



NWS
Flagstaff

2021 Fire Season Outlook

Issued March 4, 2021

Key Points

Current drought status: Well below average precipitation in February has allowed severe to exceptional drought conditions to continue across northern Arizona.

Fuel Conditions: Energy Release Component (ERC): ERCs are above average in the lower elevations and western portions of Arizona. However, ERCs are well below average along the Mogollon Rim.

Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks:

March – Odds favor drier than average conditions across Arizona. Equal chances exist for above, near, or below normal temperatures. There could be a few episodes of high winds, unsettled weather, and high-elevation snowfall.

March through May – The current outlook for Spring indicates that odds are tilted in favor of warmer and drier than average conditions. However, there still could be a few episodes of high winds, unsettled weather, and high-elevation snowfall.

June through August – The extended outlook favors above normal temperatures, and equal chances of above, near, and below normal precipitation across Arizona.

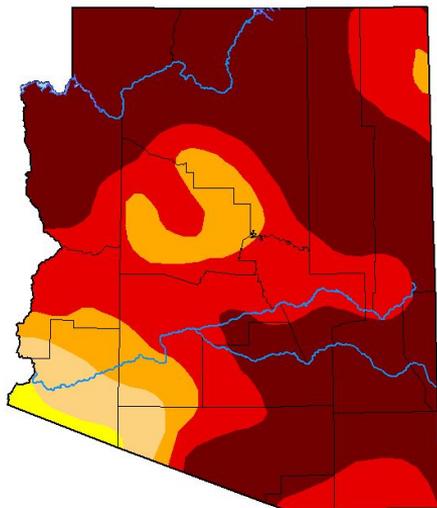
Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook: With drier and warmer than normal weather favored this Spring, near normal fire potential during the early part of this season will trend toward above normal fire threats as we enter the traditional fire season. Above normal fire threats look to develop at lower elevations (SE AZ into Yavapai County) by April, with above normal fire threat spreading north along the Mogollon Rim by May, then into all of Arizona by June.

Drought Monitor Comparison

2021 (Current)

2020

U.S. Drought Monitor Arizona



March 2, 2021
(Released Thursday, Mar. 4, 2021)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	98.92	94.60	84.67	53.50
Last Week 02-25-2021	0.00	100.00	98.92	94.60	84.67	53.50
3 Months Ago 12-01-2020	0.00	100.00	100.00	98.35	92.82	76.81
Start of Calendar Year 12-31-2020	0.00	100.00	100.00	98.34	93.86	72.69
Start of Water Year 09-29-2020	0.00	100.00	100.00	93.97	69.95	3.37
One Year Ago 03-03-2020	70.34	29.66	21.89	14.02	0.00	0.00

Intensity:



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

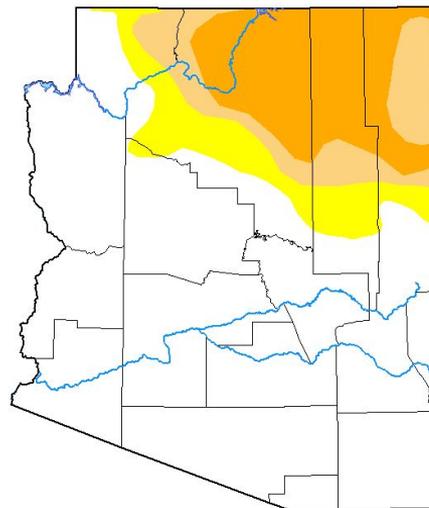
Author:

Brian Fuchs
National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

U.S. Drought Monitor Arizona



March 3, 2020
(Released Thursday, Mar. 5, 2020)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	70.34	29.66	21.89	14.02	0.00	0.00
Last Week 02-25-2020	70.34	29.66	21.89	14.02	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 12-03-2019	24.05	75.95	46.33	25.44	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12-31-2019	70.37	29.63	23.00	16.73	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 12-01-2019	5.00	95.00	80.99	25.66	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 03-05-2019	62.24	37.76	18.74	5.50	0.00	0.00

Intensity:



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Author:

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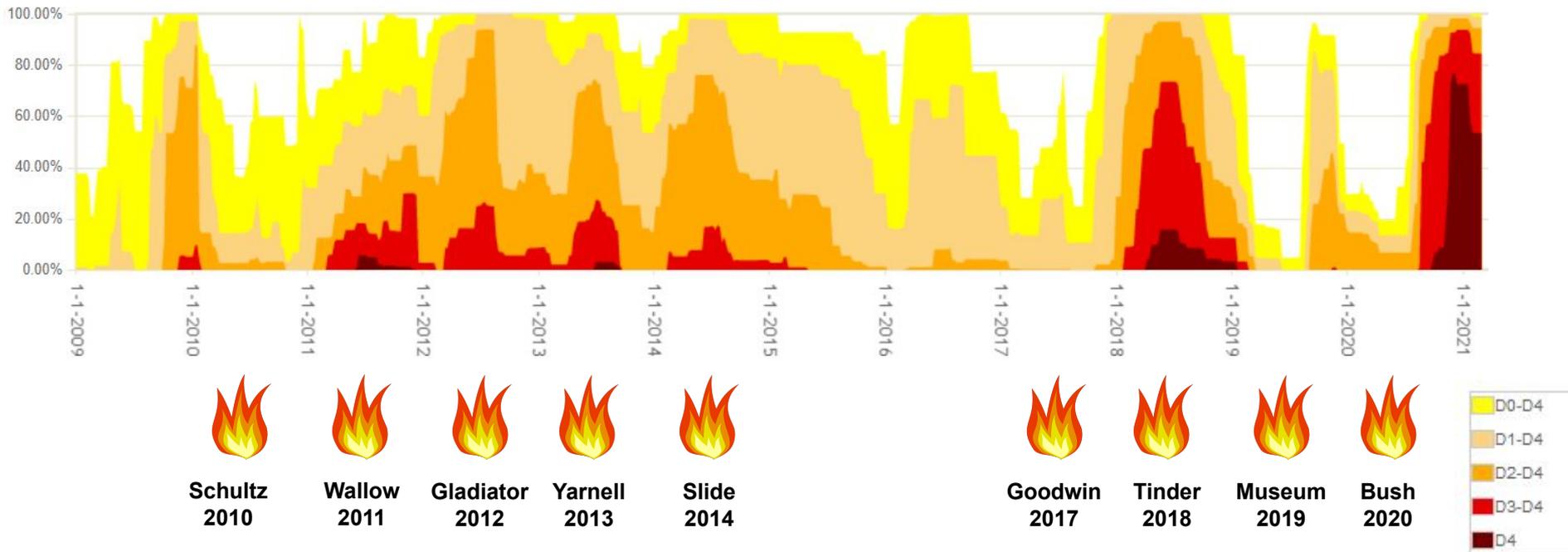


droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Comparing the latest drought monitor to the one from this time last year shows how drought conditions worsened across Arizona. Currently 100% of the entire state is in a drought, as opposed to 30% of the state this time last year.

Arizona Drought Monitor Timeline and Fires

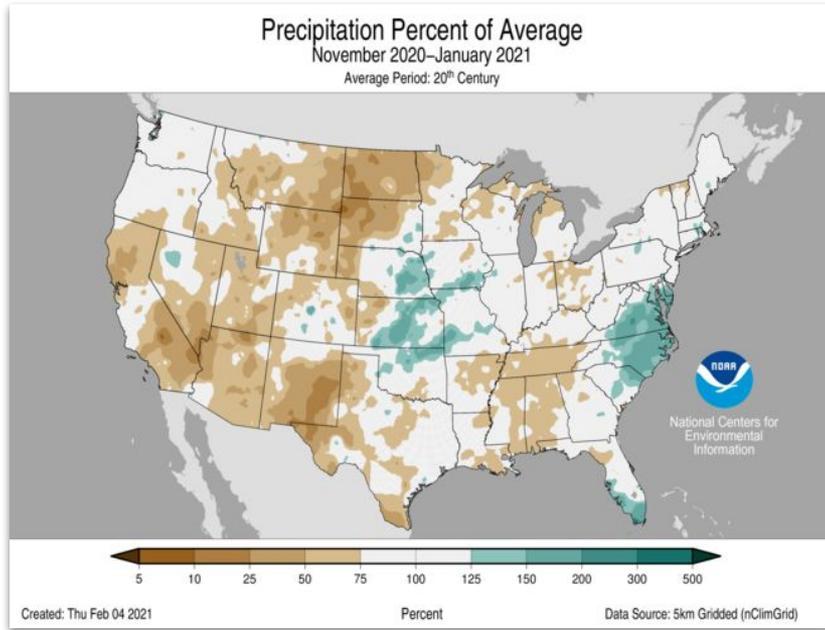
Arizona Percent Area



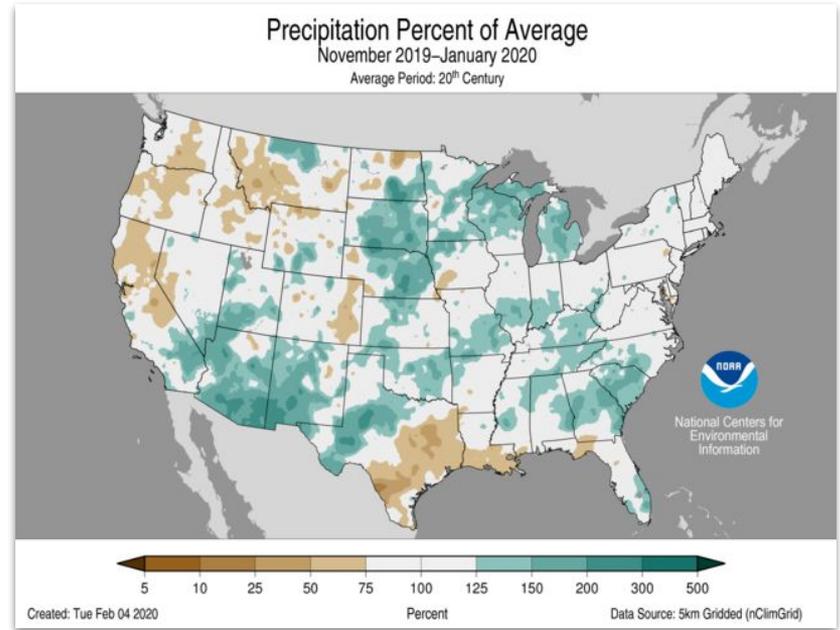
The image above is a timeline of the percent area of drought across the entire state of Arizona and fires that occurred during specified years.

Winter Precipitation % of Normal Comparison

2021 (Current)



2020



This winter's below normal precipitation exacerbated drought conditions across the state. Note that the above normal precipitation last year contributed to last year's improving drought conditions.

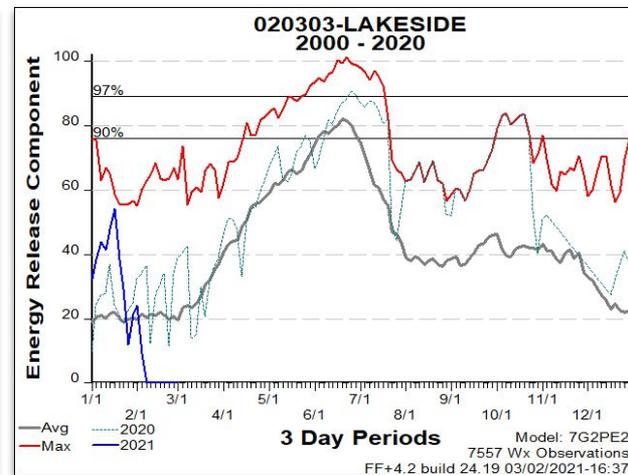
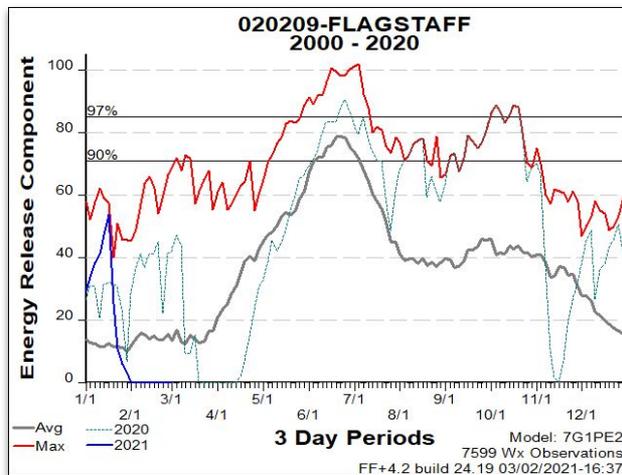
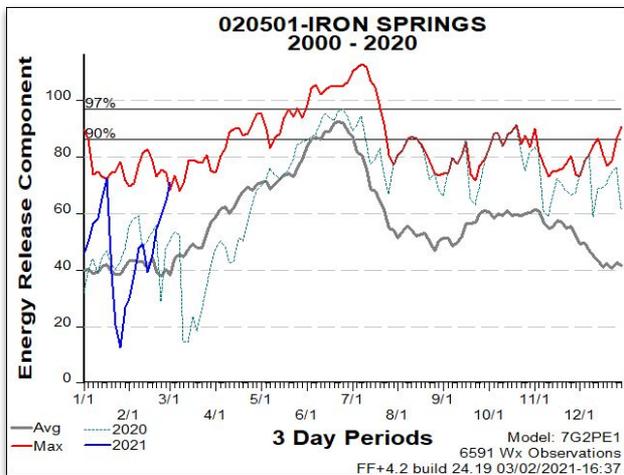
Energy Release Component (ERC) Graphs



Iron Springs/Prescott

Flagstaff

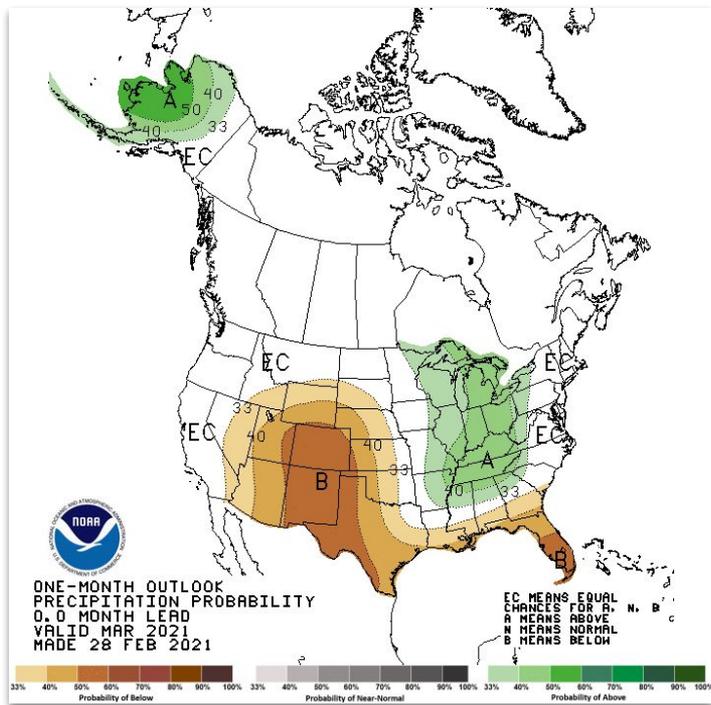
Pinetop-Lakeside



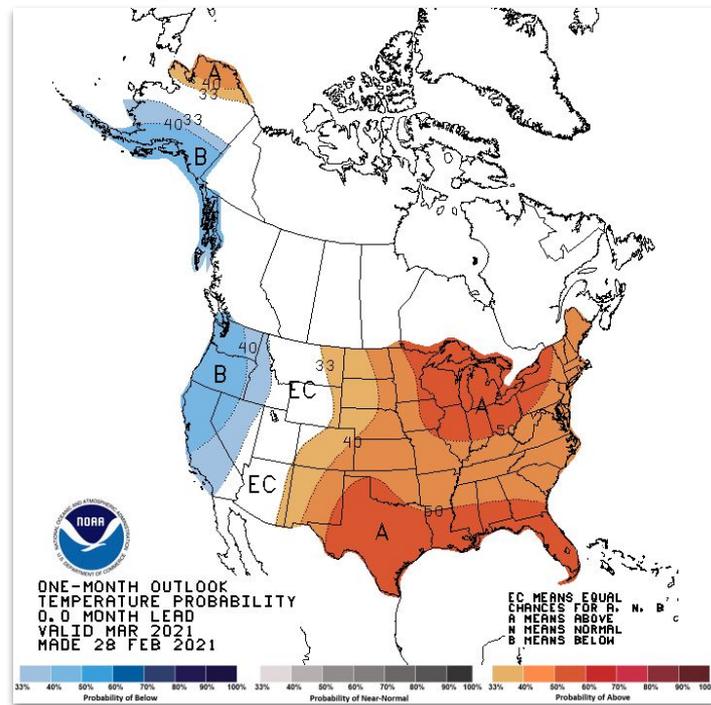
ERCs along the Mogollon Rim are well below average, with above average ERCs near the Prescott/Iron Springs area.

March CPC Outlook

Precipitation Outlook



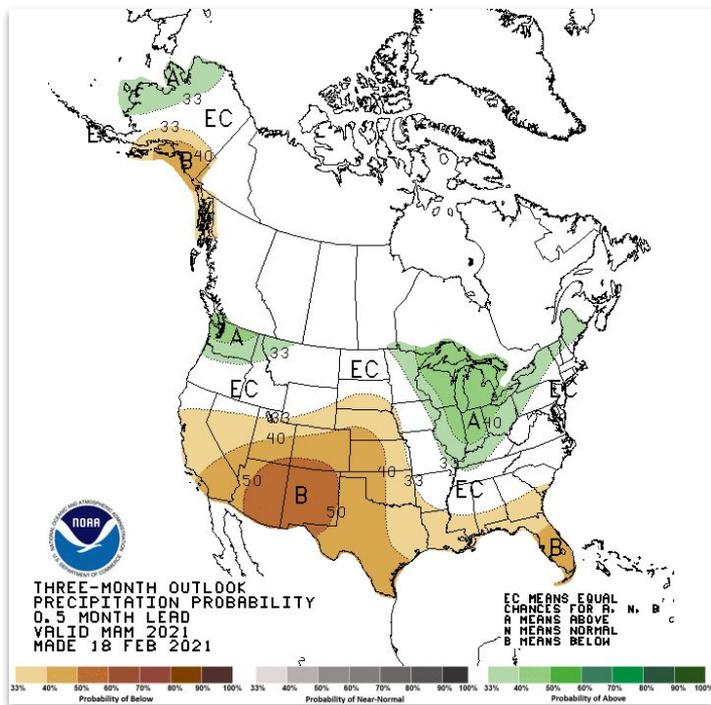
Temperature Outlook



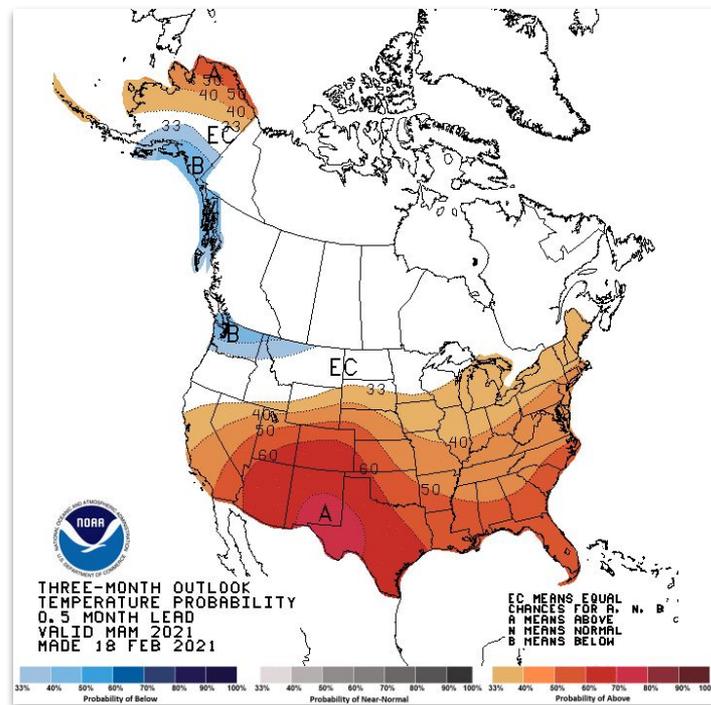
March will have odds favoring drier than average conditions across Arizona. However, there will be equal chances of above, near, and below normal temperatures. A few episodes of high winds, unsettled weather, and high-elevation snowfall will be possible.

90-day (March-April-May) CPC Outlook

Precipitation Outlook

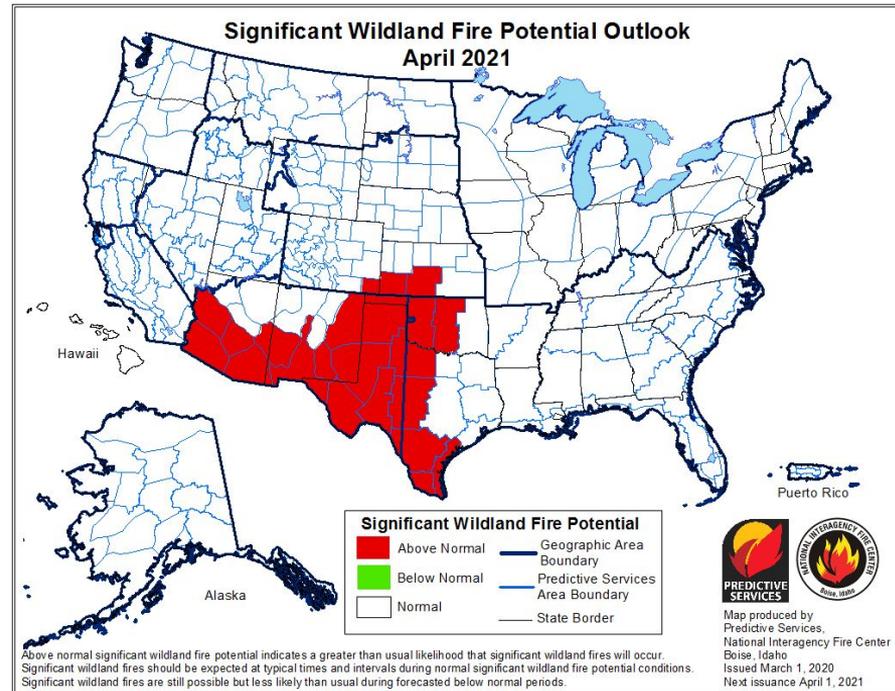
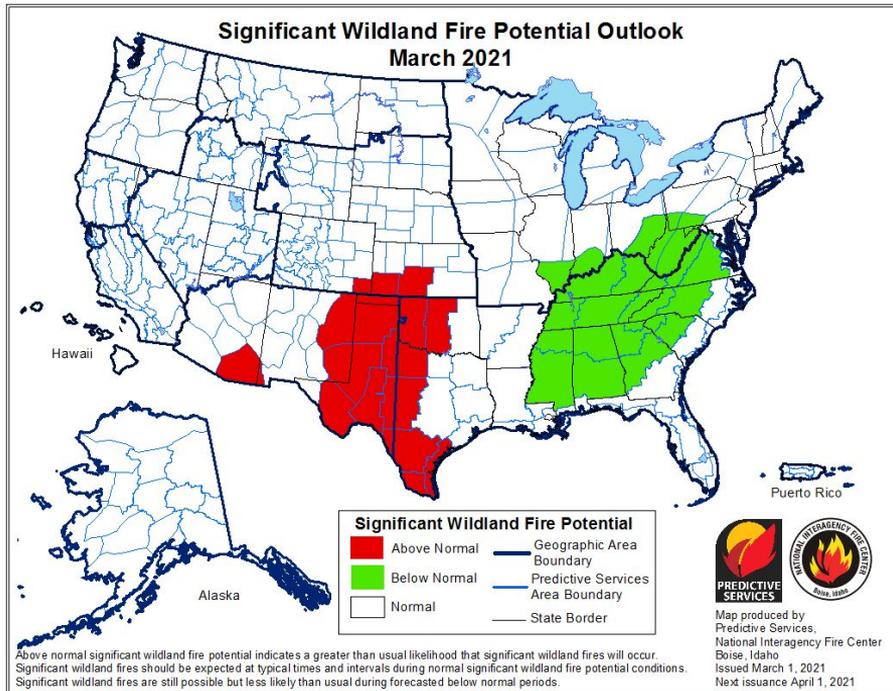


Temperature Outlook



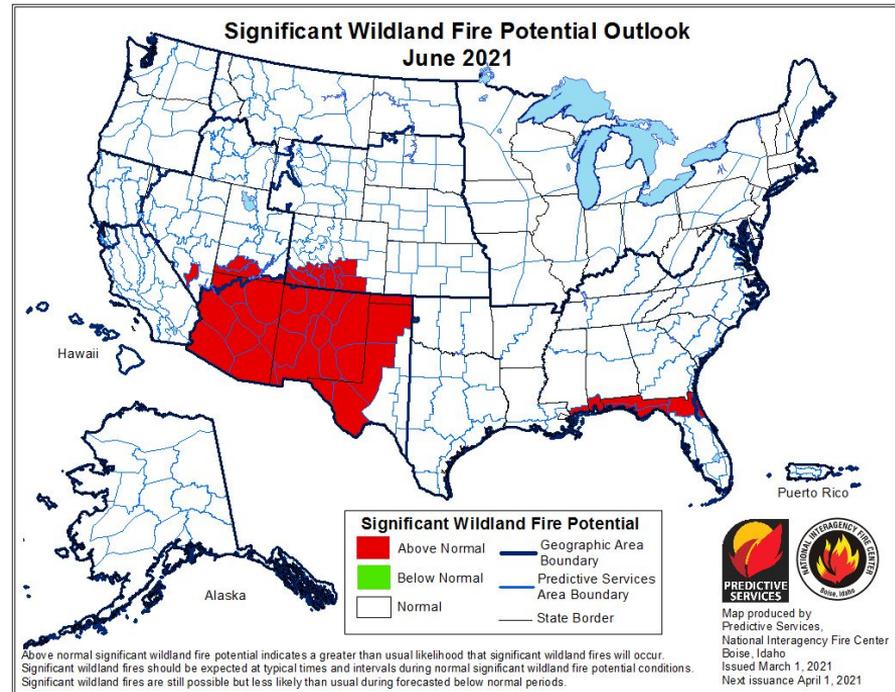
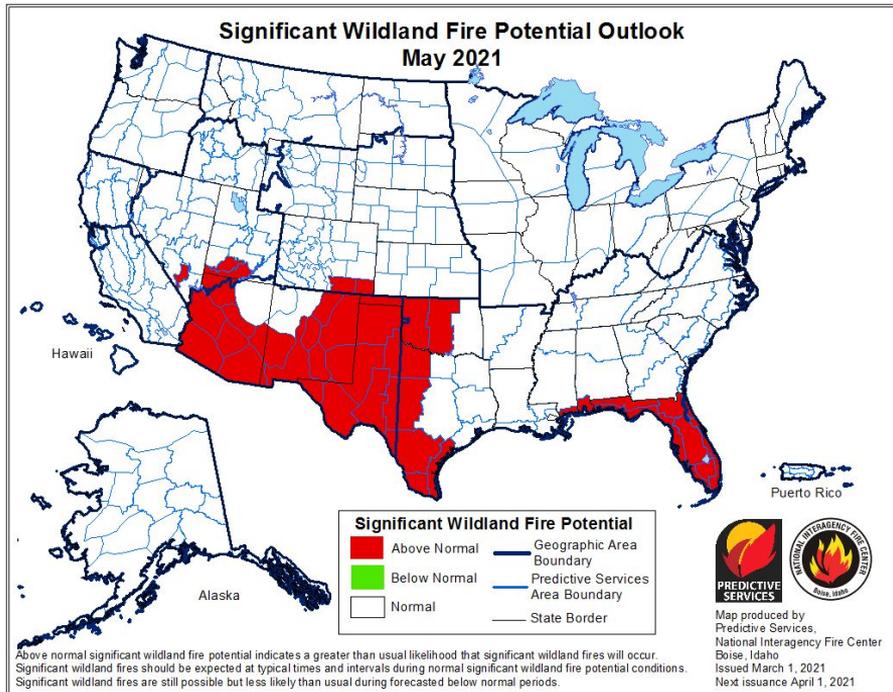
The 90-day (March, April, May combined average) outlook across Arizona indicates odds tilted in favor of above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook



Near normal wildland fire potential will continue across Arizona in March, except in SE AZ where above normal wildland fire potential is forecast. In April, above normal significant wildland fire potential is forecast to continue across SE AZ, and spread into NW AZ.

Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook



Above normal significant wildland fire potential is forecast to spread north into the Mogollon Rim by May. The entire state of Arizona is then forecast to have above normal significant wildland fire potential by June.

Summary



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