



# 2010 Rocky Mountain Area Fire Season Outlook

Issued: Wednesday, July 14, 2010

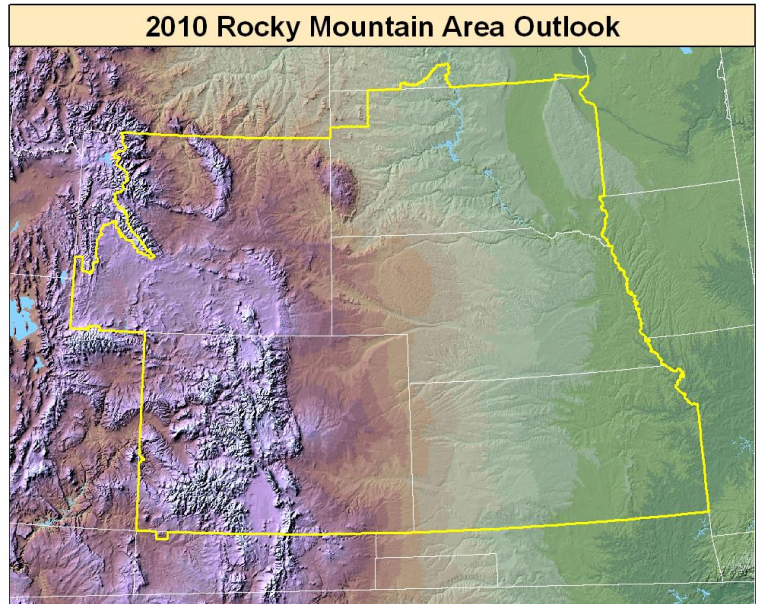
## PRODUCT INTENT & DESCRIPTION

Fire season potential is predicted for the period July – September, in terms of the “Potential” for significant fire events that may require mobilization of additional resources from outside the area in which they originate.

## SUMMARY

The weather pattern has offered much variability across the Rocky Mountain Area so far this summer. Strong cold fronts and pulses subtropical moisture have resulted in average to above average precipitation amounts mainly east of the divide, with mainly drier than average conditions west during the last 30 days (Fig. 6) High elevation snow was also recorded over the western and northern mountains of Wyoming. So far, team fires have been confined to Colorado the first part of summer, which is typically the case. However, fuel indices have begun their typical drying trend over northwest Colorado, Wyoming and western South Dakota, with the recent warm and dry patterns.

Expected weather and fuel conditions over the next several weeks will result in a steady progression of fire season north into northwest Colorado, Wyoming and western South Dakota. Expected subtropical moisture will decrease fire potential over the remainder of Colorado.



The following prediction factors were used to formulate this outlook:

- “Moderate” drought conditions were noted over western Wyoming, which is an improvement from the “Severe” drought indices for that area during the spring.
- Percent of Normal Precipitation charts show precipitation deficits over western Colorado and western Wyoming, with average to above average precipitation over the remainder of the area during the last 30 days.
- La Nina conditions are forecast to develop by late summer or early fall. This may result in even drier conditions over northern sections of the RMA later this summer. Dry conditions may develop across much of the region this fall.
- Climate forecasts from the Climate Prediction Center and others support above average temperatures west of the divide for the remainder of the summer. Wetter than average conditions are forecast east of the divide, with no tilt either way west and north. Precipitation averages typically decrease over northwest Colorado, Wyoming and western South Dakota through August.
- Pulses of subtropical moisture are expected to decrease fire potential across much of Colorado late July through mid August.
- Carry over grasses from previous growing seasons are abundant across the RMA. Many forests across the Rocky Mountain Area have been devastated by the mountain pine beetle. Dry and hot periods make these areas more susceptible to large fire potential.





Figure 1. Shoshone National Forest



Figure 2. Summit County Colorado

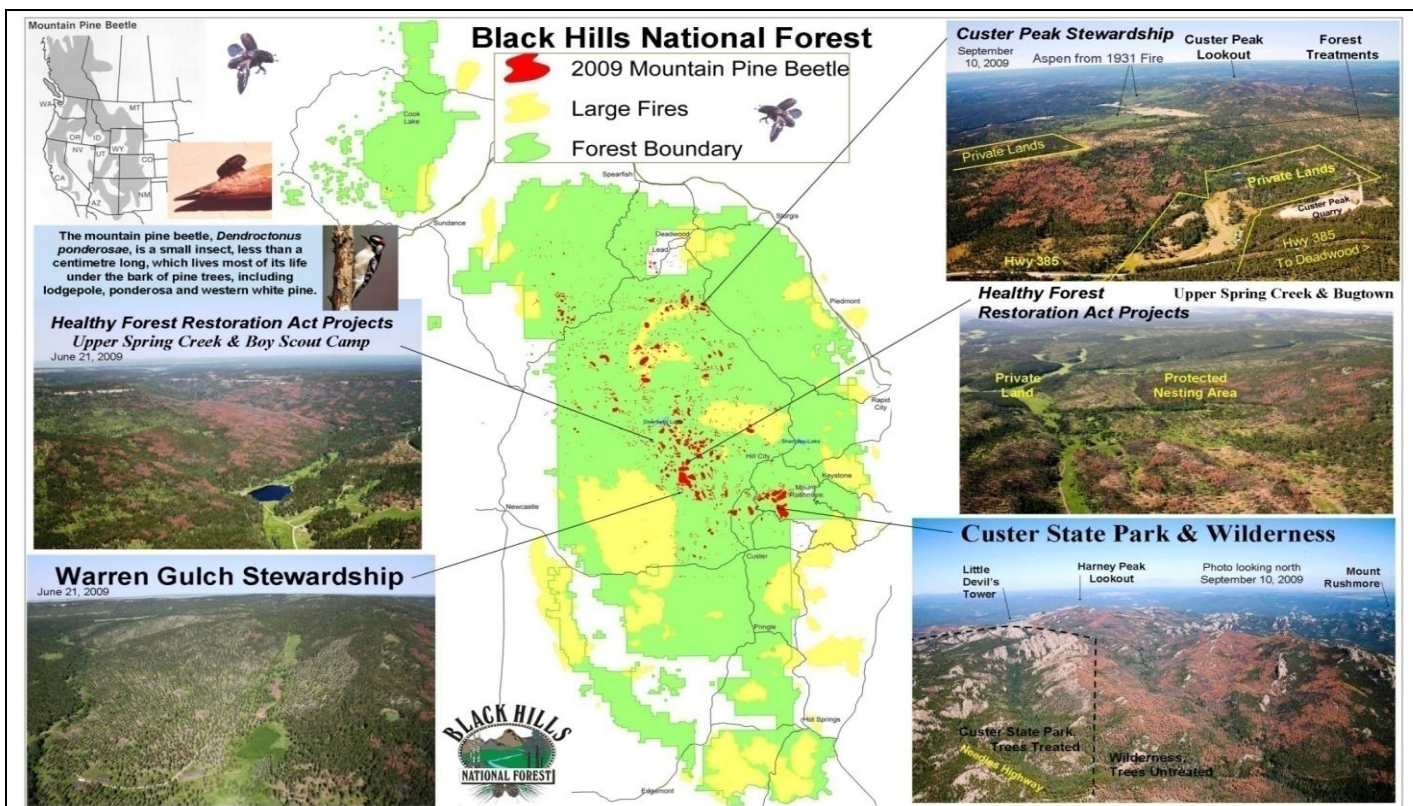


Figure 3. Black Hills National Forest

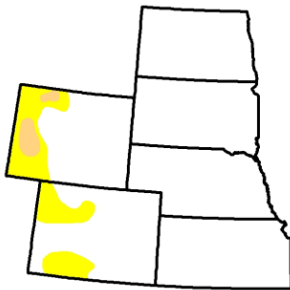
**Bottom-line: Average fire potential** is forecast for the remainder of the fire season. Fire season will progress north into northwest Colorado, Wyoming and western South Dakota through August. Average fire potential means that large fires of short duration are possible for these areas. Fire potential is forecast to decrease over the remainder of Colorado late July through August as subtropical moisture moves northward out of the southwest.

# U.S. Drought Monitor

## High Plains

July 6, 2010  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	89.5	10.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Last Week (06/29/2010 map)	87.8	12.2	5.3	1.2	0.0	0.0
3 Months Ago (04/13/2010 map)	80.3	19.7	7.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2010 map)	89.7	10.3	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Water Year (10/01/2009 map)	88.3	11.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
One Year Ago (07/07/2009 map)	90.0	10.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0



**Intensity:**

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

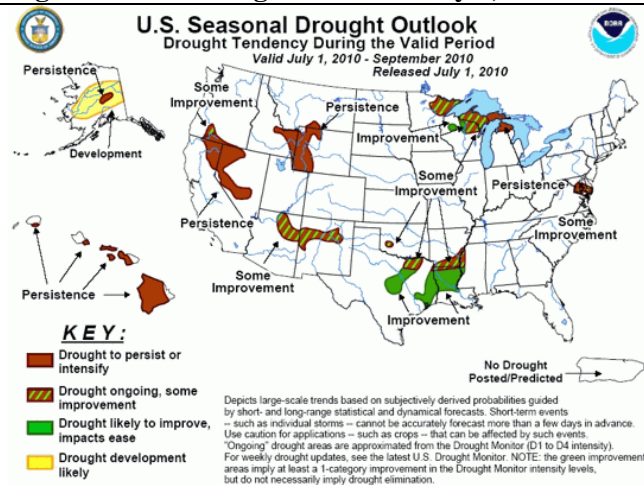
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements



Released Thursday, July 8, 2010  
Author: R. Tinker, CPC/NOAA

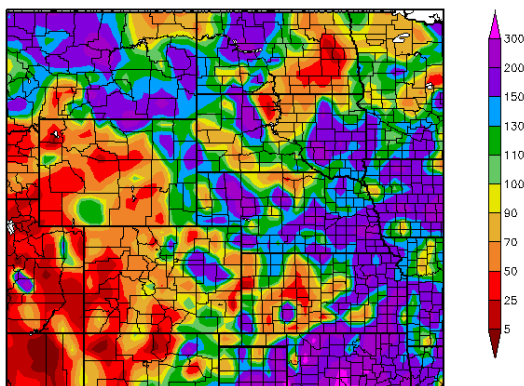
<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>

**Figure 4. U.S. Drought Monitor-July 1, 2010**



**Figure 5. Drought Outlook**

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)  
6/14/2010 - 7/13/2010



Generated 7/14/2010 at HPRCC using provisional data. NOAA Regional Climate Centers

**Figure 6. 30-Day % of Normal Precipitation**

## U.S. Drought Monitor

Drought conditions have slightly improved over western Wyoming, but with moderate drought indices noted.

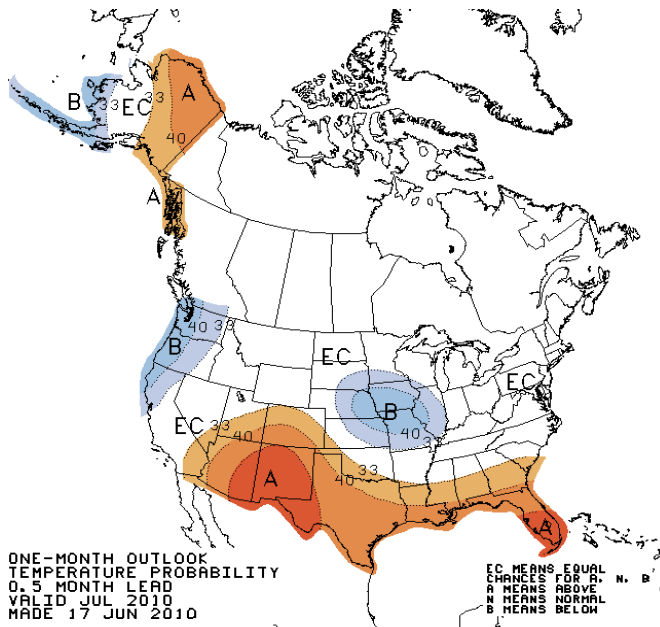
## Drought Outlook

**Drought Forecast from the Climate Prediction Center-July 1, 2010.** Moderate drought conditions are forecast to persist across western Wyoming through September 2010.

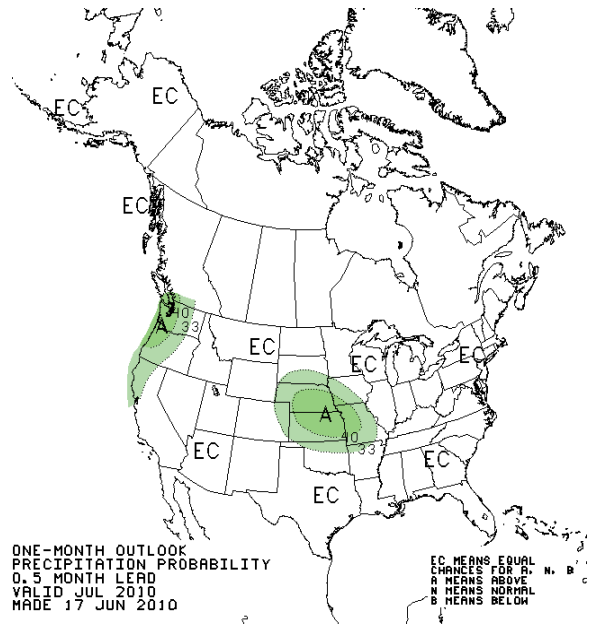
## 30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation

Wetter than average conditions occurred east of the divide, with precipitation deficits noted west of the divide.

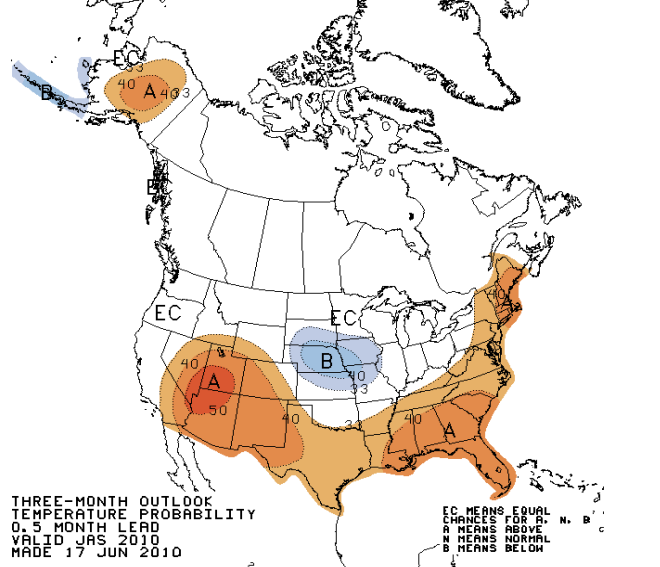




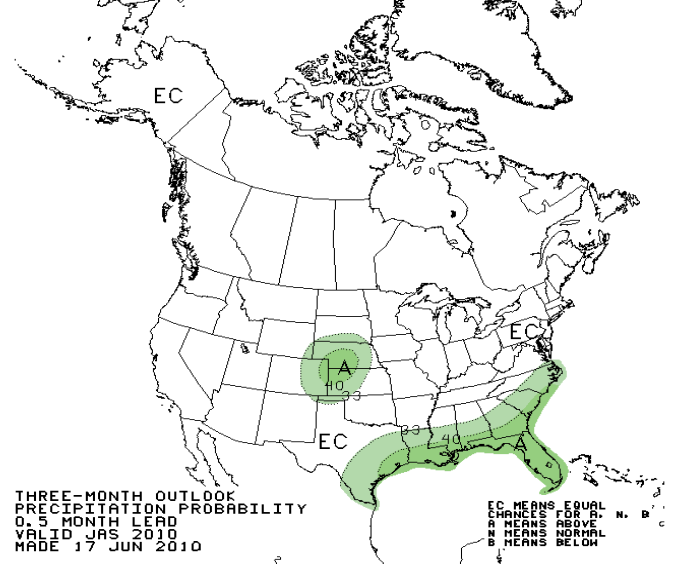
**Figure 7. Temperature Outlook: July 2010**



**Figure 8. Precipitation Outlook: July 2010**



**Figure 10. Temperature Outlook: July-September 2010**



**Figure 11. Precipitation Outlook: July-September 2010**

Temperature outlooks from the Climate Prediction Center indicate above average readings west of the divide through September, especially western Colorado (Figures 7 and 10). Additionally, the outlooks support above average precipitation east of the divide through September (Figures 8 and 11)

**Predictive Services Group**  
**Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center**