

# Southwest Area Monthly Outlook

## May 2012



### WEATHER FACTORS AND OUTLOOK:

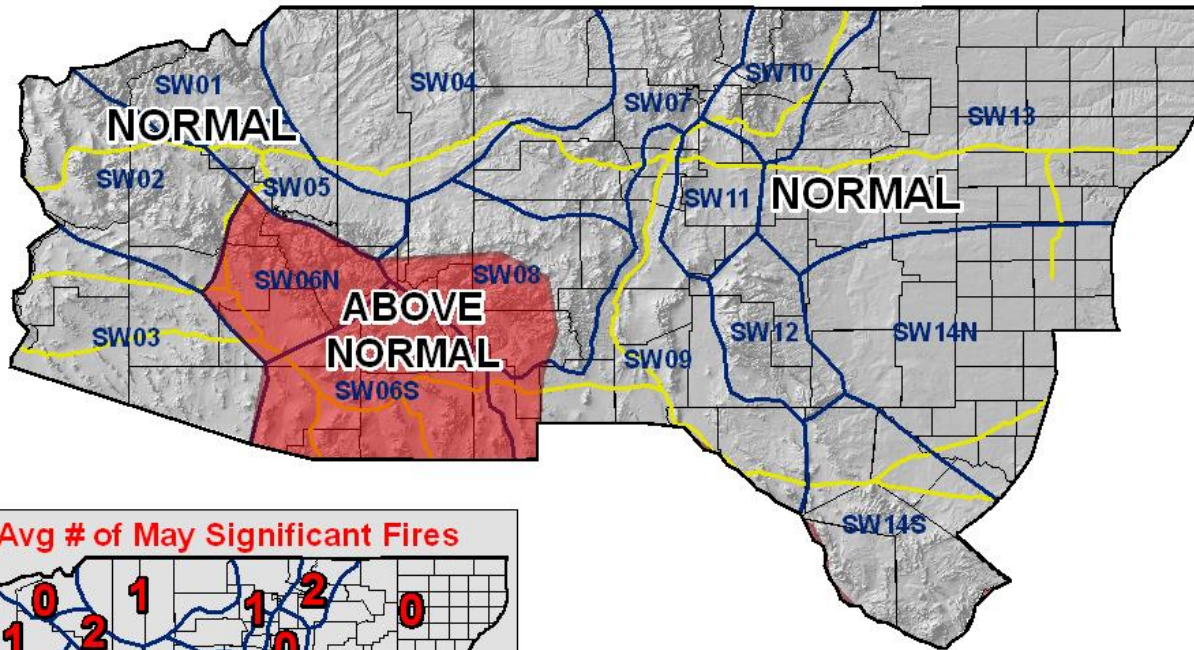
**Drought Conditions:** As of April 24<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Drought Monitor indicated extreme to exceptional drought ongoing across the southeastern ¼ or so of the area. In addition, much of southern ½ of Arizona and the southeastern 2/3 of New Mexico remain in severe drought. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released April 19<sup>th</sup> shows general persistence of the majority of the drought conditions across the Southwest, with likely development indicated across northwestern New Mexico through July 2012. An area of improvement is noted across much of southern Arizona into southwestern New Mexico likely associated with the anticipated monsoonal moisture this summer.

**Precipitation Anomalies and Outlook:** Monthly precipitation for April was 125% or more of normal across much of western Arizona, sections of central/northern New Mexico, and parts of west/southwest Texas, especially across far northeastern New Mexico/northwestern Texas. The remainder of the region was generally drier with less than 50% of normal precipitation. The latest CPC climate outlook for May depicts equal chances of both Above and Below normal precipitation area-wide. Southwest Area Predictive Services expects the precipitation signal to be wetter east and drier west overall for the month of May. This is mainly due to the arrival of backdoor cold fronts into the region and a return to more frequent southerly-southeasterly surface flow which aids moisture advection into many areas along/east of the divide.

**Temperature Anomalies and Outlook:** April saw average high temperatures running 6 to 10 degrees Above average across approximately the eastern 1/2 of the region. The warmest temperatures relative to normal were across far eastern New Mexico and west Texas. The latest CPC climate outlook for May depicts an Above Normal likelihood for warmer than usual conditions area-wide. Southwest Area Predictive Services generally agrees with this outlook, however a gradual shift towards cooler across the eastern 1/3 to ½ of the region and warmer across western sections is expected on average overall through the end of the month.

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| <p><b>Significant Fire Potential</b></p>   | <p><b>Above Normal southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. Normal elsewhere.</b></p> <p>An uptick of significant fire activity is normal by May. The focus of the combination of warmer and drier conditions will most likely occur across western sections of the region with eastern and, in time, central areas likely to see the most significant episodes of moisture intrusion. This overall trend should maintain a normal likelihood for significant fire activity for most of New Mexico and west Texas through May 2012. Up until now, most fire activity which has occurred has been human-related but an increasing amount of lightning ignitions can be expected as moisture will begin to more regularly advance westward. There could still be a few wind events but not near the regularity or magnitude compared to the spring of 2011.</p> |
| <p><b>Prescribed Fire Implications</b></p> | <p>Increasingly variable and warmer weather conditions combined with underlying drought may create challenges for prescribed fire planning and implementation through May. Less overall wind should allow more burning operations this month compared to a year ago. An eye towards upcoming and forecast weather conditions is highly recommended as we head into the warmer months of the year.</p>  |
| <p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p>                | <p>None.</p>   |

# Monthly Significant Fire Potential Outlook May 2012



## Avg # of May Significant Fires



\* Based on fire sizes which would require mobilization of additional resources from outside the immediate area (or PSA)

## Significant Fire Potential

- Below Normal
- Normal
- Above Normal