

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

The Entire Great Basin

Valid October 9th – October 23rd, 2024

Subject: Above Normal heat and dryness from mid-September onwards have rapidly dried out both live and dead fuels across the entire region. Fuels which were already at critical levels for most of the summer received only a few days of moistening rainfall, before the current 3-week drying trend pushed fuels in most areas back to critical levels, and in many cases to record levels. Extreme Fire Behavior is now being observed on both existing fires, as well as new and emerging fires across much of the Great Basin.

Discussion: The following conditions are being experienced/observed:

- Overall dryness the past few months has introduced “**Moderate Drought**” to parts of Idaho, and southern areas of Nevada and the Arizona Strip and severe drought to western Wyoming.
- The short-term dryness of the past few weeks has pushed the “**Flash Drought**” indices towards their highest levels across Wyoming and large areas of Idaho, Nevada, Utah and the Arizona Strip.
- Above normal fine fuel loading continues across southern Idaho, and northern Nevada and Utah.
- Live fuel moisture values (sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, gambles oak, mixed conifer) are still well below critical levels, correlating with High to Extreme fire behavior and will continue falling the next 2 weeks.
- October is the windiest time of year, and there have been at least 1-2 strong dry wind events every week, the past month, combining with the near record dry fuels to produce Extreme Fire Behavior.

Difference from Normal Conditions: Live and dead fuel moistures levels are much drier than mid-October normals, near or above mid-summer normals, and setting new records in many cases. The unseasonably warm, dry weather will continue this trend thru the next week or two. High elevation dead & down is extremely dry and contributing to continued large fire growth in timbered higher elevations. In middle to lower elevations sagebrush fuel moisture continues below normal. Above normal fine fuel loading in southern Idaho into northern areas of Nevada and Utah continues to be a significant departure from normal conditions, and when combined with fully cured grasses and critically dry live fuel moisture levels in the brush, can quickly contribute to explosive growth of any new and existing fires during strong wind events.

Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:

- Anticipate flashy fine fuels and sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, gamble oak and mixed conifer to ignite easily and exhibit **advanced rates of spread, elongated flaming fronts and increasing fire brands; expect more long-range spotting, even in absence of slope and wind. You can't out run it!**
- Anticipate dust devils and fire whirls to develop in warm, dry and unstable conditions, especially in fine flashy fuels, that may jeopardize control lines and contribute to erratic fire behavior.
- Expect longer burn periods at mid to higher elevations.
- Fine fuel loadings in some areas are dense and continuous and will support extreme rates of spread.
- Expect regular weekly episodes of strong/dry large scale wind events.

Mitigation Measures:

- Modify tactics to account for potential high rapid rates of spread and high resistance to control.
- Communicate retardant drop effectiveness and modify as necessary; higher coverage levels or altered tactics may be required.
- Park all vehicles in clean, cold black; avoid driving or parking in unburned fuels.
- Ensure solid anchor points – keep one foot in the black.
- Constantly re-evaluate LCES – Lookouts – Communications – Escape Routes – Safety Zones.
- Consult the latest weather and fire danger information at <http://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/>

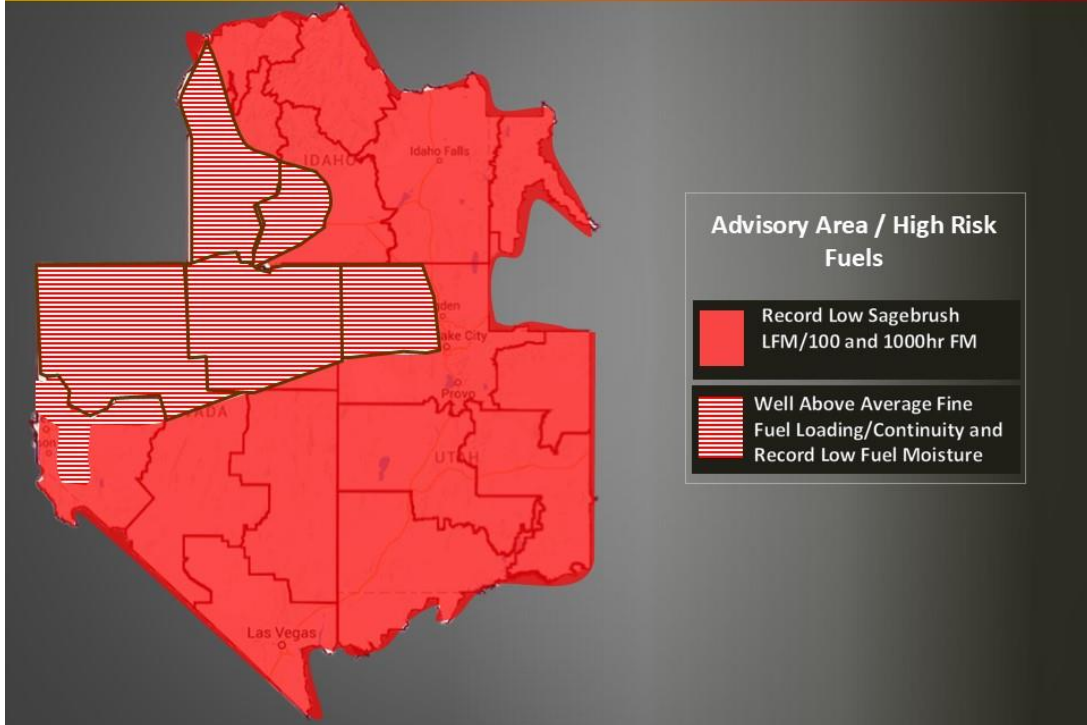
Area of Concern: All areas of the Great Basin.

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ERC Percentile Point Map

