

Alaska Monthly Fire Potential Outlook

Forecast:

- Alaska is transitioning into fire season with a forecast of above normal potential along the main road corridors for the month of May, with a return to normal for June through August. As snow retreats in the southern parts of the state, human-caused fires will pop up in early to mid-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 (D0) in the northern Panhandle and severe drought (D2) in the southern Panhandle. This drought has held steady since last summer, and is expected to continue based on long range forecasts. The remainder of the state shows as normal on drought products, though snowpack was low for many areas. This spring has proven to be a see-saw of precipitation versus melting. Though much of the southern two thirds of the state has been snow-free at some point, late season snowfall has kept fuels wet and cool.
- CPC outlook maps indicate warmer than normal conditions for Alaska this spring and summer.
- Precipitation forecasts have notoriously little skill in Alaska, but all long range forecasts are indicating the likelihood for higher than normal precipitation.



- ▶ Though calculations of CFFDRS have started, many areas are teetering between snow free and periodic new snowfall. Thawing in some areas has allowed drying of fuels. Though ignitions are unlikely at this point, fuels in the driest areas will be burnable by the second week of May.