

## **Western Interconnection Wildfire Summary 2024**

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This is a high-level summary of the 2024 wildfire season in the western interconnection and the last report this year. Wildfires continue to pose risk in areas of the interconnection.

### **Western U.S.**

The Western U.S. had an extremely busy and challenging fire year. Listed here are some of the busiest areas this season:

- Cal Fire (California) has reported 7,594 fires burning 1.04 million acres, close to the five-year average. Now that wildfire risk is diminishing with fall and winter ahead, many fire personnel are shifting their focus to the critically important work of fuels treatments, which are a planned aspect of wildland fire and landscape management.
- Washington reports 1,686 fires burning 288,000 acres, more than double the 10-year average for fires.
- Oregon reports 2,039 fires burning 2 million acres, breaking the previous record set in 2020. An above average wildfire season was forecast for Oregon.
- Wyoming reported its largest wildfire season since 1988 with 522 fires burning 800,000 acres. The Elk Fire that began in late September, burned 98,000 acres, the largest fire in over 100 years in the Big Horn Mountain range.
- Alberta reports 1,216 fires burning 1.9 million acres.
- British Columbia reports 1,683 fires burning 1.07 million acres.
- Idaho and Montana both experienced above average fire seasons.

2024 season totals will be available for all states in early 2025.

### ***BES Impacts***

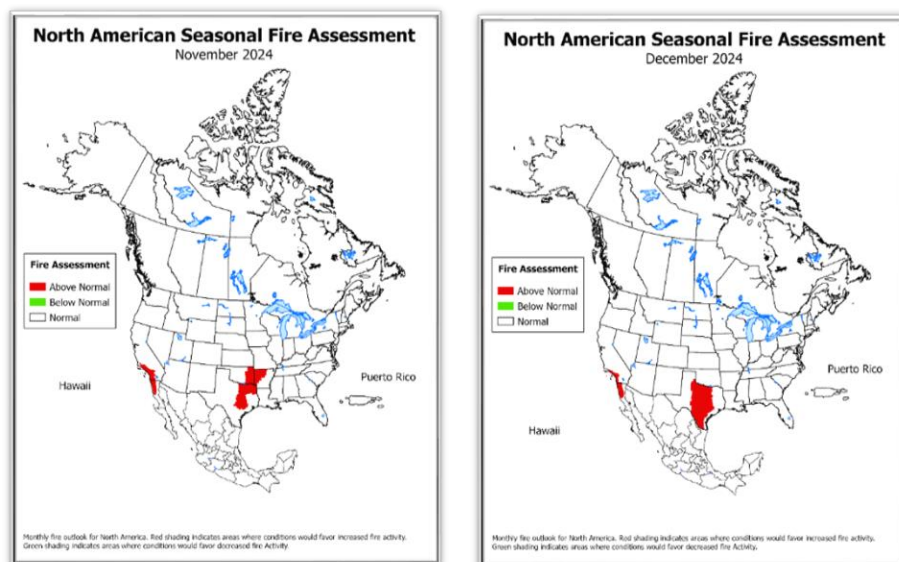
Wildfire continues to pose a threat in 2024 to reliable electricity service. The number of wildfires stayed flat when compared to the five-year average. This year saw several fires cause reliability concerns throughout the interconnection. The effects of these fires were open loop operations that left the interconnection one contingency away from separating into islands (no islanding occurred), 500 kV lines tripping, resulting in Path de-rates affecting transfer capacity. On several occasions, Path 66—the California-Oregon Intertie—was reduced to 0 MW north-to-south and south-to-north. Path 65 (the Pacific DC Intertie) also experienced several de-rates due to wildfire, creating transfer issues north to south. This can create congestion in the east as flows change direction to supply generation to meet

load requirements in the West. In October, wildfires affected several IBR plants in June when two 500 kV lines tripped due to the Post Fire burning through the transmission corridor. The plants tripped offline incorrectly, dropping 934 MW of generation. In October, the Pine Fire caused a Remedial Action Scheme to trigger due to loss of transmission, dropping over 2,000 MW of generation. Loss of solar due to smoke cover is an increasing issue as solar generation continues to grow. The loss is difficult to accurately measure, but generation is happening. Financial impacts are also an issue, especially on the distribution side, due to ongoing mitigation costs, firefighting efforts, and equipment damage. Active wildfires (10 acres or larger) peaked in July and August (800) with numbers decreasing gradually in September and October (300) throughout the interconnection. Through all events, the BES remained stable and reliable.

### ***What's next?***

On the tail of an extremely busy and challenging fire year, many fire personnel on public lands are shifting their focus to the critically important work of fuels treatments, which are a planned aspect of wildland fire and landscape management. Wildland fire management means using different kinds of strategies for managing wildfires. Sometimes it means firefighters ignite prescribed fires to reduce the underbrush and rejuvenate the landscape. Other times, it means managing fires started naturally for beneficial effects. When wildland fires are threatening communities, historic places, and natural resources, fire management means putting the fire out or full suppression of the fire. Wildfire management requires land managers to use the right tool under the right conditions, a determination which takes knowledge, experience, and cooperation between stakeholders. *NIFC*

### ***Significant Wildland U.S. Fire Potential Outlook***



## WECC Weekly Active Wildfire Totals

Active Wildfires U.S. and Canada  
June-November 2024

