

National Interagency Coordination Center

2006 Summary and Statistics





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Identifier Legend

Interagency Coordination Centers

NICC – National Interagency Coordination Center

AK - Alaska

EA - Eastern Area

EB - Eastern Great Basin

NICC - National

NO - Northern California

NR - Northern Rockies

NW - Northwest

RM - Rocky Mountain

SA - Southern Area

SO - Southern California

SW - Southwest

WB - Western Great Basin

CIFFC - Canadian Interagency Forest
Fire Centre

NIK - National Interagency Radio
Support Cache

Other:

PRI - Private

Government Agencies

Department of the Interior:

BIA - Bureau of Indian Affairs

BLM - Bureau of Land Management

FWS - Fish & Wildlife Service

NPS - National Park Service

AMD - Aviation Management Directorate

Department of Agriculture:

FS - Forest Service

DDQ - Department of Defense

Department of Homeland Security:

FEMA - Federal Emergency
Management Agency

Department of Commerce:

WXW - National Weather Service

ST - State

ST/OT – State and Other

CN - Canada

Preface

Statistics used in this report were gathered from the Fire and Aviation Management Web Applications (FAMWEB) system, which includes the Situation Report and Incident Status Summary (ICS-209) programs. Previous National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) annual reports and other sources were also used to provide statistics for this report. The statistics presented in this report are intended to provide a national perspective of annual fire activity, but may not reflect official figures for a specific agency. The statistics are delineated by agency and geographic areas.

For specific or more detailed information contact individual agencies.

Resource mobilization statistics used in this report were gathered from the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS), which tracks tactical, logistical, service and support resources mobilized by the national incident dispatch community. The statistics presented in this report are the resource requests that were processed through NICC and ordered by one of the eleven interagency coordination centers. The resource ordering process and procedures may be found in chapter 20 of the National Mobilization Guide. The National Mobilization Guide can be found on the NICC web site, (www.nifc.gov/news/nicc.html) under reference materials.



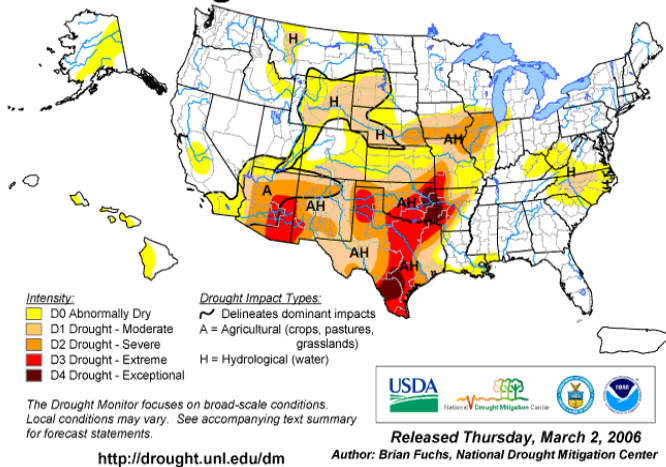
National Interagency Coordination Center

2006 Fire Season Summary

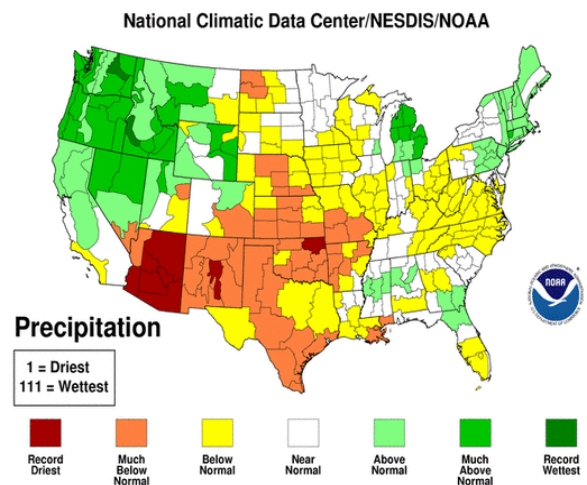
Winter (December 2005 – February 2006)

The winter (December through February) of 2005-2006 was anomalously dry over the Southwest and Southern Plains. It was the driest winter on record for Arizona, and the second driest on record for New Mexico. By the end of February, nearly 25 percent of the country was affected by moderate to extreme drought. In contrast, much of the northwestern quarter of the country experienced a very wet winter with some areas having greater than 150 percent of normal snowpack. With regard to temperature, the country experienced the fifth warmest winter on record. Alaska was also warmer and drier than normal.

U.S. Drought Monitor February 28, 2006

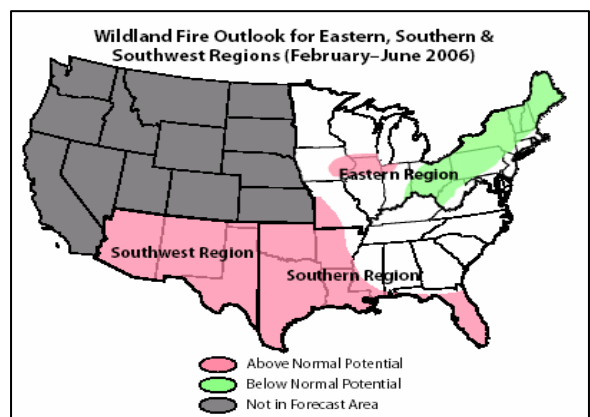


Dec 2005 - Feb 2006 Divisional Ranks



The **National Seasonal Assessment Workshops** (NSAWs) were held in late January for the Eastern and Southern States and in early April for the Western States and Alaska. These workshops brought together fire managers, fire intelligence personnel, predictive service meteorologists, and climatologists from across the United States to develop fire season outlooks for their respective Geographic Areas. This year's workshop for the Western States and Alaska also included international participants from Canada and Mexico as part of an experimental effort to coordinate fire potential outlooks among the three countries. This was the first annual North American Seasonal Assessment Workshop (NASAW).

Initial seasonal outlook reports for the Southwest, Southern and Eastern Areas called for significant fire potential over the entire Southwest, the Southern Plains, Texas, much of Florida, southwestern Missouri, central Iowa east to Lake Michigan, and northern Illinois. An earlier than normal start to fire season was expected in the



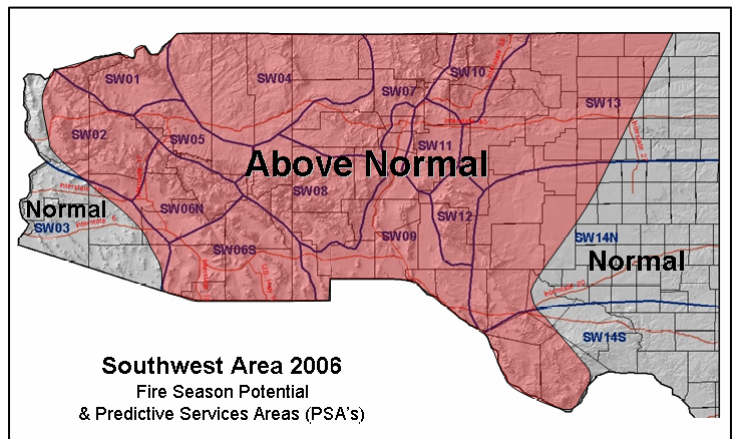
Southwest. Below normal fire potential was forecast from the Cincinnati area extending northeast into New England. Normal potential was forecast for the remainder of the area (see image at right)

Another above average Atlantic hurricane season was projected for 2006. However, it was not expected to be as severe as 2005

Initial attack was heavy in January and near normal in February, however the acres burned by the end of February was approximately 360% of normal (based on 10-year SIT/209 records). The vast majority of this fire activity occurred in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas due to extremely dry conditions. Large fire activity also occurred in Mississippi, Louisiana, Kansas, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Missouri, Indiana, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, and California. The national Preparedness Level (PL) transitioned from PL 1 to PL 2 on January 6 and remained at that level throughout the remainder of January and February. In early January, a Type-2 Incident Management Team was assigned to assist with flood control and recovery efforts in Nevada.

Spring (March – May)

The updated fire season outlook issued April 14, 2006 for the Southwest Geographic Area called for above normal large fire potential over much of the Area. This was primarily due to the very dry winter of 2005/2006, with well below normal snowpack, leading into a projected dry and warm May through June period. The occurrence of above normal precipitation during the 2004/2005 winter, within a period of long term drought, resulted in abundant carryover fine fuels.



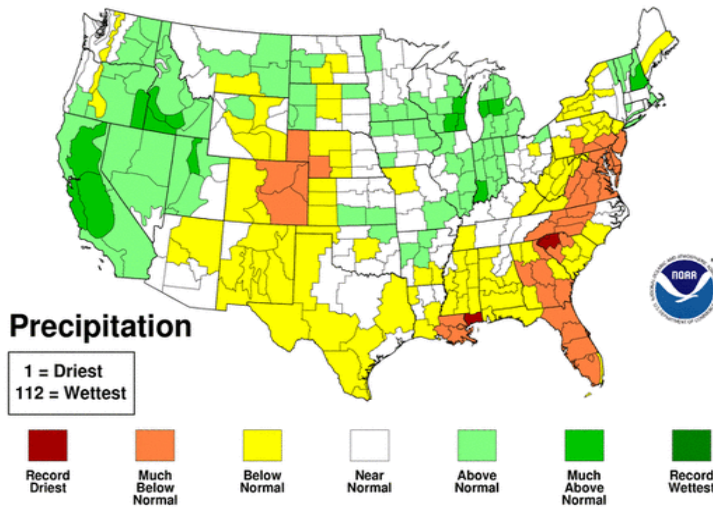
This combined with below normal fuel moisture levels in existing larger dead and live fuels elevated the risk for large fires. Fire season in the Southwest began in earnest in mid-April with numerous large fires erupting in New Mexico. By the end of May they had burned approximately 280% of their 10-year average acres. In addition, fire potential was forecast to mitigate by mid-July with a forecasted active monsoon.

Spring was warmer than normal across most of the country except for cooler than average conditions along the West Coast, particularly California. The Southwest and central U.S. were generally 3 to 5 degrees warmer than normal for the spring. On average, the nation experienced below normal precipitation across much of the South and East, while the western and northern regions were wetter than normal. Alaska precipitation varied widely, with driest regions across the northern and southern tiers of the state.

A very wet winter and spring across the northwest quarter of the country resulted in much above normal spring snowpack across the region. The April 1, 2006 snowpack map (below) showed the Northwest and Great Basin with greater than 150% of normal snowpack. Conversely, the Southwest experienced less than 50% of normal snowpack.

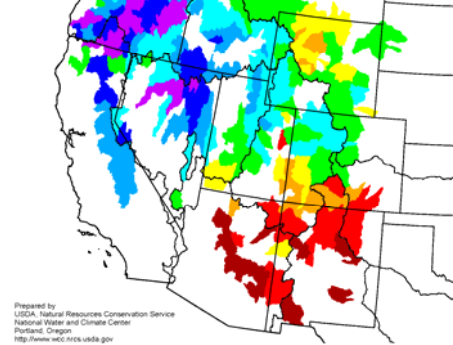
Mar - May 2006

National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA



Mountain Snowpack as of April 1, 2006

Legend



Wildfire activity increased significantly in Texas and Oklahoma, burning well over one million acres during the month of March alone. Large fire activity continued at well above average levels in the Southern Area during April and May with numerous large fires emerging in Florida later in the period. Large fire activity also increased in the Rocky Mountain, Eastern, Great Basin, and Southwest Areas during this time period. By the end of May, approximately 130% of average wildland fires had burned 300% of average acres nationally (based on 10-year average Situation Report / 209 data).

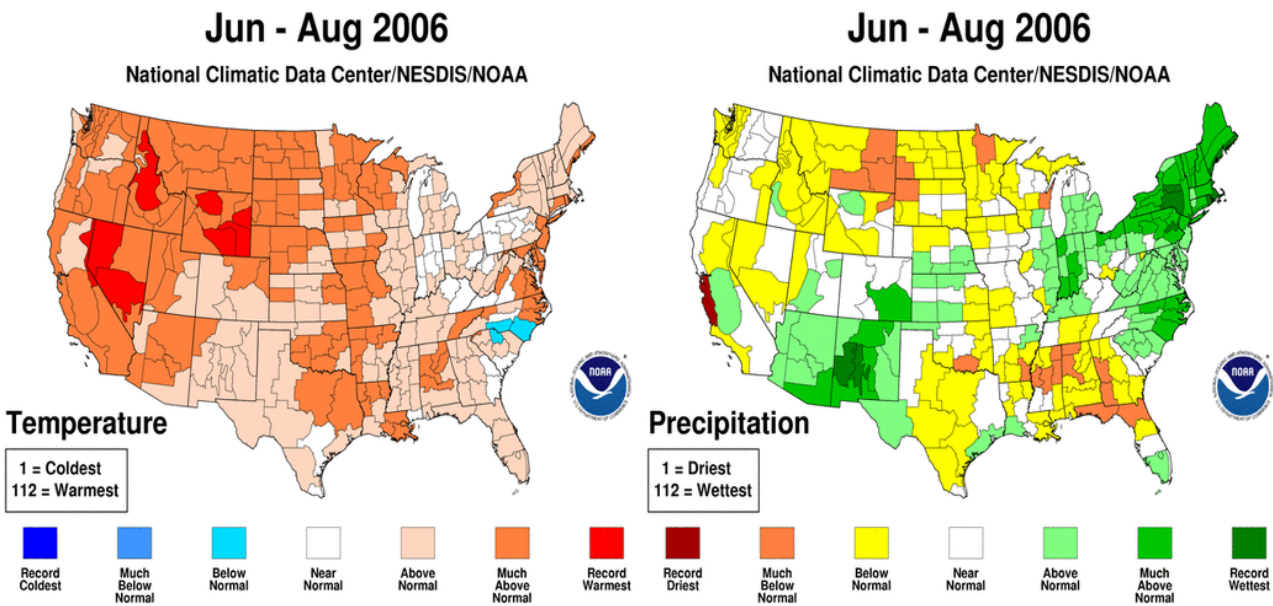
Summer (June – August)

The National Seasonal Wildland Fire Potential Outlook issued June 7, 2006 called for above normal fire potential across much of the interior West, southwest Texas, and portions of Florida. Portions of the West, Texas, and Alaska entered the summer of 2006 in continued long term drought with low live fuel moistures and vegetative stress. Dry winter conditions for the Southwest exacerbated these conditions. In addition, abundant carryover herbaceous fine fuels remained from the wet winter of 2004/2005 across the Southwest and portions of the southern Great Basin.

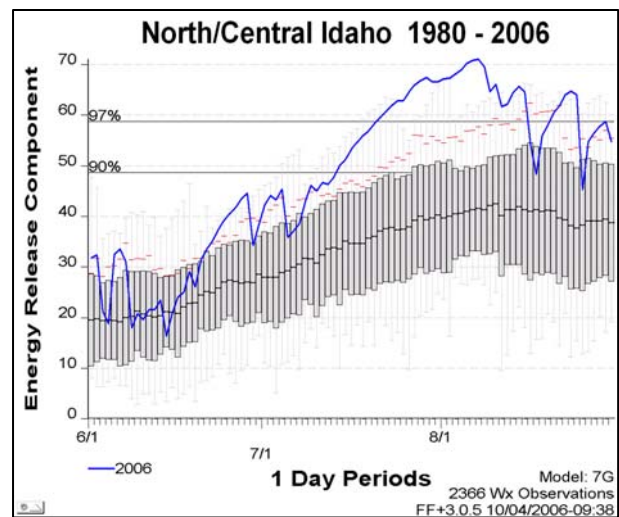


The summer of 2006 was the second warmest summer on record nationally with the January through August period being the hottest on record. It was the warmest summer on record for Nevada, the second warmest for Wyoming, and the third warmest for Idaho and California. Precipitation varied across the country with the northern tier of states from the Great Lakes westward, as well as the Gulf Coast states being drier than normal. Wet conditions persisted throughout the summer across the Southwest with a very active North American monsoon. The monsoon began a little earlier than normal, by about five days, between June 28 and July 2. It was the third wettest summer on record for New Mexico, with Albuquerque experiencing their all time record summer rainfall. The Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and portions of the Midwest

also received above normal precipitation. Alaska experienced cool and wet conditions throughout the summer.



Large fire activity dominated in the Southwest and Florida during the early portion of June with increased activity seen in the Eastern Great Basin and Rocky Mountain Areas as well. The abundant winter snow pack across the mountains of northern California, the Northwest, Idaho, and western Montana was rapidly diminished by sustained very hot, dry period that occurred in mid-June. This caused higher elevation fuels to dry out much more rapidly than expected. National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) Energy Release Component (ERC) values are a composite fuel moisture index that represents potential fire intensity. The image shown at right displays a 2006 ERC index trace for north/central Idaho overlaid on the average and one-Standard Deviation bars for each day over the past 25 years. This image shows how rapidly fuels dried out beginning in mid-June. Except for a few minor precipitation events, fuels steadily dried out and fire danger indices climbed to critical levels across much of the West by mid-July. The wet winter in combination with hot, dry conditions in June also set up northern Nevada for an active fire season. By late June, large fire activity was dominated in northern California, the Great Basin and the Southwest. Meanwhile, fears of another active fire season in Alaska were mitigated by sustained scattered precipitation during most of June and monsoon moisture helped to abate fire activity in the Southwest by mid-July.

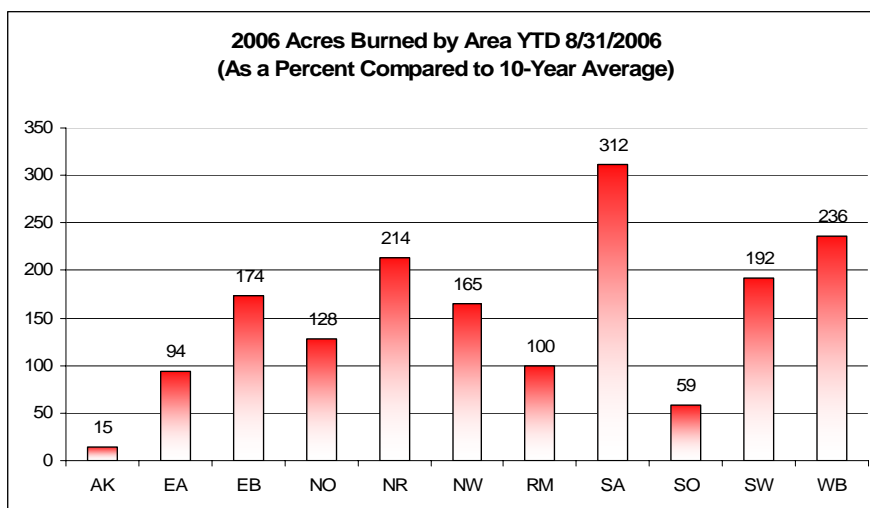


By mid-July, several large fires emerged in Southern California, the Northwest and the Northern Rockies Geographic Areas. Sustained dry conditions set up pre-disposing conditions for a number of large fires in light, flashy fuels in south/eastern Montana and Wyoming. Frequent, relatively dry, lightning storms sparked off an unusual number of large fires through the later third of July, many of which emerged in the Great Basin, Northwest, and the mountains of central Idaho and California. Two Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) air tankers were deployed on July 21 to Klamath Falls, Oregon to assist with the fire

fighting efforts. Dry conditions in the Eastern Area also created conditions that supported large fire growth in northern Minnesota. The 31,830 acre Cavity Lake fire in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area was the largest fire on the Superior National Forest in the past 100 years.

August was a very active month for much of the western U.S. Fire danger indices and fuel moisture levels were near record levels, or set 20-year historic records in many locations. Lightning storms continued to track across much of the west, causing initial attack activity to remain very high with numerous large fires emerging across a high number of the Geographic Areas. By the end of August, fires far exceeded the 10-year average in the lower 48 States. Nationally, as of August 31, a total of 79,944 fires were reported, and 7,820,449 acres burned. The national 10-year average is 58,034 fires for 4,687,310 acres burned, which means that as of August 31, the 2006 fire season experienced 137% of average fires burning 166% of average acres. The bulk of burned acreage occurred in the Great Basin and Southern Areas. Alaska had a below normal fire season, with approximately 57% of average fires burning just 16% of average acres.

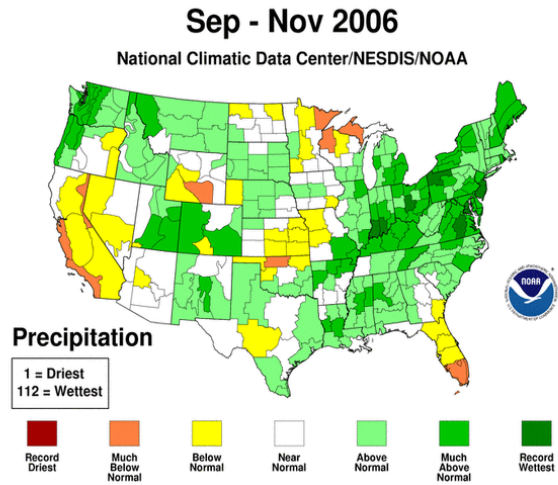
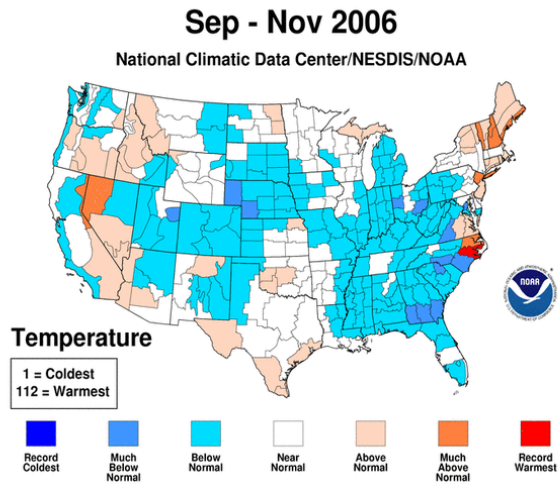
By August 31, the most active Geographic Areas were the Southern Area (42,112 fires and 2,404,326 acres burned), Western Great Basin Area (981 fires and 1,140,197 acres burned), Eastern Great Basin Area (2,512 fires and 979,009 acres burned), Northern Rockies Area (3,139 fires and 797,255 acres burned), and the Northwest Area (2,995 fires and 714,898 acres burned). The largest fire of the year was the East Amarillo Complex, which burned 907,245 acres in Texas, before containment on March 18. Fifteen large fires, or complexes, burned more than 100,000 acres apiece, with five of those large incidents occurring in the Western Great Basin Area. Additionally, 1,639 large fires were reported to the National Interagency Coordination Center as of August 31. This is well above the national average. The chart at right shows how much above, or below, average each Geographic Area was on August 31.



Fall (September – November)

September was generally warm and dry in the Northwest, but as a whole the West was slightly cooler than normal in the fall. Most of the West was wetter than normal except for a dry fall in California and Nevada. Record rainfall fell in the Northwest with Washington recording their wettest November on record. A weak El Niño (warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific) developed in the fall but significant impacts had not yet developed over the country.

California experienced considerable large fire activity during September, pushing their year-to-date total acres burned to well over 200% of their 10-year average in Northern California and nearly 200% in Southern California. By the end of October, fire activity had slowed substantially across the West.



National Fire Activity Summary

Fire season 2006 set new records for both number of reported wildfires and acres burned. Since the year 2000 the number of reported fires had been decreasing, or leveled off. However, in 2006 the number of reported fires jumped to a new record of 96,385 fires, breaking the old record of 96,363 set in 1996. The national 10-year average is 77,312 fires, and the 20-year average is 75,520 fires. Compared to the 10-year average, 2006 was 125% above normal (128% above the 20-year average). All Geographic Areas, except Alaska and Eastern Area, experienced above average fire seasons in either fires or acres burned (based on a 10-year average). Alaska's fire season was well below its average, while Eastern Area was near normal.

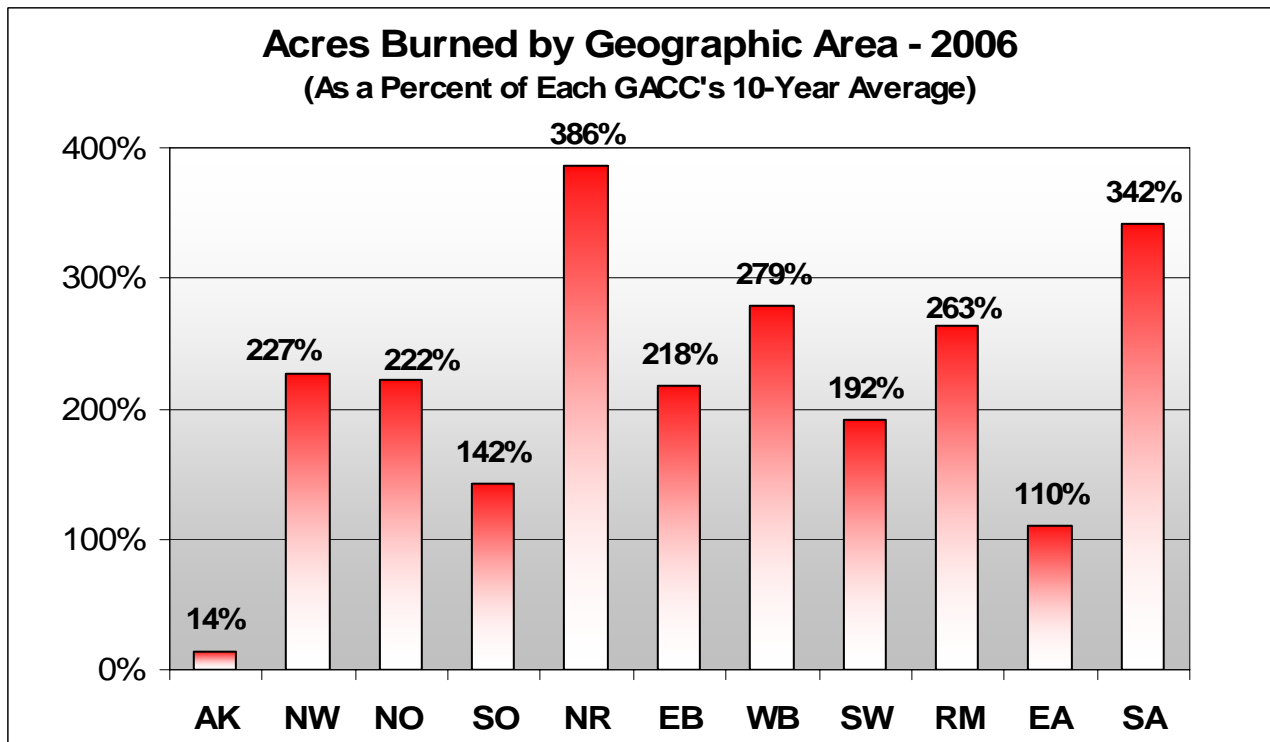
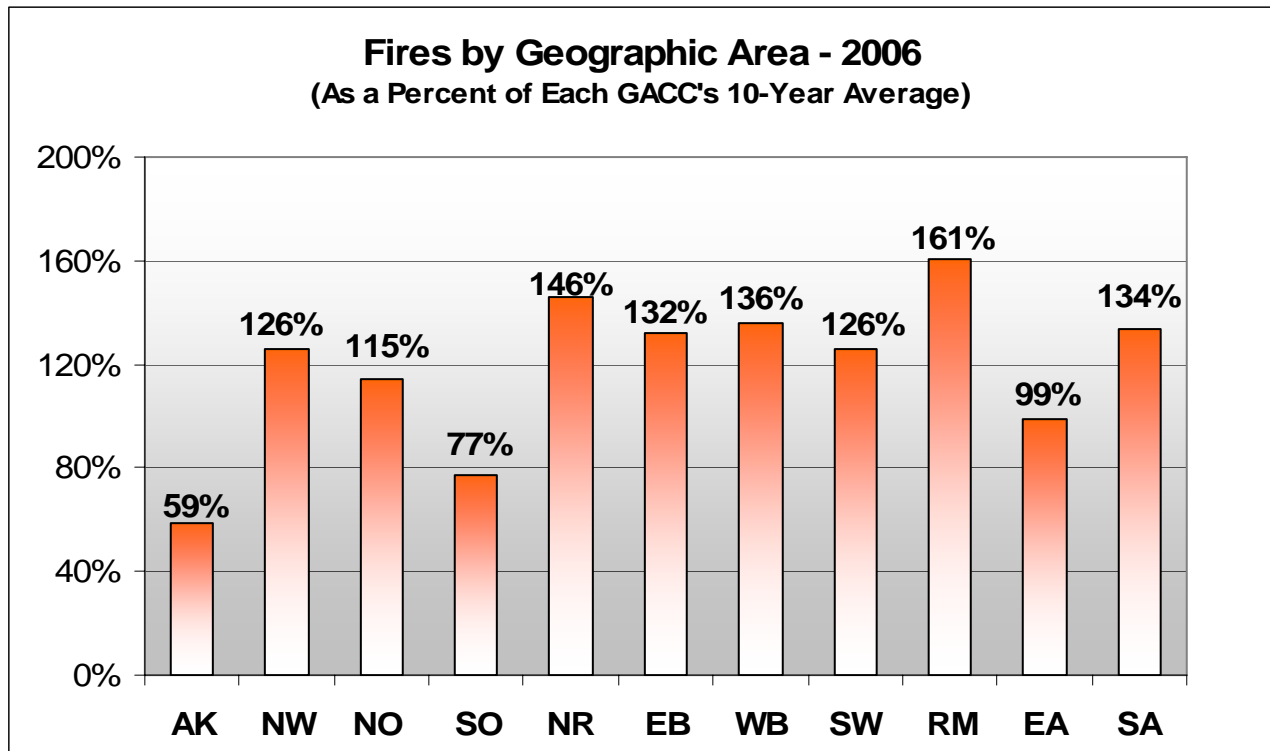
Wildfire acres burned in 2006 also were well above average, with 9,873,745 acres reported. The 10-year average is 5,577,598 acres burned, while the 20-year average is 4,256,292 acres burned. While both 2004 and 2005 also set records for acres burned, Alaska was a major contributor to the acreage totals in both years. In 2004, Alaska burned 82% of the national total acres, and in 2005 that percentage was 51%. In 2006, Alaska burned less than 3% of total acres nationally.

The Southern Geographic Area reported 48,632 fires for 2,632,358 acres burned. This represents 50% of total wildfires, and 27% of acres burned nationally in 2006. Fire activity was 134% and acres burned were 341% above the 10-year average. Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas experienced an unprecedented heavy and persistent fire season that began early in 2006 and continued almost unabated well into spring.

Prescribed fire projects in 2006 were up significantly over the previous three years, and were the second highest number reported since record keeping began in 1998. Accomplished acres were also the second highest total reported since 1998, and were up more than 410,000 from last year's total. Non-federal agencies led in both projects and acres accomplished. The Southern Area had the most projects and acres accomplished among the Geographic Areas.

Wildfire Activity Levels by Geographic Area

Compared to each GACC's average wildfire activity level for the previous ten years, most Geographic Areas experienced above average activity in 2006.



Fires and Complexes Over 40,000 Acres in 2006

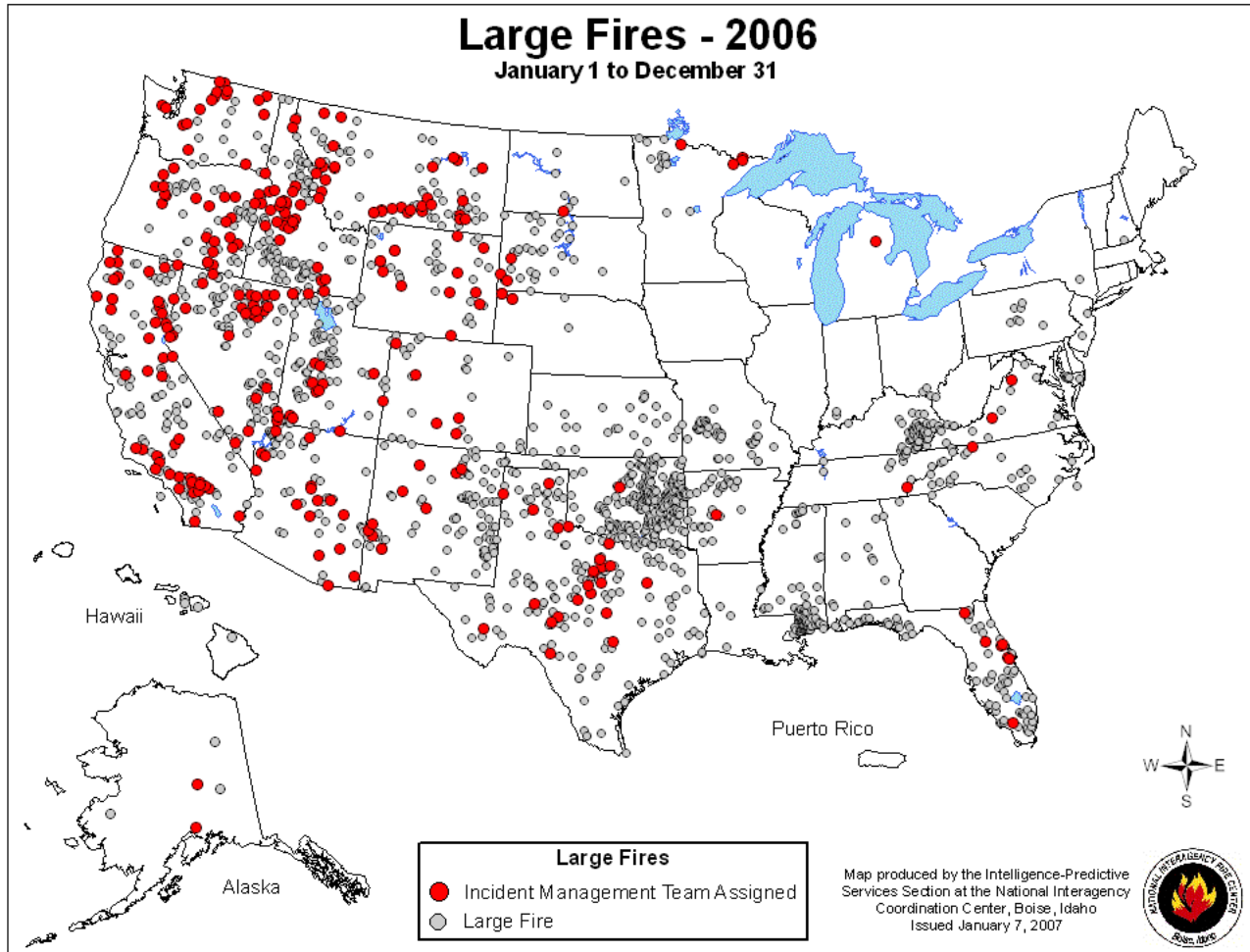
Figures derived from ICS-209 reports. Data shown may not reflect final figures.

Name	GACC	State	Start Date	Contain / Control Date	Final Size	Cause	Reported Cost
East Amarillo Complex	SA	TX	3/12/06	3/18/06	907,245	NR	NR
Winters	WB	NV	7/25/06	8/3/06	238,458	L	\$2,700,000
Derby Fire	NR	MT	8/22/06	11/6/06	223,570	L	\$23,000,000
Crystal	EB	ID	8/15/06	8/31/06	220,042	L	\$1,600,000
Charleston Complex	WB	NV	8/15/06	8/31/06	190,421	L	NR
Day	SO	CA	9/4/06	12/6/06	162,702	H	\$78,000,000
Sheep	WB	NV	9/3/06	9/17/06	150,270	L	NR
Parks Hwy	AK	AK	6/7/06	11/28/06	130,186	H	NR
Black Pulaski Complex	NR	MT	7/16/06	7/23/06	124,905	L	\$3,200,000
Pine Ridge Complex	NR	MT	7/12/06	7/21/06	121,210	L	\$2,800,000
Oklahoma Fire Response	SA	OK	1/1/06	3/23/06	117,686	U	\$9,600,000
South End Complex	NW	OR	8/21/06	8/30/06	117,553	L	\$2,550,000
Tripod Complex	NW	WA	7/24/06	11/9/06	113,011	L	\$68,175,390
Columbia Complex	NW	OR	8/21/06	10/4/06	109,422	L	\$35,400,000
Amazon	WB	NV	9/3/06	9/17/06	108,564	L	NR
McDonald	SW	NM	3/12/06	3/16/06	92,390	H	\$150,000
Bundy Railroad	NR	MT	7/12/06	7/23/06	91,897	L	\$2,900,000
Suzie	WB	NV	6/25/06	7/5/06	79,859	L	\$2,750,000
Happy Valley	NW	OR	7/22/06	7/28/06	68,393	L	\$995,000
Spur Peak	NW	WA	7/3/06	11/9/06	62,173	L	\$14,700
Sailor Cap	EB	ID	8/23/06	8/30/06	61,929	H	NR
Sawtooth Complex	SO	CA	7/9/06	7/26/06	61,700	L	\$18,000,000
Warm Fire	SW	AZ	6/8/06	8/2/06	58,630	L	\$7,100,000
Ola Complex	EB	ID	8/11/06	8/16/06	58,555	L	\$2,500,000
Foster Gulch Complex	NW	OR	7/23/06	11/9/06	53,636	L	\$6,900,000
South Fork Complex	EB	ID	8/8/06	11/30/06	52,690	L	NR
Nageethluk River	AK	AK	5/31/06	11/28/06	52,540	L	\$65,000
Hambly Complex	WB	NV	7/23/06	8/8/06	52,000	L	\$1,740,442
Tatoosh Complex	NW	WA	8/22/06	10/4/06	51,671	L	\$33,500
Bear	SW	NM	6/19/06	7/4/06	51,307	U	\$7,000,000
Jarvis	EB	UT	6/25/06	8/7/06	50,738	H	\$1,500,000
Heat Fire	SA	FL	6/2/06	6/12/06	49,500	L	\$7,000
Sioux County Complex	RM	NE	7/27/06	8/9/06	48,800	L	\$1,420,000
Basco	WB	NV	7/26/06	8/3/06	47,236	L	\$1,872,000
Rattlesnake Complex	EB	ID	8/21/06	11/21/06	43,600	L	\$18,000,000
Bull Complex	EB	UT	6/28/06	7/8/06	43,571	L	\$4,300,000
Star Mountain	NW	OR	8/21/06	8/27/06	43,545	L	NR
Heavens Gate Complex	NR	ID	8/21/06	9/20/06	42,300	L	\$6,650,000
Ringgold	SA	TX	1/1/06	1/8/06	42,100	NR	NR
Rocker B	SA	TX	1/2/06	1/8/06	42,100	NR	NR
Middle Fork Complex	EB	ID	8/9/06	9/19/06	41,978	L	\$2,601,480
Gass Complex	WB	NV	6/30/06	7/8/06	40,402	L	\$974,000
Esperanza	SO	CA	10/26/06	11/4/06	40,200	H	\$10,600,000
Buckle L 2	SA	TX	3/12/06	3/20/06	40,000	NR	NR

L - lightning H - human NR – Not Reported

Large Fire Activity

The map below depicts all reported wildfires and Wildland Fire Use incidents for calendar year 2006. Data used in the map were derived from ICS-209 reports, and include Type 1, Type 2 and Fire Use Management Teams.



Resource Mobilizations

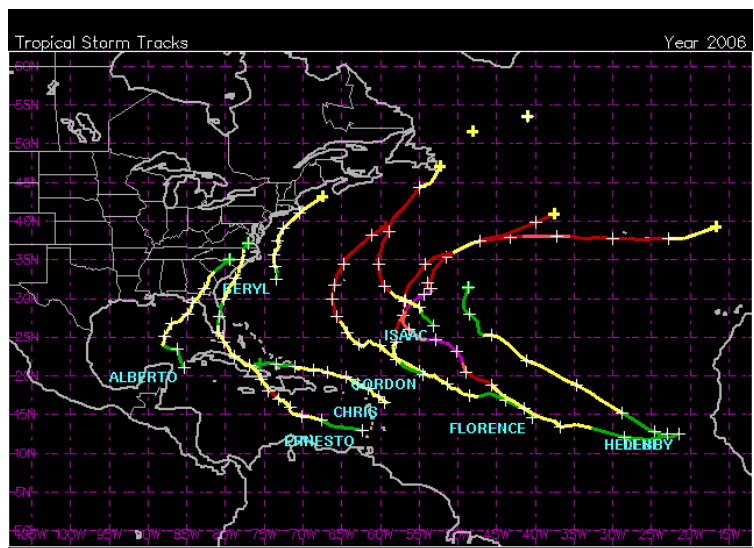
Through an international arrangement the U.S. provided a Type 1 Incident Management Team (July 3 to July 16), three Type 1 crews, two Type 2 IA crews and miscellaneous overhead to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center (CIFFC). These resources assisted the Province of British Columbia with its fire activity.

Demand for national fire fighting resources was very heavy in 2006. International resources and the Department of Defense filled a critical need for air tankers, crews and personnel. Canada provided ten 20-person crews, 11 smokejumpers and 59 overhead to assist suppression operations in the U.S. Additionally up to 115 fire specialists and management personnel from Australia and New Zealand were assigned to western fires in August and September.

Two North Carolina Air National Guard Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS) were deployed on March 17 to Albuquerque, New Mexico. These aircraft were released March 27 without flying a fire mission. The two North Carolina Air National Guard MAFFS were redeployed to Mesa, Arizona from June 26 to July 7. The aircraft flew 44 sorties, delivering 109,423 gallons of retardant. Two Wyoming and Colorado Air National Guard MAFFS were deployed to Klamath Falls, Oregon from July 21 to September 13. The aircraft flew 318 sorties, delivering 699,941 gallons of retardant. Three California Air National Guard MAFFS were deployed to Boise, Idaho from August 5 to September 16 (the third MAFFS was only temporarily deployed). The aircraft flew 295 sorties, delivering 650,625 gallons of retardant. In addition, a U.S. Army task force, Task Force Blaze, was deployed to the Tripod Complex in the Northwest Area from August 13 to September 3.

Hurricane Activity

The 2006 Atlantic hurricane season experienced slightly below normal tropical activity. Nine named storms occurred, including five hurricanes, two of which became major storms (Category 3 or higher). A normal hurricane season is 11 named storms, with 6 becoming hurricanes. Early season tropical forecasts had called for above normal tropical activity for the 2006 season, however mid-season updates issued in late August and early September downgraded the forecast to near normal. Not only were the number of storms below normal, most storms did not impact the U.S. This was due to the dominant weather pattern of an upper level low pressure trough located just off the East Coast, particularly during the mid and latter portion of the season, that caused most tropical activity to curve to the north in the western Atlantic. As a result, only two Type 2 Incident Management Teams were placed on standby in Atlanta on August 31 for tropical storm Ernesto. The Teams were released a few days later without being utilized. (See the 2006 Tropical Storm track map above. Map courtesy of Unisys Corporation:



<http://weather.unisys.com/hurricane/atlantic/2006/index.html>.)