

Alaska Monthly Fire Potential Outlook

Forecast:

- The forecast for Alaska calls for normal wildfire behavior from October through January. The fire season is basically over, with no fire activity expected through the winter months. The exception may be some small surface fires in fine fuels which could occur before snowpack sets in, or in windblown, snow-free areas later in winter.

Factors:

- The Climate Prediction Center forecasts high likelihood of above normal temperatures in western/northern Alaska this winter due to the decrease in sea ice along coastal areas. The signal for precipitation is less clear but suggests higher precipitation along Alaska's Arctic and western coasts. But this has little impact on fire potential as snowpack sets up.
- The winter's permanent snowpack is typically established over the burnable elevations of Alaska's Interior in mid-October, and across much of southern Alaska in early November. This effectively ends the wildfire season for Alaska.

- Much of Alaska is ending the 2020 wildfire season with moist surface and mid layer fuels; thus any wildfires in October will be confined to surface spread after a few days of drying and will be quickly contained. A few areas have dry deep duff layers, but these will likely recharge from the snowpack during the spring melt.

