

Fire Situation Report – March 31, 2023

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry



OFS STATISTICS for March 30, 2023

OFS Preparedness Level: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

NE Area – 2 Fires Burned 19.5 Acres (Cause: 2-Incendiary)

EC Area – No New Activity

SE Area – No New Activity

Large / Significant Fire Activity within the OFS Protection Area:

No New Activity

Fire Activity with OFS Response outside of the Protection Area:

No New Activity

OFS Prescribed Fire Activity:

No New Activity

Fire Department Activity:

Moderate Initial Attack Activity

Statewide Discussion: The strongest fire weather of the year so far will develop today across much of Oklahoma as a dryline penetrates into the state driving very dry air and warm temperatures over the area. The wind field will be impressive this afternoon supporting potential for rapid rates fire spread. Outside of the Panhandle counties, overnight moisture recovery was good and rains yesterday afternoon and evening did provide wetting amounts at a handful of sites from southern Oklahoma into northeastern Oklahoma. Also, few showers will move across far northern Oklahoma this morning. While that moisture will serve to temper fire behavior where it occurred, the strength today's fire weather will result in rapid drying of fuels. Lower fuel loading in the west and ongoing green up will limit potential to some extent today, although the next six to seven days will present persistent fire danger (especially west) with another spike in concern on Tuesday.

Today: A Red Flag Warning is in effect today for a large portion of Oklahoma. Rainfall from yesterday afternoon and overnight, as well as this morning, will temper the threat to some extent, but the strength of fire weather today will support accelerated drying of fuels, rapid rates of fire spread and erratic fire behavior. Winds are expected to gradually taper off into the night although very dry air remains resulting in an extended burning period focused in the northwestern counties.



- Oklahoma Panhandle/Northwestern Oklahoma:** Relative humidity values will dive into the single digits today over super dry fuels as temperatures register 63°-72° with little to no cloud cover. Blowing dust is likely offering some fuel shading although fine-dead fuel moisture values will register 3% across the area with some 2% observations likely. Westerly winds sustained 27-35 mph with gusts at time topping 50 mph will support rapid fire spread. Lower than normal fuel loading across most of the area will exhibit head fire rates of spread 201-261 ft/min (2.6 mph) with flame lengths 10-12 ft. Those areas where heavier fuel loading exists (canyons, drainages, CRP) will exhibit short duration runs more than 320 ft/min (3.6 mph). Problematic fire behavior including group tree torching and frequent flare ups should be anticipated. An extended burning period will persist well into the evening until winds taper off somewhat after 8:00 pm.
- Northwest of I-44:** Good overnight moisture recovery and a few areas of light rainfall will stall development of very-high to extreme fire danger, but the dryline will push in very dry air with relative humidity values in the 9-19% range as temperature warms to 72°-78°. Very little cloud cover is expected although blowing dust may develop. Fine-dead fuel moisture will register 3% across the area yielding very receptive dormant fuels. Areas along the I-44 corridor have some beneficial green up although concern from problematic fire behavior is present. Westerly winds sustained 23-35 mph gusting 35-50 mph will support rapid to extreme rates of fire spread – most notably in north-central and northeastern Oklahoma where normal fuel loading exists. Overall, head fire rates of spread on established fires will be 176-256 ft/min (+/- 2.4 mph) with flame lengths 10-12 ft. The taller, grass-dominated fuels from Kay County east into Nowata County may support head fire rates of spread exceeding 350 ft/min (3.9 mph) for periods of time. Relative humidity values are expected to remain below 30% through midnight resulting in an extended burning period.
- Southeast of I-44:** Some areas received wetting rains with storm development yesterday afternoon and evening through overnight and into the morning. Green up, especially in open, grassy areas will provide numerous breaks in the fuelscape although timber fuels and warm-season grass dominated areas will support problematic fire behavior. Temperature 74°-81°, relative humidity values 15% along I-44 to +/-30% in far southeastern Oklahoma will yield fine-dead fuel moisture values 3-6% spurring rapid, intense drying of fuels. West-southwest winds sustained 18-31 mph gusting to as high as 45 mph will drive grass dominated fire behavior around 125 ft/min given recent live fuel moisture improvements. Timber litter will exhibit ROS 30-48 ft/min with FL 4-6 ft.

Saturday: Marginal overnight moisture recovery and another day of low relative humidity values will support elevated fire danger again. Fortunately, wind speeds will be much lower with northerly winds around 10 mph over most of Oklahoma throttling back fire spread potential with most areas of grass fuels west of I-44 exhibiting rates of spread less than 100 ft/min.

Near-Term: Fire danger will remain a headline through the next six days with repetitive dryline intrusions supporting amplified drying of composite fuel moisture leading to enhanced resistance to control. Saturday and Sunday will present elevated concern across western Oklahoma and storm potential south. Another increase in fire danger comes again on Tuesday while storms develop southeast.

Burn Bans: Refer to: <https://ag.ok.gov/divisions/forestry-services/> for the most current burn ban information and links to specific burn ban proclamations.

