

Alaska Monthly Fire Potential Outlook

Forecast:

- Alaska's Interior was covered by a deeper than normal snowpack in April. The snowpack melted almost completely in May and helped to make May a below-average month for wildfire behavior in Alaska. A weak El Nino is expected this summer, which suggests only a 20% chance of a highly active wildfire season in 2020.

Factors:

- The Drought Monitor shows normal conditions over all of Alaska. There had been some drought issues in South Central Alaska as well as in the Southeast Panhandle last year, but the precipitation over the winter and into April helped to mitigate those issues.
- Early season fires during the 2020 season in Alaska have been limited to wind-driven grass fires confined to the surface. But as June progresses, drying and warming will work its way downward into the duff layer, and the grass fire regime will eventually give way to fires that burn deeper and can be carried by the sub-surface layers.



- At the end of May, the majority of the burnable terrain in Alaska has undergone green-up. Surface fuels have been cleared of snow, and drying is beginning to descend into the duff layers. Thunderstorm season typically begins in June, and fires started by lightning are expected.