

Valley if the forecast of warmer and drier than average conditions come to fruition. Above average potential may develop over parts of the Mississippi Valley later this winter into the early spring fire season.

Southern Area: Below Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected throughout the outlook period except in areas shown on the maps above where Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected.

A colder and mostly wetter than average outlook period is expected for the region. The expected development, strength, and location of a persistent atmospheric blocking pattern across Alaska and Canada will provide clues for the degree of cooling the region will see. Some snowfall is possible in the Deep South. To the south, a strong Atlantic high pressure system will likely continue to reduce the quantity and frequency of rainfall across Florida. That said, a higher trending humidity environment and some rain activity is still expected which will limit the fire potential. A drier than average pattern may develop from the Ohio Valley southwest into Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. In late winter, drying this could elevate fire potential for Oklahoma and Texas. On the island of Puerto Rico, a drying trend will usher in the dry season beginning in January. Excessive drying occurring at this time could be a fuel loading issue given the rather wet conditions of summer and fall.

With the exception of Florida, soil moisture, precipitation, and stream flows are all above to well above the average and fuels remain extremely moist (18 to 25% plus). Most of the region is drought-free. A very small area of long term drought is shown in far northeast Oklahoma. Abnormally dry conditions are present across southern Florida.

Outlook Objectives

The National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook is intended as a decision support tool for wildland fire managers, providing an assessment of current weather and fuels conditions and how these will evolve in the next four months. The objective is to assist fire managers in making proactive decisions that will improve protection of life, property and natural resources, increase firefighter safety and effectiveness, and reduce firefighting costs.

For questions about this outlook, please contact the National Interagency Fire Center at (208) 387-5050 or contact your local Geographic Area Predictive Services unit.

Note: Additional Geographic Area assessments may be available at the specific GACC websites. The GACC websites can also be accessed through the NICC webpage at <http://www.fire.gov/nicc/predictive/outlooks/outlooks.htm>

