

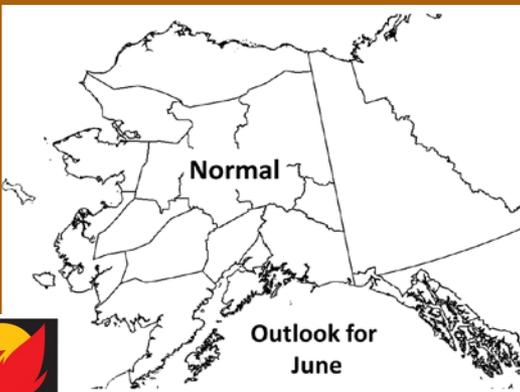
Alaska Monthly Fire Potential Outlook

Forecast:

- Alaska is transitioning into fire season with a forecast of above normal potential expected for April and May, with a return to normal for June and July. As snow retreats in the southernmost parts of the state, human-caused fires will begin in early April, spreading into central and northern Alaska by the end of April and early May. By late May, most of the state will be snow-free, and fire activity will be on the rise, reaching its peak with more lightning starts around the summer solstice.

Factors:

- The U.S. Drought Monitor shows an area of Abnormally Dry in the northern Panhandle and severe drought in the southern. This drought has held since last summer, and will continue, based on long range forecasts. The remainder of the state shows as normal, though overall snowpack is not very deep anywhere except the south slopes of the Brooks Range and northern Interior. North of the Alaska Range from Delta to Tok is particularly windblown this year, with very little snow.
- CPC outlook maps indicate warmer than normal conditions for Alaska this spring and summer. This year, the ice edge is farther north than normal and southerly flow patterns are prevailing, so it's very likely that the already low snowpack will melt quickly, up to a month earlier than normal in some areas.
- Precipitation forecasts have notoriously little skill in Alaska, but all long range forecasts are indicating the likelihood for higher than normal precipitation.



- As parts of the state become snow free, Calculations of the CFFDRS will start. Increasing temperatures will thaw the ground, allowing fuels to start drying. Though ignitions are unlikely for the first few weeks, fuels in parts of southern AK will probably be burnable by mid-April.