

Northwest Geographic Area

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

September 28, 2012

Subject: Extremely low fuel moisture and persistent warm and dry weather will contribute to active fire behavior in SE Oregon and portions of south central Oregon.

Discussion: ERC and 1000 hour fuels have reached record values in many areas of southeast Oregon. High fuel loading of fine dead fuels, continuous vertical and horizontal arrangement of the fuel bed and persistent dry weather will continue to support fire spread. Cooler nights, elevated relative humidity and the diminishing threat of lightning episodes have moderated the burn environment however expect energy released from fuels to continue to challenge initial attack resources when attempting direct or frontal attack. The potential for continued active fire behavior is anticipated but the burn period should be shorter in duration due to fuels conditioning and time of season.

Concerns to Firefighters:

- Expect fire behavior that would not be typically observed on emerging incidents with heavy fuels and especially when aligned with wind and/or slope.
- Anticipate modest wind events on emerging incidents to be a contributor to fire spread with elongated flaming fronts, prolific and efficient spotting. Spots will gather quickly and contribute to subsequent growth.
- Don't let the time of year fool you. Active fire behavior is to be expected given extremely low fuel moisture values.
- Timing to reach escape routes will need to be shorter, due to elevated fire intensity and cumulative fatigue of firefighting resources.

Mitigation Measures:

- For IA or ongoing fires make sure to check with local fire resources about **current conditions** of fuels or other specific concerns as some areas vary throughout the area.
- **Situational awareness** is a must to safe firefighting operations, base all action on current and expected fire behavior.
- Firefighters should exercise caution – **size up and engage fires with intention and watch for factors that contribute to changing conditions.**

Area of Concern: Southeast Oregon and portions of southcentral Oregon.