

# 2018 North Dakota Fire Weather Operating Plan

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## I. Introduction

This Annual Operating Plan (AOP) is a procedural guide, based on the National Interagency Agreement for Meteorological Services, which describes fire meteorological services provided within North Dakota. The AOP is updated annually after review by representatives of the National Weather Service (NWS) and each user agency in North Dakota.

## II. Service Area and Organizational Directory

Fire meteorological services in North Dakota are provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) offices in Bismarck and Grand Forks. The NWS weather forecast office (WFO) in Bismarck is responsible for the fire weather program in western and central North Dakota (Fire Weather zone 134). The NWS WFO in Grand Forks is responsible for eastern North Dakota (Fire Weather zone 135). See Figure 1. The normal fire weather season begins in early April and continues to around the end of October. The season will vary according to the actual weather. Fire weather forecasts and other fire weather related information can be found on the Bismarck and Grand Forks Internet web pages:

<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/> or <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/fgf/>

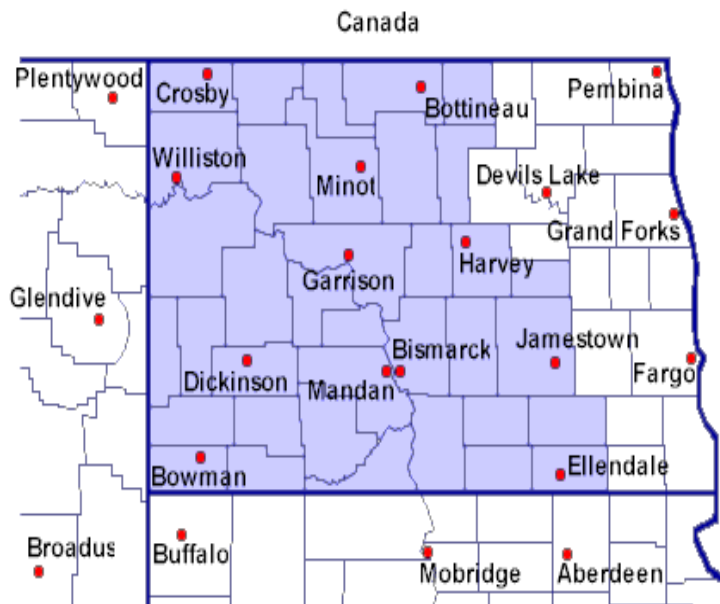


Figure 1. Fire Weather Zone 134 (shaded). Unshaded portions of North Dakota are Fire Weather Zone 135.

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### III. Services Provided by the USFS, RMRS, Fire Sciences Laboratory, Missoula, Montana

#### A. 1. Fire Danger Rating for North Dakota

The most commonly accepted definition of Fire Danger is: “**The resultant descriptor of the combination of both constant and variable factors which affect the initiation, spread and difficulty of control of wildfires on an area.**” The various factors of fuels, weather, topography and risk are combined to assess the daily fire potential on an area. Fire Danger is usually expressed in numeric or adjective terms.

A fire danger adjective rating for North Dakota will be provided in both a map and a text form by the Fire Sciences Lab in Missoula, Montana, using the NFDRS (National Fire Danger Rating System), the national standard in the United States. A single fire danger rating will be issued for each of the 53 counties in North Dakota (Fig. 2) The Fire Danger rating for North Dakota is issued daily around 5:30 am Central time during the fire weather season. It is a forecast of the **potential** for non-agricultural grasslands to **carry** fire. It is based on weather and grassland conditions. The highest threat period for grassland fire danger is usually before the Spring green-up (when grasslands are still in dormancy coming out of the winter season); and again in the late Summer into Fall (when the curing of grasslands leads to critical dryness in the moisture content of the various warm-season and cool-season grasses).

The five fire danger ratings are:

Low   Moderate   High   Very High   Extreme

These ratings may be useful to local fire management officials for daily planning and preparedness purposes. See Appendix A.1 for an example of these products.

The following description of Fire Danger Rating used nationally is from the Wildland Fire Assessment System, and is a description of what **may** happen should a fire ignite. It does **not** describe whether or not a fire will ignite.

Fire Danger Rating and Color Code	Description
Low (L) (Dark Green)	Fuels do not ignite readily from small firebrands although a more intense heat source, such as lightning, may start fires in duff or punky wood. Fires in open cured grasslands may burn freely a few hours after rain, but woods fires spread slowly by creeping or smoldering, and burn in irregular fingers. There is little danger of spotting.
Moderate (M) (Light Green or Blue)	Fires can start from most accidental causes, but with the exception of lightning fires in some areas, the number of starts is generally low. Fires in open cured grasslands will burn briskly and spread rapidly on windy days. Timber fires spread slowly to moderately fast. The average fire is of moderate intensity, although heavy concentrations of fuel, especially draped fuel, may burn hot. Short-distance spotting may occur, but is not persistent. Fires are not likely to become serious and control is relatively easy.
High (H) (Yellow)	All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are attacked successfully while small.

<p>Very High (VH) (Orange)</p>	<p>Fires start easily from all causes and, immediately after ignition, spread rapidly and increase quickly in intensity. Spot fires are a constant danger. Fires burning in light fuels may quickly develop high intensity characteristics such as long-distance spotting and fire whirlwinds when they burn into heavier fuels.</p>
<p>Extreme (E) (Red)</p>	<p>Fires start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious. Development into high intensity burning will usually be faster and occur from smaller fires than in the very high fire danger class. Direct attack is rarely possible and may be dangerous except immediately after ignition. Fires that develop headway in heavy slash or in conifer stands may be unmanageable while the extreme burning condition lasts. Under these conditions the only effective and safe control action is on the flanks until the weather changes or the fuel supply lessens.</p>

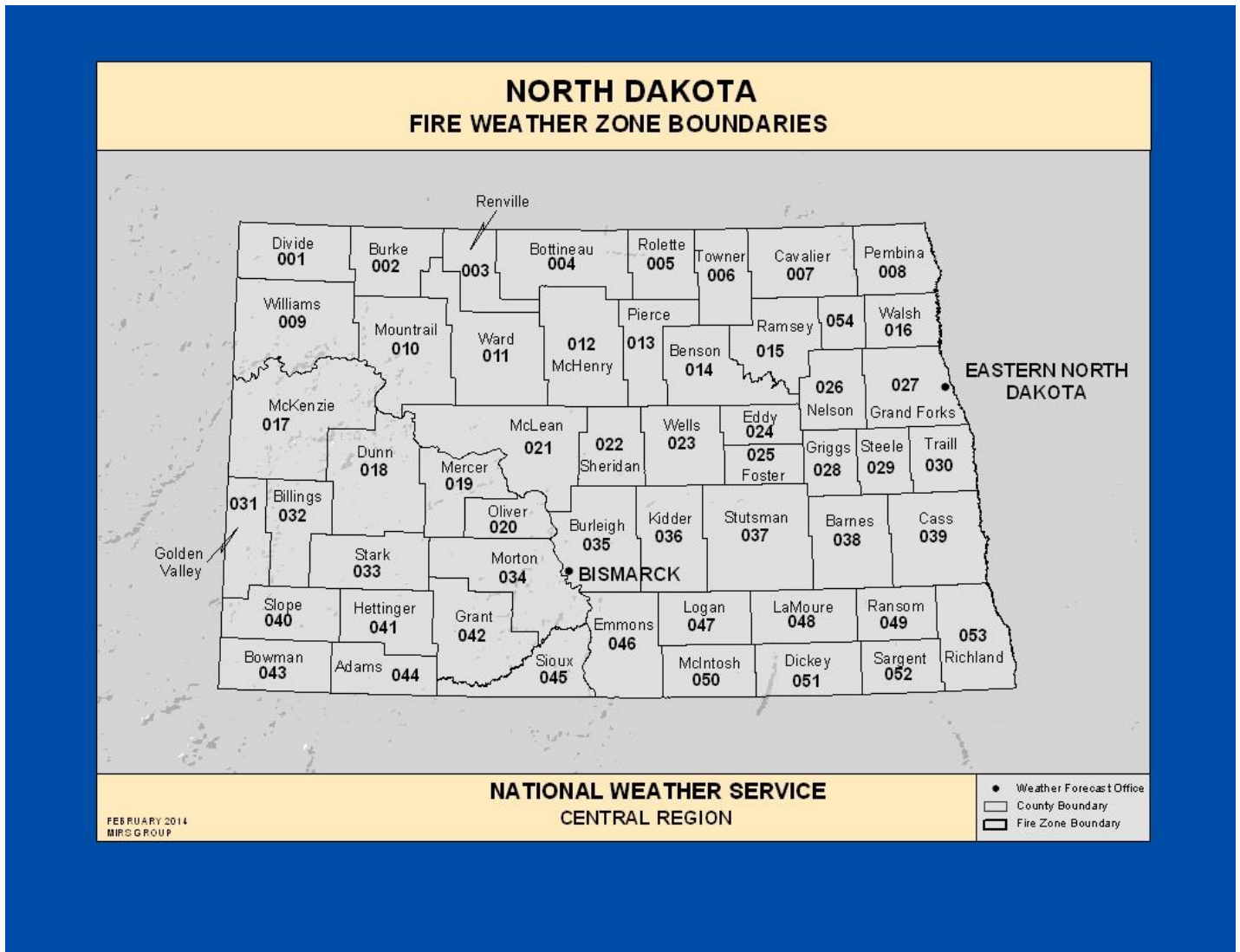


Figure 2. Fire Weather Zones used for Fire Danger Rating, Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings.



## IV. Services Provided by the NOAA National Weather Service

### A. Basic Services

#### 1. Fire Weather Planning Forecast (routine issuance)

This forecast product is issued twice daily during the fire weather season. The planning forecast will be issued near 4 a.m. and 4 p.m. Central time. The morning issuance will be updated by Grand Forks NWS and will include the observed Haines index.

The morning forecast contains a brief weather discussion, forecasts for today, tonight and tomorrow, and a general 3 to 7-day forecast. The afternoon forecast covers the periods of tonight, tomorrow, tomorrow night, the following day, and a general 3 to 7-day forecast. The product will be updated as needed. The “Discussion” should be tailored to address items of importance to the fire weather forecast. Persistent errors or biases in the forecast should be brought to the attention of the NOAA NWS. The local optional elements may vary from office to office.

The Bismarck planning forecast optional local elements will be the mid-level Haines index (Appendix D), LAL (Appendix E), Chance of Wetting Rain (CWR >.10 inches), transport wind, mixing height and smoke dispersal (Appendix F). See Appendix A.2 for examples of these products.

The Grand Forks optional local elements will be the mid-level Haines index, LAL, Precipitation amount, hours of sunshine, transport wind, mixing height, and smoke dispersal.

#### 2. National Fire Danger Rating System Forecasts – Fire Weather Matrix (FWM) (routine issuance)

The National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) is designed to represent the fire potential at peak burning conditions over a large area, generally in excess of 100,000 acres. The NWS offices in Bismarck and Grand Forks provide a point forecast, or Fire Weather Matrix (FWM) for RAWS stations utilized in the forecast NFDRS program. The point forecast is used in the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) forecast NFDRS calculations.

The following RAWS sites will receive point forecasts daily during the fire season:

##### NWS Bismarck

Crosby	320101	Watford City	321703
Painted Canyon	322503	Sand Creek	323804
Lostwood	320220	Knife River	322701
J. Clark Salyer	320401	Long Lake	322901
Arrowwood	323536	Turtle Mountain	320501
		Tatanka Prairie	328501

##### NWS Grand Forks

Devils Lake	321401		
Hampden	320701	Sheyenne	324605

The point forecasts (FWM) should be sent by 1545 LDT. Forecasted NFDRS indices are valid 24 hours from the current day’s 1400 LDT observation. They should be available in WIMS by 1615 LDT. Another morning issuance of the FWM point forecast is used by the Fire Lab for a morning issuance of Fire Danger Rating.

The Following is an explanation of codes used in NFDRS Forecasts. See Appendix A.3 for an example.

FCST, STATION#, YYMMDD, 13, WX, TEMP, RH, LAL1, LAL2, WDIR, WSPD, , TX, TN, RHx, RHn, PD1, PD2, WETF

FCST: Indicates individual site forecasts.

STATION#: NFDRS site number

YYMMDD: Date

13: Valid Forecast Time (Always 13 to indicate 1300 LST)

WX: Weather valid at 1300 LST tomorrow. Valid entries are:

0 clear

1 scattered clouds (1/8 to 4/8)

2 broken clouds (5/8 to 7/8)

3 overcast clouds (more than 7/8)

4 foggy

5 drizzle

6 raining

7 snowing or sleet

8 showers (in sight or at the station)

9 thunderstorm

(Categories 5, 6, 7 sets most NFDRS indices to 0. ERC is the exception)

TEMP: Temperature in degrees F valid at 1300 LST

RH: Relative humidity in percent valid at 1300 LST

LAL1: Lightning Activity Level 1400 LST to 2300 LST

LAL2: Lightning Activity Level 2300 LST to 2300 LST

WDIR: Wind direction valid at 1300 LST

WSPD: Wind speed in mph valid at 1300 LST

TX: Maximum temperature from 1300 LST to 1300 LST tomorrow

TN: Minimum temperature from 1300 LST to 1300 LST tomorrow

RHx: Maximum relative humidity from 1300 LST to 1300 LST tomorrow

RHn: Minimum relative humidity from 1300 LST to 1300 LST tomorrow

PD1: Precipitation duration in hours 1300 LST to 0500 LST

PD2: Precipitation duration in hours 0500 LST to 1300 LST

WETF Y or N: Wet flag, yes or no. This indicates whether or not fuels will be wet at 1300 LST.

### 3. Fire Weather Watch/Red Flag Warning (non-routine issuance)

These products are essential to the safety of the fire crews. Because of this, a Red Flag Warning should be issued even if the event appears to be borderline. Coordination with surrounding offices and land management agencies is essential. Red flag warnings should be issued any time of the day if conditions warrant.

- 1) A Fire Weather Watch will be issued when the potential for Red Flag conditions are expected in the next 12 to 72 hours.
- 2) A Red Flag Warning will be issued if the Red Flag criteria, given below, are expected to be met within the next 24 hours, are imminent or are occurring.

The Red Flag information will be included as a “headline” in the daily planning forecast. It will also be disseminated as a special product that is available on the Internet and NOAA Weather Wire. In addition, the North Dakota Interagency Dispatch Center will be notified by phone at the main dispatch line: 701-989-7330. (after hours, and on weekends, call the duty officer at the main dispatch line. The line is forwarded to the Duty Officer. Marti Dahlin (701-848-6649 or Cory Andvik at 701-425-6291).

See Appendix B for Red Flag Criteria. This was updated for the 2016 season.

An example of the fire weather watch and red flag warning product is provided in Appendix A.4.

### 5. Spot Forecasts (non-routine issuance)

#### a. Policy

- Spot Forecasts will be issued upon request of any federal, state, tribal, or local official in support of a **wildfire**.
- Upon request of any **federal official** as required under the Interagency Agreement
- Upon request of any state, tribal, or local official **in coordination with any federal land management agency**.
- Upon request of any public safety official when **essential to public safety**
- Will **not** provide to private citizens or commercial entities not acting as an agent of a government agency.

#### b. Procedure for Requesting Spot Forecasts – **change beginning in 2017**

**The preferred method to request a spot forecast is via the national spot web page at <http://www.weather.gov/spot>.** The Spot Forecast will be posted to the web page. Our goal is to provide a forecast within 30 minutes of the request; however, higher priority duties may occasionally delay the spot forecast. An updated Spot Forecast may be requested if it appears conditions are significantly different than those forecast. User feedback on the Spot Forecasts is strongly encouraged.

**Should the national spot web page be unavailable,** requests for Spot forecasts to WFO Bismarck (Fire Zone 134) can also be made using WS Form D-1 or equivalent (Figure 5b). Normally, requests/forms should be submitted by fax (701-250-4450). Topographic information and observed weather conditions should be provided when appropriate/available. Phone inquiries should be directed to 701-250-4494. For Spot Forecast service in eastern North Dakota (Fire Zone 135), call WFO Grand Forks at 701-795-5127. **The requesting agency should provide the appropriate fax number or email address for this spot forecast.**

The NWS will strive to provide as much detail as possible in the wind forecast. This includes specific wind shift times, wind gusts, etc.

### c. Weather Elements Included in Spot Forecasts

Discussion - A brief synopsis of weather features affecting the area

Sky/Weather, Maximum/Minimum temperature, Maximum/Minimum relative humidity, and 20 foot Winds (including shifts and gusts)

Optional Elements (Bismarck) – Mid-level Haines index, transport wind, mixing depth, LAL, and Chance of wetting rain (>.10 inches).

Optional Elements (Grand Forks) - Mid-level Haines index, LAL, Precipitation amount, hours of sunshine, transport wind, mixing height, and smoke dispersal.

See Appendix A.5 for an example of a Spot Forecast.

## B. Special Services

### 1. Incident Meteorologist (IMET) Service

If a wildfire is, or is expected to be, uncontrollable, and loss of life and/or considerable property damage is a possibility, the land management agency may request an on-site deployment of a trained and certified NWS Incident Meteorologist (IMET). An IMET may be requested to a wildland fire at the request of a land management agency through the North Dakota Interagency Dispatch Center. Per NWSI 10-402, “All requests for IMET support will be requested through the NFWOC (National Fire Weather Operations Coordinator).” If a request to the Bismarck Weather Forecast Office for an IMET is made from anyone other than the NFWOC, then contact the Bismarck MIC (Meteorologist in Charge). The MIC will contact the NFWOC on duty, who will facilitate finding an IMET at the regional or national level. The NFWOC 24 hour Duty Number is 877-323-IMET (4638).

## IV. Wildland Fire Agency Services and Responsibilities

### A. RAWS Station Identification Numbers: Procedures for a New RAWS Station

The following steps are necessary in order to correctly provide a new RAWS station with its identification number:

The land management agency responsible for the new site will provide preliminary information on the plans for a new station. This information will be provided to the NWS Central Region Fire Weather Program Manager (Christopher Foltz, available at [Christopher.foltz@noaa.gov](mailto:Christopher.foltz@noaa.gov) 816-268-3143). The preliminary information should also be shared with the local NWS office. The NWS will provide input on siting criteria of the site if requested by the land management agency.

A formal request for the six-digit RAWS identification number will be provided to the responsible NWS office, or directly to the Central Region Headquarters Operational Service Meteorologist.

The regional Operational Services Meteorologist will coordinate with the local NWS office, appropriate land management personnel, and the WIMS staff in order to determine the proper RAWS identification number. Note that the first two digits of the identification number denote the state (in ND, the number is 32), the second pair of digits denotes the county, and the last pair of digits denotes the particular station in that county.

In each county, once a station is given a number, that identification number can no longer be used, even if that station becomes inactive.

The regional Operational Services Meteorologist will provide the RAWS identification number to the requesting land management agency and the appropriate NWS office.

The land management agency will notify WIMS in order to assure that the observations are received and sent from the system.

## VI. Appendices

### A. USFS Fire Laboratory Product Examples

#### 1. North Dakota Fire Danger Statement text and map example

NORTH DAKOTA FIRE DANGER STATEMENT  
ISSUED BY THE WILDLAND FIRE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (WFAS)

0100 PM Tue Mar 29 2016

The five fire danger ratings are:  
Low...Moderate...High...Very High...Extreme

Adams County...MODERATE

Barnes County...HIGH

Benson County...MODERATE

Billings County...MODERATE

Bottineau County...MODERATE

Bowman County...MODERATE

Burke County...MODERATE

Burleigh County...MODERATE

Cass County...HIGH

Cavalier County...MODERATE

Dickey County...MODERATE

Divide County...MODERATE

Dunn County...HIGH

Eddy County...HIGH

Emmons County...MODERATE

Foster County...HIGH

Golden Valley County...MODERATE

Grand Forks County...MODERATE

Grant County...MODERATE

Griggs County...HIGH

Hettinger County...MODERATE

Kidder County...MODERATE

LaMoure County...HIGH

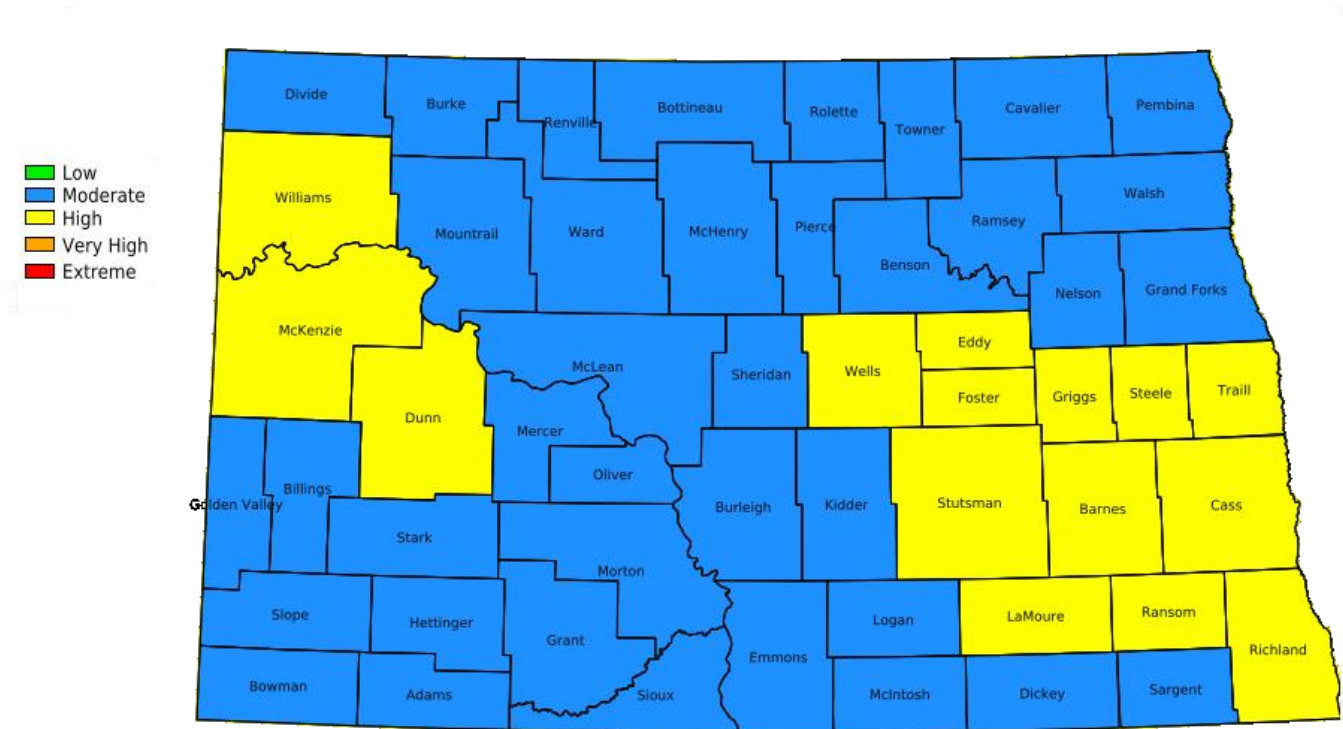
Logan County...MODERATE  
McHenry County...MODERATE  
McIntosh County...MODERATE  
McKenzie County...HIGH  
McLean County...MODERATE  
Mercer County...MODERATE  
Morton County...MODERATE  
Mountrail County...MODERATE  
Nelson County...MODERATE  
Oliver County...MODERATE  
Pembina County...MODERATE  
Pierce County...MODERATE  
Ramsey County...MODERATE  
Ransom County...HIGH  
Renville County...MODERATE  
Richland County...HIGH  
Rolette County...MODERATE  
Sargent County...MODERATE  
Sheridan County...MODERATE  
Sioux County...MODERATE  
Slope County...MODERATE  
Stark County...MODERATE  
Steele County...HIGH  
Stutsman County...HIGH  
Towner County...MODERATE  
Traill County...HIGH  
Walsh County...MODERATE  
Ward County...MODERATE  
Wells County...HIGH  
Williams County...HIGH

FOR INFORMATION ON BURNING RESTRICTIONS OR PROHIBITIONS CONTACT YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGER OR FIRE DEPARTMENT...OR VISIT THE NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES WEBSITE AT [WWW.ND.GOV/DES/PLANNING/FIRE-DANGER-AWARENESS/](http://WWW.ND.GOV/DES/PLANNING/FIRE-DANGER-AWARENESS/)

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WFAS

## North Dakota Adjective Fire Danger



0100 PM Tue Mar 29 2016  
Wildland Fire Assessment System (WFAS)



## B. NWS Product Examples

### 2. Fire Weather Planning Forecast

FIRE WEATHER PLANNING FORECAST (MORNING)

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

TIME-DATE

...HEADLINE... (REQUIRED FOR RED FLAG WARNINGS AND FIRE WEATHER WATCHES...RECOMMENDED FOR SIGNIFICANT FEATURES AT OTHER TIMES)

.DISCUSSION...

NDZXXX-XXX>XXX-DDHHMM-

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTORS

...RED FLAG WARNING/FIRE WEATHER WATCH HEADLINE... (AS NEEDED)

.TODAY...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MAX TEMPERATURE.....

24 HR TREND.....

MIN HUMIDITY.....

24 HR TREND.....

WIND (20 FT)....../.....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.TONIGHT...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MIN TEMPERATURE...

24 HR TREND.....

MAX HUMIDITY.....

24 HR TREND.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.TOMORROW...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MAX TEMPERATURE...

MIN HUMIDITY.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS....

.FORECAST DAYS 3 THROUGH 7... (WINDS MUST BE INCLUDED DAYS 3-5)

.DAY3... (DAYS CAN BE COMBINED)

.DAY4...

.DAY5...

.DAY6...

.DAY7...

\$\$

[FORECAST FOR NEXT GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTOR AND FIRE WEATHER ZONE GROUP]

\$\$

FIRE WEATHER PLANNING FORECAST (AFTERNOON)

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

TIME-DATE

...HEADLINE... (REQUIRED FOR RED FLAG WARNINGS AND FIRE WEATHER WATCHES...SIGNIFICANT FEATURES AT OTHER TIMES RECOMMENDED)

.DISCUSSION...

NDZXXX-XXX>XXX-DDHHMM-

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTORS

...RED FLAG WARNING/FIRE WEATHER WATCH HEADLINE... (AS NEEDED)

.TONIGHT...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MIN TEMPERATURE...

24 HR TREND.....

MAX HUMIDITY.....

24 HR TREND.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.TOMORROW...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MAX TEMPERATURE...

24 HR TREND.....

MIN HUMIDITY.....

24 HR TREND.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.TOMORROW NIGHT...

SKY/WEATHER.....

MIN TEMPERATURE...

MAX HUMIDITY.....

WIND (20 FT).....  
OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.FOLLOWING DAY...  
SKY/WEATHER.....  
MAX TEMPERATURE...  
MIN HUMIDITY.....  
WIND (20 FT).....  
OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

.FORECAST DAYS 3 THROUGH 7... (WINDS MUST BE INCLUDED DAYS 3-5)

.DAY3... (DAYS CAN BE COMBINED)

.DAY4...

.DAY5...

.DAY6...

.DAY7...

\$\$

[FORECAST FOR NEXT GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTOR AND FIRE WEATHER ZONE GROUP]

\$\$

### 3. National Fire Danger Rating System Forecasts

The following is an example of the point forecast for the RAWS sites in the Bismarck forecast area. The Grand Forks product will look the same, but will be for the RAWS sites in their forecast area.

FNUS83 KBIS 061944  
FWMBIS

FCST, 320101, 100407, 13, 1, 54, 27, 1, 1, W, 14, , 56, 29, 72, 26, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 320220, 100407, 13, 2, 54, 31, 1, 1, S, 11, , 56, 28, 81, 20, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 320401, 100407, 13, 1, 56, 34, 1, 1, SSE, 06, , 57, 29, 81, 29, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 321703, 100407, 13, 2, 54, 29, 1, 1, W, 13, , 58, 30, 78, 15, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 322503, 100407, 13, 2, 51, 30, 1, 2, WNW, 14, , 54, 30, 72, 24, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 322701, 100407, 13, 2, 55, 34, 1, 2, SE, 05, , 60, 30, 78, 19, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 322901, 100407, 13, 1, 55, 35, 1, 2, NNW, 10, , 60, 31, 81, 22, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 323536, 100407, 13, 1, 53, 36, 1, 1, N, 14, , 60, 30, 85, 28, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 323804, 100407, 13, 2, 49, 32, 1, 2, WNW, 14, , 55, 30, 72, 27, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 320501, 100407, 13, 1, 52, 41, 1, 1, NNE, 04, , 52, 27, 92, 41, 0, 0, N  
FCST, 328501, 100407, 13, 2, 55, 34, 1, 2, WNW, 06, , 61, 32, 78, 23, 0, 0, N

Beginning in 2015, both the Grand Forks and Bismarck NWS offices began providing 7-day point forecasts for the RAWS sites. This was in cooperation with the Fire Lab as an experimental 7-day forecast effort that will continue in 2016. The following is an example of the 7-day point forecast for Crosby RAWS and Lostwood RAWS. The text continues for 9 more RAWS sites within the Bismarck forecast area. The Grand Forks text product will look much the same, but will be valid for the RAWS sites in Grand Forks' forecast area.

FNUS83 KBIS 232232  
FWMBIS

FCST,320101,160224,13,2,31,73,1,1,NNW,18,,39,21,100,62,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160225,13,2,30,70,1,1,SW,06,,33,16,100,68,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160226,13,0,42,56,1,1,W,12,,43,22,100,54,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160227,13,2,38,62,1,1,N,09,,44,24,100,54,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160228,13,2,27,73,1,1,W,09,,40,17,100,58,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160229,13,2,25,69,1,1,NNE,09,,32,15,100,66,0,0,N  
FCST,320101,160301,13,2,30,67,1,1,WNW,08,,31,15,94,58,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160224,13,3,29,80,1,1,NNW,18,,38,21,100,64,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160225,13,2,28,72,1,1,W,08,,32,16,100,71,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160226,13,1,38,65,1,1,WNW,16,,39,21,100,63,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160227,13,2,35,68,1,1,NNE,09,,41,24,100,62,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160228,13,2,21,81,1,1,W,08,,37,15,99,63,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160229,13,2,23,68,1,1,ENE,08,,28,12,100,64,0,0,N  
FCST,320220,160301,13,2,28,69,1,1,W,08,,28,13,95,58,0,0,N

...  
...  
...

#### 4. Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings

URGENT - FIRE WEATHER MESSAGE  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE BISMARCK ND  
349 AM CDT SUN OCT 11 2015

...RED FLAG WARNING FOR PORTIONS OF WESTERN AND FAR SOUTH CENTRAL  
NORTH DAKOTA SUNDAY...

.CRITICAL FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE LIKELY SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND  
EARLY EVENING ACROSS PORTIONS OF WESTERN AND FAR SOUTH CENTRAL  
NORTH DAKOTA. WESTERLY WIND GUSTS AROUND 60 MPH ARE LIKELY...WITH  
MINIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY AROUND 25 PERCENT AND TEMPERATURES IN  
THE UPPER 60S TO LOWER 70S. COORDINATION WITH FIRE MANAGERS  
SUGGEST FUELS ARE SUFFICIENTLY DRY IN THE AREA TO SUPPORT RAPID  
FIRE SPREAD UNDER THESE CONDITIONS. THIS RED FLAG WARNING  
INCLUDES WATFORD CITY...KILLDEER...DICKINSON...CARSON...SELFRIDGE...  
MOTT...HETTINGER...BOWMAN...AMIDON...BEACH...MEDORA AND  
SURROUNDING AREAS.

NDZ017-018-031>033-040>045-111700-  
/O.UPG.KBIS.FW.A.0016.151011T1800Z-151012T0200Z/  
/O.NEW.KBIS.FW.W.0020.151011T1800Z-151012T0200Z/  
MCKENZIE-DUNN-GOLDEN VALLEY-BILLINGS-STARK-SLOPE-HETTINGER-GRANT-  
BOWMAN-ADAMS-SIOUX-  
349 AM CDT SUN OCT 11 2015 /249 AM MDT SUN OCT 11 2015/

...RED FLAG WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 1 PM CDT /NOON MDT/ THIS  
AFTERNOON TO 9 PM CDT /8 PM MDT/ THIS EVENING FOR HIGH WINDS...LOW  
RELATIVE HUMIDITY AND DRY FUELS FOR FIRE WEATHER ZONES  
017...018...031...032...033...040... 041...042...043...044 AND  
045...

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN BISMARCK HAS ISSUED A RED FLAG  
WARNING...WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM 1 PM CDT /NOON MDT/ THIS  
AFTERNOON TO 9 PM CDT /8 PM MDT/ THIS EVENING. THE FIRE WEATHER  
WATCH IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT.

\* WIND...WESTERLY GUSTS AROUND 60 MPH.

\* HUMIDITY...MINIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY AROUND 25 PERCENT.

\* TEMPERATURES...UPPER 60S AND LOWER 70S.

\* IMPACTS...RAPID FIRE SPREAD POSSIBLE WITH ANY START.

&&

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A RED FLAG WARNING MEANS THAT CRITICAL FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE EITHER OCCURRING NOW...OR WILL SHORTLY. A COMBINATION OF STRONG WINDS...LOW RELATIVE HUMIDITY...AND WARM TEMPERATURES WILL CREATE THE POTENTIAL FOR RAPID SPREAD OF ANY FIRE THAT IGNITES.

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AJ

## 5. Spot Forecasts

SPOT FORECAST FOR (NAME OF INCIDENT OR SITE)

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

TIME-DATE

IF CONDITIONS BECOME UNREPRESENTATIVE, CONTACT THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

...HEADLINE... (REQUIRED IF FIRE WEATHER WATCH/RED FLAG WARNING IN EFFECT)

DISCUSSION...

FIRST PERIOD

SKY/WEATHER.....

TEMPERATURE.....

HUMIDITY.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

SECOND PERIOD

SKY/WEATHER.....

TEMPERATURE.....

HUMIDITY.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

THIRD PERIOD

SKY/WEATHER.....

TEMPERATURE.....

HUMIDITY.....

WIND (20 FT).....

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS...

\$\$

FORECASTER...

REQUESTING OFFICIAL...

REASON FOR REQUEST...

## B. Red Flag Warning Criteria and the Red Flag Matrix – a change beginning in 2016:

The following red flag matrix was based on calculations for Rate of Spread of wildfires using “Behave” software given certain wind and relative humidity values on a sunny summer day with a temperature of 80F, is used as a “first look” when considering the need for a Red Flag Warning. The chart is meant as a guide, and is not absolute.

Some special considerations (discretion clause) to take into account:

NWS will maintain limited flexibility in using and interpreting the Red Flag Matrix. This flexibility allows forecaster discretion, and will allow forecasters to issue a Red Flag Warning, albeit sparingly, for unforeseen or drastic weather events, such as:

- 1) Dry thunderstorm activity is foreseen during an extremely dry period.
- 2) Anytime the forecaster foresees a change in weather that would result in a significant increase in fore danger (e.g., very strong winds associated with a cold front even though the fire danger rating is below the high category, extensive lightning, etc.)

During the off-season (post freeze of RAWS stations and pre-greenup of the RAWS stations) forecasters will use the discretion while cross-referencing the Red Flag Matrix in Red Flag decision-making.


Red Flag Matrix


Relative Humidity (%)

		40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%
Sustained Wind Speed (mph)	5 mph	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	10 mph	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	15 mph	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	20 mph	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
	25 mph	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	30 mph	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	35 mph	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	40 mph	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Use Red Flag Matrix when  
Fire Danger is: High, Very  
High, or Extreme

Red Flag Conditions  
needed for at least  
3 consecutive hours

### C. Spot Forecast Fax Request Form and Instructions

WS FORM D-1 (1-2005) (Supersedes Previous Editions)		<b>SPOT REQUEST</b> (See reverse for instructions)				U.S. Department of Commerce NOAA National Weather Service					
Please call the NWS Weather Forecast Office (WFO) when submitting a request and also after you receive a forecast to ensure request and forecast were received. Please provide feedback to WFO on forecast.											
1. Time†		2. Date		3. Name of Incident or Project			4. Requesting Agency				
5. Requesting Official				6. Phone Number			7. Fax Number		8. Contact Person		
9. Ignition/Incident Time and Date		12. Reason for Spot Request (choose one only) <input type="radio"/> <b>Wildfire</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Non-Wildfire</b> Under the Interagency Agreement for Meteorological Services (USFS, BLM, NPS, USFWS, BIA) <input type="radio"/> <b>Non-Wildfire</b> State, tribal or local fire agency working in coordination with a federal participant in the Interagency Agreement for Meteorological Services <input type="radio"/> <b>Non-Wildfire</b> Essential to public safety, e.g. due to the proximity of population centers or critical infrastructure.					13. Latitude/Longitude:				
10. Size (Acres)							14. Elevation (ft, Mean Sea Level) Top:                      Bottom:				
11. Type of Incident <input type="radio"/> <b>Wildfire</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Prescribed Fire</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Wildland Fire Use (WFU)</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>HAZMAT</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Search And Rescue (SAR)</b>							15. Drainage				
		16. Aspect		17. Sheltering <input type="radio"/> <b>Full</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Partial</b> <input type="radio"/> <b>Unsheltered</b>							
18. Fuel Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Grass <input type="checkbox"/> Brush <input type="checkbox"/> Timber <input type="checkbox"/> Slash <input type="checkbox"/> Grass/Timber Understory <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Fuel Model: 1,2,3    4,5,6,7    8,9,10    11,12,13    2,5,8											
19. Location and name of nearest weather observing station (distance & direction from project):											
20. Weather Observations from project or nearby station(s): (Winds should be in compass direction e.g. N, NW, etc.)											
Place	Elevation	†Ob Time	20 ft. Wind		Eye Level Wind.		Temp.		Moisture		Remarks (Relevant Weather, etc)
			Dir	Speed	Dir	Speed	Dry	Wet	RH	DP	
21. Requested Forecast Period Date		22. Primary Forecast Elements (Check all that are needed) (for management ignited wildland fires, provide prescription parameters):					23. Remarks (other needed forecast elements, forecast needed for specific time, etc.)				
Start _____		Needed:									
End _____		Sky/Weather _____									
Forecast needed for:		Temperature _____									
<input type="radio"/> Today <input type="radio"/> Tonight <input type="radio"/> Day 2 <input type="radio"/> Extended		Humidity _____									
		20 ft Wind _____									
		Valley _____									
		Ridge Top _____									
		Other (Specify in #23) _____									
24. Send Forecast to: ATTN:			25. Location:				26. Phone Number: Fax Number:				



27. Remarks (Special requests, incident details, Smoke Dispersion elements needed, etc.):

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS: † Use 24-hour clock to indicate time. Example: 10:15 p.m. = 2215; 10:15 a.m. = 1015  
Indicate local standard time or local daylight time

WS FORM D-1  
WS FORM D-1, January 2005

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**I. Incident Personnel:**

1. Complete items 1 through 27 where applicable.

13. Weather Observations from project or nearby station(s):											
Place	Elevation	†Ob Time	20 ft. Wind		Eye Level Wind.		Temp.		Moisture		Remarks (Relevant Weather, etc.)
			Dir	Speed	Dir	Speed	Dry	Wet	RH	DP	
Unit G-50	1530'	0830	NW	6-8	NW	3-5	32		72		Observations from unit RAWS station, 50% cloud cover.

- a. Example of weather conditions on site:
- b. If the incident (HAZMAT, SAR) involves marine, put the wave/swell height and direction in the Remarks section.
- 2. Transmit in numerical sequence or fax to the appropriate Weather Forecast Office. (A weather forecaster on duty will complete the special forecast as quickly as possible and transmit the forecast and outlook to you by the method requested)
- 3. Retain completed copy for your records.
- 4. **Provide feedback to NWS utilizing separate page.** Be sure to include a copy of the spot forecast with any feedback submission including forecaster's name. Feedback to NWS personnel is imperative to assist with future forecasts. Remember, feedback on correct forecasts is equally as valuable as feedback on incorrect forecasts! If spot forecast is significantly different than conditions on site, a second forecast may be required.

**II. ALL RELAY POINTS should use this form to insure completeness of date and forecast. A supply of this form should be kept by each dispatcher and all others who may be relaying requests for forecasts or relaying completed forecasts to field units.**

**III. Forms are available from your local National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office. They may also be reproduced by other agencies as needed, entering the phone number and radio identification if desired.**

*NOTICE: Information provided on this form may be used by the National Weather Service for official purposes in any way, including public release and publication in NWS products. False statements on this form may be subject to prosecution under the False Statement Accountability Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. § 1001) or other statutes.*

**D. Haines Index Calculations**

Computing the Haines Index in Middle Terrain Elevations:

Stability Term= Temp(850mb) - Temp(700mb)

Moisture Term = Temp(850mb) -Dew Point Temp(850mb)

Each term is given a value of either 1, 2 or 3.

Stability Term Value:

- 1 – if 5 deg C or less
- 2 – if 6-10 deg C
- 3 – if 11 deg C or more

Moisture Term Value:

- 1 – if 5 deg C or less
- 2 – if 6-12 deg C
- 3 – if 13 deg C or more

The Stability and Moisture terms are added to calculate the Haines index.

Mid Level Haines Index

Potential for large fire growth

- |        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| 2 or 3 | ...very low |
| 4      | ...low      |
| 5      | ...moderate |
| 6      | ...high     |

**E. Lightning Activity Level Guide**

**Lightning Activity Level Guide**

<b>LAL</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
1	No T-storms
2	Isolated T-storms (1-14% coverage)
3	Widely Scattered T-Storms (15-24% coverage)
4	Scattered T-storms (25-54% coverage)
5	Numerous (55+% coverage)
6	>=15% coverage...little or no rain

## F. Smoke Dispersal and Ventilation Terms

### Smoke Dispersal Terms

Category	Description
<b>Very Poor</b>	High smoke pollution potential. Usually occurs in a very stable air (strong inversion) and light winds. Normally occurs late at night and early in the morning hours, but could occur during the daytime when a shallow pool of cold air intrudes into the area creating strong low level inversions. Burning is not advised under this category.
<b>Poor</b>	Moderate to High smoke potential. Burning not advised under this category. Most likely time of occurrence is from evening through the early morning.
<b>Fair</b>	Marginal smoke pollution potential. Dependent on trend of weather and local conditions. Generally acceptable for small burns of dry fuels.
<b>Good</b>	Moderate to Low smoke pollution potential. No inversion and gentle winds expected. Most likely to occur in the late morning and afternoon when surface heating usually breaks through the low level inversions.
<b>Very Good</b>	Low smoke pollution potential. Transport winds or mixing height lower than that for Excellent. Transport winds stronger than that for Good. Most likely to occur in the late morning and afternoon.
<b>Excellent</b>	Low smoke pollution potential. Unstable airmass and/or brisk winds. Best time to conduct burning operations if fire can be controlled. Most likely to occur in the late morning and afternoon or when a strong weather system affects the area, eliminating all low level inversions and generating moderate winds.

### Breakdown of Ventilation

#### Based on Mixing Height and Transport Wind

Excellent.....	150,000 Knot Feet and Greater
Very Good.....	100,000 to 150,000 Knot Feet
Good.....	60,000 to 100,000 Knot Feet
Fair.....	40,000 to 60,000 Knot Feet
Poor.....	Less than 40,000 Knot Feet

## G. Listing of RAWS Stations in North Dakota

The following is a listing of active RAWS stations in North Dakota as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

### NWS Bismarck Forecast Area

Crosby	320101	Watford City	321703
Painted Canyon	322503	Sand Creek	323804
Lostwood	320220	Knife River	322701
J. Clark Salyer	320401	Long Lake	322901
Arrowwood	323536	Turtle Mountain	320501
Tatanka Prairie	328501		

### NWS Grand Forks Forecast Area

Hampden	320701	Devils Lake	321401
Sheyenne	324605		

## VI. Agency Signatures

This plan is valid for the 2017 North Dakota fire season.

/Signed/date

Jeffrey Savadel, NOAA National Weather Service Meteorologist in Charge (Bismarck)  
Representing both NWS offices with fire weather forecast responsibility in North Dakota  
4/6/2018

/Signed/date

Ray Hart, BIA, Regional FMO, Great Plains Regional Office  
North Dakota Fire Council Chairman  
4/6/2018