

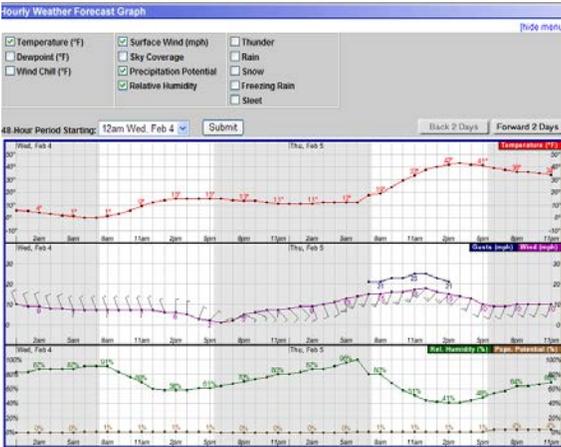


Support for Decision Makers

NWS Forecast offices around the U.S. provide a variety of fire weather services, based primarily on local needs. In the western U.S. for example, it is typical for Incident Meteorologists to provide on-site support to fire fighters involved in wildfire management. In other areas, governmental agencies commonly need specialized forecasts in support of prescribed burns, also known as “Spot Forecasts”.

Spot Forecasts for Prescribed Burns

In 2002, the NWS Quad Cities began issuing Spot Forecasts for two Federal land management areas in the local service area. Since then, the Spot Forecast Program has grown to include other government managed or co-managed land. To be eligible for spot forecasts, the requesting party must be a government entity and there usually is a public safety interest. Spot forecasts are provided for pre-determined locations. Through a web site, the requesting agency provides basic, local meteorological conditions and the time frame of concern. Typically within 30 minutes, they receive their specific spot forecast via the web page.



Information to Support Decision Makers

The NWS Quad Cities provides information to support officials who must decide whether to implement local burn bans. Based on local customer input, the primary tool for conveying this information is the Hazardous Weather Outlook. When the fire danger is very high or extreme (see GFDI below), a “Fire Weather” section is added to the Hazardous Weather Outlook describing the threat. In addition, a Rangeland Fire Danger Statement is issued during the dry seasons, providing fire danger categories for each county in the service area.

For point-specific weather conditions year-round, the Hourly Weather Graph, available through the web page, provides a detailed forecast of critical parameters such as humidity, temperature, and wind for up to 7 days for a specific point.

Grassland Fire Danger Index (GFDI)

The Grassland Fire Danger Index or GFDI is an experimental index that quantifies the potential for grass fires to become difficult to contain. The GFDI incorporates temperature, humidity, wind, and the state of the vegetation into the calculation, and rates the conditions on a scale from Low to Extreme. During dry periods, the GFDI is available in both graphical and text formats via the web page.

GFDI Categories
Low
Moderate
High
Very High
Extreme

Vegetation Observers

Volunteers scattered across the NWS Quad Cities service area provide weekly updates on the state of vegetation during dry seasons. These reports are a key parameter in the GFDI calculation.

On the web:
 National Interagency Fire Center..... www.nifc.gov
 NWS Quad Cities Fire Weather Page..... www.crh.noaa.gov/dvn/?n=fireweather
 NWS National Fire Weather Page..... fire.boi.noaa.gov/firewx.htm