August 2024 Wildfire Update

Current Conditions, Trends, and Coordination Efforts

Cory Calnan

Deputy Chief – DNRC Fire Protection Bureau

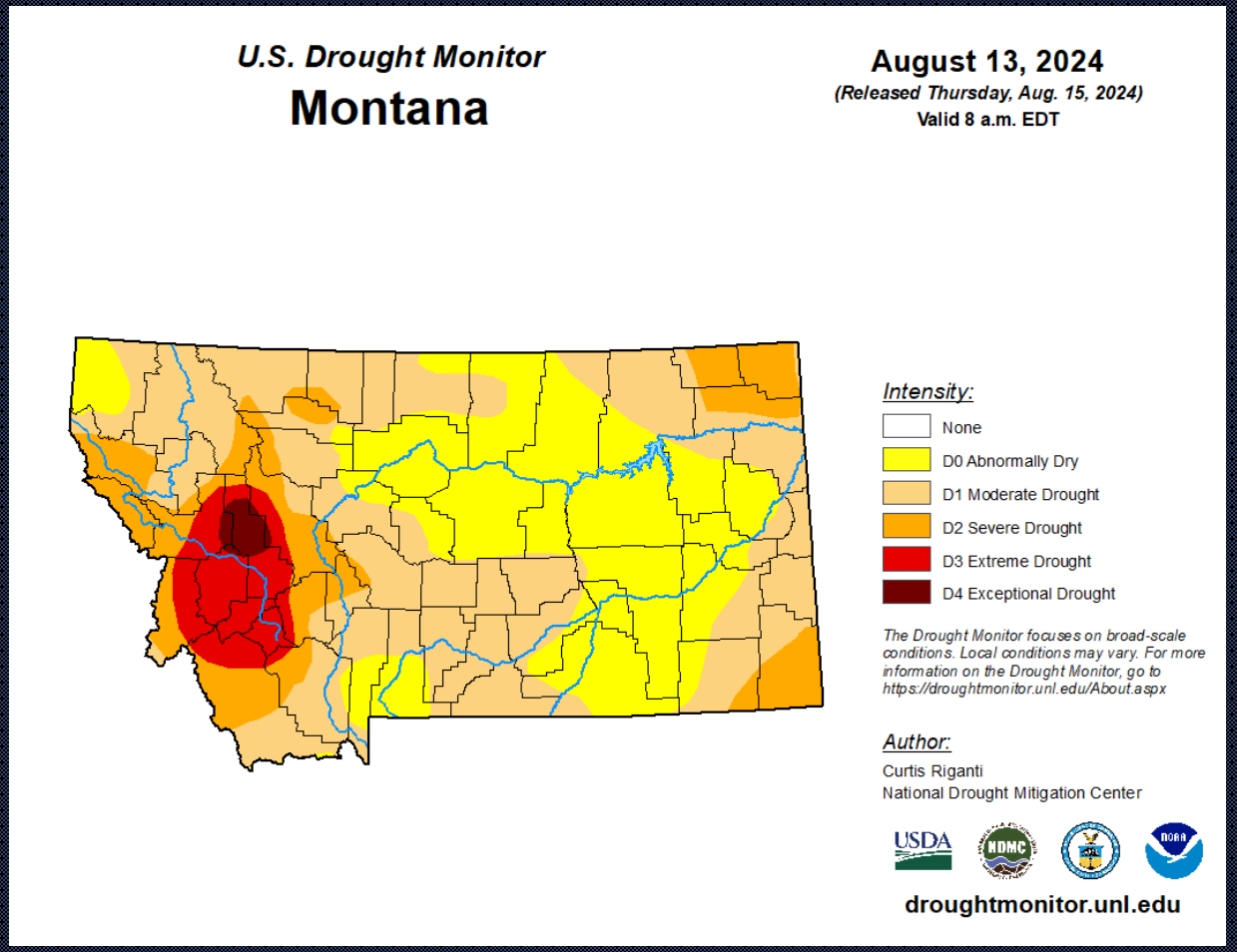
Current Fire Activity

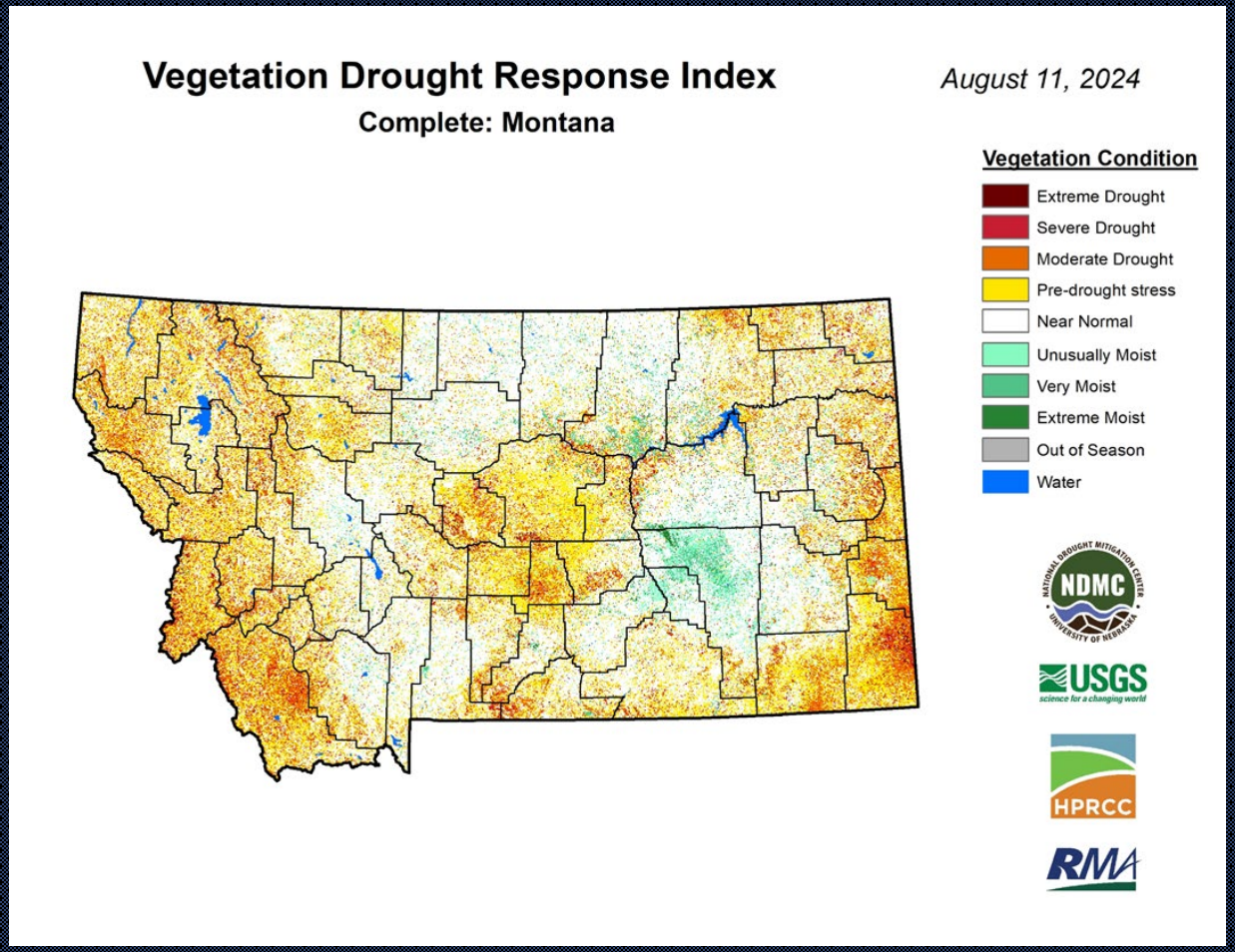
- National Preparedness Level 5
- Northern Rockies Preparedness Level 3
  - 40 Aircraft
  - 13 Handcrews
  - 89 Engines
- Very successful initial attack efforts.
- Incidents of note:
  - Horse Gulch (Helena NF/DNRC)
  - Black Canyon (DNRC/Meagher Co)
  - Grouse (Beaverhead- Deerlodge NF)
  - Black Mountain (Helena NF)
  - Miller Peak (Lolo NF)
  - Deadman/McGhee/Prairie (BLM/DNRC/Bighorn & Rosebud Co)

Agency	Fires	Acres
C&L	686	73, 434
USFS	260	23,342
BIA	292	7,237
BLM	61	5,100
FWS	12	1,724
DNRC	155	848
NPS	8	30.5
Totals	**1474**	**111,718**

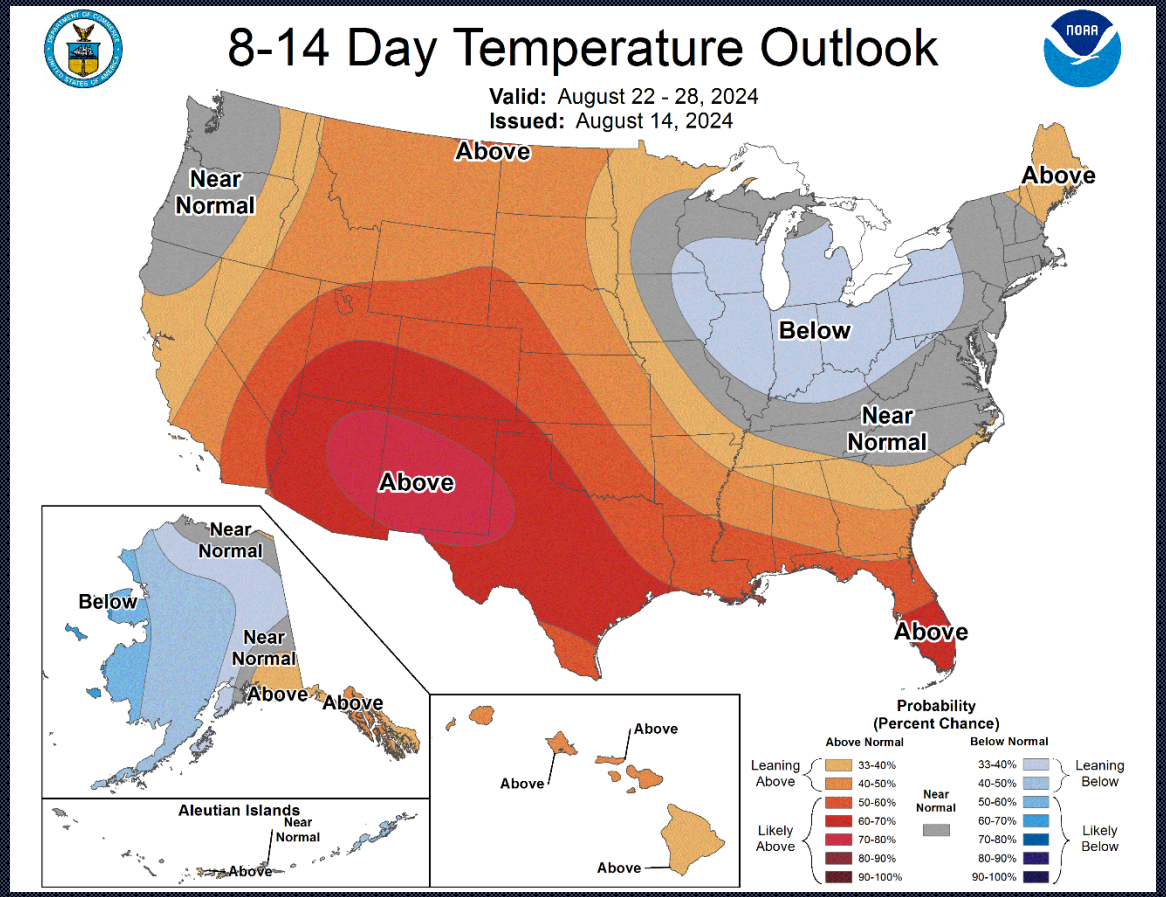
Cause	Fires	Acres
Lightning	304	66,653
Human	626	20,640
Undetermined	399	24,421
Unreported	149	2.5

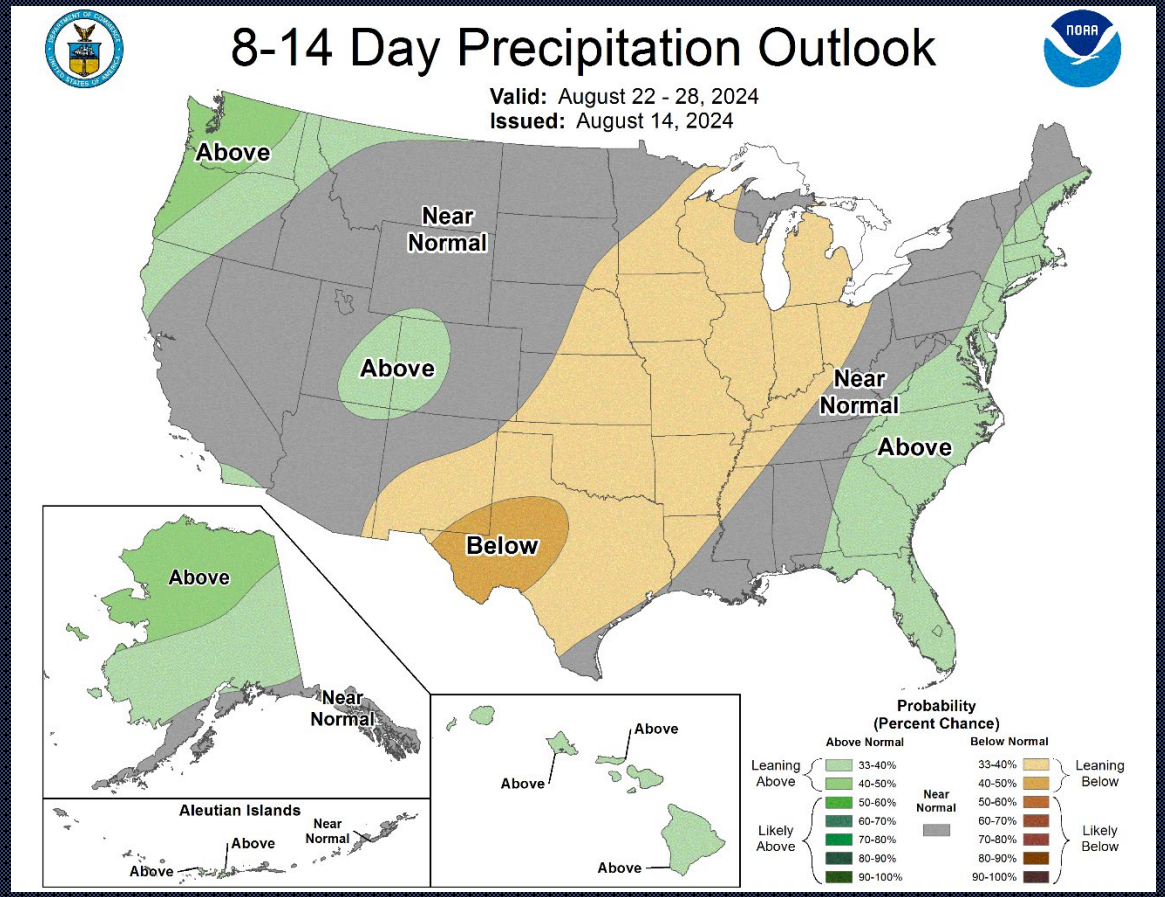
Factors - Drought and Vegetation



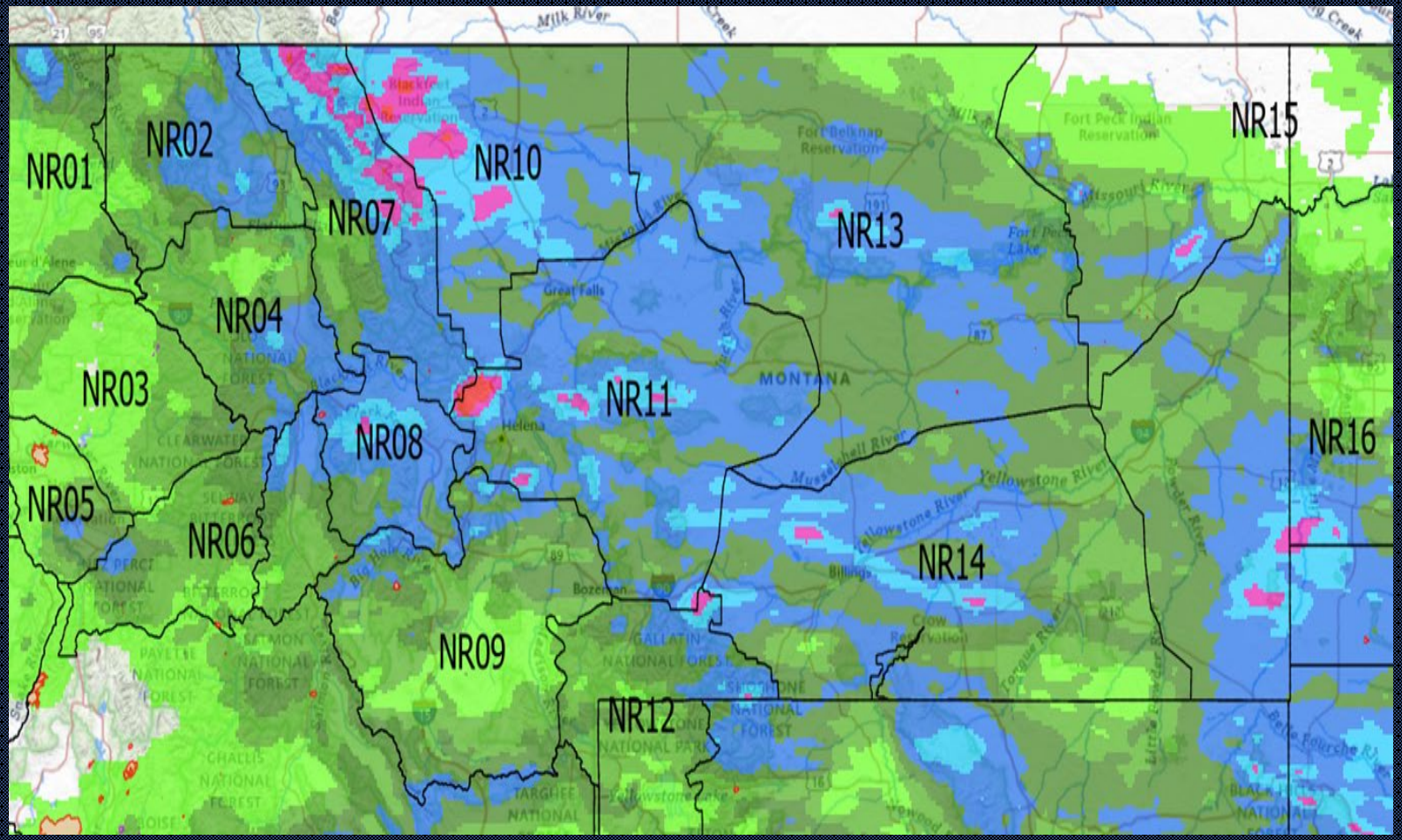


Factors – Temperature & Precip Outlooks

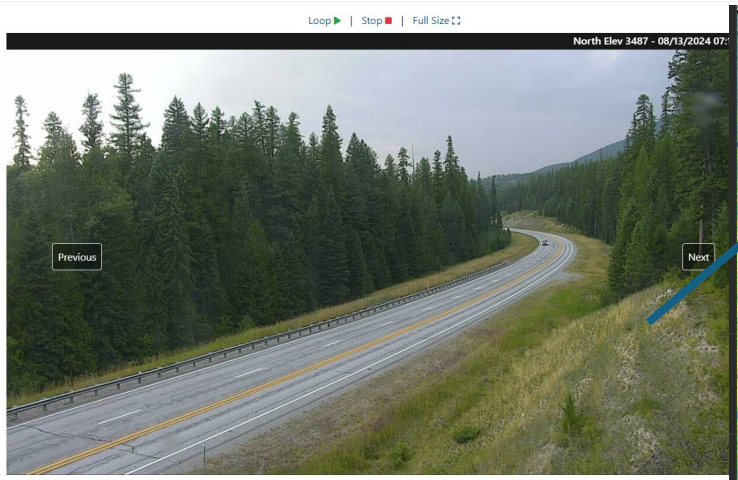


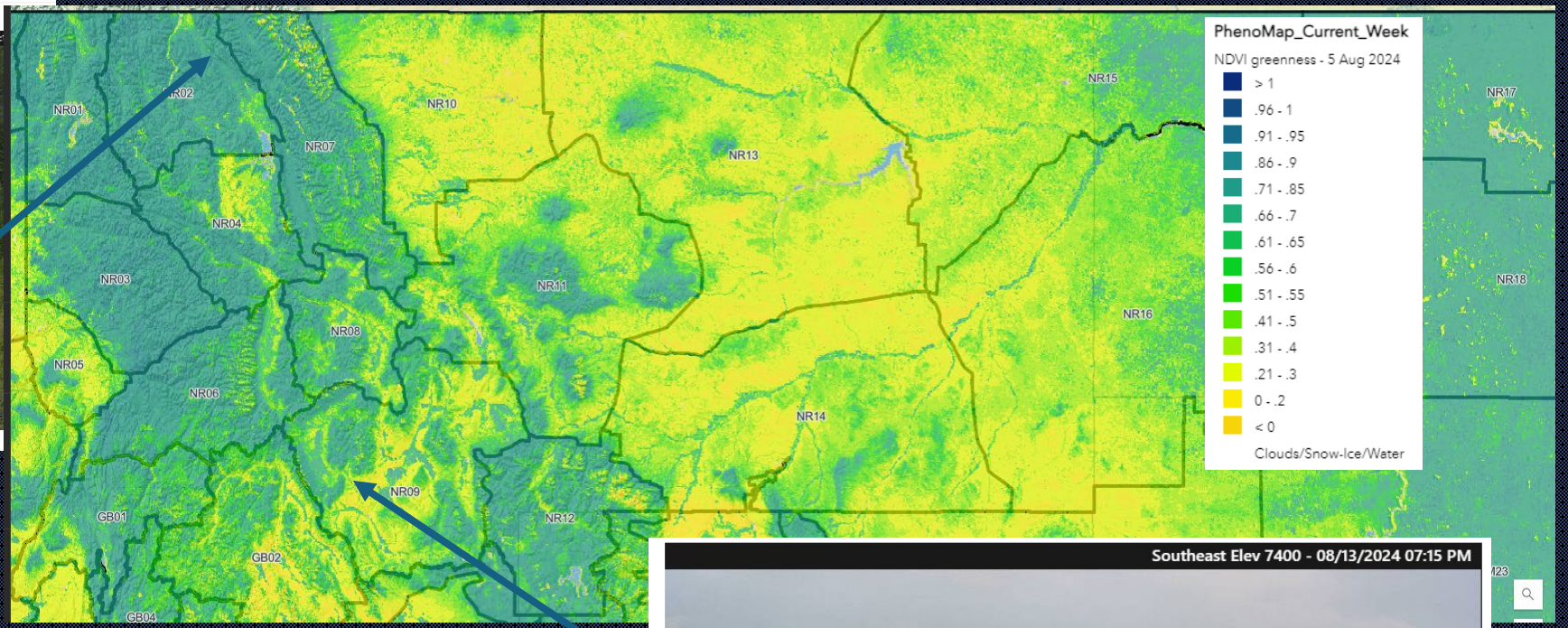


7- Day Precipitation Totals (as of 8/ 12)



Credit: Erin Noonan, FBAN - USFS



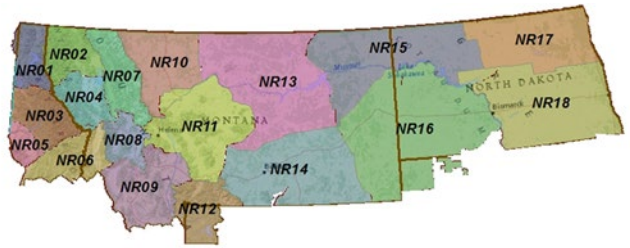


Live Fuel Moisture

- On our way to seasonal curing of live fuels. Monitoring for forecasted cold nights and frost kill in higher elevations.
- Where we have forests (and shaded fuels) live fuels are holding onto their moisture and slowly on their way to seasonal and normal curing.
- In the absence of forests, grasses are cured.
- Southeastern Montana live WOODY fuel moistures ~ 75-90% (~at 60% we consider live woody fully cured = higher fire spread). These live fuels are close to reaching a critical threshold at contributing to significant fire spread under the low RH/high wind days.

Credit: Erin Noonan, FBAN - USFS

NRCC PSAs 1-6 ERC Percentile Trend



NR-01 NORTHERN IDAHO

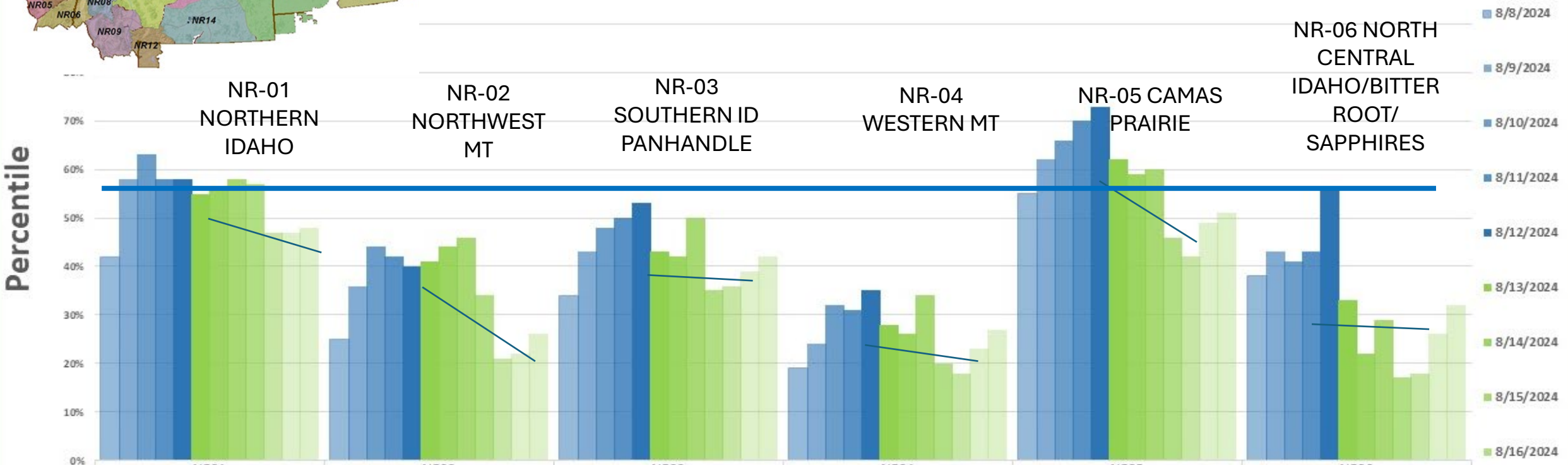
NR-02 NORTHWEST MT

NR-03 SOUTHERN ID PANHANDLE

NR-04 WESTERN MT

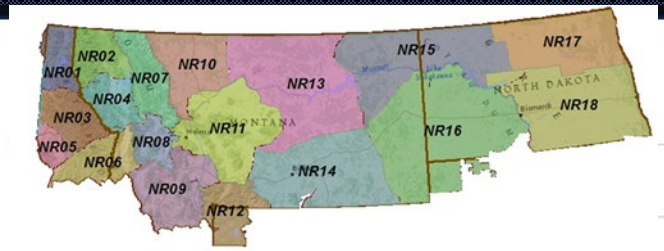
NR-05 CAMAS PRAIRIE

NR-06 NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO/BITTER ROOT/ SAPPHIRES



	NR01	NR02	NR03	NR04	NR05	NR06
8/8/2024	42%	25%	34%	19%	55%	38%
8/9/2024	58%	36%	43%	24%	62%	43%
8/10/2024	63%	44%	48%	32%	66%	41%
8/11/2024	58%	42%	50%	31%	70%	43%
8/12/2024	58%	40%	53%	35%	73%	56%
8/13/2024	55%	41%	43%	28%	62%	33%
8/14/2024	56%	44%	42%	26%	59%	22%
8/15/2024	58%	46%	50%	34%	60%	29%
8/16/2024	57%	34%	35%	20%	46%	17%
8/17/2024	47%	21%	36%	18%	42%	18%
8/18/2024	47%	22%	39%	23%	49%	26%
8/19/2024	48%	26%	42%	27%	51%	32%

Axis Title



NRCC PSAs 7-12 ERC Percentile Trend

NR-07 Glacier National Park & Wilderness Areas

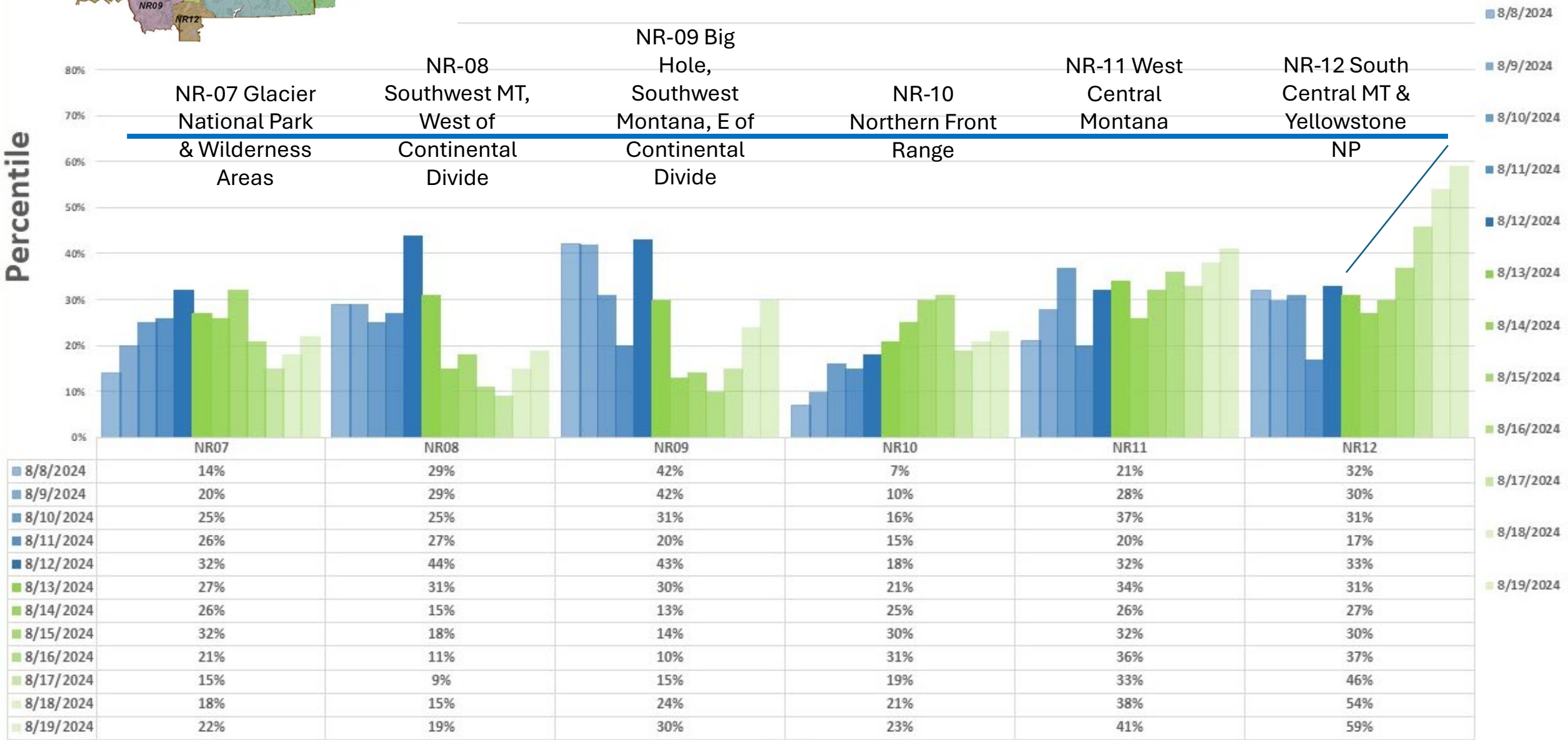
NR-08 Southwest MT, West of Continental Divide

NR-09 Big Hole, Southwest Montana, E of Continental Divide

NR-10 Northern Front Range

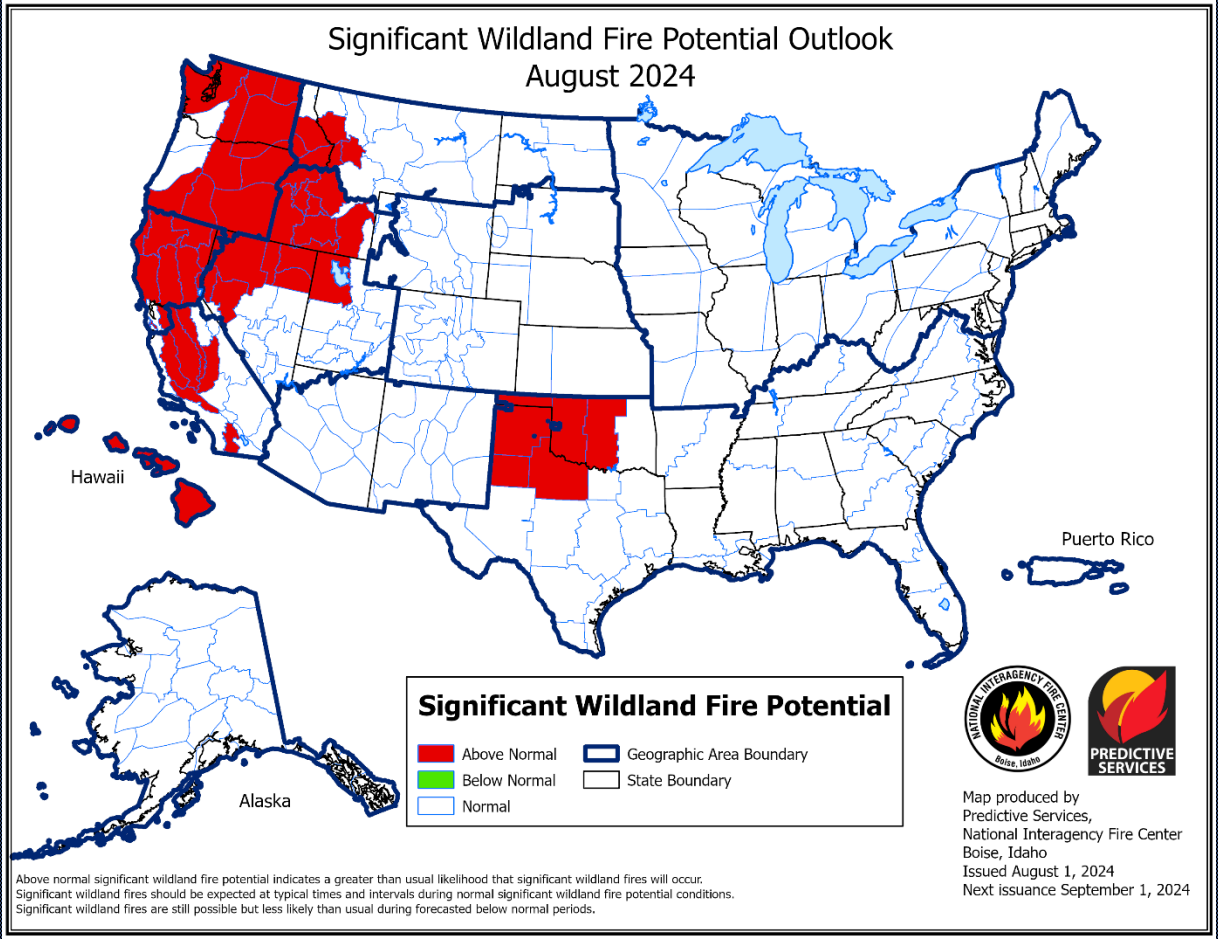
NR-11 West Central Montana

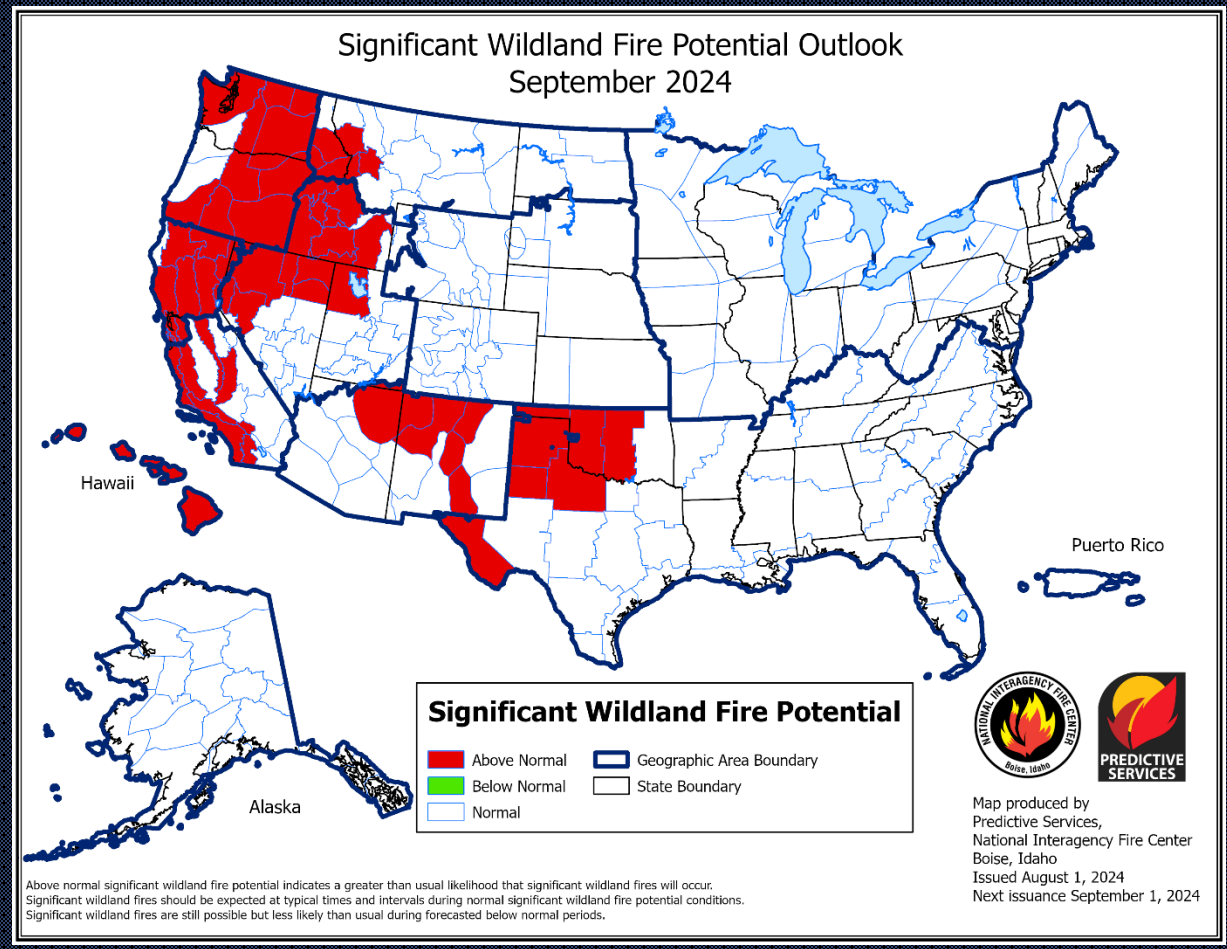
NR-12 South Central MT & Yellowstone NP



	NR07	NR08	NR09	NR10	NR11	NR12
8/8/2024	14%	29%	42%	7%	21%	32%
8/9/2024	20%	29%	42%	10%	28%	30%
8/10/2024	25%	25%	31%	16%	37%	31%
8/11/2024	26%	27%	20%	15%	20%	17%
8/12/2024	32%	44%	43%	18%	32%	33%
8/13/2024	27%	31%	30%	21%	34%	31%
8/14/2024	26%	15%	13%	25%	26%	27%
8/15/2024	32%	18%	14%	30%	32%	30%
8/16/2024	21%	11%	10%	31%	36%	37%
8/17/2024	15%	9%	15%	19%	33%	46%
8/18/2024	18%	15%	24%	21%	38%	54%
8/19/2024	22%	19%	30%	23%	41%	59%

Outlook – August & September





Current Outlook for Montana

- On 8/1, West Central and Southwestern Montana added as areas of above normal significant fire potential for August-September.
- MT has benefitted from precipitation, cooler temps and higher humidities the past few weeks
- Ongoing initial attack with lightning. So far successful
- Normal fire potential expected throughout the remainder of Montana
- Later in August - increased tendency for windier patterns
- All areas returning to normal by October
- A reminder that "normal" fire seasons can still yield significant fires.

Coordination and Preparedness

- 66 DNRC Engines Staffed
- 5 MT-205 Helicopters &3 Fixed Wing Detection Platforms
- Increased Preparedness Assets via HB 883
  - Large (Type 1) Helicopter, 2000-gallon fixed tank
  - Two 20-person hand crews
  - Large Air Tanker (on loan from State of Alaska)
  - Single Engine Scoopers
  - Air Attack Platform
  - Incident Awareness and Assessment Aircraft
  - Several other resources augmenting existing capacity

Additional Resources

Learning to live with fire is critical to a safe and healthy environment and community.

MTFireInfo.org is dedicated to helping you, as a Montanan, learn how to live better with wildfire.

Restrictions

Check for fire restrictions in your area.

Explore

Current Fire Info

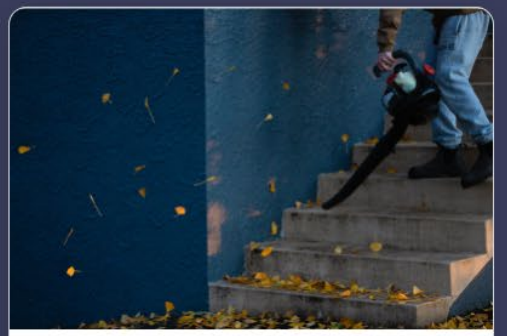
Check for current wildfires in Montana.

Explore

Smoke Preparedness

View current air quality forecasts and learn how to...

Explore



Preparing for Wildfire

Learn how to prepare for evacuation, smoke and how to..

Explore

Thank You!

Cory Calnan

Deputy Chief – DNRC Fire Protection Bureau

406-788-7718 ccalnan@mt.gov