

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

South Central and Central Oregon

July 19, 2021 to August 2, 2021



Subject: Potential for extreme fire behavior exists due to critically low live and dead fuel moistures, very dry conditions from an extended drought and a recent record-breaking heat wave. The combined effects have intensified fire behavior, produced several costly and destructive fires and increased resistance to control significantly.

Discussion: Fires burning in the advisory area have exhibited extreme fire behavior due to critical fuel conditions. Spread rates are difficult to control. The fire behavior threatens firefighter and public safety. The fires do not require windy conditions for active spread. The fires are becoming fuel driven. The intense burning of the fuels is generating rapid rates of spread and spotting. The persistent pattern of poor humidity recovery has produced a highly ignitable fuel bed. Long range spotting, group torching and independent crown fire behavior is occurring frequently.

Difference from normal conditions: In the advisory area indices were in the 90 to 95 % range two to three weeks earlier in the season. Following a June record breaking heat wave, indices climbed to new maximums at several weather stations. The duration and magnitude of the heat wave rapidly lowered fuel moistures. Several stations in the area have not received precipitation for 30 days. Humidities have been below 15% for several consecutive days. Fire behavior observed is being compared to peak August burning conditions seen in very dry years. Initial attack size has been increasing and resultant evacuations are becoming more common due to rapid rates exceeding initial attack capability.

Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:

- Lower humidities, higher temperatures and drier fuels are increasing the burn periods.
- Poor humidity recovery and low 1,000 hr. fuel moistures are generating intense nighttime burning which increases demands on suppression resources and threatens values.
- Spotting distance is moderate to long-range making protection of values more difficult.
- Spot fires are repeatedly causing problems two to three days after initial attack.

Mitigation Measures:

- Anticipate extra resources and measures that may be necessary for initial attack success.
- Anticipate increased spread rates and intensity.
- Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
- Anticipate all fuel types will have a higher resistance to control.
- Suppression actions need to be based on good anchor points, escape routes and safety zones. **Rember LCES**
- Establish trigger points in anticipation of expected fire behavior and adhere to them. **Establish LCES.**

Area of Concern: South Central and Central Oregon Predictive Service Areas NW7, SE portions of NW4, and the SW part of NW6. See the attached map on the following page or [click here](#),

Adjacent Fire Behavior Advisory: The Northwestern Mountains (NC04) and Northeast California (NC06) have issued a fire behavior advisory for areas adjacent to this fuels and fire behavior advisory area. See https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/fuels_fire-danger.htm

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