

North American Seasonal Fire Assessment and Outlook

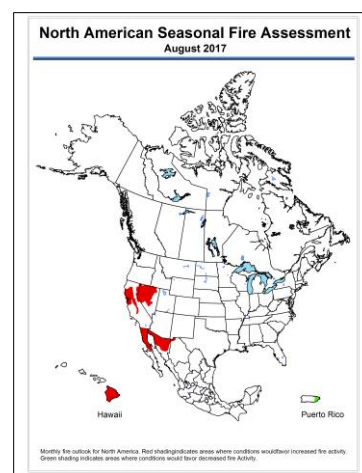
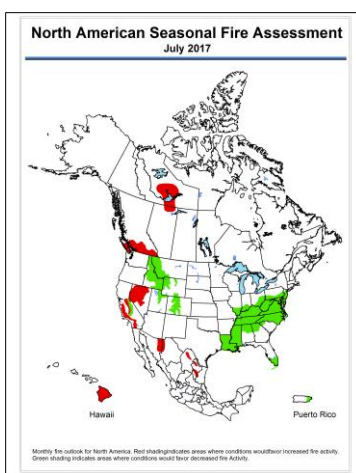
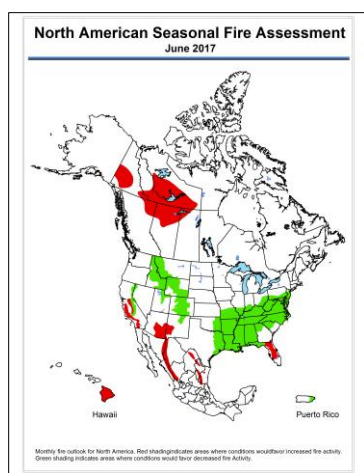
National Interagency Fire Center • Natural Resources Canada • Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
United States Canada Mexico

Outlook Period June, July, and August 2017 Issued 10 June 2017

Executive Summary

A very progressive pattern continued across the United States and Canada with several deep troughs moving across the western states and provinces and closed lows moving through the southern and eastern U.S. At mid-month and again at the end of the month, strong high pressure formed over the western and central U.S. and Canada, bringing very warm and dry conditions for short periods. Above normal precipitation fell across the Rockies from Montana and Idaho northward into British Columbia and Alberta, often as snow in the mountains adding to still very high snowpack. Above normal precipitation fell from southwestern Arizona to the Great Lakes and across much of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River Valley. Drier-than-normal conditions occurred across much of the Great Basin, northern California, New Mexico and West Texas, the northern U.S. Plains, and southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In Mexico, the southern and eastern states received above normal rainfall, mainly from Tropical Storm Adrian in early May, but the western and central states remained dry.

Fire activity will gradually increase as summer conditions take hold across the continent. Northwestern Canada will have elevated potential in parts of Yukon, Northwest Territories, northeastern British Columbia, and northern Alberta. This will gradually decrease in area through July while an increase in potential spreads across far southern British Columbia. By August, normal conditions will return nationwide. In the U.S., elevated potential across the Southwest and southern California in June will gradually migrate northward into western Nevada and northern California. Much of the Southeast and the Rockies will have low potential where spring precipitation or lingering snowpack keep fuels moist through much of the summer. In Mexico, elevated potential will stretch along the Sierra ranges in the north but decreasing in July as monsoon rains arrive. The northwestern corner will become elevated as hot and dry conditions affect heavy grass fuel loads.



Monthly fire outlook for North America for June (left), July (middle), and August 2017 (right). Red shading indicates areas where conditions would favor increased fire activity. Green shading indicates areas where conditions would favor decreased fire activity. *Click on each image to see larger versions.*



National Interagency Fire Center
Predictive Services



Natural Resources Canada
Ressources naturelles Canada



Servicio Meteorológico Nacional

Critical Factors

The critical factors influencing significant fire potential for this outlook period are:

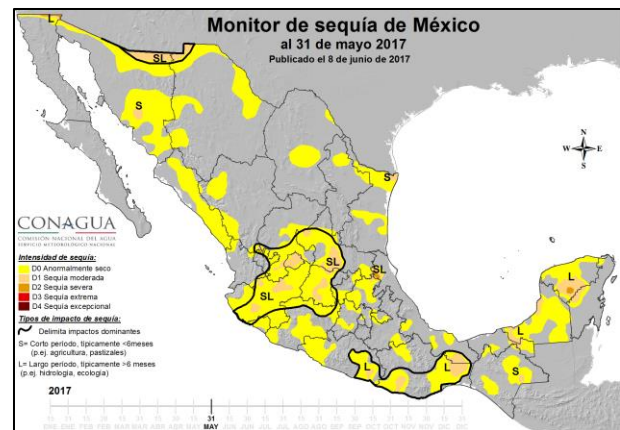
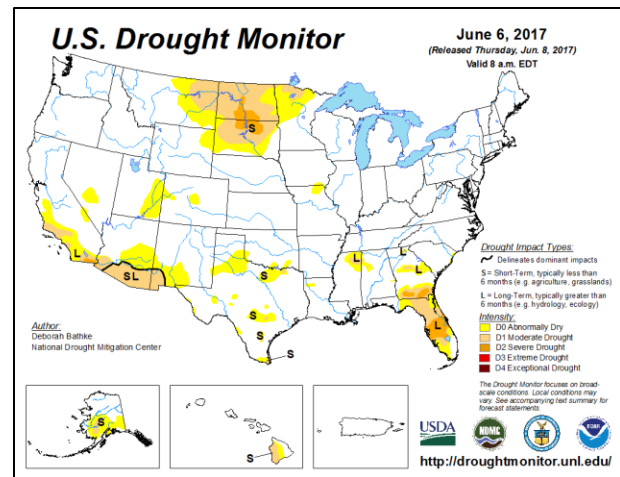
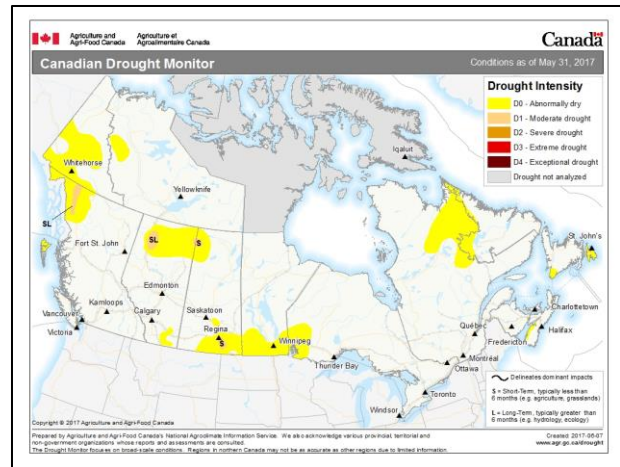
El Niño-Southern Oscillation: Equatorial Pacific sea-surface-temperatures remain slightly above normal. ENSO remains in a neutral state. The latest forecasts continue to indicate this neutral pattern will continue through the northern hemisphere early summer with a trend toward El Niño conditions later in the summer.

Drought: Drought remains sparse across Canada with areas of abnormally dry to moderate drought in parts of northwestern British Columbia, southern Yukon, northern Alberta, southern Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan, and northern Quebec. Dry to moderate drought conditions continue in the far southwestern U.S. along the Mexico border. Recent significant precipitation in the southeastern states reduced drought over most of the region except in southern Georgia and Florida where moderate to severe drought conditions continue. Short-term moderate to severe drought developed in the Dakotas, eastern Montana, and northwestern Minnesota. In Mexico, moderate across the central states with pockets of abnormally dry to moderate drought across the southern and Yucatán states.

Fire Season Status: Wildfire activity across Canada was well below average through May. Fire activity continued at a relatively high level in southern Georgia and Florida early in the month. Several precipitation episodes in the last half of May reduced fire conditions significantly. Dry, windy, and warmer conditions in the Southwest supported an increase in fire activity late in the month. To date, the number of fires is near normal but acres are about twice normal through May, largely driven by early spring large fires in the southern Plains. In Mexico through late May, fire activity was restricted to the southern half of the nation with the most activity around Mexico, D.F.

Canada Discussion

June: A broad zone of high fire danger will spread from the Yukon, through the Northwest Territories, and into northern British Columbia and Alberta because of above average temperatures. Longer-range forecasts suggest that June may be the peak of the season in this region as seasonal temperatures develop later in the summer.



Top: Canadian Drought Monitor for 31 May 2017 (from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada). **Middle:** United States Drought Monitor for 6 June 2017 (from U.S. National Center for Environmental Information). **Bottom:** Mexican Drought Monitor for 31 May 2017 (from CONAGUA-Servicio Meteorológico Nacional).

the peak of the season in this region as seasonal

July: Elevated fire danger conditions will subside across the northwest, remaining high around the Great Slave Lake area of the Northwest Territories where above-average temperatures are expected with a normal precipitation pattern for most of the summer. Fire danger in southern British Columbia will gradually increase to a peak in July due to below-average precipitation. Fire activity will likely subside for the remainder of the summer throughout the rest of Canada.

August: No exceptional fire activity is expected in Canada as cooler, moister conditions prevail over much of the country.

United States Discussion

June/July: Wet conditions across much of the Southeast and extensive snowpack still present at the higher elevations of the Rockies and the Sierra will keep fire activity below normal for most of June and July. Lingering high fire potential will remain in central and northern Florida before subsiding with increasing rainfall potential and normal summer decreases in fire. In the West, high fire potential will continue in southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico where typical summer conditions will be exacerbated by occasional windy conditions associated with a progressive pattern bringing troughs through the region. Abundant fuel loads in lower elevations of southern California raise the fire potential through this period. Potential will increase in northwestern Nevada as fine fuels cure by July. The Big Island of Hawaii will remain in high potential where precipitation deficits and above normal temperatures keep fuels dry and susceptible to ignition and fire spread.

August: High fire potential continues over northwestern Nevada and increases in northern California from the Bay Area northward. Potential in southern California returns to normal. The rest of the nation returns to normal fire activity, especially the Rockies where snowpack will finally be gone but moist conditions will still moderate fire activity. Hawaii remains at elevated potential.

Mexico Discussion

June/July: Precipitation is forecast to increase across the southern and eastern areas of the country as the tropical rain season begins. The western areas will likely be drier than normal as the month progresses. Elevated fire potential is expected over the higher elevations of the Sierra Madre Occidental from Durango and Sinaloa to the U.S. border. Higher elevations of the northeast will also have elevated fire potential from northern Coahuila to San Luis Potosi. By July, the summer rains will spread northward, leaving just a few northeastern ranges in Coahuila and Nuevo León with elevated potential. Most of the Sierra Madre Occidental will return to normal potential except the far northern portion in eastern Sonora.

August: Hot and dry conditions take hold over the far northwestern corner of the country while summer rains spread through the north central and northeastern states. Higher grass fuel loads in the states of Sonora and northern Baja California will support elevated fire potential through the month.

Additional Information

Additional and supplemental information for this outlook can be obtained at:

United States:

National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf

Canada:

Canadian Wildland Fire Information System

<http://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/home>

Mexico:

Servicio Meteorológico Nacional

http://smn.cna.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=156&Itemid=113

Outlook Objective

The North American Seasonal Fire Assessment and Outlook is a general discussion of conditions that will affect the occurrence of wildland fires across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Wildland fire is a natural part of many ecosystems across North America. This document provides a broad assessment of those factors that will contribute to an increase or decrease of seasonal fire activity. The objective is to assist wildland fire managers prepare for the potential variations in a typical fire season. It is not intended as a prediction of where and when wildland fires will occur nor is it intended to suggest any area is safe from the hazards of wildfire.

Acknowledgements

Contributions to this document were made by:

Canada: Kerry Anderson, Natural Resources Canada
Richard Carr, Natural Resources Canada

United States: Ed Delgado, Predictive Services, Bureau of Land Management
Jeremy Sullens, Predictive Services, USDA Forest Service

Mexico: Martín Ibarra, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional
Dario Rodríguez, Servicio Meteorológico Nacional