



National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

Predictive Services
National Interagency Fire Center

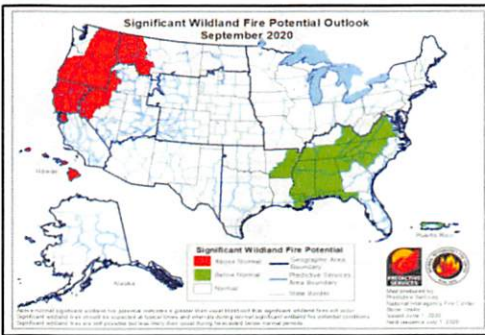
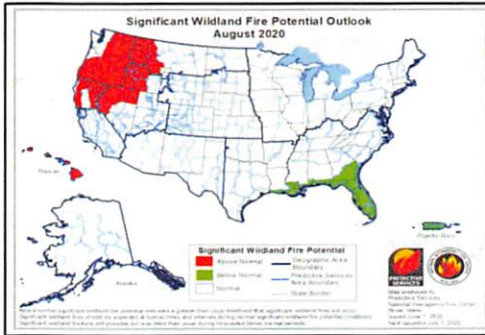
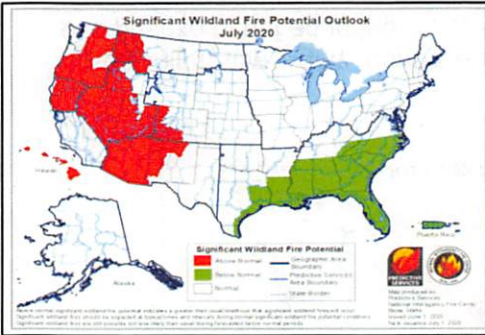
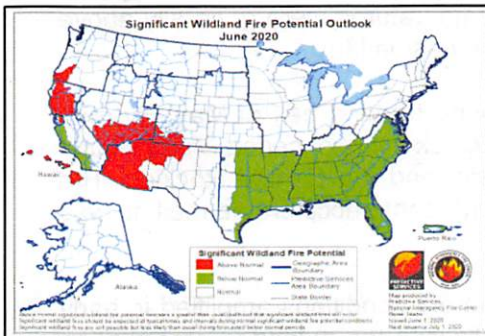


Issued: June 1, 2020
Next Issuance: July 1, 2020

Outlook Period – June, July, August, and September 2020

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.



Overall, national fire activity remained light in May as green-up progressed and as a wet pattern developed over the West. During the first half of the month, Southern Area received the most fire activity due to very dry conditions that had developed across northern Florida. Activity across the Southwest and Southern Great Basin began to increase mid-month as the periodicity of wind events increased and interacted with the inherently dry conditions observed in both the weather and fuels. Activity across Alaska began to develop as the last vestiges of the winter snowpack melted. Dry conditions across the Pacific Northwest and Northern California early in the month were replaced by a wet and convective pattern. The emergence of the wet pattern during the middle portion of the month allowed for 150%-200% of average precipitation to fall across the Pacific Northwest and Northern California. However, the Southern Great Basin, Southwest, and Southern California remained dry receiving less than 25% of average rainfall. The Alaskan Interior was drier than average as was Northern Minnesota and New England. Precipitation events during the latter half of the month began to curtail activity along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Mountain snowpack melting rates accelerated. By month's end, most basins had lost their snowpack except along the northern Continental Divide and along the Canadian Border. Above average temperatures in the West were the culprit. Temperatures across the Great Plains and in the East were generally 3 to 6 degrees below average.

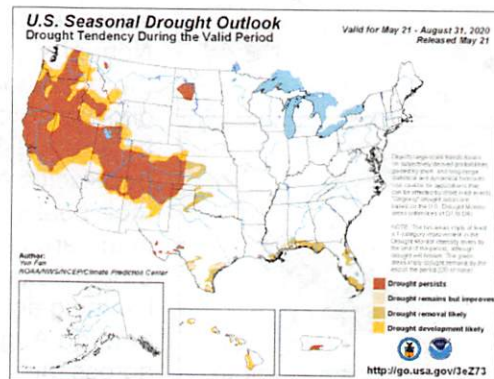
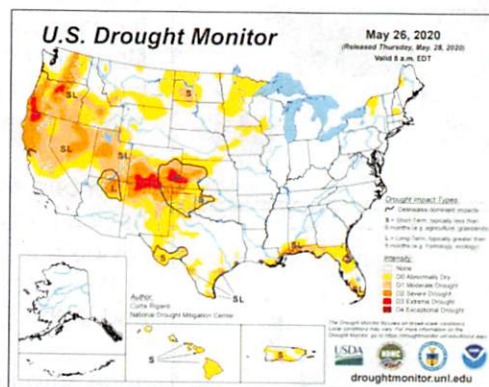
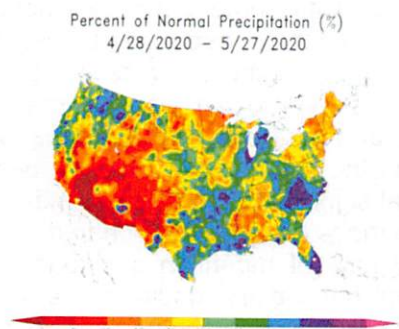
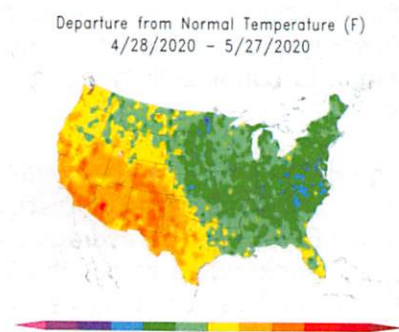
June through early July is the peak of the fire season across the Southwest. Expect for the normal fire activity across the region to increase through the period with some areas experiencing Above Normal significant large fire potential, especially across Arizona. As the monsoon begins in mid-July, activity across the Southwest will diminish. Activity across Alaska will also diminish as the rainy season begins. California, central and northern portions of the Great Basin, the Pacific Northwest, and the Northern Rockies will begin to enter their peaks. Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected in the areas shown on the maps to the left due primarily to increasing drought conditions, early loss of mountain snowpack, anticipated lightning activity, and overall hot and dry conditions that should persist through August. As is typically the case, the peak season fire activity across the northwestern portion of the country should diminish by mid-September as the seasonal transition begins and allows for wet fronts to begin to bring precipitation to impacted areas.

Past Weather and Drought

Early May was very dry along the West Coast. Most areas over the previous 30 days received less than 25% of average precipitation due to high pressure ridge events that controlled the weather during the period. The dry conditions extended inland across the Great Basin and Southwest. A pattern change occurred during the second week of May that allowed for several wet low pressure areas to bring significant precipitation to the Pacific Northwest, Northern Great Basin, and Northern California. By late month, portions of Northern California had received as much as 200% of average precipitation for the period. The Central and Southern Great Basin, Southern California, and the Southwest remained dry generally receiving less than 50% of average precipitation. Colorado, Wyoming, and northern Minnesota were dry as well. Conditions across South Florida improved through the month as the region begin to experience more frequent rainfall. Critical conditions resulted in the initiation of several large fires developed across the Florida Panhandle early in the month and lingered into the third week of the month before abating. The Interior of Alaska transitioned to a warmer and drier than average. Temperatures were generally above normal in the West and below normal across the Great Plains and in the east in May.

Mountain snowpack melting rates in the West accelerated greatly during the first half of May. By mid-month, most basins were reporting 40% or less than average snowpack for the period. Areas most negatively impacted were the Sierra, Southern Cascades, Great Basin, and the Central Rockies. The Northern Rockies and the North Cascades continued to fare well, though some accelerated melting was observed on the eastern slopes in Washington.

Drought continued to intensify and expand across the Northwest as the dry conditions amplified in early May. Some sporadic improvement was observed late in the month following the extended precipitation episodes. Across the Four Corner states, Great Basin, and West Texas, the drought began to expand and intensify. Florida experienced some drought intensification early in the period, but it was followed by improvement during the latter half of the month.



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

Sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies along the equator indicate slightly cooler than average temperatures across most of the ENSO regions entering June. Only in the far western regions do they remain slightly above average. Temperature depth profiles show the cooler waters that were at 100 meters depth now beginning to upwell and surface from the Central Pacific east to the Ecuadoran Coast. The tropical Easterlies (winds) remain in place and are not disrupting the overall atmospheric flow patterns.

The outlook for ENSO calls for a continuance of slightly cooler than average but still neutral conditions through August and into the early fall. Confidence appears to be increasing in the models as both the statistical and dynamical models both tend in this direction.

Geographic Area Forecasts

Alaska: Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the Interior during the outlook period.

Alaska's Interior was covered by a deeper than normal snowpack in April. The snowpack melted almost completely in May and made May a below average month for wildfire behavior in Alaska. A weak El Niño is expected this summer, which suggests only a 20% chance of a highly active wildfire season in 2020.

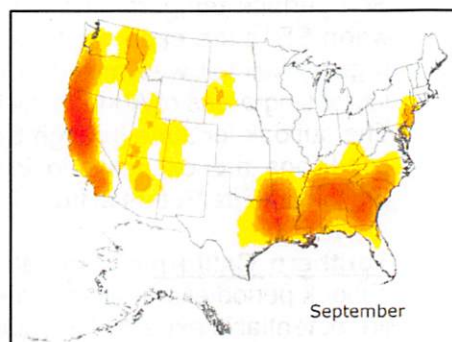
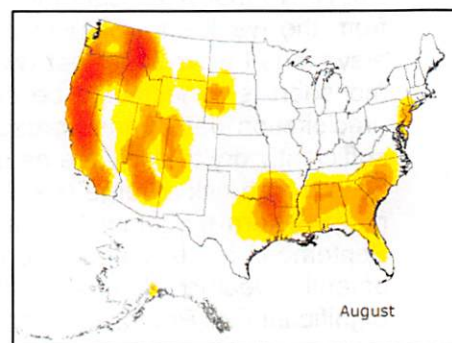
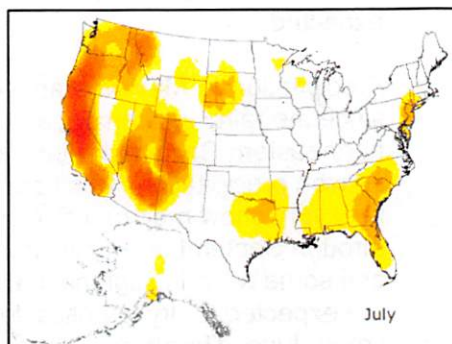
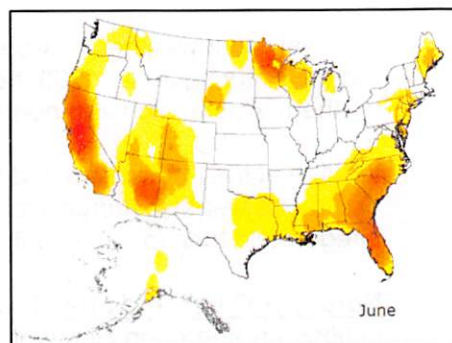
The Drought Monitor shows normal conditions across the state. There had been drought issues in south central Alaska and in the Southeast Panhandle last year, but the precipitation over the winter and into April helped to mitigate those issues.

Early season fires during the 2020 season in Alaska have been limited to wind-driven grass fires confined to the surface. But as June progresses, drying and warming will work its way downward into the duff layer, and the grass fire regime will eventually give way to fires that burn deeper and can be carried by the subsurface layers.

Entering June, the burnable terrain in Alaska has undergone green-up. Surface fuels have been cleared of snow and drying is beginning to descend into the duff layers. Thunderstorm season typically begins in June, and fires started by lightning are expected.

Northwest: Above Normal significant large fire potential will begin developing across southwestern Oregon in June and then expand to include all but the northwestern quarter of the region in July. The Above Normal significant large fire potential will persist into September before the seasonal transition begins. Other locations can expect Normal significant large fire potential during the outlook period.

Temperatures warmed to be well above normal in the first half of May and then promptly cooled to be well below normal for much of the latter half of the month. Periodic weather systems allowed for above average precipitation to fall across most of the region. Snow melt-off is proceeding rapidly. Many lower elevation reporting stations are snow-free while higher elevation stations across Washington and eastern Oregon remain generally above average for late May. Outlooks for June through September indicate that the weather is most likely to be warmer and drier than usual.



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)

The wet, cool weather that began in mid-May moistened fuels considerably through the last half of the month. Entering June, 1000hr dead fuel moisture is above average in all areas and well above average in northern Washington and northeastern Oregon.

Wildfire activity in Oregon and Washington has been low since early May owing to the predominantly cool and moist weather. Large fire potential is expected to rise to be above normal in June in southwestern Oregon and then in much of the rest of Oregon and eastern Washington by July and August

Northern California and Hawaii: Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the outlook area through September except areas above 6000 feet in June, the lower elevations in July and August, and the windward side of the Hawaiian Islands where Normal significant large fire potential is expected.

Precipitation in May was above normal over a large portion of the region. However, precipitation totals since the rainy season began on October 1, 2019 have been below normal in all but a small portion of far northeastern California. Some central and western areas have received less than half of the normal rainy season precipitation. This has led to a weak snowpack that will be almost entirely gone by early June and very light snow melt runoff. Current outlooks call for warmer and drier than average conditions from June through September. Pacific frontal systems are expected to occasionally move across the region in June, and some will bring lightning. Dry north to northeasterly wind events will follow frontal systems. Dead fuels are expected to dry to critical levels in June and the annual fine fuel crop will be sufficiently cured to carry fire in June. Therefore, most areas west of the Cascade-Sierra crest that are below 6000 feet will have Above Normal Significant Fire Potential in June. Areas above 6000 feet are will still receive the benefits from the weak snowpack in June. In July and August north to northeasterly winds are less likely, so elevations below 3000 feet (west of the crest) return to Normal Significant Fire Potential. The summer monsoon is expected to be close to normal, in terms of its impact on California. Due to the overall precipitation deficit and spreading drought conditions, dead fuels at all elevations are expected to be sufficiently dry to carry fire beginning in July. Even below average lightning occurrence and amounts will pose a high risk of large fires in timber. Elevations above 3000 feet and PSAs dominated by timber (the northwestern mountains) have Above Normal significant large fire potential in July through August. In September, there is a transition from the lightning threat back to the offshore wind threat. So due to these potential weather triggers and the expectation of very dry fuels in all areas, all areas have Above Normal Significant Fire Potential in September.

Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) surrounding the Hawaiian Islands are warmer than normal, and the warm SSTs are expected to continue through September, leading to above average temperatures in the region. Rainfall was mixed in May, but generally below average. The Drought Monitor product shows increasing areas of Abnormally Dry and Moderate Drought areas, mainly on the lee sides of all the islands. The outlook for June through September calls for warmer and drier than average conditions, and drought conditions are expected to increase. The lee sides of all the Hawaiian islands have Above Normal Significant Fire Potential from June through September. Significant large fire potential is Normal elsewhere.

Southern California: Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the region during the outlook period except across the coastal areas and adjacent ranges where Below Normal significant large fire potential is expected in June.

The weather pattern was progressive in May with a series of troughs and ridges moving into California from the Pacific Ocean. A couple of the ridges were strong, and a couple of the troughs were deep for this time of year. Record or near record temperatures occurred from May 5th through May 7th and once again from May 25th through May 27th as strong high pressure set up over Southern California and the Desert Southwest. Temperatures were 10 to 15 degrees below average when deep troughs set up over California May 12th through May 13th and May 18th through May 19th. Overall, almost the entire region received above average temperatures in May. A strong storm that moved into Northern California from the Gulf of Alaska brought significant rainfall to the Sierra and to the Big Sur Coast May 17th through May 19th. Elsewhere, most locations received light rainfall amounts during this time. Light scattered showers also moved across

parts of Central California May 10th through May 12th as a storm approached the Northern California Coast and then moved northward. Most of the region received near to above average rainfall, except the deserts which received very little or no rainfall this month. Even though the High Sierra above 8,000 feet received a couple feet of new snow in mid-May, it melted quickly, leaving almost the entire Sierra free of its snowpack. There was little change to the drought in May. A substantial drop in the 1000 hour dead fuel moisture from well above average to near average occurred as the consistent rains from March and April ceased and as hot and dry spells increased. The 100 hour dead fuel moisture was variable during the month. It reached record or near record low values during hot and dry periods and was well above normal during rainy and cool periods. The grasses across the lower elevations are now either fully cured or almost fully cured. The live fuel moisture in new growth vegetation has started to drop, but it is still well above normal.

Substantial warming has occurred in the sea surface temperatures across both the Gulf of Alaska and along the California Coast over the past month. Thus, expect high pressure off the California Coast to be the dominant weather feature in June. This ridge will cause there to be little or no rainfall across the region. This is considered normal for the month. The above average sea surface temperatures off the California Coast will cause temperatures to be warmer than average and the marine layer to be shallower than normal in June. Below average sea surface temperatures off the Pacific Northwest Coast will allow troughs to move inland well to the north through the summer months, but they will have little influence on the weather across Central and Southern California. The passing troughs will most likely keep the center of high pressure that usually forms near the Four Corners area during the summer suppressed further to the south. This placement in the high pressure will most likely cause there to be less monsoonal thunderstorms than what is typically observed. Due to the sudden increase in sea surface temperatures off the California Coast, temperatures are now expected to remain above average through the summer months.

Northern Rockies: Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the region during June followed by Above Normal fire potential for western Montana and northern Idaho for July, August, and September. Eastern Montana and the Dakotas can expect Normal significant large fire potential during the outlook period.

Significantly moister than average conditions returned to northern Idaho and Montana, west of the Continental Divide after several months of drier conditions. north central Montana and a portion of northeastern Montana were also wetter than average during the past month. southwestern, south central, and far eastern Montana, as well as most of western North Dakota were drier than average. eastern North Dakota recorded near average precipitation. Temperatures during the preceding month were generally near average across the region.

The near average temperatures combined with generous precipitation meant western area mountain snowpacks were melting slowly, until just during the past ten days. Warmer temperatures then combined with two moist upper trough passages that had high snow levels with abundant precipitation that produced greater rates of snowmelt, and rainfall runoff. This has produced minor flooding on smaller waterways and rivers in portions of northern Idaho and western/central Montana. Mountain snowpacks have completely melted off in the lowest elevations of the western areas, and largely so in the middle elevations. But significant amounts are still present over the higher elevations, generally above 6000 feet north, to 8000 feet south. Latest NWS Climate Prediction Center calculated soil moisture anomalies are now near or above-average over all the region, with the driest, near average values in northern Idaho, southwestern Montana, and northwestern North Dakota.

Over the past 30 days, it was drier than average across much of the region. The driest areas were in northeastern Montana and southwestern North Dakota with less than 25 percent of average precipitation received. In contrast, there are two areas that saw very moist conditions with 150 to 200 percent of average: Along the Bitterroot Divide in western Montana (and extending through northwestern Montana) and extreme eastern North Dakota in the Red River Valley. The eastern half of North Dakota has measured much more than average precipitation for the entire water year which began October 1 and has also experienced several weeks of River flooding. Very similar conditions existed in north central Montana, but

elsewhere in the region it has been drier than average for this longer term. The latest US Drought Monitor shows areas of Abnormally Dry conditions in northern Idaho, southwest/southcentral Montana, eastern Montana, and western North Dakota where a small pocket of short-term drought is also embedded.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center outlooks for June are projecting near average precipitation throughout the region, with a slight probability of above-average in eastern North Dakota. While above-average temperatures probabilities are confined to just northern Idaho and far-western Montana, with near average further east. CPC three month-outlooks for the core fire season months of July/August/September show strong continuity with preceding ones, keeping warmer than-average temperature probabilities in place for northern Idaho and western Montana, and to a lesser extent, central and eastern Montana, and western North Dakota. While eastern North Dakota remains with near average temperature probabilities. Drier than average precipitation probabilities are focused on these outlooks over eastern Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and western Montana, and to a lesser extent, central and eastern Montana, while North Dakota is projected to have near average precipitation, possibly slightly above in the eastern third.

ENSO neutral status continues in the Pacific. While consensus remains among the climate modeling members that ENSO neutral conditions will persist through at least the early summer, more model ensemble members are now suggesting the possibility of a weak La Niña developing later during peak fire season this summer. There are also signs of this developing in the central Pacific Ocean. This will be closely monitored, as that could bring a rapid onset and persistence of warmer and drier than average weather to the Northern Rockies during July and August, focused in the western areas. Due to a strongly enhanced further northward extending Four-Corners upper ridge, like what has occurred during other region peak fire season years like 2003, 2006, 2007, and 2017. These patterns produce a robust North American monsoon and generate periodic dry thunderstorm outbreaks over the western areas (and hence fire ignitions) from monsoon moisture pulses circulating around the enhanced southwestern US upper level ridging.

Lower-mid elevations in the western areas are snow-free and live fuels are fully greened-up. Some low-elevation fine fuels are expected to begin curing in PSAs 05, 06, and 09 during the first week of June, which is slightly earlier than average. Only the highest elevations still have snowpack and that snowpack is currently undergoing melt-off. With increasing sun angles and warmer than average temperatures anticipated in late May and early June, the expectation is that the remaining snowpack will melt off completely by mid-June, which is relatively early. Above average moisture within this melting snowpack in the western areas will then be fully available for healthy live fuels growth in the middle and higher elevations through mid to late June but warmer than average temperatures will then allow exposed fuels to begin drying even in the middle to higher elevations as early as late June.

In the eastern PSAs 10 through 18, fine-fuels green-up has peaked and there is an expectation of some curing beginning by the first week of June. Thereafter, higher humidity resulting from typical summer convective storms in a "normal" plains pattern should maintain average fuels conditions there.

In the western areas, higher than average soil moistures from recent precipitation, and within the remaining snowpack, will provide healthy live fuels growth and limit any significant areas of dry fuels in June in the middle and higher elevations. This will maintain normal fire potential in June. Considering that the Climate Prediction Center outlooks are indicating increasingly drier and warmer than average conditions during the core fire season months, Above Normal significant large fire potential is anticipated from July through August and will continue into September for PSAs 01-09. Although the likelihood is minimal, the potential of a La Niña ENSO pattern developing in late summer or early autumn could enhance the fire potential or extend the duration of the fire season. In PSAs 10-18, fine fuels curing and dead fuels drying are expected to occur at more typical rates and be closer to average levels, resulting in significant wildland fire potential at normal levels for the duration of the outlook period June through September. There are drier pockets in the lower to middle elevations of central and southcentral Montana where there have not been as much precipitation over the winter and spring. These areas will need to be monitored in June for additional drying trends and possible updates.

Great Basin: Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected across southern Utah, southern Nevada, and the Arizona Strip in June. In July and August, the Above Normal potential will expand further north into southern Idaho. In September areas experiencing Above Normal significant large fire potential will decrease to western Nevada and southwestern Idaho. Areas not mentioned above can expect Normal significant large fire potential.

Temperatures across the majority of the Great Basin have been above average over the past 30 days, with the exception of northern areas of Idaho and Wyoming which remained near to just below average as low pressure systems continued to track across the north bringing periods of cooler temperature and showers. Precipitation over the past 30 days has been above average over central and western Idaho into far northern Nevada due to a wet storm in mid-May. Otherwise, precipitation was well below average over the rest of the southern two thirds of the Great Basin. Precipitation since October 1, 2019 has been below average across all but the far southern portions of Nevada into northwestern Arizona and far southwestern Utah, which has been 130% to 200% of average, accounting for wetter weather that occurred in November and December. Precipitation was near average across parts of Idaho into Wyoming, and well below average across the remainder of the Great Basin.

Moderate drought continues over much of the northern two thirds of Nevada into southwestern Idaho and Utah, with pockets of severe drought. These drought areas are expected to persist into the summer. Fine fuel loading is still 100% to 300% of average across parts of Nevada, Utah, the Arizona Strip, and southern Idaho. Higher fuel loadings have been patchier across parts of southern Utah and Idaho. Fuels are in green up across the northern third of the region in the lower to middle elevations. Fine fuels are curing out in the lower elevations of the southern Great Basin, along with the southern slopes further north into Nevada and Utah. Fuels are expected to cure completely by the end of June. Temperatures climbed to well above average at the end of May with many areas seeing multiple days of near record-breaking heat which rapidly began drying the fuels. Temperatures in the early June are not expected to be as far above average as moisture increases early in the month. Thunderstorm chances are expected to increase in early June with at least a few periods of gusty winds, precipitation, and cooler temperatures as well. Drier conditions should arrive mid-month. The monsoon is expected to arrive on time or slightly delayed and may be weak when it starts. Therefore, areas in Utah, southern Nevada and the Arizona Strip may stay drier in early July than would be expected most years. By August, the monsoon should bring some rains to the eastern and southern areas of the Basin with the north and west remaining dry.

A steady increase in small fires across the Great Basin is expected in June, especially across the southern two thirds of the region where fuels are beginning to rapidly dry due the late May heat wave. Fire potential should increase significantly in June across of southern Nevada, southern Utah, and the Arizona Strip due to increased lightning activity following very hot temperatures. Fires will increase in size in June as fuels cure and lightning potential increases. The carryover fine fuels from 2019 will likely be a concern for fire starts, along with any new growth from the recent rains and precipitation in the south from last fall. If the monsoon is weak at the onset, or even slightly delayed, the Above Normal fire potential will extend north into central and northern Utah in July, mainly during the first half of the month. Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected in July over all of Nevada into southwestern and central Idaho in the lower to middle elevation grasses. Above Normal fire potential is expected to last into August over western and northern Nevada into Idaho, before it decreases seasonally in September. Fire potential will increase to Above Normal across the central Idaho Mountains by August after a significant dry period once the snow melts and soil moisture and fuel moisture levels drop.

Southwest: Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected across most of Arizona and northwestern New Mexico through mid-July followed by a return to Normal potential after mid-July as the monsoon arrives. Other locations across the region can expect Normal significant large fire potential.

Over the past two months, average high temperatures have been from 1-4 degrees above Average west of the divide and generally between 2-6 degrees above average further east. Some spots in eastern New Mexico have seen high temperatures from 6-8 degrees above average. As far as precipitation, most portions of the region have seen much drier conditions over the past 60 days. There have some areas

along/near the Mogollon rim and well as across the northeastern plain of New Mexico that have experienced some precipitate but most everywhere else has been quite dry.

Central Pacific oceanic conditions will generally remain in neutral conditions over the next few months before likely turning into at least weak La Niña conditions by the fall. Variability has been the key takeaway so far this spring with brief cooler periods interrupting the building warmth over the past month. The expectation of the generally drier signal by June is still intact, but in the short-run, there is an unseasonably humid and wet period coming the first few days of June. This will certainly lead to areas of drier storms west of the Continental Divide. This trend of moisture sliding westward at times will likely continue into June. In addition, wind events are likely across region in early June.

Significant Large Fire potential is anticipated to remain Normal for many areas east of the Divide during the month of June while most portions of Arizona into northwestern and northern New Mexico will experience Above Normal significant large fire potential. The fine fuels will be the continued focus of fire activity entering June until the larger fuels become receptive mid-month and remain so until the monsoon's arrival in mid-July.

Longer term forecast models suggest a likelihood of both a "false start" to the monsoon in late June as well as the overall summer monsoonal period being average to below average. Considerable uncertainty exists, so confidence is lower than normal. In addition, the start of the wetter portion of the monsoonal pattern could be a week or two delayed this summer allowing parts of the region to continue at or near peak fire season longer than normal.

Rocky Mountain: Above Normal significant large fire potential is expected across southwestern Colorado in June and southwestern through northwestern Colorado in July. Elsewhere, Normal significant large fire potential is expected during the outlook period.

After a cooler than average period during late March and April across the region, warmer than average conditions emerged in May across central and southern Colorado. April and May precipitation deficits were significant across locations west of the Continental Divide, especially across southwestern through southeastern Colorado. Long range deficits were most evident west of the Divide especially across southwestern Colorado into southeast Colorado. The Drought Mitigation Center portrays "Extreme" drought across portions of southern Colorado.

Antecedent dead fine fuel loading resulting from the robust growing season of 2019 are evident across southern Colorado and spring green up has been stunted this year. Soil moisture west of the Divide into southeastern Colorado is below the 20th percentile. ERC values are greatest as of across southwestern Colorado above the 90th percentile using the May through October historical dataset. Furthermore, a few stations have occasionally spiked above daily maximums.

For the first week of June forecast models indicate a wetter pattern overall compared to what was experienced during much of the month of May. CPC long range forecasts show a wetter than average regime across the eastern plains in June, with average to drier than average conditions across Wyoming and central to western Colorado for the July through August period.

Moderating fire potential is forecasted across Colorado during the early portion of June associated with a surge of tropical moisture with beneficial rainfall from scattered wet thunderstorm activity. However, resulting from a delayed and less vigorous green-up across southern Colorado in combination an intensification of the long term drought, the large fire potential is forecast rebound to be back in the Above Normal range across southern Colorado by mid-June. Average precipitation is expected to occur during the second half of June across the geographic area. CPC long range outlooks indicate a drier than average regime across Wyoming and central to western Colorado during the July through August period. Given the drier than average long range forecasts in conjunction with an expansion of drought this spring across western and southern Colorado, the above average risk is predicted to expand across much of western Colorado by July. Although the southwest monsoon is not expected to be wetter than average, surges of limited tropical moisture are predicted to bring the large fire risk back into the average range during the

second half of July in southern Colorado, then moderating the fire potential across northwestern Colorado by August.

Eastern Area: Normal significant large fire potential is expected over the Eastern Area during the outlook period.

30 day soil moisture and precipitation anomalies were near to above average across much of the region towards the end of May. Some mid-term drying developed April and May across the northern Great Lakes as well as parts of northern New England.

Warmer than average temperature trends are expected over the eastern tier of the region in June. Cooler than average conditions are forecast across the western tier in June and July. Wetter than average conditions overall are forecasted across much of the region through the summer into the early fall. Cooler than average conditions are forecast over the western Great Lakes with warmer trends over the eastern tier of the region late this summer into the early fall season.

Below normal fuel moisture levels and elevated fire danger indices were indicated over portions of the northern Great Lakes and northern New England towards the end of May. Near to above normal fire danger index levels were indicated elsewhere. Green-up was near completion across the northern tier of the region at the end of May while conifer fuels were progressing through their late spring needle moisture "dip".

The spring fire season may persist into the early summer season across drier portions of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Northeast Compact if forecast wetter than average weather trends do not develop in June.

Near normal fire potential is expected over much of the Eastern Area through the summer and early fall fire season. Elevated fire potential may persist into June across drier portions of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Northeast Compact if the forecast wetter weather pattern does not develop.

Southern Area: Normal to Below Normal significant large fire potential is expected across the region during the outlook period.

Although ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) region remain in a neutral state, some cooling has occurred, and this trend is expected to continue through the summer. This pattern, along with an ongoing and typical transition to more easterly/tropical wind flow into the Southeast, should produce intermittently wet for the next few months and severely limit significant or long-term drier, and lower humidity fire weather episodes. A wetter cycle and higher tropical development threat are expected in June as the tropical season gets underway. For West Texas, mainly the desert of the Trans Pecos, it appears a continuing drier and warmer than average pattern is likely and most likely will persist during the summer months. This area will need to be monitored for gradual drying and drought development potential. A robust Atlantic tropical season is forecasted with the Gulf of Mexico. The Southeast will see increased risks for moderate to heavy precipitation events in the early months.

As indicated on the Drought Monitor, the vast majority of the Southern Area is not in drought and is reflective of the high rain amounts and frequency of rain events over past several months. As was the case last month, the only area in the South experiencing drought is the Gulf Coast, South Texas, and Florida. The current drought outlook forecasts improvement and possibly removal.

While there was some increased activity during early May due to the drier conditions along the southern GACC coastal area and Florida, more recent rains and higher humidity levels have significantly reduced activity. Despite the activity, stats during May were trending at below average levels.

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>