Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

Eastern Nevada, Central Utah

August 6 – August 19, 2026

Subject: Persistent drought, critically low live and dead fuel moistures combined with spotty monsoon moisture have created above-normal significant fire potential across eastern Nevada and parts of northern/central Utah. Recent large fires have demonstrated the potential for rapid fire growth, long-range spotting, and high resistance to control even after periods of higher humidity and scattered showers.

Discussion: Drought-stressed vegetation, localized shrub mortality, and continuous cured fine fuels are contributing to increased fire occurrence and extreme fire behavior. Juniper fuel moistures across much of the advisory area are also at or near record low levels for this time of year, which failed to exhibit the expected spring recovery due to below-average winter precipitation, limited snowpack, and persistently low soil moisture conditions. As a result, many juniper stands entered the summer fire season under significant moisture stress with little opportunity for recovery. Recent monsoon rainfall has been uneven, leaving some areas with minimal or insufficient precipitation to significantly reduce large fire potential.

Recent large fires throughout the region such as the Widemouth 2 fire in Utah, and the Quail Springs fire in Nevada have demonstrated rapid rates of spread, active torching, long-range spotting, prolonged burning periods, and high resistance to control. Field observations from recent incidents have documented unusually receptive juniper fuelbeds and more aggressive fire behavior within juniper fuel types than would typically be expected under similar weather conditions.

Difference from Normal Conditions: Fuel conditions are significantly drier than seasonal averages. Live woody fuel moisture remains critically low; in many cases, record low values have been measured. In addition, 1000-hour dead fuel moistures are well below normal and continue to decline.

Concerns to Firefighters and the Public: Firefighters should anticipate rapid fire growth, active fire behavior, long-range spotting, and high resistance to control during initial attack and extended operations. Aggressive burning may occur at night. Human-caused ignitions remain a significant concern, and any new fire has the potential to escape initial containment under current fuel and weather conditions. Communities located adjacent to wildland fuels should remain prepared for rapidly changing fire conditions.

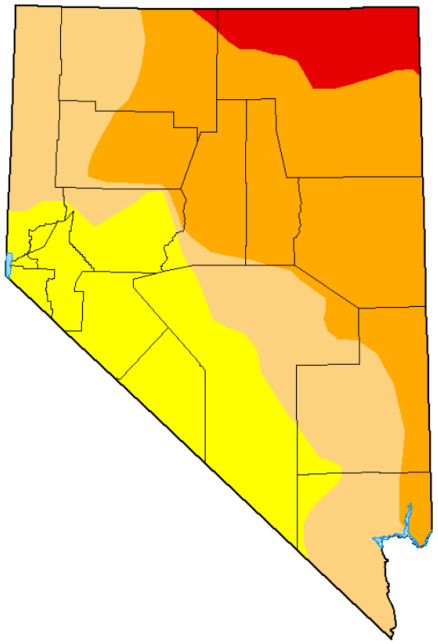
Mitigation Measures:

- Monitor fuel and fire weather conditions continuously and anticipate rapid changes in fire behavior.
- Utilize risk-based suppression strategies and evaluate indirect tactics when firefighter exposure outweighs the probability of success.
- Maintain LCES and identify contingency actions early.
- Position resources for rapid initial attack while preparing for extended attack and large fire growth.
- Incorporate heat illness prevention through work/rest cycles, hydration, and crew rotation.
- Increase public prevention messaging to reduce human-caused ignitions.

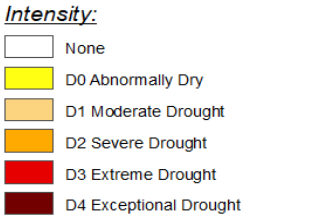
Area of Concern: Portions of eastern Nevada and central/northern Utah (see map)

Issued By: Great Basin Predictive Services, Nevada and Utah Fuels Specialists.

Figure 1
Nevada Drought Monitor Map



U.S. Drought Monitor
August 4, 2026

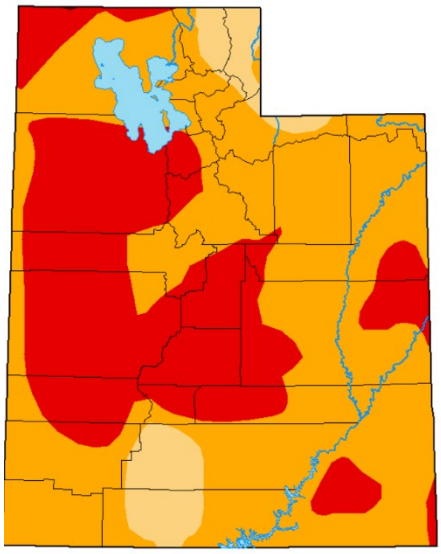


The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

Author:
Brad Rippey
U.S. Department of Agriculture

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Figure 2
Utah Drought Monitor Map



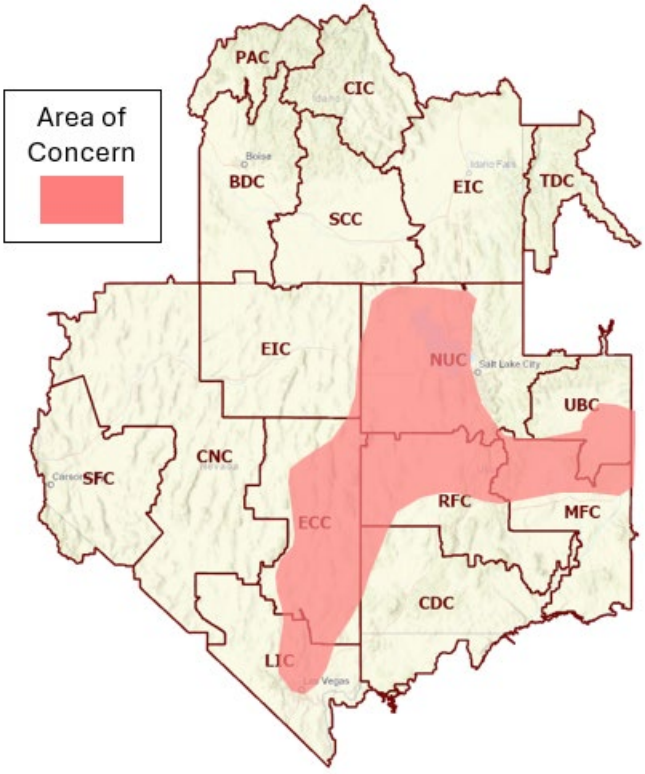


Figure 3
Affected Areas

Figure 4: Quail Springs Fire, Southern NV
Drought-stressed junipers supported rapid fire spread in otherwise sparse fuelbed

Figure 5: Widemouth 2 Fire, Near Kanosh, UT
100k ac and growing (nearby Cottonwood Fire was also nearly 100k ac)

Figure 6: Ward Fire, south of Ely, NV
Grew to over 1,000 ac in first 6 hours