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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 22-117
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD
500 PM EST Wed Dec 14 2022

To: Subscribers:
 -NOAA Weather Wire Service
 -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network
 -NOAAPort
 Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From: Mary Mullusky, Chief
 Forecast Services Division

Subject: Changes to Fire Forecast Zones for WFO Gray and WFO Caribou, ME:
Effective March 8, 2023

On or about Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 04:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), 2100 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS Weather Forecast Offices in Gray, Maine (GYX) and Caribou, Maine (CAR) will change Fire Weather Forecast Zones encompassing the entire state of Maine. After this change, fire weather forecasts and related products will use the new zone numbers and names shown below.

If March 8, 2023 is declared a Critical Weather Day, this implementation will be postponed to March 9, 2023 at 2100 UTC.

These changes are intended to provide increased flexibility and improved accuracy of forecast, watch and warning products in the fire weather program. These changes will result in an alignment of land agency fire danger rating areas and fire weather forecast zones. This aligning will better connect fire danger rating outputs with our fire weather forecast products for our government partners, media partners and the general public.

The current 33 fire weather zones across the state of Maine will be converted and consolidated down to 14 fire weather zones. The new zones are as follows:

Table 1: Universal Geographic Codes (UGCs): New Fire Weather Zone
Forecast Names

MEZ101: Quebec-Maine Borderlands
MEZ102: North Woods and St. John Valley
MEZ103: Eastern Aroostook
MEZ104: Western Maine Mountains & Foothills
MEZ105: Central Highlands
MEZ106: Central Maine North of Bangor
MEZ107: Kennebec River Valley
MEZ108: Interior Downeast
MEZ109: Lakes Region
MEZ110: Beaches and Casco Bay

MEZ111: Mid-Coast
 MEZ112: Coastal Downeast
 MEZ113: Bangor Region
 MEZ114: Eastern Penobscot Bay Coast

Table 2: Universal Geographic Codes (UGCs): Current Fire Zone Forecast Name

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MEZ001: Northwest Aroostook County
MEZ002: Northeast Aroostook County
MEZ003: Northern Somerset County
MEZ004: Northern Piscataquis County
MEZ005: Northern Penobscot County
MEZ006: Southeast Aroostook County
MEZ007: Northern Oxford County
MEZ008: Northern Franklin County
MEZ009: Central Somerset County
MEZ010: Central Piscataquis County
MEZ011: Central Penobscot County
MEZ012: Southern Oxford County
MEZ013: Southern Franklin County
MEZ014: Southern Somerset County
MEZ015: Southern Penobscot County
MEZ016: Interior Hancock County
MEZ017: Central Washington County
MEZ018: Interior York County
MEZ019: Interior Cumberland County
MEZ020: Androscoggin County
MEZ021: Kennebec County
MEZ022: Interior Waldo County
MEZ023: Coastal York County
MEZ024: Coastal Cumberland County
MEZ025: Sagadahoc County
MEZ026: Lincoln County
MEZ027: Knox County
MEZ028: Coastal Waldo County
MEZ029: Coastal Hancock County
MEZ030: Coastal Washington County
MEZ031: Southern Piscataquis County
MEZ032: Northern Washington County
MEZ033: Interior Cumberland Highlands
  
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Table 3: NWS Products Affected by the WFO NWS Gray, ME and Caribou, ME Fire Zone Changes

AWIPS ID	WMO Heading	Product Name
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FWFGYX	FNUS51 KGYX	Fire Weather Forecast
RFWGYX	WWUS81 KGYX	Fire Weather Watch
RFWGYX	WWUS81 KGYX	Red Flag Warning
FWFCAR	FNUS51 KCAR	Fire Weather Forecast
RFWCAR	WWUS81 KCAR	Fire Weather Watch
RFWCAR	WWUS81 KCAR	Red Flag Warning

NWS partners and users should take the appropriate action to ensure systems recognize the new UGC (Z) and new zone alignments and names.

Preliminary shapefiles for public and fire weather forecast zones are available online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/gis/FireZones>
<https://www.weather.gov/gis/Counties>

Final versions of these shapefiles will be available on January 17, 2023.

A graphical depiction of this change is online at:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f653136a6a8e40ca9949efeaae26e46d>

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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