Texas Fire Potential Update

October 16th – October 22nd 2023

Texas A&M Forest Service Predictive Services
Fire Potential Notes October 16th-October 22nd, 2023

- Drought cured grasses are present in portions of the central High Plains and upper Rolling Plains. These drought cured grasses will support low potential for small wildfires Tuesday as pre-frontal wind speeds increase. Near normal fuel moisture will not support any significant fire potential. Any wildfires that occur in cured grasses will have low to moderate resistance to control.

- Warming temperatures and dry conditions will promote moderate drying in dead surface fuel in Central and East Texas Monday through Wednesday. Expect low potential for small wildfires with low resistance to control.

- Localized pockets of dry fuel are expected to develop or persist in Central and East Texas through the weekend. Increased wind speeds associated with a cold front passage Thursday through Saturday combined with above normal temperatures should support moderate potential for small wildfires in Central and East Texas with low resistance to control.
Several wildfires with low to moderate resistance to control occurred in drought cured grasses in the central High Plains last week when exposed to elevated and critical fire weather. Cool, breezy post-frontal conditions did support some small wildfire activity in East Texas PSAs this past weekend as show by this 1.5 acre fire in Rusk County Sunday the 15th.

Photo submitted by Darin Vaughn
Remnant moisture from Hurricane Lidia produced light to moderate rainfall amounts in South Texas last week with decreasing amounts into Southeast Texas. Most of Texas experienced dry conditions the past 7 days. Most of the rainfall over the past 14 days occurred between October 3rd-6th.
Drought cured grasses are present in the central High Plains and upper Rolling Plains. The 60 day percent of normal rainfall map combined with recent observations highlight where drought cured grasses have been identified.

Recent photos submitted by Fire Analyst Ryan Burns show grasses in transition in the northern High Plains as depicted from observations in Hemphill County with some greenness in the grass profiles near regions with rainfall surpluses.

Rainfall deficits of less than 50 percent of normal rainfall are showing drought cured grasses as represented by Armstrong County.
A weak cold front is expected to progress through Texas Wednesday through Friday. Little to no rainfall is forecast with this cold front passage. Wind speeds are forecast to increase surrounding this cold front passage, but no widespread critical fire weather is expected.
A warming trend is forecast to begin Tuesday and persist through the weekend. Warming temperatures combined with dry conditions will promote moderate drying in surface fuel and support low potential for small wildfires in Central and East Texas Monday through Wednesday.
Despite increasing maximum temperatures and dry conditions, no critically dry fuel is expected to develop through the weekend. The lack of critically dry fuel and critical fire weather will not produce significant fire potential through the outlook period. Localized pockets of dry fuel are expected to emerge in East Texas Thursday and persist through the weekend in the area outlined in red and can support moderate potential for small wildfires.
Pre-frontal conditions are expected to develop in the High Plains and Rolling Plains Tuesday. Drought cured grasses will support low potential for small wildfire activity in the central High Plains and upper Rolling Plains.
As the cold front progresses southeast Thursday, pre-frontal winds combined with above normal temperatures are expected in Central and East Texas. Localized pockets of dry fuel will support moderate potential for small wildfires.
Post-frontal conditions are expected Friday for the majority of Texas. Wind speeds of 10-15 mph will be focused in East Texas with relative humidity near 30%. Little cooling is expected behind this cold front passage with temperatures in the 80’s. Dry fuel will support moderate potential for small wildfires in East and Central Texas Friday.
Temperatures are expected to range from 5-15 degrees above normal this weekend with no rainfall expected.
Energy release component (ERC) trends indicate moderate drying potential across the state through the weekend. No Predictive service area ERC is expected to approach the 90th percentile over the next 7 days, an indication that the potential for a large or significant fire will remain limited.
Post-frontal conditions are forecast to linger Saturday in Central and East Texas with wind speeds near 10 mph coupled with warm and dry conditions. Moderate potential for small wildfires will continue in dry fuel beds.
By Sunday, winds are forecast to become southerly and will slowly increase gulf moisture inland. Dry surface fuel in East and Central Texas will continue to support moderate potential for small wildfires with low resistance to control.