



Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

State of Oklahoma

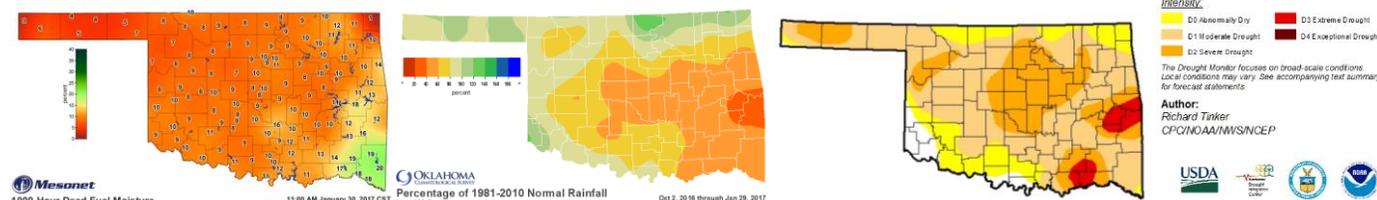
Issued: January 31, 2017

Effective: February 1 through February 14, 2017



Subject: Complete curing of the vigorous herbaceous growth from the growing season has resulted in an above normal fine fuel loading. Persistent drought indices have resulted in very dry large fuels. Above normal fine fuel loading in full dormancy and critically low 1,000 hour fuel moisture are expected to continue to produce problematic fire behavior with elevated fireline intensity in grass, shrub and timber fuels along with extended burning in timber fuels.

Discussion: Energy Release Component (ERC-G) across Oklahoma has hovered above the range of average spiking at 90th percentile with regularity. Lagging precipitation totals through summer drove KBDI values to well above 600 in several areas. Concurrently, drought rapidly developed during a hot and dry fall weather pattern. Drought conditions consistently expanded and intensified through mid-summer and fall with persistence into the dormant period of late winter. 1,000 fuel moisture values are critically low resulting in intense burning in timber fuels with dead and downed fuel component. Multiple tornadoes and ice-storms in previous years have resulted in pockets of heavy loading of all time-lag fuel classes. Above normal fire danger is expected to persist through February into March as Oklahoma continues through the climatological dry period. This advisory is the result of consultation with interagency wildfire agencies, local firefighting resources and the National Weather Service.



Difference from normal conditions: Recent fire occurrence has demonstrated substantial resistance to control utilizing standard timber and range firefighting tactics. Breakovers and spot fires have been frequent during recent incidents. Spotting is occurring at longer ranges than typically observed. Dead-standing and dead-downed timber is easily ignited by firebrands.

Concerns to Firefighters and the Public: The fire environment across Oklahoma is primed for above normal fire occurrence and well above normal fire severity. Firefighters should be prepared for extreme rates of spread in fine fuels along with exceptional fireline intensity in brush and timber fuels especially where large, dead fuels are present. Firefighting strategies should account for fire behavior influenced by the approach and passage of dry cold fronts prevalent during the late winter and early spring period in this area. Additionally, prepare for longer duration and more complex initial attack along with an increasing occurrence of extended attack. The public should avoid areas in the vicinity of an ongoing fire and heed evacuation notices should fires occur near their home or places of employment.

Mitigation Measures: Fire managers should be prepared to support periods of more frequent fire occurrence as well as the potential for more complex, longer duration wildfire incidents. Firefighters should be prepared to construct wider than normal control lines in brush and timber fuels while considering taking advantage of changes if the fire environment that will provide tactical opportunity. Dozers and maintainers will be best utilized in tandem. Wet-lines in fine fuels will require frequent patrol and intensive mop-up due to heavy fuel loading. In general, fires that are contained will require longer periods of patrol to prevent escape and to meet control specifications.

Area of Concern:

