

National Wildland Fire Outlook
National Interagency Fire Center
Predictive Services Group



Issued: September 21, 2004

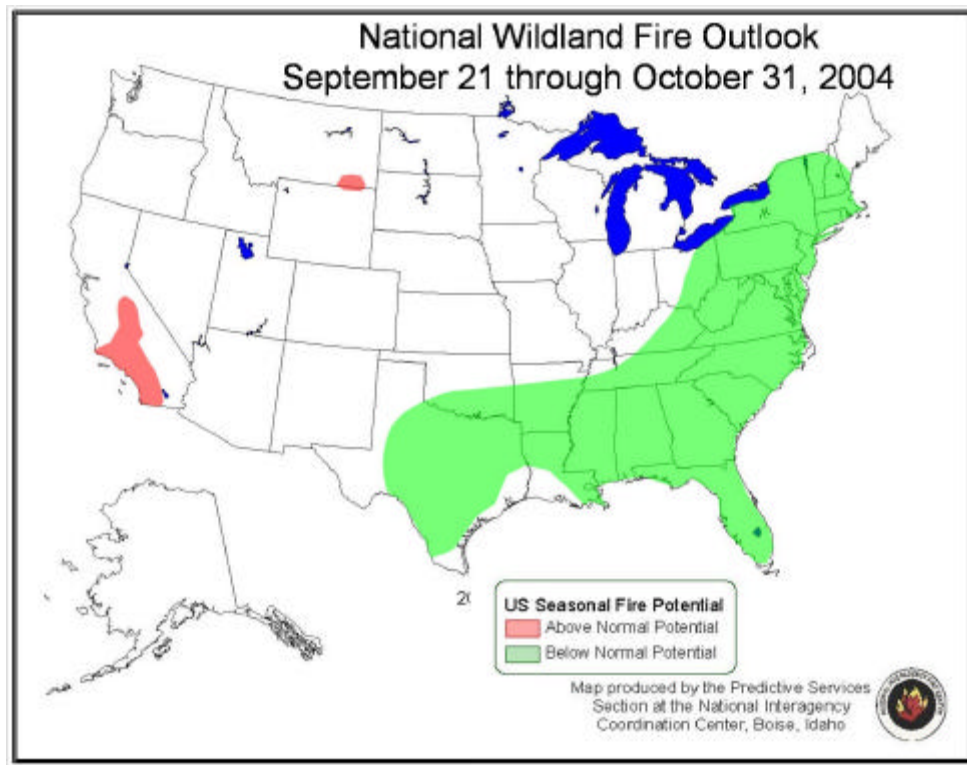
Wildland Fire Outlook – September 21 through October 2004

As of September 21, the number of acres burned nationally (7,705,975) is more than twice the average (10 year average is 3,665,477) with nearly 6.4 million of that due to the Alaska fires. The remainder of the country had a below normal fire season due to 1) spring rains in the Southwest which delayed the onset of the Southwest fire season until mid-May, 2) most of the lightning in the West being accompanied by showers and 3) the periodic low pressure troughs with rain which moved across Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana during the summer.

The recent rains over northern California have greatly decreased the fire danger. However, **southern California remains at above normal fire potential through October** for the following reasons:

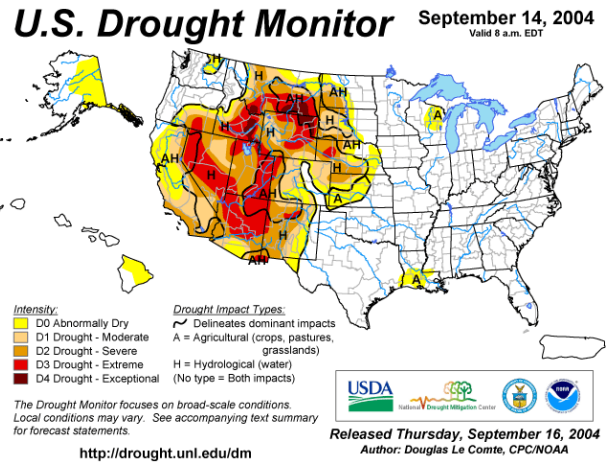
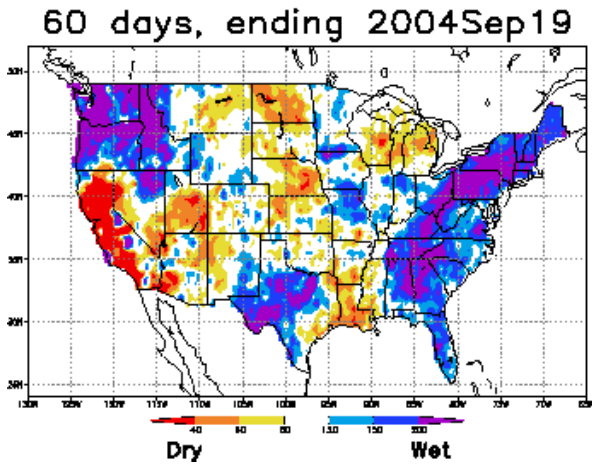
- Fire danger indices are running at or above record levels.
- The frequency of Santa Ana winds typically increases during the fall.
- Late September and October are expected to be warmer than normal. Rainfall is expected to be near normal which is typically light for this time of year.

A small area of southeastern Montana remains at risk for large fires due to the lack of significant rainfall and dry fuels.

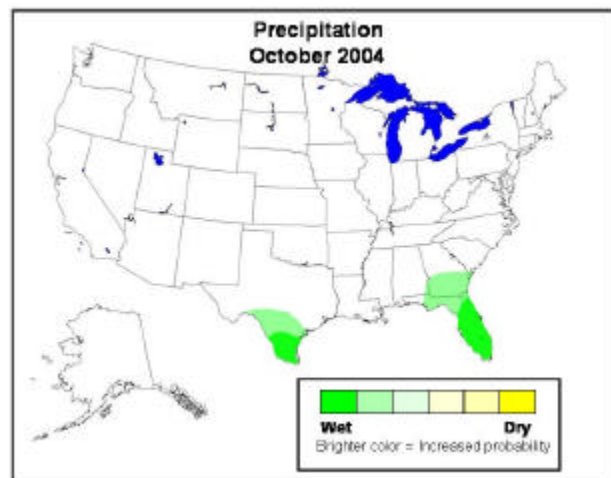
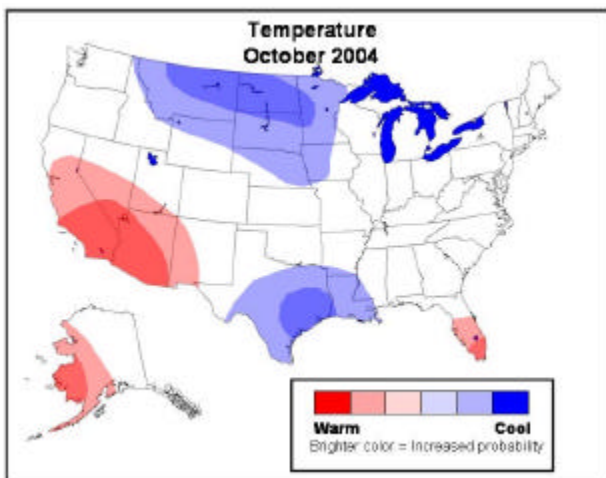


Weather

After one of the warmest and driest summers on record, Alaska's fire season has come to an end with the onset of rain and snow this month. August and September have been very wet in the Pacific Northwest and Idaho with much of the rest of the West receiving enough moisture to greatly diminish fire danger. However, southern California is still quite dry and has a high potential for large fires until the fall rains arrive. Hurricane activity has brought very wet conditions to much of the South and East.



The weather outlook for October is shown below. Southern California should see warmer than normal temperatures and near normal rainfall (which is generally light). Southern California typically sees an increase in Santa Ana wind events in October with a peak in December. While it is difficult to predict the number of Santa Ana wind events during a particular month, southern California should see more offshore flow than usual for October.



Geographic Area Discussions

Alaska: Potential: Normal. Besides setting a fire season record of over 6 million acres burned, Alaska also set a September record with 245,399 acres burned. Normally, about 5,000 acres burn during September. Rain, snow and colder temperatures in mid-September have finally ended the fire season.

Southwest: Potential: Normal. As a result of rather patchy monsoon rains this summer, portions of Arizona had elevated fire danger during the first part of September. However, the remains of Hurricane Javier brought very heavy rainfall to Arizona on September 18-19 and have reduced the potential for large fires through October.

Northern Rockies: Potential: Normal to Above Normal. Fire potential has decreased due to precipitation over the past few weeks. Southeastern Montana has been quite a bit drier than the rest of the Geographic Area. The combination of this dryness, long-term drought and dry fuels has resulted in a greater than average potential for large fires. This large fire potential will be generally limited to those periods preceding a cold front passage when gusty winds and warm, dry weather increase fire danger.

Great Basin: Potential: Normal. The situation in the Great Basin has greatly improved due to a wet August and September in Idaho and heavy rainfall in Utah from Hurricane Javier. Nevada remains the driest part of the Great Basin, but the cooler and shorter days of September along with some light amounts of rain has reduced this area to more normal potential for large fires.

Northwest: Potential: Normal. August and the first three weeks in September have been very wet in the Northwest. The driest portion is in southeast Oregon which may see short periods of elevated fire danger during dry, windy weather.

Northern California: Potential: Normal. Rainfall during September, including over an inch in some areas, has brought most danger indices down to near normal levels. Thus, the potential for large fires has been greatly reduced.

Southern California: Potential: Normal to Above Normal. Rainfall over the month has been very light in most areas with the greatest amounts over the Sierras, along and east of the southern California mountains and over the deserts. Many sites are recording fire danger at or above historic levels. Fire potential is expected to remain high due to critically dry fuels, warmer than average temperatures, more offshore flow than normal and the usual increase in Santa Ana wind events during October.

Rocky Mountain: Potential: Normal. Some portions of western Colorado and Wyoming had high fire danger during the first half of September, but recent rainfall has significantly diminished the wildland fire potential. Most fire danger indices are now at or below normal.

Eastern Area: Potential: Normal to Below Normal. Most of the region south and east of Ohio will have below normal fire potential due to heavy rain, largely from Hurricane Ivan. The driest states are Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois and these areas may see short periods of elevated fire danger during warm, dry and windy weather.

Southern Area: Potential: Normal to Below Normal. Rainfall from recent hurricane activity has left most of the area with very wet conditions. However, southern Louisiana has been rather dry recently and this area will see increased fire danger at times until it receives significant rainfall.

Note: This national outlook and some geographic area assessments are currently available at the NICC and GACC websites. The GACC websites can also be accessed through the NICC webpage at: www.nifc.gov/news/pred_services/Main_page.htm

National Wildland Fire Outlook
National Interagency Fire Center
Predictive Services Group



Issued: September 21, 2004

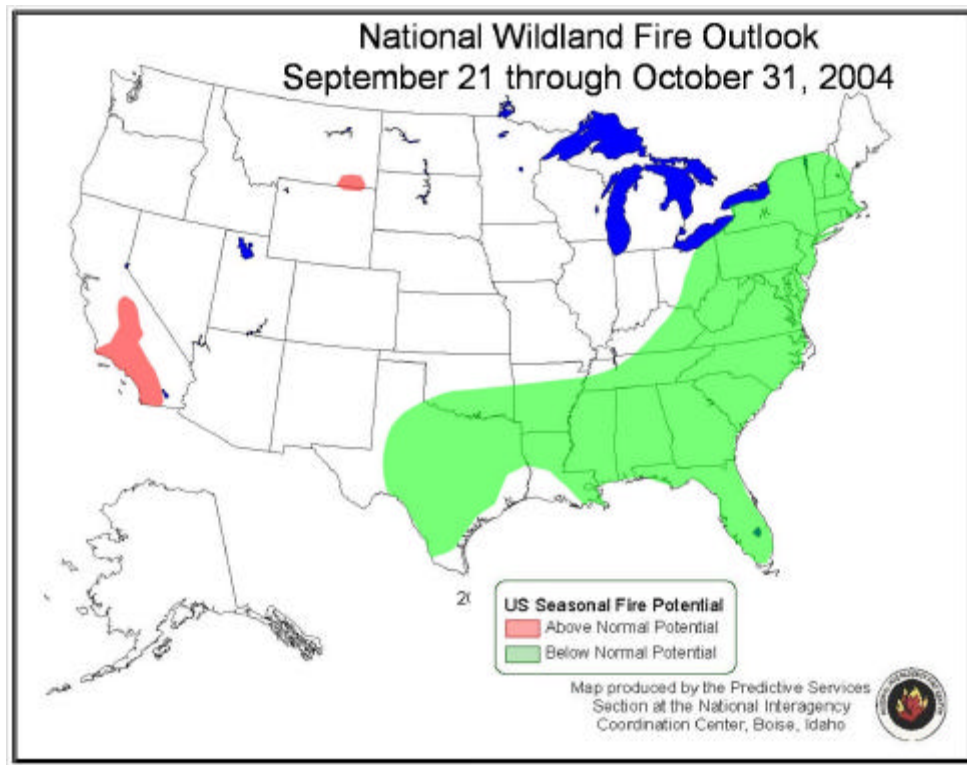
Wildland Fire Outlook – September 21 through October 2004

As of September 21, the number of acres burned nationally (7,705,975) is more than twice the average (10 year average is 3,665,477) with nearly 6.4 million of that due to the Alaska fires. The remainder of the country had a below normal fire season due to 1) spring rains in the Southwest which delayed the onset of the Southwest fire season until mid-May, 2) most of the lightning in the West being accompanied by showers and 3) the periodic low pressure troughs with rain which moved across Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana during the summer.

The recent rains over northern California have greatly decreased the fire danger. However, **southern California remains at above normal fire potential through October** for the following reasons:

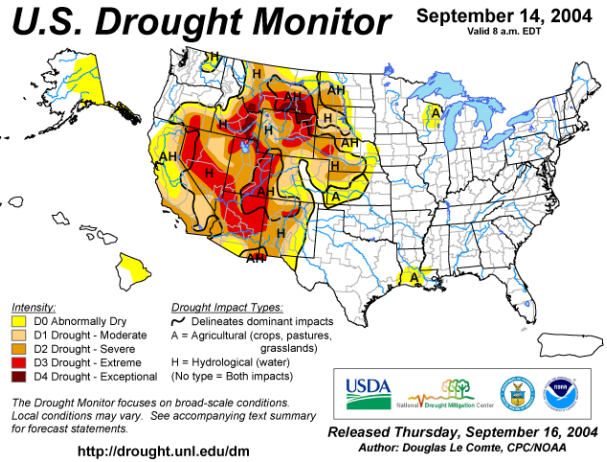
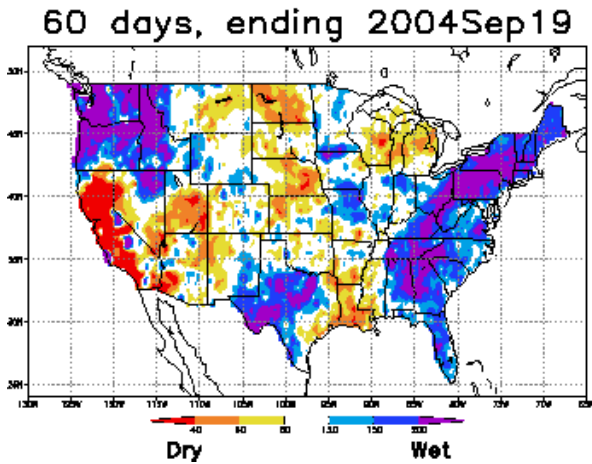
- Fire danger indices are running at or above record levels.
- The frequency of Santa Ana winds typically increases during the fall.
- Late September and October are expected to be warmer than normal. Rainfall is expected to be near normal which is typically light for this time of year.

A small area of southeastern Montana remains at risk for large fires due to the lack of significant rainfall and dry fuels.

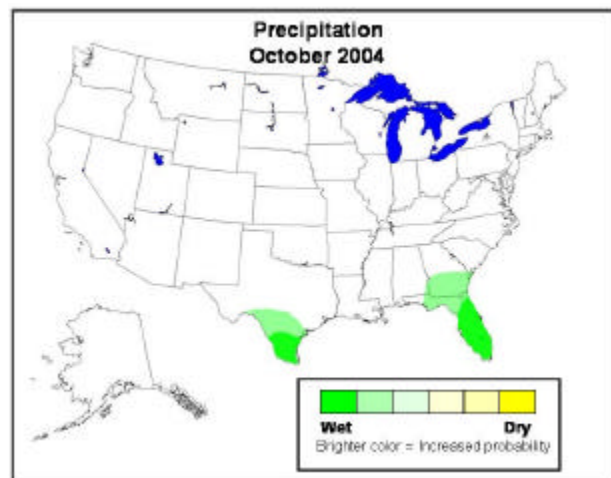
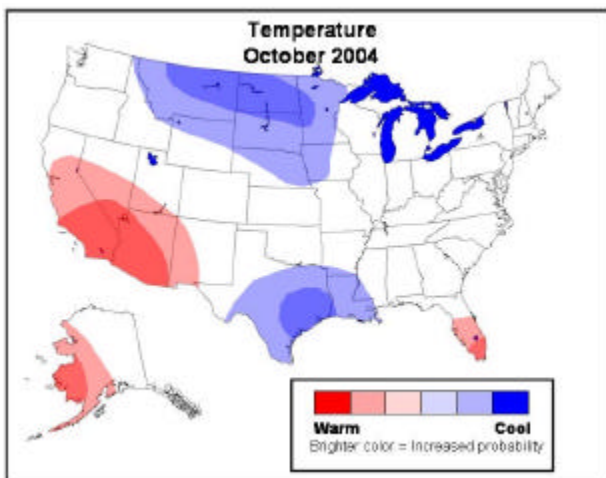


Weather

After one of the warmest and driest summers on record, Alaska's fire season has come to an end with the onset of rain and snow this month. August and September have been very wet in the Pacific Northwest and Idaho with much of the rest of the West receiving enough moisture to greatly diminish fire danger. However, southern California is still quite dry and has a high potential for large fires until the fall rains arrive. Hurricane activity has brought very wet conditions to much of the South and East.



The weather outlook for October is shown below. Southern California should see warmer than normal temperatures and near normal rainfall (which is generally light). Southern California typically sees an increase in Santa Ana wind events in October with a peak in December. While it is difficult to predict the number of Santa Ana wind events during a particular month, southern California should see more offshore flow than usual for October.



Geographic Area Discussions

Alaska: Potential: Normal. Besides setting a fire season record of over 6 million acres burned, Alaska also set a September record with 245,399 acres burned. Normally, about 5,000 acres burn during September. Rain, snow and colder temperatures in mid-September have finally ended the fire season.

Southwest: Potential: Normal. As a result of rather patchy monsoon rains this summer, portions of Arizona had elevated fire danger during the first part of September. However, the remains of Hurricane Javier brought very heavy rainfall to Arizona on September 18-19 and have reduced the potential for large fires through October.

Northern Rockies: Potential: Normal to Above Normal. Fire potential has decreased due to precipitation over the past few weeks. Southeastern Montana has been quite a bit drier than the rest of the Geographic Area. The combination of this dryness, long-term drought and dry fuels has resulted in a greater than average potential for large fires. This large fire potential will be generally limited to those periods preceding a cold front passage when gusty winds and warm, dry weather increase fire danger.

Great Basin: Potential: Normal. The situation in the Great Basin has greatly improved due to a wet August and September in Idaho and heavy rainfall in Utah from Hurricane Javier. Nevada remains the driest part of the Great Basin, but the cooler and shorter days of September along with some light amounts of rain has reduced this area to more normal potential for large fires.

Northwest: Potential: Normal. August and the first three weeks in September have been very wet in the Northwest. The driest portion is in southeast Oregon which may see short periods of elevated fire danger during dry, windy weather.

Northern California: Potential: Normal. Rainfall during September, including over an inch in some areas, has brought most danger indices down to near normal levels. Thus, the potential for large fires has been greatly reduced.

Southern California: Potential: Normal to Above Normal. Rainfall over the month has been very light in most areas with the greatest amounts over the Sierras, along and east of the southern California mountains and over the deserts. Many sites are recording fire danger at or above historic levels. Fire potential is expected to remain high due to critically dry fuels, warmer than average temperatures, more offshore flow than normal and the usual increase in Santa Ana wind events during October.

Rocky Mountain: Potential: Normal. Some portions of western Colorado and Wyoming had high fire danger during the first half of September, but recent rainfall has significantly diminished the wildland fire potential. Most fire danger indices are now at or below normal.

Eastern Area: Potential: Normal to Below Normal. Most of the region south and east of Ohio will have below normal fire potential due to heavy rain, largely from Hurricane Ivan. The driest states are Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois and these areas may see short periods of elevated fire danger during warm, dry and windy weather.

Southern Area: Potential: Normal to Below Normal. Rainfall from recent hurricane activity has left most of the area with very wet conditions. However, southern Louisiana has been rather dry recently and this area will see increased fire danger at times until it receives significant rainfall.

Note: This national outlook and some geographic area assessments are currently available at the NICC and GACC websites. The GACC websites can also be accessed through the NICC webpage at: www.nifc.gov/news/pred_services/Main_page.htm