NWCC Predictive Services Fire Behavior Outlook

**FORECAST VALID FOR:**
October 10 – October 17, 2021

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**NEXT UPDATE:** October 18, 2021

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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 make informed decisions and maintain 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:**

Significant moisture has been received on the west side of the Cascades. Precipitation on the east side has been more scattered leaving both central Washington and south central Oregon with minimal amounts. More precipitation is expected this week with the northwest portion of the geographic area again receiving the heaviest amounts.

Temperatures have cooled down considerably. Overnight temperatures on the east side have been below freezing in many areas. Snow levels are expected to fall, and higher elevations may receive light accumulations this week.

Winds are expected to pick up after a frontal passage on Tuesday. Dry weather and seasonable temperatures are expected for the later half of the week for most of the geographic area. For western Washington, cool temperatures and rounds of moisture will continue thru the week.

**Fuel Conditions**

Fuels remain drought stressed east of the Cascades and will need above average precipitation for an extended period to recover. Fuels west of the Cascades are significantly moist and will take substantial drying to return to a burnable condition.

ERC values are below average across the geographic area. Dry periods may support some small fire activity at lower elevations, but they will be of short duration. Shorter days and cooler weather will limit drying of fuels through the off season.

Heavy fuels are moist at higher elevations and expected to remain that way through the fall and winter. Live shrubs are in their dormant mode and will continue to be at low fuel moisture values until they begin to green up in the spring. Cured grasses in rangelands may dry out with warmer and sunny conditions.
Fire Behavior Potential

Fire behavior potential will remain low in all forest fuels. Rangelands may support fire spread under sunny and dry conditions. Fire activity in unburned pockets of existing large fires or fires that become established in slash fuels could support some fire spread near intense heat, but fire spread will be limited to areas near intense heat.

Forecasted precipitation and cool temperatures will keep the threat of new starts low. Burn periods are expected to remain shortened by the increased moisture and decreased day length.

Westside PSAs

Minimal fire behavior expected. Existing large fires in PSAs 3 and 4 will have limited time for activity. Most active behavior will be in isolated areas that are sheltered and/or have accumulations of heavy fuels.

Central PSAs

These areas did not receive the precipitation seen in other areas. Existing large fires in PSAs 7 will have limited time for activity. Lower elevation grasses and brush may support fire spread under and drying conditions. Minimal fire behavior expected. Low overnight temperatures are becoming common.

Eastside PSAs

Grass and forage production has been reduced due to drought. Lower elevation grasses and brush may support fire spread under and drying conditions. Minimal fire behavior expected. Low overnight temperatures are becoming common.

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, ETC.).