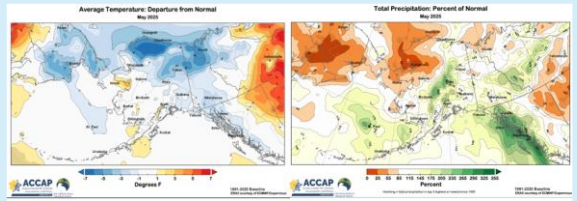
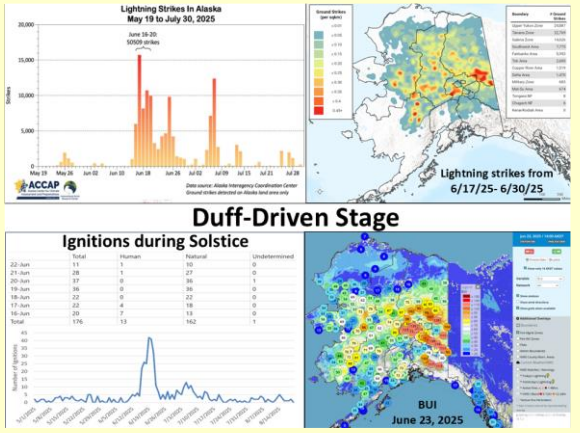
Alaska's 2025 Fire Potential Outlook

Updated: 9/19/2025

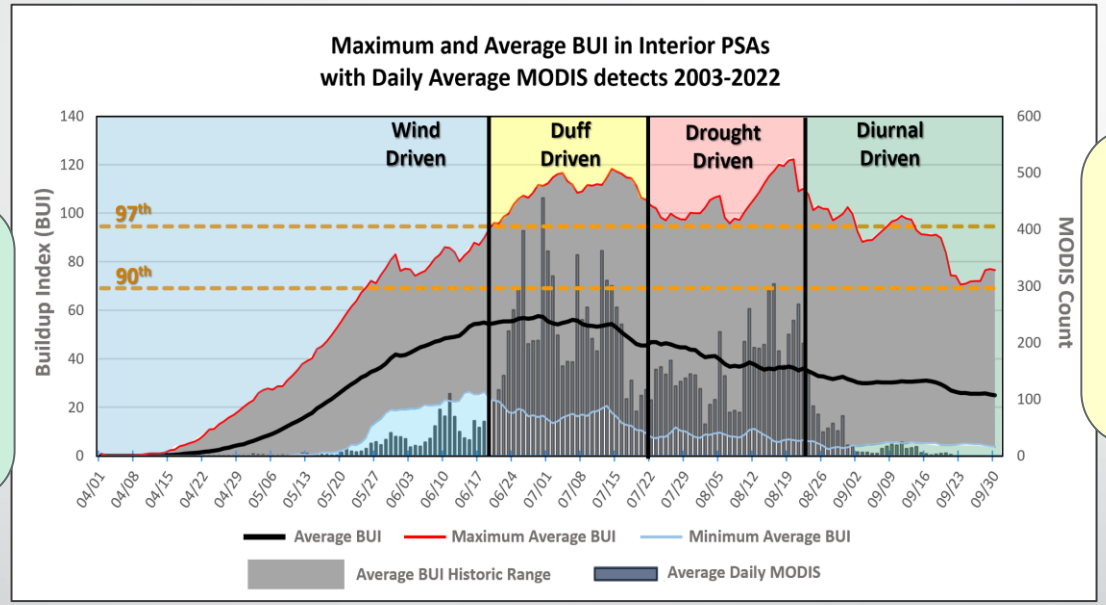


Snowmelt – Mid June

Despite a below normal snowpack in the south, a cool, damp spring kept moderated conditions for most of the state into early June. The second week of June saw a rapid warm up with low humidities, as the season began moving into the Duff-Driven Stage very rapidly. Click for details.

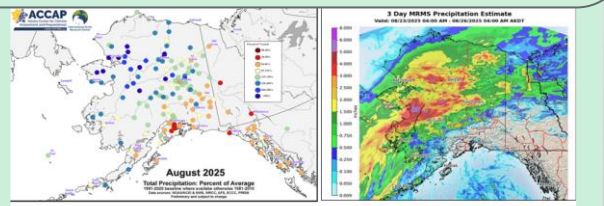


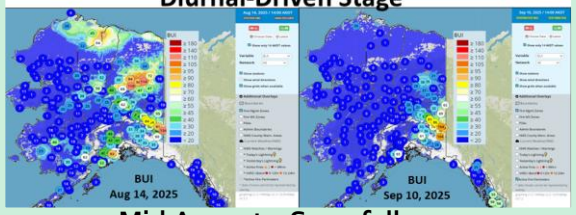
Mid June – Mid July



End of season rains ceased fire activity throughout most of the state. However, the Upper Tanana Valley remains mostly dry, and though some rains are expected, fires will likely smolder there until the snow flies. Click for details.

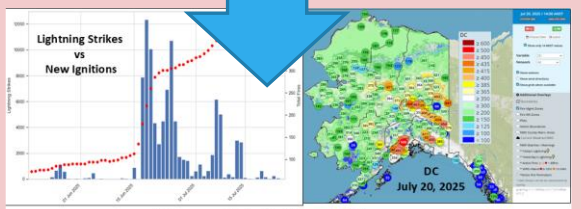
Hot and dry weather in June dried surface and duff fuels, making them receptive for numerous lightning ignitions over the Interior. With little rain, fire activity remained very high through most of July. Click for details.





Mid August – Snowfall

Several large rain events began bringing moisture into the duff layers. This gradually lowered ignition potential and then resistance to control. Fire activity slowly decreased and mopup and demobilization occurred on most fires. Click for details.



Mid July – Mid August

Wind-Driven Season

Snowmelt - Mid June

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- Summary: Despite anticipation of a busy early season, a very cool and wet spring kept surface fuels damp into early June. A drastic pattern change led to a rapid warmup the second week of June, and Alaska began fire season in earnest about a week later, rapidly moving into the duff-driven stage.
- Weather: Cool and damp weather in March, April, and May prevented fuels from beginning a cumulative drying trend until a week into June. Northern Alaska stayed one to seven degrees colder than normal through May, while the Interior and South Central had many areas with more than double the normal amount of rainfall. One week into June, the weather drastically changed, with temperatures soaring into the 80s and RHs dropping into the teens. This pattern has held with the approach of solstice as Alaska moves into the next stage of the fire season.
- Fuel Conditions: Though fine fuels quickly moved into the Very High and Extreme categories in mid-June with a few days of dry heat, it has taken a bit longer for the upper and mid duff layers to become burnable. The area of earliest concern has been the Tanana Valley, particularly the area from Manley to Salcha, where DMC and BUI both show those duff layers will support larger fire behavior. Other parts of the state are slower to follow but are now moving into the burnable phase as well. AKFF has the latest fire weather indices.

Duff-Driven Season

Mid June - Mid July

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- Summary: The heart of fire season brought hot and dry weather with many lightning events across the state, leading to many new ignitions and rapid fire growth. By mid-June, activity and resistance to control was high, and resources were needed from out of state.
- Weather: Hot and dry weather dominated much of the state throughout June and the first half of July, with instability leading to many days that saw thousands of lightning strikes. Approximately 240 lightning ignitions, mainly across the Interior, were observed by the end of July. Season slowing rains came to the Interior the second week of July, and to the west by mid-month. These rain events allowed resources to better manage fire progression, but did not stop fires from growing during hot and dry spells.
- Fuel Conditions: Drought Code by the third week of July indicates that many areas have very dry deep duff layers, indicating extinguishment is difficult. At the same time, Duff Moisture Code shows that upper and mid duff layers have received some rain to dampen the upper fuels, making control measures effective in steering fire growth. Together, these indicate that the fire season is entering the Drought-Driven stage.

Cumulative Drought Season

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Mid July – Mid August

- Summary: As wetter weather began to appear in the latter half of July, fire activity slowed down. The eastern half of the Interior held on to drier conditions, but fire growth was mainly found in fires burning in Limited Management areas as suppression efforts were aided by the increasing moisture. Lightning decreased enough to no longer be a major factor in new ignitions.

- Weather: Mid to late July had episodes of rain wash across most of the state at times. By the second week of August, a series of very wet storms fed by atmospheric rivers, began to surge across the west coast, western and central Interior, and finally into South Central, dousing the grpimd The eastern Interior remained drier, and thunderstorms became few and far between. Temperatures were still warm at times, though RHs were damper despite the warm days.

- Fuel Conditions: Upon entering the Drought Season, BUI indicated dry fuels around much of Alaska. By early August, heavy rain had decreased Buildup Indices across most areas, the exceptions being the Yukon Flats, the Tanana Valley east of Dot Lake, and a few areas on the Kenai. This left the only significant fire potential in the southeast Interior, particularly along the Upper Tanana Valley, though Copper River Basin also stayed quite dry.

Diurnal-Driven Season

Mid August - September

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- Summary: As end-of season rains moved in from the west, most fires were declared out or moved into monitor status. The exception is the southeast Interior, particularly the Upper Tanana Valley east of Dot Lake. There are a few existing fires that continue to smolder, while new ignitions occur, but are quickly caught. This trend is likely to continue until snowfall.
- Weather: Weather in late August and early September has continued to be wet in the west and very dry in the east (including the Panhandle!), but a pattern shift beginning mid-September will start to increase chances of wetting rains in the east. Temperatures are decreasing, and some areas are seeing below freezing conditions at times. Relative humidities are too high to support burning other than days with strong winds in areas of downslope effects (generally the Upper Tanana Valley).
- Fuel Conditions: By late August, all but a few rogue stations had significantly lowered Buildup Indices, indicating that resistance to control had plummeted and fires could be easily contained. Human-caused fires continue to pop up in many of the populated corridors on dry days but are quickly caught. Though the rain forecasted for the Upper Tanana Valley will help reduce concerns there, drier duff will continue to be burnable until heavy rain or snowfall arrives.