Texas Fire Potential Update

November 21st – November 27th 2022

Texas A&M Forest Service Predictive Services
Herbaceous fuel is likely freeze cured in the High Plains, Rolling Plains, Southern Plains and portions of the Trans Pecos, Cross Timbers, Hill Country, North Texas, and Northeast Texas from hard freezes observed in mid-November. Freeze cured herbaceous fuel is the catalyst for the dormant fire season, requiring less drying and moderate fire weather for initial attack fire activity to occur.

Near normal temperatures are forecast for the Panhandle Monday through Wednesday before a cold front moves through the region. Forecast post-frontal wind speeds near 25 MPH on Thursday will result in low initial attack potential where freeze cured grasses are present on the landscape.

There is some uncertainty in the forecast regarding rainfall amounts Friday through Saturday however, drying potential will be limited statewide through the weekend. ERC values will remain near or below seasonal averages. Above normal fuel moisture and the absence of widespread elevated to critical fire weather will result in low to no initial attack potential across the rest of the state through the weekend.
Initial attack activity in November has been low with Texas A&M Forest Service only responding to 5 initial attack fires. Low initial attack potential is forecast to continue across the state through the weekend with above normal fuel moistures and the absence of widespread elevated to critical fire weather.
Rainfall frequency over the past 14 days has been highest across the eastern half of Texas due to several cold front passages. Little to no precipitation has been observed for much of the Western Plains of Texas over the past 2 weeks. There remains some uncertainty in the forecast regarding potential rainfall in the western plains Thursday through Saturday this week.
Herbaceous fuel is likely dormant in the High Plains, Rolling Plains, Southern Plains and portions of the Trans Pecos, Cross Timbers, Hill Country, North Texas, and Northeast Texas from hard freezes observed in mid-November. Freeze cured herbaceous fuel is the catalyst for the dormant fire season, requiring less drying and moderate fire weather for initial attack fire activity to occur.
A cold front is forecast to move through the state Wednesday and Thursday. Post-frontal wind speeds near 25 MPH combined with temperatures in the to mid 50’s and RH values above 25% are forecast for the High Plains on Thursday resulting in low initial attack potential where freeze cured grasses are present.
Additional rainfall associated with the cold front is forecast for the eastern half of Texas on Thursday reinforcing the above normal fuel dryness forecast for the first half of the week. The above normal fuel dryness will provide a barrier to most wildfire ignitions and spread resulting in low to no initial attack potential for the eastern half of the state through the weekend.
There remains some uncertainty in the forecast regarding the potential development of an upper level low and associated rainfall for the western half of the state Thursday through Saturday. Current forecasts indicate the western plains should remain dry, but there is potential for more rainfall to occur if a cut off low develops late in the week. Any additional rainfall received will further improve current fuel moistures resulting in low to no initial attack potential.
Drying potential is forecast to be limited across the state through the weekend. ERC values are expected to trend near or below seasonal averages. ERC trends in grass dominant regions such as the High Plains and Rolling Plains are below seasonal averages, a significant improvement compared to 2021 where ERC values were trending near the 90th percentile at this time 1 year ago.