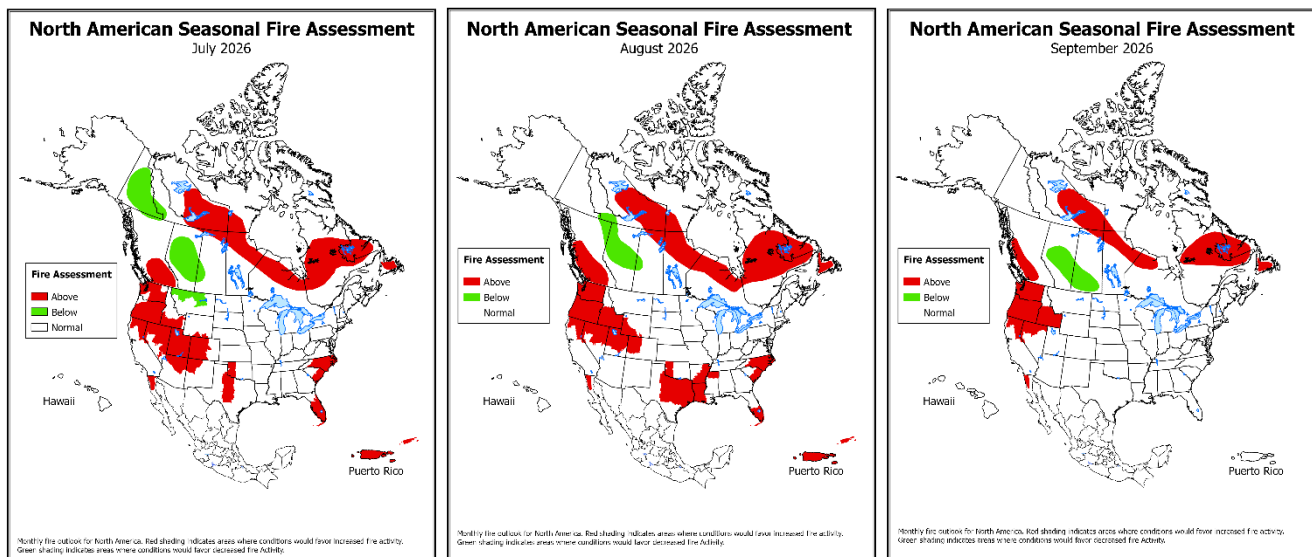

North American Seasonal Fire Assessment and Outlook

National Interagency Fire Center • Natural Resources Canada • Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
United States Canada Mexico

Outlook Period July through September 2026
Issued 14 July 2026

Executive Summary

Overall, in Canada, there was below normal fire activity throughout June. However, hot, dry, and windy conditions late in the month resulted in a substantial uptick in fire activity, bringing both area burned and number of fires to near the 25-year average. Sustained drought in the east-central Northwest Territories, and dry conditions in the northeastern prairies and north-central Quebec were the epicenter for wildfire activity. Additionally, a large region of drought exists in southern British Columbia, which has led to sustained high fire danger.



Monthly fire outlook for North America for July 2026 (left), August 2026 (middle), and September 2026 (right). Red shading indicates areas where conditions would favor increased fire activity. Green shading indicates areas where conditions would favor decreased fire activity. [Click on each image to see larger versions.](#)

Temperatures were normal to above normal across British Columbia in June and remained close to normal over the majority of Yukon aside from the far southeast. On the prairies, temperatures were normal to below normal outside the far north and northeast. Some regions in the Alberta foothills even had a few below freezing nights. Warmer than normal temperatures in the northeast were driven by a late June heat wave. Most of Ontario, Quebec, and Labrador were warmer than normal outside of the far south regions and the warmest temperatures sat in the James Bay region. Peawanuck set a daily record of 32.9C, on June 10 and on June 9, La Grande IV set a daily temperature record of 30.8C, 6C higher than its previous record. Kuujjuarapik recorded two days with a humidex of 35. In the Maritimes, temperatures were near normal, though a storm at the beginning of the month brought a few overnight temperatures below 0C. Record daily low temperatures of -2.6C, and -2.4C were set in Northeast Margaree, Nova Scotia, and Kouchibouguac Park, New Brunswick, respectively. Newfoundland was generally cooler than normal with temperatures remaining quite consistent.

Drought and lower water levels persist in across much of southern British Columbia with a dry June. In the interior, a region extending from Smithers to the southern Okanagan received at most 25% of its normal monthly precipitation. Only small areas near Port Hardy, small parts of the Peace River region, and near Dease Lake had above normal precipitation. Port Hardy received 95.3mm of rain in late June, exceeding their normal monthly amount. The dry trend extended into Yukon where the north received less than 50% of its normal precipitation for June. A small region from Burwash to the southwest received 150-275% of normal precipitation. On the prairies, three slow moving storms brought high precipitation to the central and southern parts of the three provinces. Edmonton, Alberta had its wettest June on record, receiving 385% of its normal rainfall. Similarly, Swan River, Manitoba, received 315% of its normal rainfall. Northwestern Alberta and Manitoba as well as northern Saskatchewan received less than normal rainfall though still enough precipitation to improve drought conditions. Most of Ontario and Quebec were drier than normal outside of a region extending from Georgian Bay east to Kingston and south to Niagara. Some daily precipitation records were set in Ontario, with St. Catharines receiving 60mm on June 14 and Earlton receiving 102mm on June 30. Drought conditions continued north of a line from Abitibi to Labrador. Conversely, on the south coast of Quebec, up to 250% of normal precipitation fell. A notable rainfall event on June 20 brought 121mm of rain in 3 hours to the Island of Montreal, Pointe-Claire. New Brunswick received near normal precipitation; the west of Prince Edward Island was slightly wetter than normal. Conversely, the east of the Island was drier than normal, a trend that extended to all of Nova Scotia. More precipitation than normal fell over northern Newfoundland, while the south was dry. On June 1, Goose Bay received 0.1cm of snow, and St. John's recorded 2.8cm.

In the U.S., June precipitation anomalies were mostly below normal across the West, with portions of California, Nevada, western Arizona, and southern Utah receiving no measurable rainfall. Localized areas of above normal rainfall occurred in eastern Arizona and New Mexico, with near to above normal precipitation in central Idaho to much of Montana. Precipitation was generally above normal across the central and southern Plains to the Mississippi Valley and northern Gulf Coast, with above normal precipitation also observed from Lower Michigan to northern New England. Precipitation was below normal along much of the East Coast from southern New England to Florida. Overall drought decreased across the country, but drought still covers nearly 53% of the U.S. Fire activity increased rapidly across the U.S. from mid-May into early July with the National Preparedness Level increasing to three (on a scale of 1-5) June 18, then to four on June 29.

Climate Prediction Center and Predictive Services outlooks issued in late June forecast temperatures that are likely to be above normal across most of the contiguous U.S. through September, especially in the northwestern U.S. However, temperatures may trend below normal in portions of the Midwest. Precipitation is likely to be below normal for western Washington, the Upper Great Lakes, and Texas into Louisiana. Precipitation is likely to be above normal in much of the southwestern U.S. due to the North American Monsoon, as well as in southern New England. Above normal significant fire potential is expected across the Greater Four Corners northwestward to the Inland Northwest in June, with portions of central Texas, western Oklahoma, and the southeast Atlantic coast above normal, as well. In August, above normal significant fire potential will continue in much of the Northwest, northeast California, northern Great Basin, and West Slope, with above normal potential in much of the southern Plains and portions of the Lower Mississippi Valley and southeast Atlantic coast. Above normal potential will persist in the northwestern U.S. into September, with normal potential elsewhere. In addition, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands will have above normal potential in July and August.

Forest fire activity across most of Mexico reached its lowest point during the first quarter of the year before its seasonal increase March through May, then stabilizing again in June, which is expected to continue into December, only being disrupted by human activity. The forest fire season continues in northern Baja California due to deteriorating environmental conditions, with July and August expected to be the months of greatest activity.

Recent weather conditions have had a mitigating effect on the drought in Mexico, due to above-average rainfall during April, May, and June. Despite this wet trend, the contrast in rainfall distribution is significant, as drought-stricken areas have returned to normal levels while abnormally dry areas have emerged. The forecast for the next three months indicates below normal rainfall, although some states

are expected to show a slight improvement in September, transitioning from dry to wet conditions. The International Rainfall Index (IRI) shows an active North American Monsoon affecting both Mexico and the United States. Mexico's national average temperature was above average, and the forecast for maximum temperature distribution in most states during the quarter shows variable thermal behavior.

The IRI (International Research Institute for Climate and Society) seasonal forecast for the July-September (JAS) period of 2026 indicates that in Mexican states located south of 23.5° north latitude, including the state of Tamaulipas, the probability of average seasonal precipitation will be below normal, and in the states of Coahuila and Durango and in regions of Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Nuevo León and Zacatecas, near-normal conditions are likely. In contrast, the probability of average seasonal precipitation will be above normal in the Baja California Peninsula and Sonora, in the western region of Chihuahua, and the northern region of Sinaloa. Meanwhile, above normal temperatures are expected to persist across almost all of Mexico the next three months.

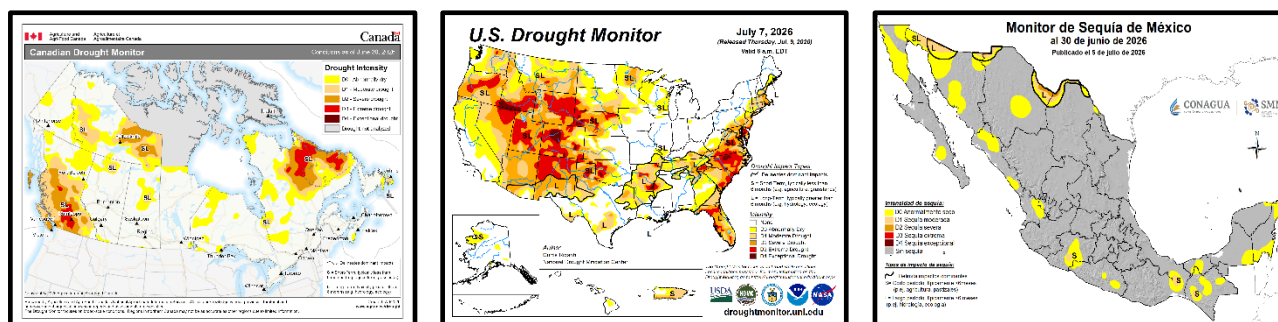
Critical Factors

The critical factors influencing significant fire potential for this outlook period are global climate patterns related to sea surface temperatures, particularly in the Pacific Ocean, and large scale, longer-term soil moisture deficits:

El Niño-Southern Oscillation and Other Climate Teleconnections:

El Niño developed in June, and sea surface temperatures (SSTs) continue to warm rapidly throughout the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean into early July. El Niño will continue to strengthen throughout the summer and into the fall. The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) forecasts El Niño to persist through the fall and winter, with near 100% confidence. The CPC is forecasting a greater than 60% chance of a strong El Niño by August or September, and a nearly 65% chance of a very strong El Niño by late fall.

The Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) remains in a negative phase and is likely to remain negative through the outlook period. The Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) was active in the western Pacific Ocean last month but has weakened as it moves through Indonesia and the Philippines. It is forecast to become very active once again as it moves into the western Pacific in mid-July. This active phase of the MJO will have an impact on the outlook for much of July, but the main climate driver for the outlook will be the rapid strengthening of El Niño.



Left: [Canadian Drought Monitor](#) from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Middle: [United States Drought Monitor](#). Right: [Mexican Drought Monitor](#) from CONAGUA-Servicio Meteorológico Nacional.

Drought:

As of June 30, 35% of Canada was in some stage of abnormal dryness or drought. The most significant regions of extreme drought sit in northeastern Quebec and large portions of Labrador; however, the southern and central interior of British Columbia also has a large region of extreme drought. Other areas comprising the southern half of British Columbia sit in either moderate or severe drought. In the

Northwest Territories there are two regions of concern, north and east of Great Slave Lake, where large areas of severe drought exist, and along the eastern slopes of the Mackenzie mountains, where a swath of moderate drought exists. Finally, on the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland a region of moderate drought also persists. Outside of these regions only small pockets of drought exist, though significant regions of abnormal dryness exist in northern British Columbia, central Saskatchewan, northern Ontario, and central Quebec.

Prolonged periods of hot, dry weather in June led to expansion of drought and abnormal dryness in several regions of Canada, most significantly in British Columbia and northern Quebec and Labrador. These regions had extreme drought form during the month. By the end of June, 80% of British Columbia now sits in some form of drought or dryness, up from 40% in May. On the western and northern prairies, drought conditions improved in June, driven by a wet month.

Temperatures in June across the U.S. were above normal for the southern half of the West into the Northwest and Lower Mississippi Valley. Above normal temperatures were also observed in Florida, the Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast, while below normal temperatures occurred in much of Montana. Temperatures were closer to normal for the rest of the country, including most of Alaska and Hawai'i. In early July, temperatures have been above normal across most of the U.S., with an exceptional heat wave observed July 11-13 in portions of the northern Rockies, northern Plains, and Upper Great Lakes, as temperatures soared to 40-46C (104-115°F) in southeast Montana and 35-40C in northern Minnesota (95-104°F). However, temperatures were near to below normal near and west of the Sierra Nevada and Cascades.

Precipitation was above normal across much of the central and southern Plains into the Mississippi Valley and portions of the Southeast, as well as Lower Michigan into northern New England. Precipitation in the West was mostly below normal, with portions of California, Nevada, western Arizona, and southern Utah receiving no measurable rainfall, while central Idaho and much of Montana received near to above normal precipitation, mainly due to a strong storm at the end of the month. Portions of eastern Arizona into New Mexico recorded above normal precipitation, but June is also the driest month of the year for areas near and west of the Continental Divide, so overall amounts were mostly less than a half inch. Drier than normal conditions were also observed across much of the East Coast from southern New England south to Florida. Precipitation was mostly near normal for Alaska, with much of the precipitation occurring in late June from an unusually cold and wet storm near the summer solstice. Precipitation in Hawai'i was slightly below normal in Kauai to well above normal for Maui and the Big Island. In early July, precipitation has been below normal in much of the West, Upper Great Lakes, and northern New England. Elsewhere across the country has been a mix of above to below normal precipitation as rainfall has been in the form of showers and thunderstorms.

Overall drought decreased across the U.S. during June as drought now covers just over 47% of the country as of July 7, a decrease of almost 10% from early June. Drought developed and/or intensified in the Northwest, portions of the northern Great Basin, and central Rockies. Drought development and intensification were also noted in portions of the northern Plains and northern Minnesota. Drought improvement was observed across much of the central and southern Plains into the Southeast and Florida, although drought intensification was observed in portions of eastern North Carolina. Drought improvement occurred in northern New England and northern Montana. Areas of extreme to exceptional drought also decreased, with just over 11% of the country in these categories. Extreme to exceptional drought is most widespread across the eastern Great Basin, central Rockies and central High Plains, with smaller areas in central Oregon, south-central Montana, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, and the coastal Mid-Atlantic. Drought is expected to persist and expand across most of the northern half of the West through September, but some improvement is expected in the Greater Four Corners due to the North American Monsoon. Drought is expected to develop in much of Texas and the northern Plains to Minnesota and Wisconsin. More improvement is expected in the Southeast, but drought is expected to persist in the Mid-Atlantic, while development is expected across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In Mexico during the second half of June, surface low-pressure troughs, the passage of five tropical waves, and upper-level troughs led to above-average rainfall in the north-central and central regions, as well as in isolated areas of the northeast, north, and south of the country. This rainfall contributed to the reduction of moderate drought in northern Coahuila and the elimination of abnormally dry areas in the central part of the country.

In contrast, a heat wave prevailed during the mid-June in northwestern and northern Mexico, while below-average rainfall was concentrated mainly in the states along both coasts and the Yucatán Peninsula. Consequently, moderate to severe drought persisted in the northwest of the country, and abnormally dry areas increased slightly in the south and the Yucatán Peninsula. As of June 30, observed moderate to severe drought was very small and just over 2% of the country, unchanged from June 15.

Fire Season Status:

In Canada, June transitioned from quiet to widespread fire activity by the end of the month. On July 6, the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center elevated to national preparedness level four, indicating that numerous resources are required to action fires and collaboration is needed between provinces and territories. As of July 7, 1.18 million hectares (M ha) have burned, representing 61% of the 10-year average (1.94M ha). Quebec has had the largest area burned so far this season, 367,930 hectares, though still lower than its 10-year average of 412,099 hectares. However, this average is heavily influenced by the 2023 fire season. The Northwest Territories has had 227,857 hectares burned, higher than its 10-year average of 171,911 hectares. Newfoundland and Labrador have the greatest area burned with reference to normal. The 10-year average is 7,824 hectares, and 2026 has burned 35,887 hectares, roughly 460% of normal. Notably, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Yukon all sit significantly below their average area burned for this time of year.

Fire activity in Canada has largely been concentrated over four regions; the Northwest Territories, north-central Quebec, central Labrador, and the north-central/northeastern prairies. British Columbia fire activity was also increasing at month's end. Northwestern Ontario has also had periods with significant fire growth. There have been several resulting evacuations, most notably to Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, and Lynn Lake Manitoba. While area burned in British Columbia remains low, fire danger in the southern interior was generally extreme late in June. During July, convective season is at its peak, and as such, lightning ignitions are more common. Parts of southern Ontario and the Atlantic Canada have also had periods of high fire danger though these periods have not had the same number of ignitions.

Fire activity increased slowly across the U.S. the first half of June, with an acceleration the second half of the month. The Great Basin, Rocky Mountain, and Southwest areas had the most significant increase in activity in the latter half of June, with the rest of the West having a more moderate increase in activity. The Eastern Area was active at the beginning of June with a significant decrease mid to late month before rapidly increasing the second week of July due to numerous lightning fires in northern Minnesota. The Southern Area continued at low levels, with most activity in the Carolinas and Florida. With the significant increase in activity late in the month, the National Preparedness Level increased to three (on a scale of 1-5) on June 18 and increased to four June 29. As of July 13, 1,463,723 hectares (3,616,860 acres) have burned across the country, which is 134% of the previous 10-year average. So far this year 39,354 wildfires have been reported, also above average, at 129%.

In Mexico so far this year, 5,071 forest fires have been recorded in 32 states, covering an area of 395,081 hectares. Of this area, 94% corresponded to herbaceous and shrub vegetation, and 6% to tree cover. Regarding the greatest number of fires, the most affected states were Jalisco, State of Mexico, Michoacán, Mexico City, Chihuahua, Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Puebla, representing 72% of the national total. The most affected states with the largest area burned were Guerrero, Jalisco, Nayarit, Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Michoacán, and Chihuahua,

representing 81% of the national total. Of the total number of forest fires nationwide, 1,120 (22%) occurred in fire-sensitive ecosystems, covering an area of 82,574 hectares (21%).

Canada Discussion

July: Forecasts for July indicate above normal temperatures across much of Canada. Anomalies are highest around Hudson Bay and in eastern Northwest Territories. Some models also suggest that British Columbia will have just as strong positive temperature anomalies, though uncertainty is higher. Nationwide warmth is supported by slow moving ridges that will move across Canada and further stagnate near Hudson Bay. July is likely to be drier than normal over coastal British Columbia, as well as the Hudson Bay region. There are only weak signals for any positive precipitation anomalies, though the western prairies and the eastern Great Lakes region may have a wetter than normal month. In the peak convective season, storms can bring significant, localized precipitation events that can impact monthly normals. Overall, nationwide warmth, and regional precipitation deficits will lead to the most significant fire danger over the Hudson Bay region, eastern Northwest Territories, and southern Nunavut. These regions already have numerous fires burning, and conditions will remain favorable throughout the month. A wet June will keep fire danger lower than normal into July for most of Alberta, western Saskatchewan, parts of the Yukon, and far southwestern Northwest Territories.

August: The August forecast points toward two distinct warm regions, the west coast extending north into the Yukon and western Northwest Territories, and Quebec and Labrador. In central Canada, temperatures are likely to sit near normal with a cool signal over the southeastern prairies. This is likely driven by ridging preferentially sitting on the Pacific coast and northeastern Canada. The August precipitation forecast holds significant uncertainty, though points towards another dry month for British Columbia as well as for western Hudson Bay. Outside of these regions, weak signals point toward near-seasonal rainfall. Warmth and precipitation will continue to drive elevated fire danger over the western Hudson Bay region. Additionally, fire danger is forecast to be elevated over the interior of British Columbia as well as northern Quebec and Labrador. Periods of elevated fire danger also are likely to occur over Atlantic Canada given the warmth that will periodically move over eastern Canada.

September: In September, slightly warmer than normal temperatures are forecast for all of Canada, though anomalies are weak. This is supported by a zonal-looking upper air pattern bringing less significant periods of troughing or ridging. Given this flatter pattern, precipitation signals point towards a drier than normal month for much of Canada. Western Atlantic Canada and the southern prairies look to have the highest probability of receiving normal levels or rainfall. This forecast points towards fire danger remaining elevated in the Hudson Bay region extending eastwards to Labrador and west towards Great Bear Lake. However, by the end of September, temperatures begin to cool and fire danger will generally decrease. This is especially true east of Hudson Bay. Two other regions that are forecast to maintain periods of high fire danger are the northern interior of British Columbia and part of Newfoundland.

United States Discussion

July: Predictive Services and Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlooks indicate that warm and dry conditions are likely to continue into July in the northern half of the West, with some possibility of an increased North American Monsoon increasing in the southwestern U.S. the latter half of the month. Above normal precipitation is also possible in the eastern U.S., with near normal precipitation forecast in the center of the country the rest of July. Otherwise, temperatures are expected to be above normal for most of the country except for the Midwest and Northeast, where near normal temperatures are most likely. Significant fire potential will return to normal in most of the Southwest and spread to the southern Great Basin and southwest Colorado by late in the month. Above normal potential is expected in most of the rest of the central Rockies, the Great Basin, northern California, and the Northwest. Above normal potential is also forecast in portions of central Texas, western Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, and along

the southeast Atlantic coast. Below normal potential is forecast for northwest and north-central Montana.

August: Predictive Services and CPC outlooks indicate that warm and dry conditions are likely to continue in the northwestern U.S., with above normal temperatures likely along much of the East Coast. Drier than normal conditions are also expected in the Upper Midwest. While the forecast for a robust monsoon in the Southwest continues into August, it remains low confidence, but the monsoon should remain active enough to keep fire potential normal in the southwestern U.S. Above normal precipitation is also likely along the Mid-Atlantic coast and much of Alaska. For August, above normal significant fire potential will continue from the central Rockies into the northern Great Basin, northern California, and Northwest. Above normal potential will spread across most of central and east Texas into portions of the Lower Mississippi Valley, while continuing in much of the eastern Carolinas, south Florida, and Puerto Rico.

September: Predictive Services and CPC outlooks indicate that warm and dry conditions are likely to continue in the northwestern U.S., with above normal temperatures likely along much of the East Coast. Above normal precipitation is forecast to continue in the southwestern U.S., with precipitation less frequent as the monsoon wanes. Below normal precipitation is also expected for much of the Upper Great Lakes. Significant fire potential will persist in northeast California, the northern Great Basin, and Northwest in September, but all other areas of the country are expected to have normal potential.

Mexico Discussion

For the July-August-September period, below normal precipitation is forecast for July and August, with a slight improvement in September, but remaining below normal in two-thirds of the states. This outlook suggests dry conditions across much of the country. Meanwhile, above normal temperatures are expected to prevail in large areas of most Mexican states, contrasting with some states where above normal temperatures will be combined with below normal temperatures at times.

July: Below normal rainfall is forecast for most states. In contrast, the states expected to experience above normal precipitation are Baja California Sur, Campeche, Jalisco, and Yucatán. Above normal temperatures are forecast for some states in Mexico, contrasting with other states experiencing below normal anomalies, and still others exhibiting all three categories over the course of the month. Wildfire activity is expected to remain minimal in most areas but remain at above normal levels in portions of northern Baja California.

August: Rainfall is forecast below normal in most states; in contrast, above normal rainfall is expected in Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Sonora, and Yucatán. Temperatures are forecast above normal in some Mexican states, contrasting with other states experiencing below normal anomalies, and still others exhibiting all three categories. For August, wildfire activity is expected to exhibit a pattern similar to that observed in July, with most incidents (and continued above normal potential) concentrated in the northern portion of Baja California, while the remainder of the country is expected to experience minimal fire activity.

September: Above normal rainfall is forecast for the states of Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Mexico City, Durango, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, and Zacatecas, but below normal rainfall is expected in the remaining states. Above normal temperatures are forecast for some states in Mexico, contrasting with areas of below normal temperatures in others, and still others fluctuating between all three categories (above, below, and near normal). Wildfire activity is expected to be concentrated primarily in the northern portion of Baja California, with continued above normal fire potential, while the remainder of the country is likely to experience minimal fire occurrence, which is normal for September.

Additional Information

Additional and supplemental information for this outlook can be obtained at:

United States:

National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

https://www.nifc.gov/nicc-files/predictive/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf

Canada:

Canadian Wildland Fire Information System

<https://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca>

Mexico:

Servicio Meteorológico Nacional

<https://smn.conagua.gob.mx/es/observando-el-tiempo/monitoreo-atmosferico-ambiental>

Outlook Objective

The North American Seasonal Fire Assessment and Outlook is a general discussion of conditions that will affect the occurrence of wildland fires across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Wildland fire is a natural part of many ecosystems across North America. This document provides a broad assessment of those factors that will contribute to an increase or decrease of seasonal fire activity. The objective is to assist wildland fire managers in preparing for the potential variations in a typical fire season. It is not intended as a prediction of where and when wildland fires will occur nor is it intended to suggest any area is safe from the hazards of wildfire.

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Canada: Richard Carr, Natural Resources Canada
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United States: Jim Wallmann, Predictive Services Meteorologist, US Forest Service
Steve Larrabee, Predictive Services Fire Analyst, US Wildland Fire Service
Julie Osterkamp, Data Manager, US Wildland Fire Service
Jennifer McCollum, Fire Data Coordinator, US Wildland Fire Service

Mexico: Roberto Pineda León, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
Martín Ibarra Ochoa, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
Darío Rodríguez Rangel, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
José L. Solís Aguirre, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional