

# Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

## Northwest Nevada

July 12, 2025- July 25, 2025



**Subject:** An extended period of well above average heat and exceptionally dry conditions has rapidly dried out live and dead fuels across Northwest Nevada. In some areas Sagebrush Live Fuel Moisture values are several weeks ahead of historical norms and are already approaching record lows. Due to the mild winter and wet conditions in early spring, fine fuel loading across much of northern and western Nevada is well above average, adding to rapid fire spread potential. These fuel conditions have resulted in extreme fire behavior, especially when gusty wind or lightning is present.

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

- Fine fuel loading well over 100% of the 10 year and historical averages, with continuity of fine fuel across the landscape providing few natural breaks.
- Fine fuels present in vegetation types that typically are largely devoid of cheat grass and other invasive annuals.
- Live fuel moistures are at or below 80%, which can result in extreme rates of spread and fireline intensity, and with continued above average temperatures and dryness will likely plummet further.
- ERCs are approaching the 90th percentile and approaching record levels for this time of year.

### Difference from Normal Conditions:

- Fuel moisture levels at this point in the season are comparable to 2012 and 2017, which were both large fire years across the region. Notably in 2012, the 460,000-acre Holloway Fire occurred, which exhibited extreme fire behavior and high resistance to control.
- Extreme fuel driven fire behavior has been observed on the Winnemucca Mountain Fire and Conner Fire in Northwest Nevada in mid-June.

### Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:

- Anticipate flashy fine fuels, sagebrush, and pinyon-juniper, 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 and with low RH recover expect fires to burn through the night.
- Fine fuel loadings in northwestern Nevada are dense and continuous and will support extreme rates of spread regardless of fuel heights.

### Mitigation Measures:

- Modify tactics to account for potential high 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:** Northwest Nevada, see map below

**Issued By:** Great Basin Predictive Services and local Nevada Fire Planners.

