good burst of moisture initially perhaps followed by a stronger focus along and east of the Continental Divide as the summer moves forward.

Rocky Mountain: Above Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across southwestern Colorado in June. Below Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across northern Wyoming, extreme western Nebraska, and southern South Dakota in June and July. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

Long to medium range precipitation deficits are greatest across south-central to southwest portions of Colorado, with amounts of below 25% of average being reported in many areas. Extreme to Exceptional drought exists across southern portions of Colorado into southwestern Kansas. Drought improvement trends have developed across South Dakota and southeastern Kansas. 90 day percent of average precipitation has been above average across northern and eastern Wyoming into South Dakota, western Nebraska, and northeastern Colorado.

Greenup continues to be late/stunted across south central and southwestern Colorado, while May precipitation has resulted in a closer to average greenup across the remainder of the region. Abundant fuel loading across Kansas could result in an increase in fire potential from late in the summer into the fall. Fuel loading in the mountains of southern Colorado are greater than average as a result of historically low winter/spring snowpack limiting the compaction of dead fuels. Unusually high snowpack values still cover fuels in the northwestern Wyoming mountains, and to lesser extent northcentral Wyoming. ERC values are greatest and near the 90th percentiles over southwestern Colorado at month's end.

Short term model forecast precipitation into early June are reflective of an active storm track across the northern and eastern portion of the geographic area generating showers and thunderstorms at times, with dry desert air more prevalent across western and south central Colorado where breezy to windy conditions are also predicted. For the remainder of June, forecasts favor average to warmer/drier than average conditions, especially in southern portions of the geographic area. Above average rainfall from the southwest monsoon is expected to moderate fire potential back into the average range across southern Colorado after the early portion of July, and long range forecasts extend above average precipitation into Wyoming during the middle portion of July into early August.

Above average fire activity is expected to during June over central to southern Colorado a result of extreme to exceptional drought and a late/stunted green-up. Continued drought and predicted temperature and precipitation patterns during June, above average fuel loading, and occasional warm, dry and windy periods are expected to contribute to the above average fire risk areas at times. A seasonal increase in moisture from the Southwest Monsoon is predicted to moderate large fire risk closer to average after the early portion of July and continuing during the remainder of summer. High snowpack values in the spring and even lingering into the latter portion of May as well as a wetter than average spring points towards below average large fire risk across northern portions of the geographic area through June. After the historically high snowpack and wet spring over northern portions of the region, a very warm and dry month of June would be required to increase the July large fire potential into the Above Average or even the Average range over northern portions of the geographic area, especially given the average to above average precipitation forecast in July. The regional forecast for large fire acres burned during the core fire season, June-August, is near average, and above the median value.

Eastern Area: Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the majority of the region through the summer. Above Normal fire potential may persist across portions of the northern Great Lakes if the forecasted wetter trends do not materialize.

Thirty day soil moisture and precipitation anomalies were below average across portions of the northern Great Lakes, Lower Ohio Valley, and New England towards at month's end. Above average precipitation and soil moisture thirty day anomalies were observed across the southern Great Lakes and the eastern Mid-Atlantic States.

Above average temperatures are forecast across much of the southern tier of the region in June and July. Wetter than average conditions are forecast across the northern tier of the region in June and July. The

wetter trends should shift into the south central and eastern portions of the area during August. Drier than normal conditions may develop over the western half of the Eastern Area in September.

100 and 1000 hour fuel moistures, Energy Release Components, and Canadian Build-Up Indices were below to above seasonal normal levels, respectively, towards the end of May across portions of the northern Great Lakes where precipitation deficits were the greatest. The spring fire season may persist into the early summer season across portions of the northern Great Lakes if dry conditions persist over this area.

Southern Area: Below Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across all areas east of the Mississippi River during the outlook period except for Tennessee and Mississippi which will experience Below Normal potential for only the month of June. In addition, the island of Puerto Rico can expect mostly Below Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period as well. Areas not mentioned above, Kentucky and Virginia, can expect Normal significant wildland fire potential during the outlook period.

The transition to ENSO Neutral conditions in the equatorial Pacific Ocean should produce a trend toward above average temperatures during the outlook period region-wide. The outlook period will begin with an early focus on tropical activity along the Gulf Coast as the first named system of the season has already made landfall in the Florida Panhandle. Latest data suggests that this could be another active year for the coastal areas of the Southeast.

For the summer months, and with the ENSO Neutral state slowly evolving toward a weak El Niño for the fall, fire danger should continue to track within seasonal ranges. Precipitation trends over summer should follow trends generally expected by a neutral ENSO condition with anticipated weather patterns not appearing to show any particular out of the ordinary fire danger heightening trends. What is yet to be determined is what the impact that the tropical Atlantic storm season will have on Southern Area rain patterns. At this time forecasts vary widely from below to above average with a slight trend toward above average tropical activity.

Outlook Objectives

The National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook is intended as a decision support tool for wildland fire managers, providing an assessment of current weather and fuels conditions and how these will evolve in the next four months. The objective is to assist fire managers in making proactive decisions that will improve protection of life, property and natural resources, increase fire fighter safety and effectiveness, and reduce firefighting costs.

For questions about this outlook, please contact the National Interagency Fire Center at (208) 387-5050 or contact your local Geographic Area Predictive Services unit.

Note: Additional Geographic Area assessments may be available at the specific GACC websites. The GACC websites can also be accessed through the NICC webpage at: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive/outlooks/outlooks.htm>