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:

Isolated lightning is possible over northeast Washington on Saturday. A warming and drying trend will begin over the geographic area on Sunday and will last through the week. Expect temperatures to rise to well above normal levels. Strong winds or lightning are not expected at least through mid-week. Expect poor overnight humidity recoveries and much warmer than normal overnight low temperatures through the period. The hot dry period will likely end mid to late week when a round of lightning will move through the geographic area.

Fuel Conditions

In general, the ERCs are at average values west of the Cascades and slightly above average east of the Cascades. The ERCs are expected to rise with the hot and dry forecast. Grasses have cured at lower elevations and areas of transition from green to cured will move higher in elevation. Other than the Coastal Ranges, ERCs across the geographic area are predicted to rise to the 90th percentile and higher given the hot dry temperatures over the next week, however, higher elevations continue to be green with many areas just starting to transition. Additional reference: PNW Fuels Status and Region 6 Fire Danger Rating Areas

Fire Behavior Potential

Large fire potential increases in the lower elevations of the Columbia Basin, eastern Washington, and central, eastern and southern Oregon through the week. Native grasses, brush and timber fuel types in the mid elevations could start contributing to fire behavior by the end of the week. Initial attack resources could be challenged if wind and slope alignment occur at mid elevations. Sometime in the Wednesday to Saturday timeframe the heat dome will break down, this will likely be accompanied by lightning. A spike in fire occurrence and fire behavior is expected given the warm and dry weather earlier in the week.
Westside PSAs - (1, 2, 3, & 4)

PSA 1 and 2 ERCs have risen to average levels and could be above average by mid-week. Timbered areas in PSA 3 and 4 will continue to hold moisture, expect light fire activity in these areas. Fine dead fuels and brush will continue to cure, resulting in an increase in activity at lower elevations in PSAs 3 and 4.

Central PSAs - (5, 6, & 7)

High elevation forest and rangelands are not anticipated to pose problems through the forecast period. Mid elevation brush and litter in Pine or Juniper stands are transitioning and will support moderate fire growth, increased fire behavior is expected where slope and wind align. Grasses have cured at lower elevations and with the hot dry weather mid elevations are also curing. This will lead to rapid rates of spread and higher resistance to control when combined with wind and slope.

Eastside PSAs - (8, 9, 10, 11, & 12)

Grasses have cured at lower elevations bringing higher resistance to control and rapid rates of spread when combined with winds. Mid elevation brush and litter in Pine or Juniper stands have started to transition and with the hot and dry weather these areas will see an increase in fire behavior. High elevation forest and rangelands are still green and have not started to transition, these areas are not anticipated to pose problems through the forecast period.

**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...).**