



The Inland Northwest Informer

Information For Storm Spotters, Cooperative Observers And Everyone

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Spring/Summer 2018 - Volume 22

Severe Wind Storm of February 17, 2018

By Zaaron Allen, Science and Operations Officer

Early in the morning of February 17, 2018, a strong cold frontal boundary moved onshore coastal Washington and Oregon. As the day progressed, the cold front continued to move eastwards, crossing the Cascade crest into eastern Washington during the afternoon hours. Figure 1 shows the late afternoon position of the cold front.

The potential for high winds was initially highlighted on Thursday February 15th, with a Wind Advisory issued for the eastern Columbia River Gorge early Friday February 16th for Saturday afternoon and evening. As the system strengthened further, wind advisories were extended to include all lower elevations locations. By late Friday evening, wind advisories were upgraded to High Wind Warnings for

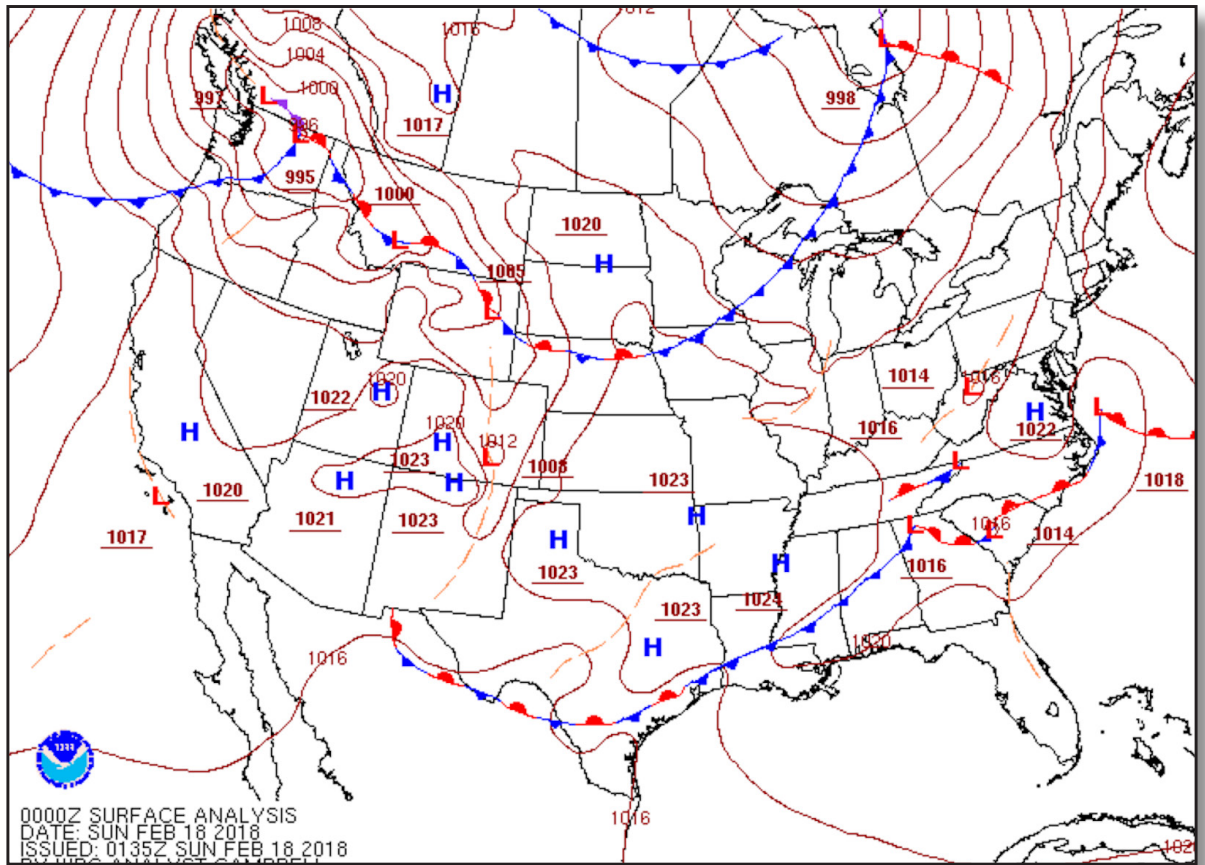


Figure 1. Surface pressure/frontal analysis at 4 PM Saturday February 17, 2018.

the eastern Columbia River Gorge. By early Saturday February 17th, High Wind Warnings were issued for all of eastern Oregon and Washington.

The windstorm began across the

region early Saturday afternoon, with the event continuing through the late afternoon hours. Figure 2, on the following page, is a table of the most significant wind reports, with an event maximum wind gust of 90 mph near Mikkalo in Gilliam County Oregon. ❖

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Banner Image by: T.W. Earle

Time (PST)	Max Wind Speed (MPH)	City/Town	County
1258 PM	62	11 mi. south Celilo	Wasco
127 PM	90	13 mi. west-southwest Mikkalo	Gilliam
131 PM	68	Near Maryhill	Sherman
140 PM	68	4 mi. northwest West Richland	Benton
154 PM	60	Near lone	Morrow
157 PM	70	Near Sisters	Deschutes
200 PM	60	5 mi. west-southwest Shaniko	Wasco
215 PM	60	6 mi. southwest Basin City	Franklin
215 PM	63	Near Heppner	Morrow
215 PM	66	Near Sisters	Deschutes
223 PM	65	4 mi. west-southwest Alderdale	Klickitat
225 PM	58	2 mi. south Roosevelt	Gilliam
227 PM	64	Near Hermiston	Umatilla
233 PM	60	4 mi. northeast Lyle	Klickitat
237 PM	62	Near Goodnoe Hills	Klickitat
308 PM	63	1 mi. north The Dalles	Klickitat
318 PM	61	4 mi. south-southwest Fossil	Wheeler
354 PM	72	3 mi. west-southwest Kooskoosie	Umatilla

Figure 2. Significant wind reports from February 17, 2018, listed by time of occurrence.



Summer 2018 Outlook

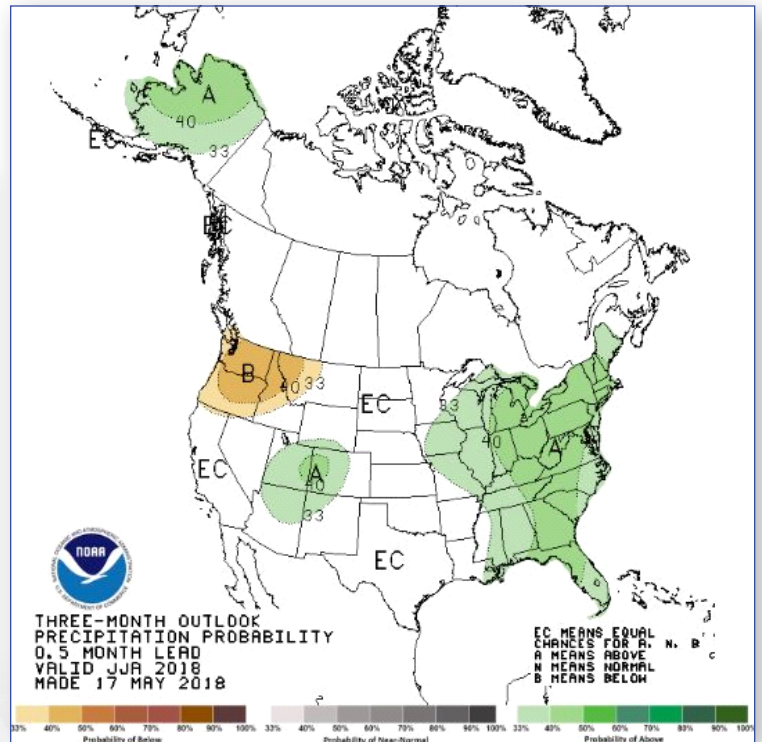
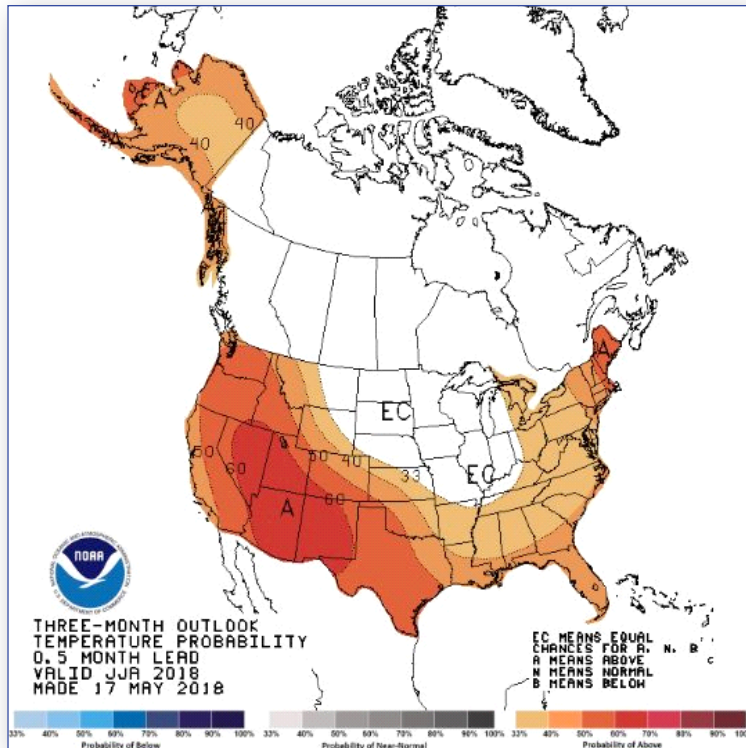
By Roger Cloutier, Meteorologist

The recent winter can be summarized as being close to a typical winter, overall. It has been defined as having a weak to moderate La Nina winter. With the exception of a cold snap and a widespread snow event during the Christmas Holiday and another cold snap and some light to moderate snow at the end of February, it was mostly a typical winter.

The forecast is calling for the La Nina status to transition into neutral conditions during the 3 main summer month period (June, July and August). However, there is a growing chance that El Nino conditions could develop by

autumn and continue into the winter of 2018-2019.

For the Pacific Northwest and the County Warning Area temperatures are favored to be above normal by as much as a 60 percent chance of being above normal. The precipitation outlook for the 3 summer months (June, July & August) are favored to be about a 40 percent chance of having below normal precipitation for most of the Pacific Northwest. The combination of above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation is two of the ingredients that will lead to a more active fire season. ❖

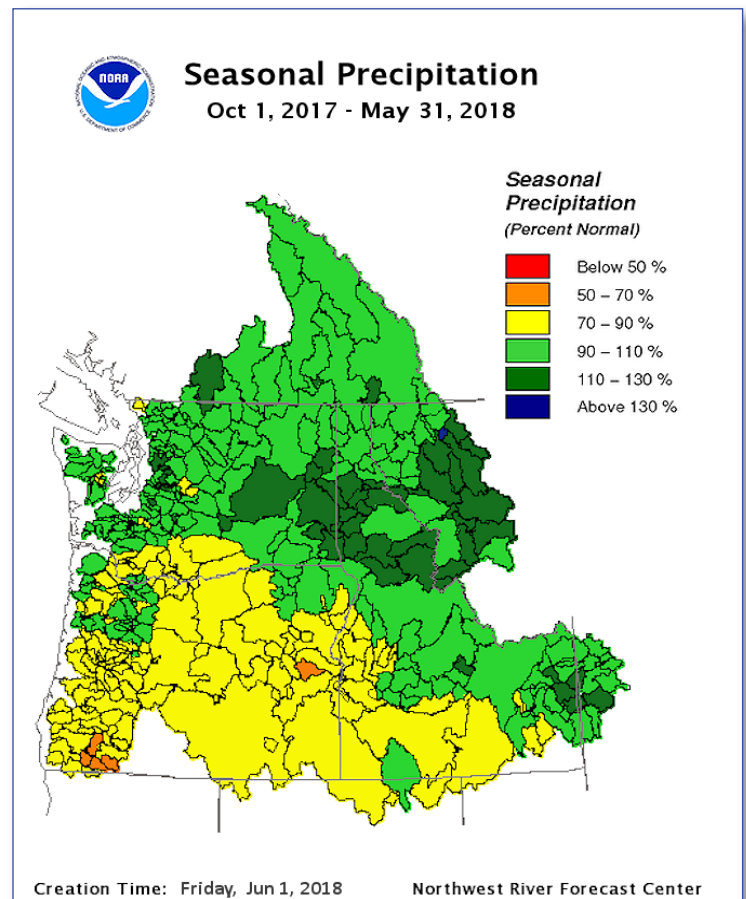


Water Year Precipitation October 2017 - May 2018

By Marilyn Lohmann, Service Hydrologist

Location	Amount In Inches	Percent of Normal
Bend.....	4.91	53%
Heppner.....	9.67	85%
John Day City.....	7.45	75%
La Grande.....	15.73	123%
McNary Dam.....	7.76	110%
Madras.....	6.67	79%
Meacham.....	35.91	129%
Milton-Freewater.....	12.06	89%
Mitchell 2NE.....	8.45	79%
Moro.....	9.03	93%
Pelton Dam.....	4.42	47%
Pendleton Airport.....	10.17	96%
Pilot Rock.....	10.35	90%
Redmond Airport.....	3.94	58%
Walla Walla.....	11.80	90%
Wickiup Dam.....	10.72	59%
Cle Elum.....	16.91	87%
Dayton.....	17.01	106%
Ellensburg.....	7.00	95%
Hanford.....	6.38	112%
Ice Harbor Dam.....	8.78	95%
Mill Creek Dam.....	18.73	120%
Mt Adams RS.....	43.49	103%
Prosser.....	6.61	91%
Selah.....	5.34	77%
Sunnyside.....	5.84	95%
Whitman Mission.....	13.77	115%
Yakima Airport.....	4.75	70%

January saw mild temperature and drier than normal conditions. In February, the northern Blue Mountains got hit hard by heavy rain early in the month with minor flooding and ended the month with above normal precipitation. Outside of the northern Blue Mountains, conditions were drier than normal through February. March had below normal precipitation and cooler than normal temperatures. Outside of central Oregon, April was much wetter than normal and most locations had below normal precipitation for the month of May.

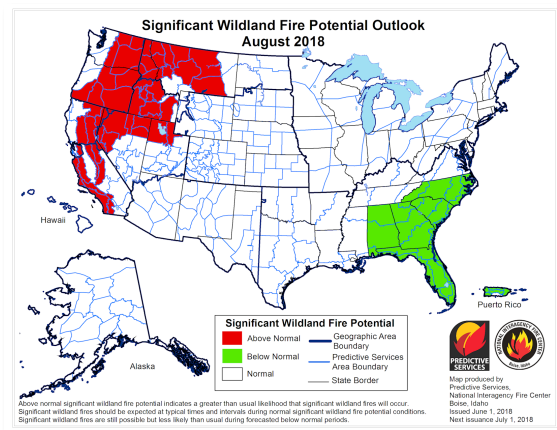
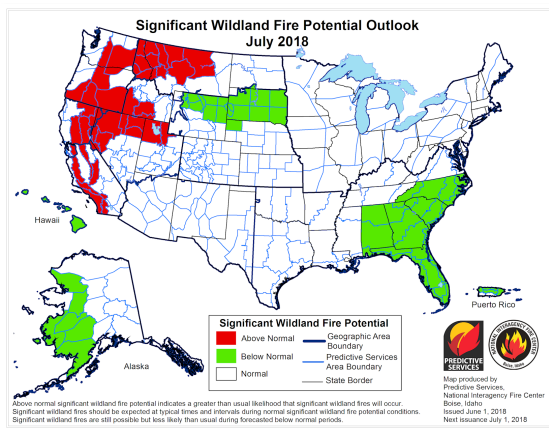
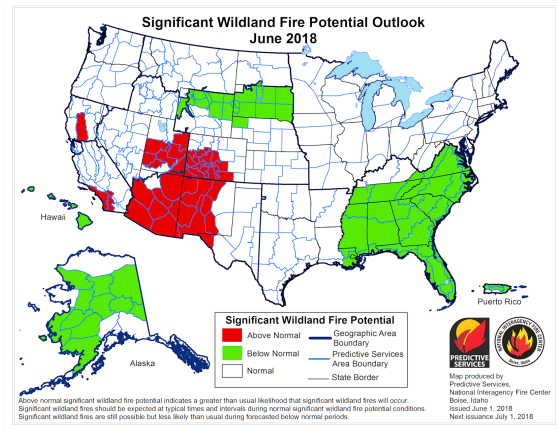
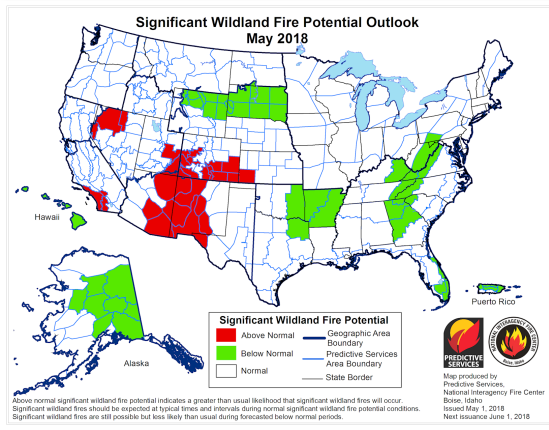


The water year started off on a good note with generally above normal precipitation for the months of October and November. It was even cold enough to produce some light snow in the lower elevations during the first few days of November. December had below normal precipitation, but there was one episode of heavy rain over Walla Walla and Columbia Counties on December 29 and 30, with flooding on the Walla Walla River as well as many other streams and creeks in that area.



Fire Season Outlook 2018

By Mary Wister, Incident Meteorologist / Fire Weather Program Leader



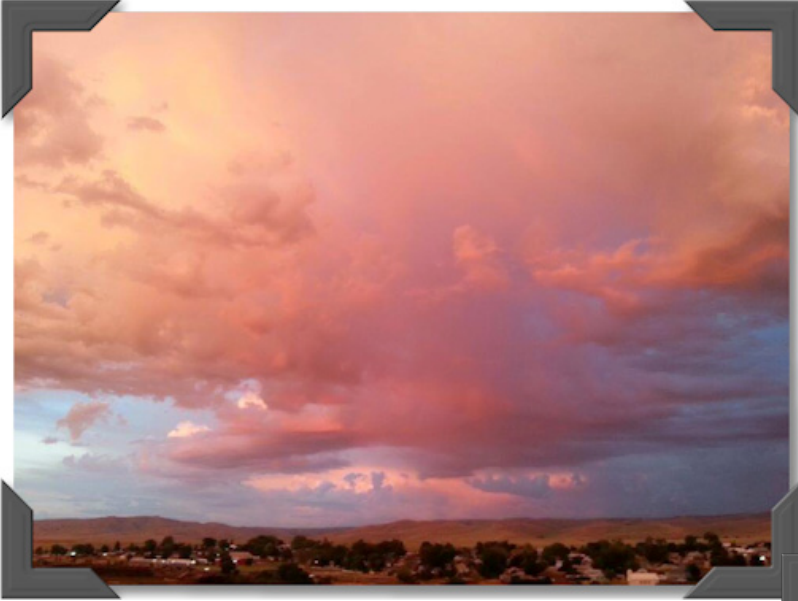
As demonstrated on the graphic above, most of the western United States may be experiencing above average potential for large wildfires this summer. This includes eastern Washington and eastern Oregon. The Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlooks are provided by the nationwide Geographical Area Coordination Centers (GACC) Predictive Services on the first day of each month. As you recall, the precipitation for the winter of 2016-2017 was well above average, resulting in an above average grass crop throughout the region last year.

For the latest 4-month Outlook graphics, visit the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) at <https://go.usa.gov/xQA5N>

Maintaining your home and landscape is necessary to prevent a major disaster not only for your home but also your surrounding environment. Create a defensible space, and you will keep the fire far enough away that firefighters have a chance to defend your home. There are numerous resources available on the Internet with excellent tips for creating a defensible space. Join together with your neighbors to spend a day or a weekend on community projects designed to reduce wildfire risk. ❖

The precipitation for the winter/spring of 2017-2018 was near to above average for areas east of the Cascades with the exception of southeast Oregon with below average seasonal precipitation. The grass crop this season has been near average. If the climate outlook for above average temperatures and below average precipitation this summer verifies, firefighters may be busy fighting wildfires in the Pacific Northwest.

Photo Album



*Sunset reflected by clouds over Pilot Rock, OR.
Photo by J. Ely.*

*Whispy clouds over Umatilla County.
Photo by A. Adams.*



*A view eastward on the Columbia River,
from Vista House. Photo by A. Adams*

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