



NWCC Predictive Services Fire Behavior Outlook

FORECAST VALID FOR: September 29 to October 9, 2020	DATE/TIME ISSUED: September 29, 2020 1500
NEXT UPDATE: October 10, 2020	Matt Ellis FBAN

This is a general fire behavior outlook covering the entire Northwest Geographic Area. It is intended to provide wildland fire managers with an overall view of fire behavior potential and to help wildland firefighters with making informed decisions and maintaining situational awareness based on current and expected fire behavior. Firefighters must use onsite observations and spot weather forecasts to calculate site-specific fire behavior for individual wildland fires.

Fire Weather Summary:

A ridge of high-pressure is expected to remain over the geographic area through the first week of October. The ridge is maintaining warm and dry conditions with generally moderate overnight humidity recoveries. Light east winds will accentuate warming west of the Cascades again today before shifting to light onshore flow by tomorrow. Expect poor to moderate overnight humidity recoveries from the Columbia Basin south into Southern Oregon. A series of shortwave troughs will weaken the high pressure ridge this weekend and early next week increasing cloud cover and possibly some light rain to western Washington and northwestern Oregon before pressure rebuilds next week extending the warm, dry conditions. Monitor your local NWS fire weather forecasts for the latest details.

Fuel Conditions

The geographic area experienced widespread wetting rains for most locations from September 24-26th. Fuels have begun to rebound under unseasonably warm and dry conditions. ERC values are at normal levels for this time of year and will continue to dry under the ridge of high pressure but are not expected to reach critical conditions. Severe drought conditions persist east of the Cascades in Washington, while severe to extreme drought conditions persist in much of Oregon. This drought condition has stressed live fuels across the region, with grasses fully cured and readily available in most locations. Low and mid elevations are still available particularly on south and west aspects. With nightly RH recoveries slowly on the rise in the coming days, fine fuels will have a slight increase in diurnal fuel moisture recoveries while larger fuels remain dry and available. Large dead fuels have seen improved moisture content following last week's rains and are likely to dry out over the next 7-10 days until significant wetting events impact them.

In the coming week, moderating weather will provide improving conditions to the dry fuels allowing for a decrease in expected fire behavior.

Fire Behavior Potential

Warm and dry conditions continue, however a decrease in potential fire behavior is expected over this coming week. There are no large-scale wind events are predicted in the next 7-10 days and any new initial attack activity is not expected to surpass resource capacity. Given the increased nightly humidity recoveries and more stable conditions, having a new large fire on the landscape continues to decline compared to the previous week's conditions.



Westside PSAs

Westside PSA's are expected to see improved conditions and highest chances for precipitation in the coming week. Expected fire behavior in these PSA's will be significantly reduced. Potential fire behavior activity will be limited to creeping, short runs, single tree to group torching with limited spotting distances. Most active behavior will be in isolated areas that are sheltered and/or have accumulations of heavy fuels that remain dry. PSA 04 continues to be the driest westside location and fuels will continue to support active fire behavior.

Central PSAs

The Central PSA's have remained warm and dry with poor overnight humidity recoveries. With the rain shadow effect, fuels near the crest of the Cascades will have the greatest increase in fuel moisture content. Mid elevation to lower slopes will tend to be a drier allowing for behavior that can include short runs with limited torching. On lower East slopes, potential for sustained runs and torching trees can be possible through the burn period as fine fuels dry each day. PSA 07 ERC values are expected to return to 85th percentile levels over the next 7-10 days and will support active fire behavior.

Eastside PSAs

Eastside PSA's saw a decrease in potential behavior however, the amount of observed precipitation varied substantially from last week's precipitation event. Light flashy fuels will have the ability to quickly dry out and support active fire behavior that can include running spotting and torching during the peak of the burn period. The Columbia Basin and portions of southeast Oregon only received variable amounts of precipitation and thus keeping fuels drier with the ability to support active fire behavior with short runs, torching and spotting. Large diameter fuels remain at seasonal averages while ERC values are expected to rise above normal over the next 7-10 days.

ALWAYS BASE ACTIONS ON CURRENT AND EXPECTED FIRE BEHAVIOR GIVEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN YOUR LOCAL AREA. MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS FOR CHANGING CONDITIONS AS YOU CHANGE LOCATIONS (FUEL, WEATHER, AND TOPOGRAPHY). REMAIN VIGILANT FOR FACTORS THAT ALIGN TO PRODUCE CRITICAL FIRE ENVIRONMENTS (THUNDERSTORMS, FINE FLASHY FUELS, SLOPE...).