

# Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

## Southern Idaho

Valid July 25<sup>th</sup> – August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Subject:** Above Normal heat in mid-July combined with exceptionally hot/dry conditions during early July, have rapidly dried out both live and dead fuels across southern Idaho. Fuels are at critical levels and continue to become more extreme each day. **Fine fuel loading is also well above normal** and fully cured, adding to rapid fire spread potential. These fuel conditions are rapidly increasing fire behavior, especially with any upcoming wind or lightning event. **Several large fires of several thousand acres occurred earlier this month.**

**Discussion:** The following conditions are being experienced/observed:

- Moisture from any light, spotty showers in the short term, will quickly evaporate as above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation are expected. Thousands of recent lightning strikes are likely to increase holdover fires as conditions dry out during the last week of July.
- Above normal fine fuel loading across most of the lower elevations. Grasses are fully cured.
- Live fuel moisture values (sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, Gambel oak, mixed conifer) are already at or below critical mid-summer normal levels, correlating with high to extreme fire behavior and will continue falling over the next 2 weeks.
- For most areas ERCs are already above normal, between the 90<sup>th</sup>-95<sup>th</sup> percentile, and with the prolonged warmth and dryness, are projected to reach or exceed the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile by early August.

**Difference from Normal Conditions:** Live and dead fuel moistures rapidly dried out with the warm and dry conditions in June and amplified by exceptional heat and dryness in most of July. Live sagebrush fuel moisture is below normal most areas and will continue steadily falling through early August. The 100-hr fuels are already well below mid-summer normal levels and are projected to reach critical percentiles by early August.

**Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:**

- Anticipate flashy fine fuels and sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, Gambel oak and mixed conifer to ignite easily and exhibit **advanced rates of spread, elongated flaming fronts and increasing fire brands; expect more long range spotting, even in absence of slope and wind. You can't outrun it!**
- Anticipate dust devils and fire whirls to develop in hot, dry and unstable conditions, especially in fine flashy fuels, that may jeopardize control lines and contribute to erratic fire behavior.
- Expect longer burn periods at mid to higher elevations.
- Fine fuel loadings in some areas are dense and continuous and will support extreme rates of spread regardless of fuel heights.
- Thunderstorms may produce strong outflow winds that may rapidly increase fire behavior and change spread direction.

**Mitigation Measures:**

- Modify tactics to account for potential rapid rates of spread and high resistance to control.
- Communicate retardant drop effectiveness and modify as necessary; higher coverage levels or altered tactics may be required.
- Park all vehicles in clean, cold black; avoid driving or parking in unburned fuels.
- Ensure solid anchor points – keep one foot in the black.
- Constantly re-evaluate LCES – Lookouts – Communications – Escape Routes – Safety Zones.
- Consult the latest weather and fire danger information at <http://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/>

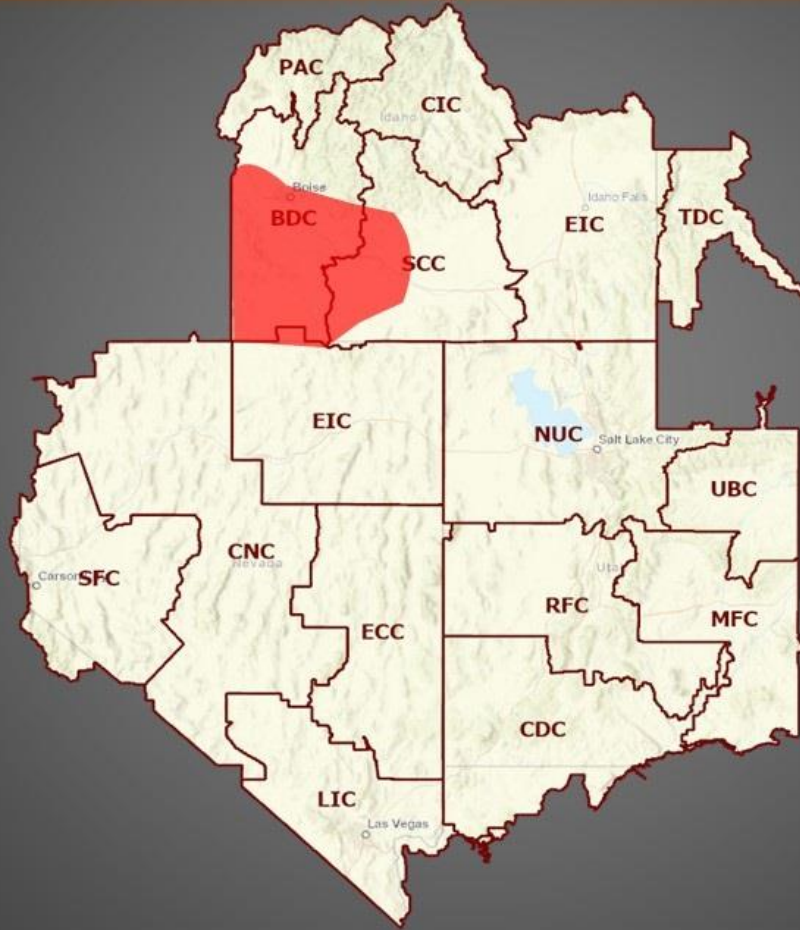
**Area of Concern:** Southern Idaho elevations below 6000 ft.

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Climatology Years: 2012-2022

GB03 SW Idaho

Valid Date: 07/23/2024

