



Rocky Mountain Geographic Area – Predictive Services

Daily 7-Day Weather / Fire Potential Outlook Discussion

Issued: Tuesday, 24 May 2022

Yesterday's Recap/Current Fire Weather as of 0700 MDT

View the current fire weather forecast, click this link: [7-Day Fire Weather Outlook Maps](#)

Forecast for TODAY and WEDNESDAY

Another fast-moving disturbance in the northwesterly flow aloft quickly broadens the trough pattern over the Rocky Mountain Area. This will keep conditions unsettled across the geographic area and introduce more seasonable temperatures along with scattered showers and thunderstorms mainly along and east of the Divide through the middle of the week.

THURSDAY and FRIDAY

A drier, warmer west to southwesterly flow will establish over the Rocky Mountain Area as high pressure shifts eastward over the region ahead of another West Coast trough. Across portions of southern Colorado and along/east of the Front Range Foothills, surface conditions will quickly dry out and daytime minimum humidity levels will drop back into the teens and single digits. Downslope flow will generate gusty/breezy winds east of the Front Range and Laramie Mountains and will serve to keep temperatures warm, elevating daytime temperatures into the mid-80s to low 90s across the southern half of the geographic area by Friday. Little to no precipitation is anticipated to fall across the RMA in this period.

SATURDAY through MONDAY

Very warm, dry and breezy/windy conditions will set up across the south portions of the RMA as the aforementioned West Coast trough moves inland across Northern California and deepens over the Great Basin. The southwesterly flow aloft will strengthen with time, peaking late Saturday ahead of a surface cold front that will quickly move across Wyoming and the Dakotas. The front will eventually interact with the dryline across western Kansas for an uptick in thunderstorm potential across the High Plains Saturday evening into Sunday. Cooler temperatures and gusty north winds overspread the area Sunday, with storms and precipitation chances remaining confined across north portions of the geographic area and the plains into early next week.

Current NWS Red Flag Warning and Fire Weather Watch information can be found at: <https://www.weather.gov/fire/>

Fuels and Fire Potential Discussion

Early spring weather systems in March brought beneficial amounts of precipitation to many areas of the RMA, especially across the High Plains. However, the pattern has started to change in the last month or so, leaving southern Wyoming, the Western Slope, southern Colorado and southwest Kansas with greater deficits in precipitation, and the drier pattern once again extending northward across western Nebraska into South Dakota.

Expectations are that seasonal temperatures, residual snowpack and occasional wetting rains will continue to keep significant fire potential low across most high elevation sites west of the Divide into the last week of May. However, lower elevation sites in southwest Colorado and most areas east of the Divide will continue to experience the warmth, with fine fuels displaying a mosaic of green-up conditions. Even with green-up on going, some sites may exhibit only patchy new growth within larger areas of drier, dense/dead fuels. The fine fuels in some areas are not compacted but have remained standing/vertically oriented due to lack of winter snow cover.

Along and east of the Northern Front Range Foothills and Laramie Mountains, a more robust green-up is ongoing, and recent precipitation has mitigated the dry fuel conditions across the Pike NF and areas south of the Palmer Divide in southeast Colorado, knocking down the ERCs to below the 80th percentile. **Across southwest and south-central Colorado, ERCs have elevated above the 80th percentile, with a few sites in the San Juan and San Luis Valley near the 90th percentile.** Areas of very dry fuels exist along the lowest elevations (below 7500 feet) and will quickly carry fire with strong wind events. Due to the warmth, high mountain ranges throughout the interior of Colorado are experiencing early snowmelt, with fuels around 8500-9000 feet now exposed and beginning to dry out.

The introduction of springtime thunderstorms is expected to elevate the significant fire potential as more lightning ignitions will be possible given the warmer temperatures and the persistence of dry/receptive fuel beds.

Significant fire potential in many areas across southern and western Colorado will remain in **moderate risk** as we go into the latter half of May. **Periods of high risk** may occur with warmer and drier wind events.

For the most current daily ERC Percentile Trend Map, please view:

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/predictive/outlook/ercmap.png>

For current Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisories, please refer to:

https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/fuels_fire-danger.htm