

# August 2012 PIO Messages



*Prepared by NIFC*

- It's important to remember this is still **an average fire season**. Fire potential/behavior is above average, but the lack of widespread lightning is helping to keep the number of fires down. The number of acres burned this year to date is **very close to the ten-year average**, and the number of fires year-to-date is **actually substantially lower (about 23 percent) than the ten-year average**.
- Firefighters are reporting unusually active diurnal fire behavior, which is an indicator of the high potential for the next month.
- **It's very normal to be at PL-4 this time of year**. We likely will reach PL-5 later this month, which, again, is not unusual. However, days are getting shorter and September is not too far away, which traditionally marks the decline of lightning activity in the West. The National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) at NIFC will evaluate the need for changing the PL on a daily basis.
- There are resource shortages, but NMAC and geographic areas are actively prioritizing to make the best use of those we do have.
- **Activity is starting to shift from the rangelands to the forests**. These higher-elevation fires are longer in duration and require more resources. Some may not be suppressed until September or even until snow arrives.
- Expect activity to increase in the Great Basin, California, Montana, Nevada and Idaho.
- One main difference between the fires now and those earlier in the summer is the current fires are generally burning in less-populated areas and are not generating as much public attention.
- **Our top priority remains keeping the public and firefighters safe**. Firefighters count on the public to help reduce risk. Every person who enjoys the outdoors needs to be especially cautious about activities that could cause a wildfire. And it's not too late to take a few simple steps that will help make your home and property more defensible.