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## **Wildfire Conditions For Oregon And California May Be Worse, Earlier Than Predicted**

New Models From The National Interagency Fire Center Show Earlier And More Widespread Possibility For Fires In Oregon And Northern California Than Predicted In Early April.

May 1, 2020 4:31 PM  
Posted By: Jamie Parfitt

BOISE, Idaho — New models from the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) show an earlier and more widespread potential for "significant" wildfires in southwest Oregon and northern California than [previous predictions made in early April](#).

NIFC is a federal agency based in Boise, Idaho that helps coordinate wildland firefighting resources in the U.S. It bases its fire potential predictions on drought conditions and expected large-scale weather patterns.

The earlier models did predict "significant large fire potential" for northern California, much of Oregon, and eastern Washington by July — due to warmer and drier than average conditions going into summer. However, the latest models show a potentially alarming development since that report.

"Overall, since the beginning of the water year in autumn 2019, the region has been drier than average except for western Washington and extreme northwestern Oregon," [NIFC states in its full report](#). "Elsewhere precipitation has been significantly below normal, and drought designations have expanded across the region."

According to NIFC, areas of southwest Oregon and northern California could see large wildfire potential by June. By July, that potential is expected to expand throughout most of southern and eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and Idaho.

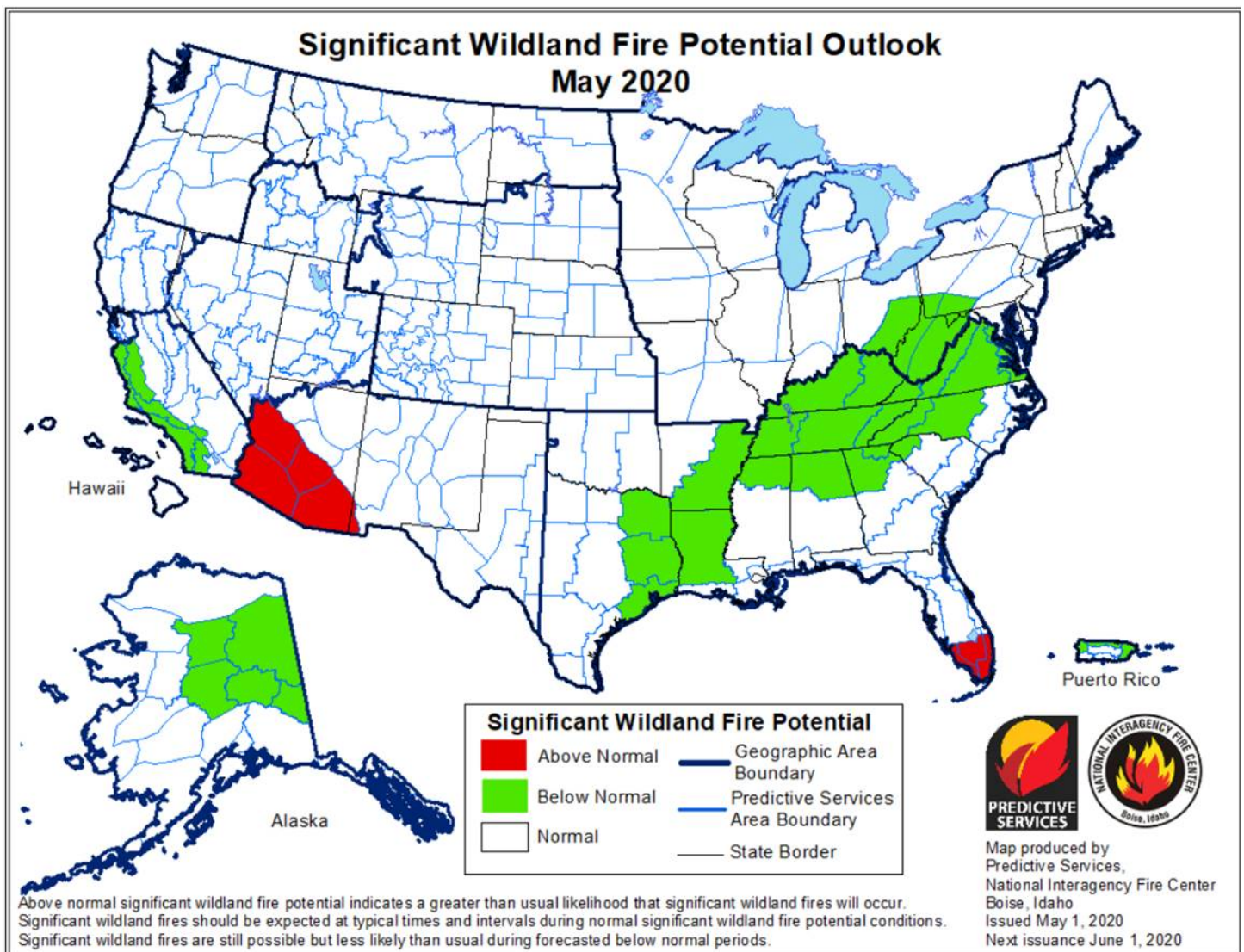
The NIFC report predicts significant fire potential for an even larger area of the western U.S. into August — covering most of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and areas of Nevada, Montana, and northern California.

"Above Normal significant large fire potential will begin developing across southwestern Oregon in June and then expand to include all but the northwestern quarter of the region by August," NIFC report said. "Other locations can expect Normal significant large fire potential during the outlook period."

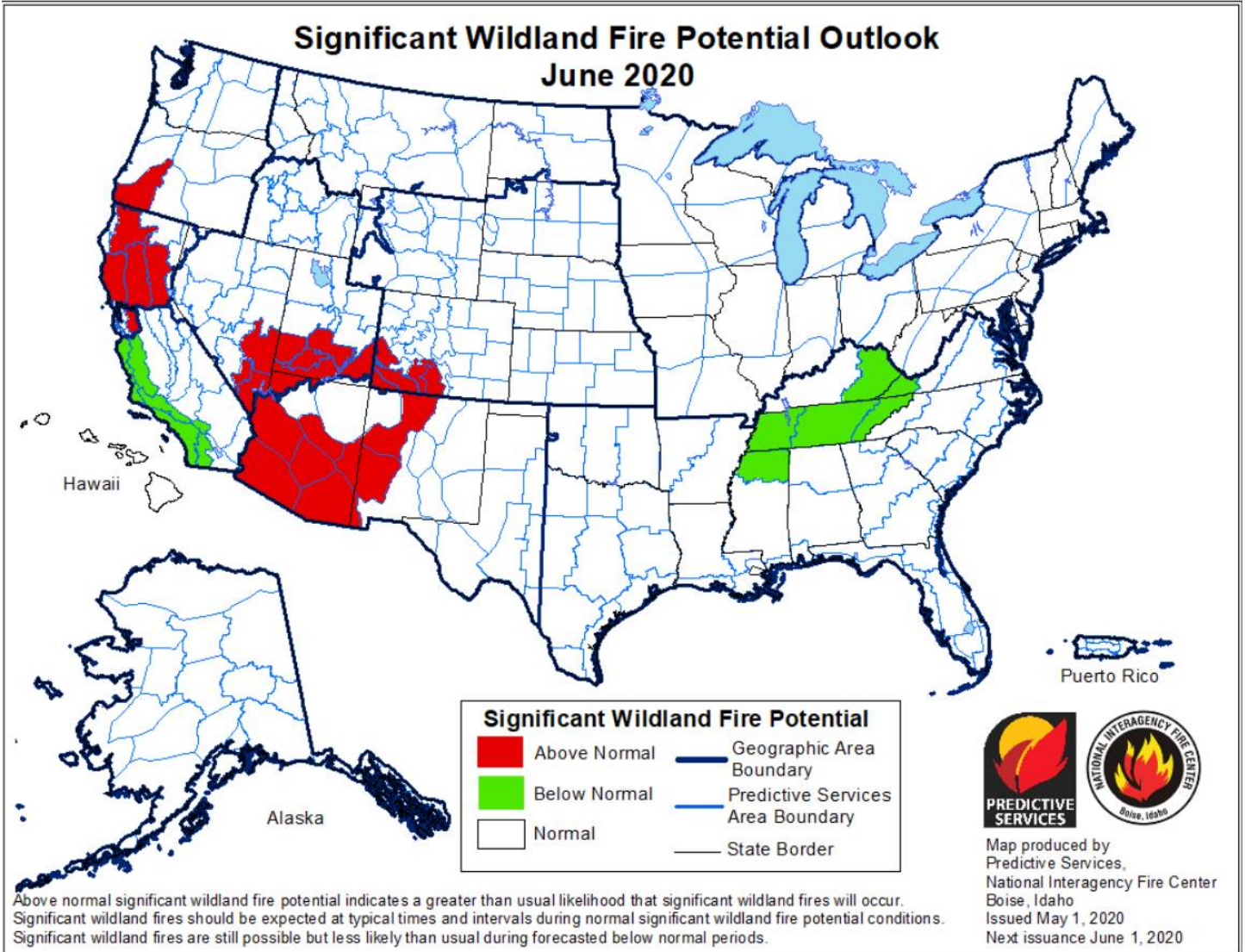
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 After a devastating fire season in 2018, [NIFC predicted another bad year by August of 2019 for the coastal areas of California, Oregon and Washington.](#) For western Oregon, at least, the area instead saw a comparatively mild season in 2019.

The [worst wildfires of last year happened in Alaska](#), which saw dozens of massive fires by early summer.

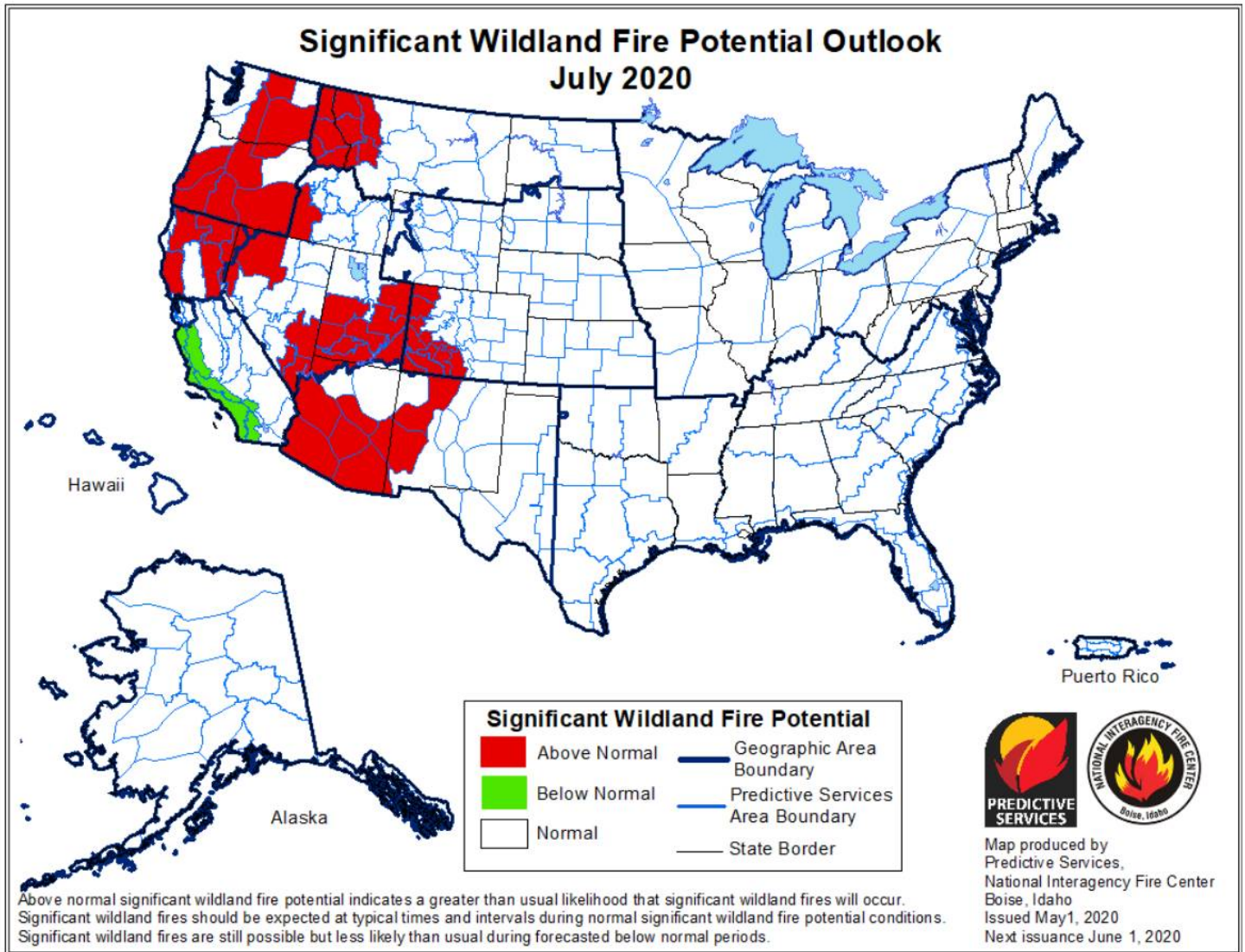
The response to COVID-19 has also impacted some of the usual spring preparations ahead of wildfire season, causing agencies to either halt or limit prescribed burns for both social distancing measures and the potential health complications of smoke for coronavirus patients. [The U.S. Forest Service completely suspended burns in the Pacific Northwest in March.](#)



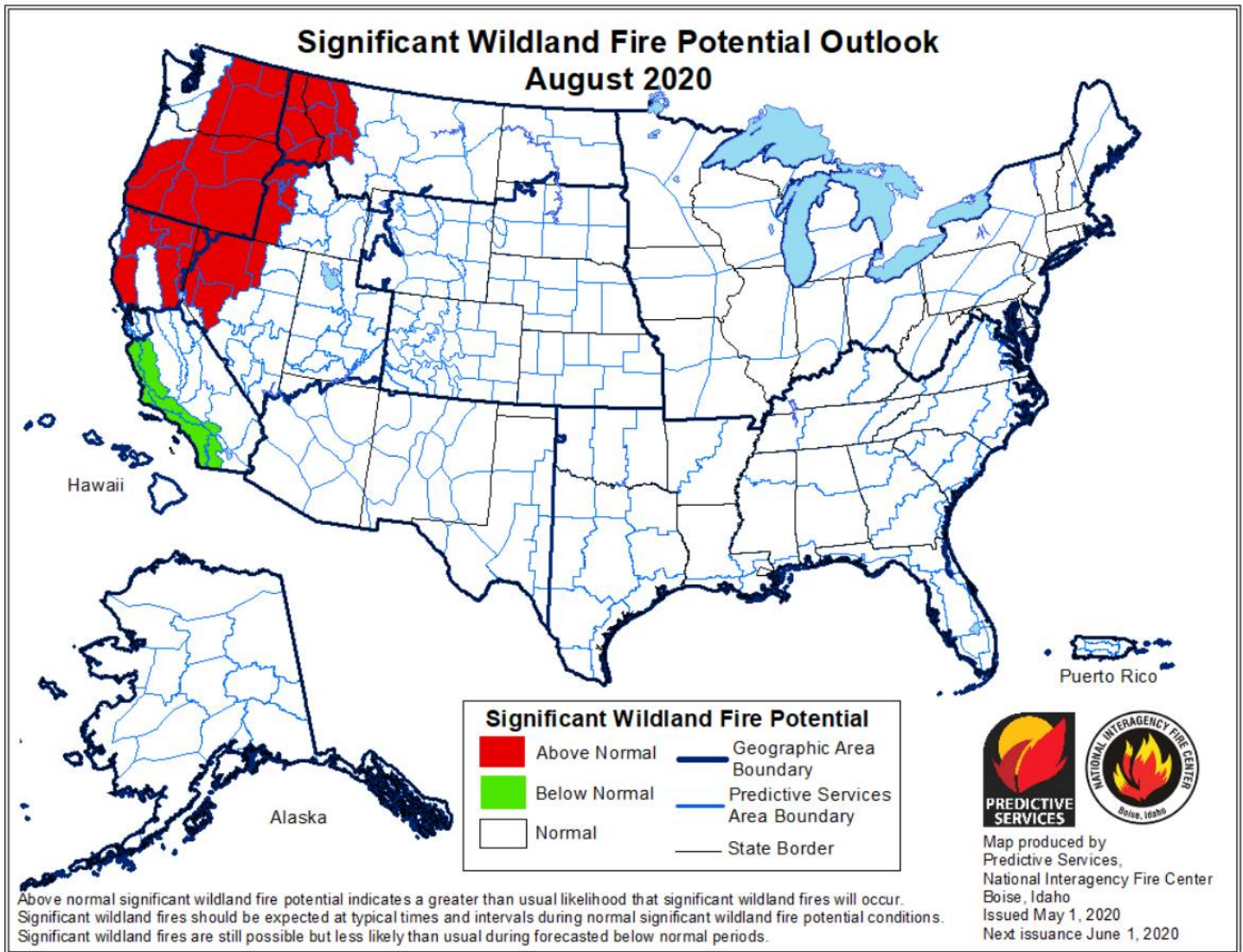
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