

Appendix B – Media Reports

Air quality readings higher in Shawnee County



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Air quality readings higher in Shawnee County

By [The Capital-Journal](#)
Created Apr 13 2011 - 5:51pm

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment air-quality monitors measured readings that exceeded national air qualities for ozone in Shawnee, Sedgwick and Linn counties recently.

Weather conditions during the past two weeks have been conducive to burning grasslands in the Flint Hills area of Kansas.

The burns are conducted to provide better forage for cattle and to help control invasive species, such as Eastern red cedar and sumac.

Well-planned and managed periodic burns can minimize fire safety danger and is a valuable tool for managing rangeland.

They can, however, create air quality impacts when meteorological conditions don't provide for adequate dispersion of the pollutants formed by the burns.

Air pollutants from the burns can affect people in the Flint Hills and can be carried long distances to more populated areas.

The air-quality monitors measured readings that exceeded national standards for ozone in Sedgwick and Linn counties on April 6 and in Shawnee County on April 12.

People who are healthy, usually aren't at a major risk from short-term exposures to smoke.

The fine particles in smoke can get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause health problems, such as burning eyes, runny nose and illnesses, such as bronchitis. Fine particles and ozone also can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases.

Older adults and children are at highest risk for health problems, especially those with underlying health conditions.

Here are steps that can be taken to protect health on days when smoke is present:

- n Healthy people should curtail or avoid strenuous outdoor exercise.
- n People with heart or breathing related illnesses should remain indoors.
- n Help keep indoor air clean by closing doors and windows and running the air conditioner on 'recirculate' setting.

[http://cjonline.com/print/97858\[4/18/2011 9:03:42 AM\]](http://cjonline.com/print/97858[4/18/2011 9:03:42 AM])

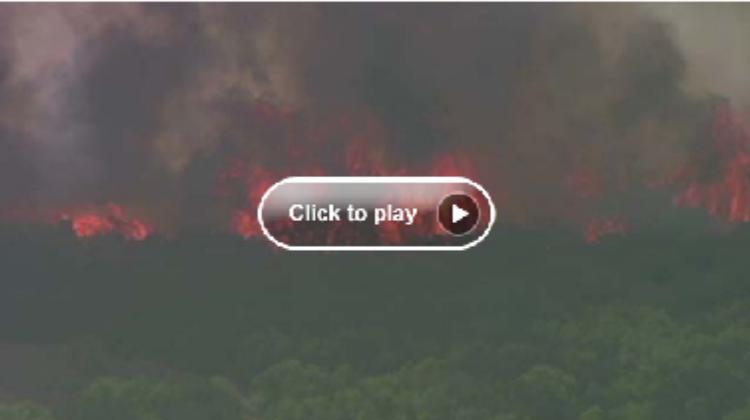
Fires burn across Texas with no end in sight - CNN.com

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Fires burn across Texas with no end in sight

By the **CNN Wire Staff**
 April 19, 2011 9:37 a.m. EDT



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Texas fires force hundreds to evacuate

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Spring winds combined with dry conditions typical of late summer have "not boded well"
- A Forest Service spokeswoman says conditions in Texas are the driest since 1917
- 7,807 fires have affected more than 1.5 million acres since this year's wildfire season began
- In southwest Austin, 10 homes suffered major damage

Dallas (CNN) — Sara Rogers-Smith considers herself one of the lucky ones.

She, her husband and two kids were allowed to return to their home Monday and found it in one piece after a wildfire swept the area. Some of their neighbors were not as fortunate.

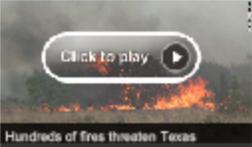
"We definitely feel lucky," Rogers-Smith said in a telephone interview from her home in southwest Austin. "The wind was blowing in the complete opposite direction of our house."

Have you been affected by wildfires? Send photos, videos

She said several other homes in her area were damaged and that at least two were burned to their foundations, leaving just metal and ash as reminders of what was.

Dozens of large fires continued to burn out of control Monday in Texas in what officials have described as unprecedented conditions that show no signs of abating soon.

"We're experiencing conditions never seen in Texas before," said Marq Webb, a spokesman with the Texas Forest Service. "Yesterday, we had 1,400 people and that number will go up today," he said in a telephone interview Monday from the service's incident command center in Merkel just west of Abilene.



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Hundreds of fires threaten Texas



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Flint Hills grass fires impact air quality



Published on *CJOnline.com* (<http://cjonline.com>)

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Flint Hills grass fires impact air quality

By [Ann Marie Bush](#)

Created *Apr 17 2011 - 7:30pm*

THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Burning grasslands in the Flint Hills helps provide better forage for cattle and helps control invasive species, such as Easter Red Cedar and Sumac. However, the burns also can impact air quality when weather conditions don't provide for adequate dispersion of pollutants.

While air pollutants from the burns can affect people in the Flint Hills, the pollutants also can be carried long distances to more populated areas such as Topeka and Wichita, said Tom Gross, chief of the monitoring and planning section for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's bureau of air.

KDHE air quality monitors, which are positioned at several areas across the state including one in Topeka, measured readings that exceeded national air quality standards for ozone in Shawnee County on April 12 and in Sedgwick and Linn counties April 6.

Ozone is an air pollutant that is formed in the atmosphere by the reaction of gaseous pollutants that are emitted by the fires, Gross said.

The monitors also recorded higher-than-normal levels of particulate matter.

"If folks have pre-existing health conditions, if they have heart problems or lung problems, such as asthma, they can take some precautions," Gross said.

Smoke is made up of a mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic matter burn. The fine particles can get into people's eyes and respiratory system and cause health problems, such as burning eyes, runny nose and bronchitis.

The fine particles also can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases.

"Normal, healthy people may feel some irritation in the nose," Gross said. "The more serious impact is on the elderly, young or people who have pre-existing conditions. It can trigger an asthma attack, aggravate other diseases."

Gross' son has asthma, so on days when burning takes place, family members keep an inhaler handy and restrict the boy's activities.

KDHE has worked closely with many organizations during the past year to develop the Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan to address the air quality impacts that result from the annual burning, according to a KDHE news release.

The goal of the smoke management plan is to reduce ozone levels during April, when air pollution increases because of prescribed burning in the Flint Hills.

[http://cjonline.com/print/98078\[4/18/2011 9:01:41 AM\]](http://cjonline.com/print/98078[4/18/2011 9:01:41 AM])

Kansas ozone levels rise after Flint Hills burning | Wichita Eagle



The Wichita Eagle
Kansas.com

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Thursday, April 14, 2011

Posted on Thu, Apr. 14, 2011

Kansas ozone levels rise after Flint Hills burning

The Associated Press

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment says grassland burning in the Flint Hills sent ozone levels above national pollution standards in several areas this month.

KDHE says readings showed the excessive ozone Tuesday in Shawnee County and April 8 in Linn and Sedgwick counties. Higher-than-normal levels of particulate matter also were recorded.

Farmers and ranchers burn the grasslands to provide better forage for cattle and control some plant species.

Tom Gross, of the department's air bureau, says the readings are disappointing. But Gross also says the agency believes a smoke management plan approved in December will cut down on such incidents in the future.

The plan allows ranchers to continue spring burning but restricts other burning in 12 counties in the Flint Hills and four near Kansas City and Wichita.

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<http://www.kansas.com/2011/04/14/v-print/1807401/kan-ozone-levels-rise-after-flint.html>[4/18/2011 9:09:03 AM]

Mayor Brewer urges state and feds to ignore April 6 air quality problems | Wichtopekington | Wichita Eagle Blogs



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« 30 days of detour on eastbound Douglas in Delano

Mayor Brewer urges state and feds to ignore April 6 air quality problems



A smokey haze envelopes downtown Wichita along Douglas Ave. on March 24.

Mayor Carl Brewer wants state and federal officials to cut Wichita a break on its air quality readings on April 6 because the haze stemmed from range burning in the Flint Hills.

"We recognize the absolute necessity for the range burning in the Flint Hills," Brewer said in a news release. "However, Wichita and our surrounding area should not be penalized for the short-term air quality problems that result from that event."

If Brewer is successful, environmental officials would ignore the April 6 air quality readings, which exceeded federal standards.

Wichita has flirted with exceeding national air quality standards for years. If the city surpasses national standards, it would likely

have to come up with plans to reduce air pollution that could be costly to residents and businesses.

City officials say if federal officials designated Wichita as a non-attainment area, it could cost the community \$10 million a year.

By Brent Wistrom

Posted April 15, 2011 at 3:49 p.m. Filed under Uncategorized

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Mayor seeks break on air quality | Wichita Eagle



The Wichita Eagle

Kansas.com

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Saturday, April 16, 2011

Posted on Sat, Apr. 16, 2011

Mayor seeks break on air quality

BY BRENT D. WISTROM

The Wichita Eagle

Mayor Carl Brewer wants state and federal officials to cut Wichita a break on its poor air quality readings on April 6 because the haze stemmed from range burning in the Flint Hills.

"We recognize the absolute necessity for the range burning in the Flint Hills," Brewer said in a news release Friday. "However, Wichita and our surrounding area should not be penalized for the short-term air quality problems that result from that event."

If Brewer is successful, environmental officials would ignore the April 6 air quality readings, which exceeded federal standards for the first time this year.

The city can exceed federal standards three days a year, but the fourth day — paired with data from the past two years — determines whether it is in violation.

Kay Johnson, manager of the city's office of environmental initiatives, said it is frustrating that the city has been denied exceptions in recent years.

"If it's attributable to the Flint Hills, we're not in control of that and don't have any way to deal with it," she said.

Wichita has come close to violating national air quality standards for years.

If the city surpasses national standards, it would likely have to come up with plans to reduce air pollution that could be costly to residents and businesses.

City officials say that if federal officials designated Wichita as a non-attainment area, it could cost the community \$10 million a year.

The city has several air quality monitoring stations, which collect data the city sends to Topeka.

To violate current federal standards, the 3-year average of the fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average of ozone concentrations must exceed 0.075 parts per million.

But the EPA is expected to further clamp down this summer by making the standard somewhere between 0.06 and 0.07 parts per million.

Wichita exceeded the 0.075 standard for the first time April 6 with readings of 0.082 just south of Wichita and 0.079 inside the city.

That would give the city two more days to exceed the standard. If it crosses the line a fourth time, Wichita could face strict new air quality rules.

And it may have surpassed the standard a second time Wednesday when air quality again edged close to exceeding standards.

But it probably won't be clear whether that was a violation until data is calculated and validated by the state next week, Johnson said.

"We know one of them went over," she said. "But we don't know how many more will go over this year. You can say we're at risk if we lose one of our chances."

Reach Brent D. Wistrom at 316-268-6228 or bwistrom@wichitaeagle.com.

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<http://www.kansas.com/2011/04/16/v-print/1810355/mayor-seeks-break-on-air-quality.html>[4/18/2011 9:15:53 AM]

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Texas burning 'from border to border'

By the **CNN Wire Staff**
April 20, 2011 9:47 a.m. EDT

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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- A cold front is expected to bring rain and lower the fire threat Wednesday
- The threat is likely to return Thursday for parts of west Texas
- More than 170 homes have been destroyed by fires

Read more about this story from CNN affiliates WFAA and KTVT. Are you there? Share your photos and video.

Dallas (CNN) – Texas firefighters on Wednesday continued to battle blazes that have scorched a million acres and have been burning for more than a week, according to the Texas Forest Service.

"We're actually seeing Texas burn from border to border. We've got it in West Texas, in East Texas, in North Texas, in South Texas – it's all over the state," Texas Forest Service spokeswoman April Saginor told CNN Radio. "We've got one in the Dallas area that's four fires that have actually merged together."

Saginor said firefighters from 34 states are now in Texas battling blazes that, over the past two weeks, have destroyed 170 homes and burned 1 million acres.

"Some (fires) are over 100,000 acres and they've been burning for over a week, so that's our priority right now," Saginor said, "to put out the big ones."

Much of Texas, however, is expected to get a break Wednesday from the dry weather and high winds blamed for the spreading wildfires, according to the National Weather Service. However, the

http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/04/20/texas.fires/index.html?hpt=TI[4/20/2011 9:00:59 AM]

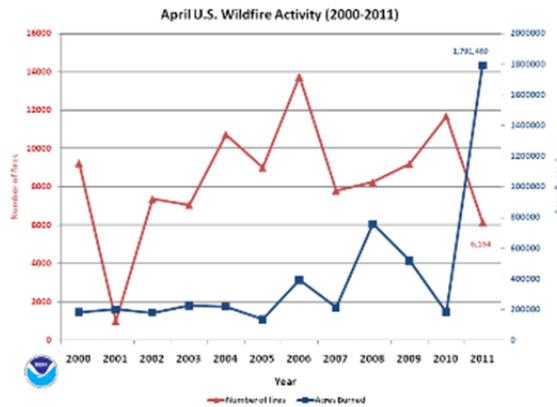


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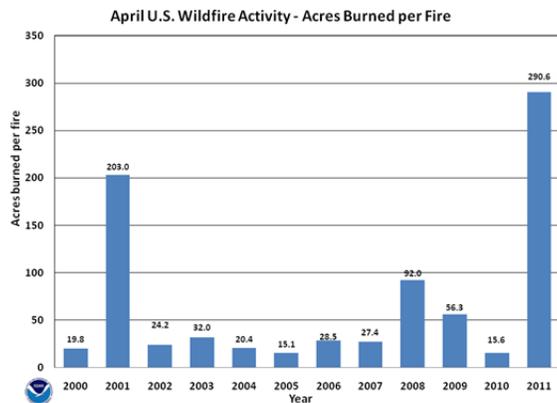
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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Climatic Data Center



Number of fires and acres burned in April 2000-2011



Acres burned per fire in April 2000-2011



Large Fires on 29 April 2011

Updated: 8 May 2011

Much-above-average fire activity has plagued the southern tier of the U.S. since February. April provided little reprieve with thousands of large wildfires burning across the country. Hardest hit was the southern Plains, including parts of Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, where several large fires burned millions of acres and destroyed thousands of structures. The region experienced above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation on the [one-month](#), [three-month](#), [four-month](#) and [six-month](#) time scales, drying out much of the vegetation and creating ample fuel for wildfires. Many of the climate divisions across the region had record-low precipitation for the same time scales. Please [see the monthly temperature and precipitation discussion](#) for more information. Meanwhile the rest of the country experienced near- to above-normal precipitation, limiting wildfire growth. During April, there were 6,164 new wildfires across the country, which burned 1.79 million acres (0.7 million hectares), marking the most active April in terms of acreage burned in the 12-year period of record. At the beginning of April, there were 32 large wildfires burning across the country: seven in Oklahoma and Missouri; six in Texas; four in New Mexico; two in Colorado, Kansas, and Georgia; and one each in Arkansas and South Carolina. By mid-month, much of the wildfire activity shifted towards the Southern Plains, with 34 total large fires burning nationwide — 17 in Texas; four in Oklahoma and New Mexico; three in Arkansas; two in Mississippi; and one each in Georgia, Louisiana, Kansas, and Colorado. On the 29th, wildfire activity expanded into southern Florida and persisted across much of Texas where drought conditions prevailed. There were 28 large wildfires active across the country, 19 in Texas, seven in Florida, and two in New Mexico.

Large Fire Maps:

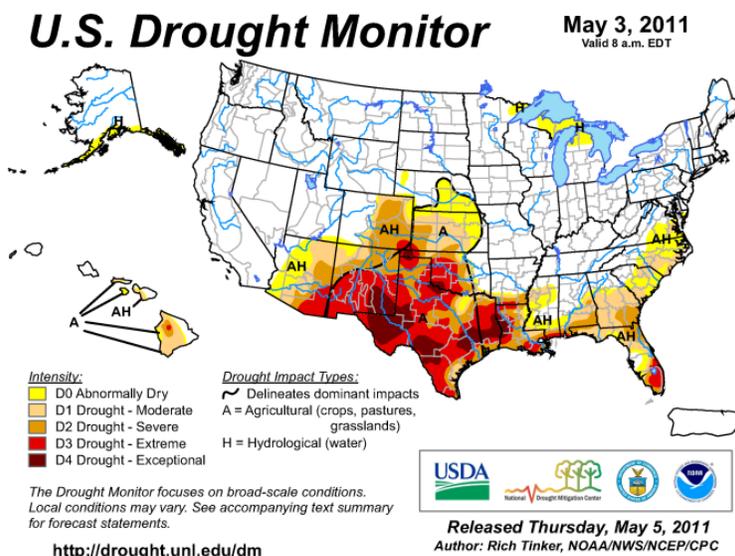


2011 Wildfire Statistics

(Source: NIFC)

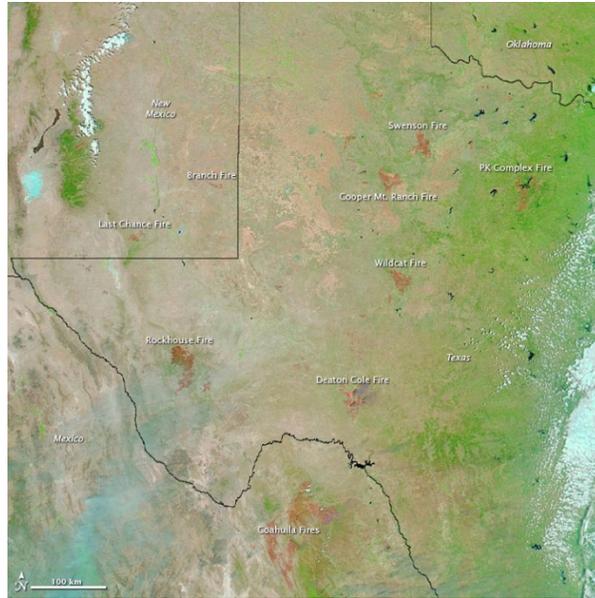
Year-To-Date Totals as of April 29th	Nationwide Number of Fires	Nationwide Number of Acres Burned
04/29/2011	23,232	2,380,885
04/29/2010	20,221	323,448
04/29/2009	30,937	1,059,779
04/29/2008	19,330	1,274,533
04/29/2007	24,072	475,431
04/29/2006	34,689	2,240,787
04/29/2005	18,263	266,894
04/29/2004	24,393	370,100
04/29/2003	14,461	319,821
04/29/2002	22,083	378,640
04/29/2001	15,407	468,562
04/29/2000	28,015	732,579
5-yr average (2006 – 2010)	25,850	1,074,796
10-yr average (2001 – 2010)	22,386	717,800

According to statistics from the [National Interagency Fire Center \(NIFC\)](#), at the end of April, the nationwide number of fires year-to-date was 23,232 which burned approximately 2.4 million acres (1 million hectares), with an average of 101 acres (41 hectares) per fire. This marks the sixth largest (seventh smallest) number of fires for the year-to-date period and the largest acreage burned since records began in 2000. The relatively small number of fires compared to the acreage burned was associated with the large average fire size. During April, an estimated 1.79 million acres (0.7 million hectares) burned across the U.S., which was 6.1 times the 2000-2010 average. A total of 6,614 fires were reported during the month, which was below the 2000-2010 average of 8,645. The average number of acres burned per fire was 290.6 acres (117.6 hectares), which was the largest in the period of record and six times the 2000-2010 average of 48.6 acres (19.7 hectares).



U.S. Drought Monitor map from 3 May 2011

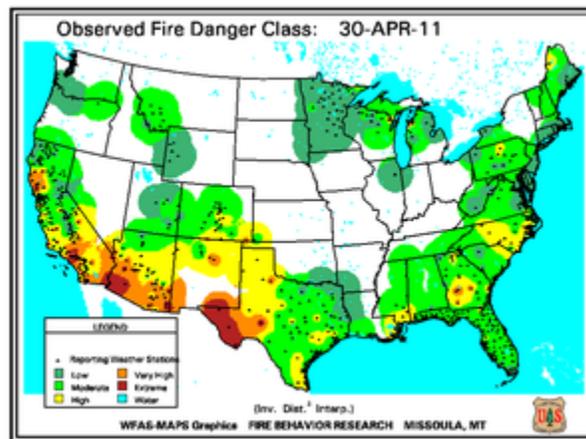
According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), during the month of April, the overall size of the drought footprint across the contiguous U.S. shrank, but the percent area experiencing [extreme](#) and [exceptional](#) drought expanded. Drought conditions generally improved across the southeastern U.S. by [one to two categories](#). The [severe](#) drought across the Carolina piedmont was re-classified as [moderate](#), and the [extreme](#) drought along the coast of Georgia and northern Florida was reclassified as [severe](#). The [severe-to-moderate](#) drought persisted across southern Florida. The ongoing drought across the southern Plains intensified, particularly in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. At the beginning of May, 73.7 percent of Texas was experiencing [extreme-to-exceptional](#) drought, exacerbating the wildfire conditions across the state. Drought conditions remained generally unchanged across the rest of the country. Wet conditions across the central and northern plains kept drought from developing, and across the west above average snowpack helped keep streams and rivers flowing at or above normal levels. In Hawaii, drought remained generally unchanged, except along the eastern coast of the Big Island where drought was completely alleviated. [Abnormally dry](#) conditions persisted across the southern coast of Alaska throughout April.



Satellite Image of Texas and New Mexico burn scars
Source: NASA

Wildfire activity that began in February across the southern Plains continued through March into April. During April, extremely dry and windy weather conditions prevailed across western Texas and New Mexico, creating ideal conditions for wildfires. April 2011 followed the [driest March](#) on record for Texas and the [third driest](#) for New Mexico. Thousands of fires grew rapidly out of control across the two states, burning millions of acres. Several cities in Texas, including [Austin](#) and [San Antonio](#) had top five driest/warmest Aprils on record. Much of the fuel for the fires came from dried underbrush and grasses which experienced ideal growing conditions during the [summer of 2010](#), when there was abundant precipitation observed across the region. This spring has proven to be the opposite, drying out much of last year's vegetative growth. During the year-to-date period alone, wildfires have burned approximately 2.2 million acres (0.9 million hectares) across Texas, including over 400,000 acres (161,875 hectares) that burned in towns that were handled by local fire departments. These additional 400,000 acres (161,875 hectares) are not typically reported to [NIFC](#). Many of the wildfires were ignited by natural phenomenon, such as lightning, but several fires were by started humans, both intentionally and non-intentionally. The fire conditions were driven by a series of strong upper level low pressure systems moving from the Rockies into the central Plains, bringing strong winds to the region. The associated dry line, a boundary between the dry continental air and moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, consistently set up across Texas, blocking any moisture from reaching the western parts of the state and New Mexico.

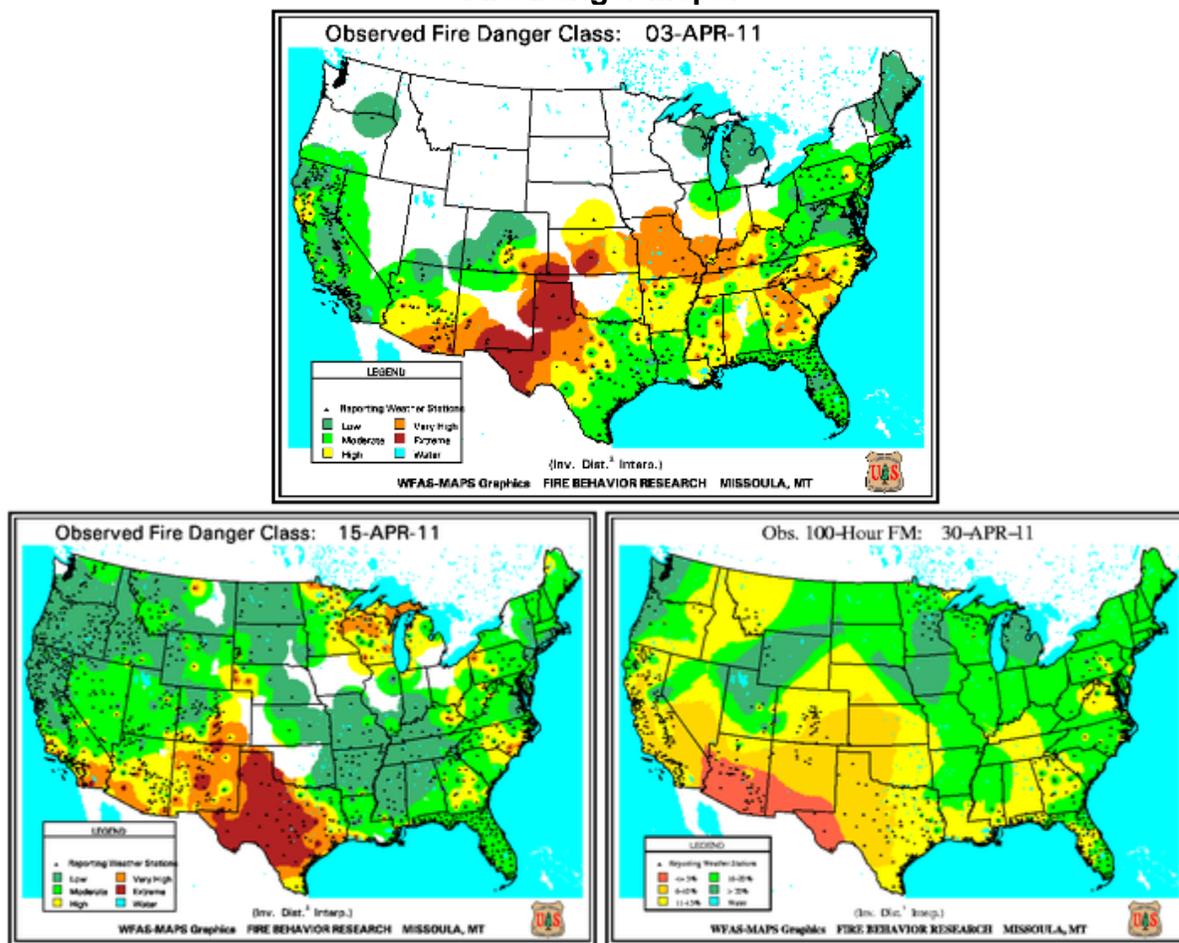
Several metropolitan areas of Texas were threatened by the wildfires during the month, including San Angelo, Austin, and Fort Worth. For the year-to-date period, 1,134 structures, including 244 homes, have been destroyed by fires across Texas. In a southwest suburb of Austin, 10 homes suffered major damage. In San Angelo, the [Wildcat fire](#) forced the evacuation of hundreds of people due to fears of the fires overtaking entire neighborhoods. Several of the individual fires exceeded 100,000 acres (40,468 hectares) in size. The [Rock House fire](#), which burned near Fort Davis, Texas burned nearly 315,000 acres (127,475 hectares) of land and destroyed 41 homes and two businesses. The Rock House Fire was the largest observed in Texas for the year. Governor Rick Perry declared a state of emergency for several counties, and asked for federal funds to help the firefighting efforts, which were estimated at two million dollars a day. The state used a variety of available resources to battle the blazes including over 2,000 volunteer firefighters and 71 aircraft. Officials with the [Texas Forest Service](#) claim this was the worst wildfire season on record for the state, and at least two firefighters perished as they tried to battle the blazes.



[Fire Danger map from 30 April 2011](#)

According to the [U.S. Forest Service \(USFS\) – Wildland Fire Assessment System](#), at the beginning of April, extremely high fire danger dominated most of western Texas, southern New Mexico, western Oklahoma, and southwestern Kansas. High to very high fire danger stretched westward into southern Arizona and eastward across the central Mississippi River Valley, and the southeast. By the 15th, precipitation across the southeastern U.S. alleviated the fire danger there, while high fire danger spread northward into the upper Midwest. Across the southern Plains, extreme fire danger was observed across most of Texas, and high fire danger stretched into the four corners region. By the end of the month, most of the high fire danger across the country had subsided, with the exception of western Texas, and the southern portions of New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Fire Danger Maps:

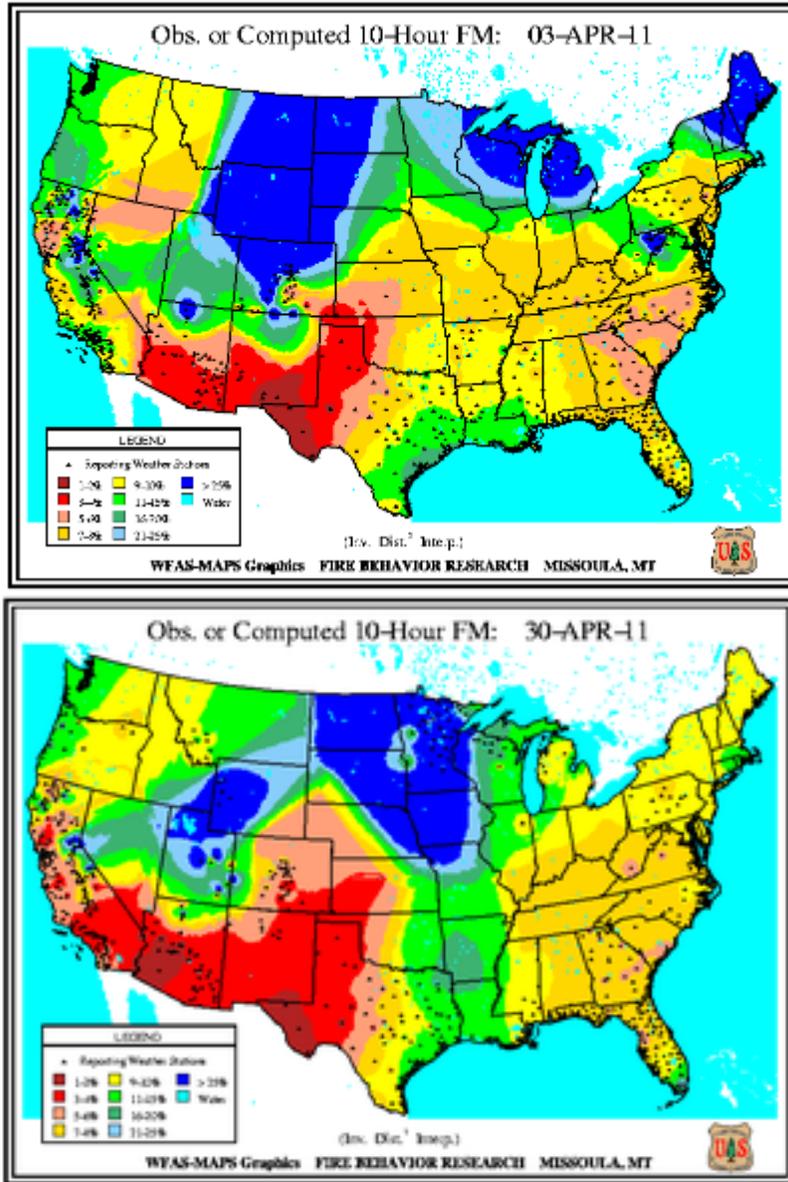


100-hr Dead Fuel Moisture Map on 30 April 2011

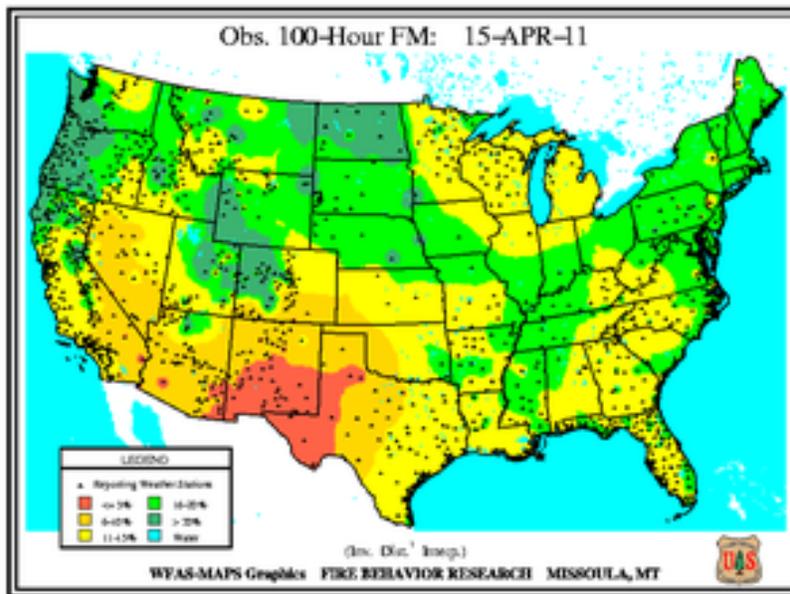
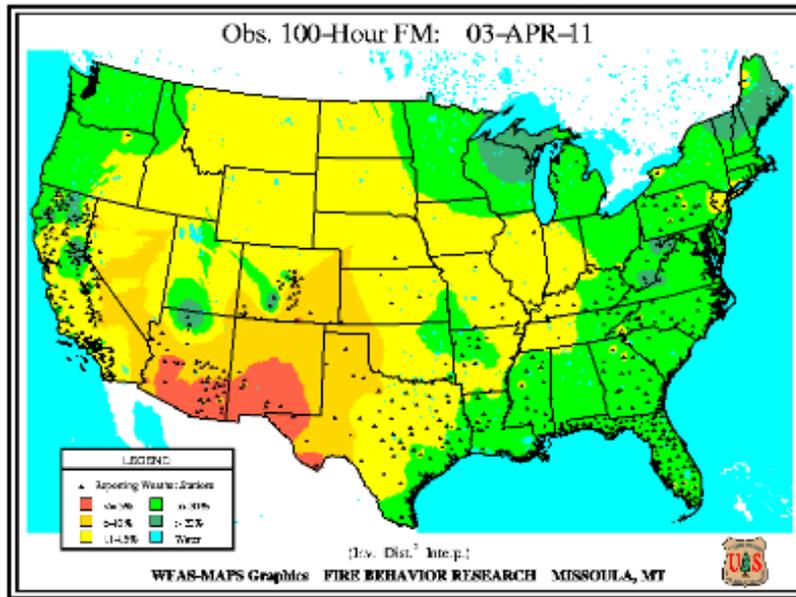
According to the [USFS – Wildland Fire Assessment System](#), at the beginning of the month, dry small fuels (low 10-hour fuel moistures) were present across the southern two thirds of the country, with the lowest 10-hour fuel moistures observed across the southeast, western Texas, southern New Mexico, and southern Arizona. Low 100-hour and 1,000 hour fuel moistures (dry large fuels) were present across western Texas, southern New Mexico, and southern Arizona. On the 15th, widespread heavy precipitation across the center of the country moistened fuels of all sizes there. Conversely, dry conditions elsewhere allowed the expansion of low 10-hour fuel moistures. Low 10-hour fuel moistures were observed along the Eastern Seaboard and the western Great Lakes. The lowest 10-hour fuel moistures were observed across western Texas and most of the southwestern U.S., where dry conditions have prevailed for months. Low 100-hour and 1,000 hour fuel moistures were confined to western Texas, southern New Mexico, and southern Arizona. By the end of the month, low 10-hour fuel moistures were widespread across the east, particularly parts of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, while extremely low 10-hour fuel moistures persisted for

western Texas and the Southwest. There was also little change in the spatial pattern of low 100-hour and 1,000-hour fuel moistures, with dry larger fuels confined to western Texas and the Southwest.

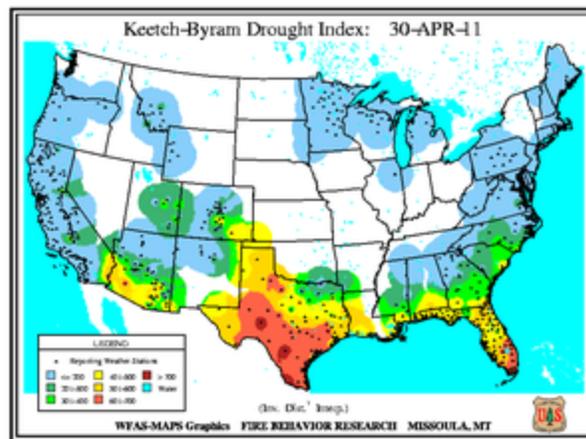
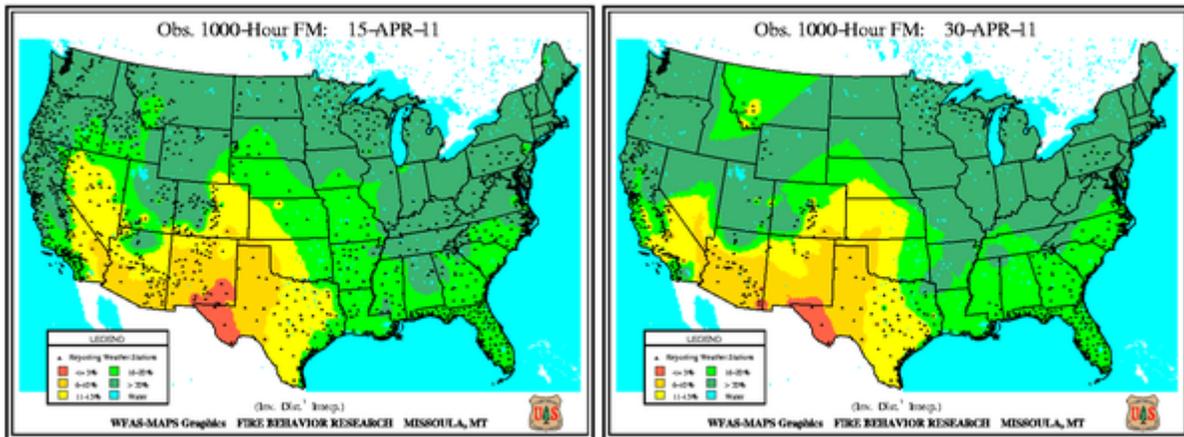
10-hr Fuel Moisture Maps:



100-hr Fuel Moisture Maps:



1000-hr Fuel Moisture Maps:



Keetch-Byram Drought Index on 30 April 2011

According to the [USFS – Wildland Fire Assessment System](#), at the beginning of the month, high [Keetch-Byram Drought Index \(KBDI\)](#) values were occurring in locations consistent with the areas of the most severe drought conditions. High KBDI values were occurring across southern Florida and most of Texas. By the 15th, high KBDI values persisted across southern Florida, while they expanded across Texas, into southern New Mexico and southern Arizona. By the end of the month, the high KBDI values expanded to cover most of Florida, with the highest values confined to the southern tip of the state. High KBDI values persisted across the southern Plains and the southern Rockies.

KBDI Maps:

