Texas Fire Potential Update
October 19th-October 25th, 2020
Predictive Services Department
Fire Potential Notes

• Initial attack potential will be low to moderate across the far Western Plains and east into the Cross Timbers where underlying drought and dry fuel is observed. Significant fire potential will remain low across the state through next weekend.

• Initial attack fire activity has increased east into the Rolling Plains and Cross Timbers where emerging drought is expanding.

• Little to no rain is forecast for much of state through next weekend. Drought conditions will continue to expand and deepen.

• The fire environment will be warm and humid for most of the state this week before a cold front moves south Friday. A brief period of elevated fire weather is possible in the far Western Plains Thursday afternoon.

• Drying potential will remain low statewide through the weekend due to increased surface moisture.
Reported initial attack fire activity increased across parts of the Rolling Plains and Cross Timbers due to emerging drought and transition grasses appearing on the landscape. Low resistance to control has been reported with these initial attack fires.
A few showers occurred in South Texas and along the Gulf Coast the past 7-days while the rest of the state has seen no rain in the past week.

Outside of rainfall from Hurricane Delta in Southeast Texas on October 9th, little to no rainfall has been observed across the state over the past 14 days.
Emerging drought is increasing in scale across the state where 25% or less than normal rainfall deficits are observed over the past 30-days. Emerging drought is causing herbaceous fuels to lose greenness and producing an increase of transition grasses that are supporting fire ignitions in the Rolling Plains and Cross Timbers.

The greatest underlying risk for fire occurrence remains in the Western Plains due to persistent drought where 25% or less than normal rainfall deficits overlap during the past 30 and 60 days. Drought cured grasses are generally present where rainfall deficits overlap. Some freezing temperatures were observed for several hours the morning of October 16th in the northwest High Plains. Locations where freezing temperatures persisted for several hours will increase the amount of cured grasses on the landscape.
Mostly Dry Forecast Statewide the Next 7-Days

Seven Day Rainfall Forecast thru Sunday

A few showers are possible Monday afternoon over East Texas ahead of a frontal boundary followed by dry weather statewide mid-week. A series of frontal passages Friday and late Sunday may trigger scattered light showers from the Rolling Plains to North and Central TX.
Several cold fronts will impact the state Monday, Friday, and possibly Sunday. These cold fronts will not produce much rainfall and provide the greatest temperature decrease to the northern half of the state. No widespread freezing temperatures are forecast with the passage of these cold fronts through next Sunday. Between frontal passages, temperatures will increase to above normal with increased surface moisture.
Dry to critically dry fuel is observed in the Western Plains and into parts of the Rolling Plains. Increasing surface moisture this week will add moisture into dead surface fuels and decrease the coverage of dry to critically dry fuel. Initial attack potential will remain low to moderate this week where dry fuel is present in the Western Plains and east into the Cross Timbers. Initial attack potential will be low for the rest of the state. Significant fire potential will also remain low statewide this week.
Temperatures will rebound back to above normal for most the state by Tuesday and remain above normal through Thursday before a cold front moves south into the state Friday. Southeasterly winds will increase Gulf of Mexico surface moisture inland producing higher daytime relative humidity values and very good overnight relative humidity recoveries. Increased surface moisture will offset the above normal temperatures keeping drying potential low across most of the state.
10 of the 14 PSA are above normal with the High Plains PSA at the 90th percentile. Drying potential will remain low this week with the increased surface moisture across most of the state. ERC values may decrease slightly this week in most PSA, but remain near or above normal without widespread rainfall.
ERC values are currently well above normal in the Rolling Plains PSA after last week’s drying. A slight decrease has been observed after the passage of a cold front Sunday that produce near normal temperatures and increased relative humidity. Drying potential will be low this week, but ERC values will likely remain above normal without widespread rainfall.
Pre-frontal conditions may produce a brief period of elevated fire weather in the far Western Plains on Thursday due to above normal temperatures, RH values below 20%, and winds above 15 mph. Initial attack potential will be low to moderate due to the elevated fire weather, dry fuel, and cured grasses present. Initial attack potential may also be low to moderate in the Rolling Plains and Cross Timbers where transition grasses are present and increased wind speeds are forecast.
Temperatures are forecast to rebound this weekend before a cold front enters into the state late Sunday. There is uncertainty of the timing of the frontal passage late Sunday and any potential development of pre-frontal elevated fire weather conditions.