

Northern California Fire Season Outlook

Northern Operations Predictive Services June 9, 2026

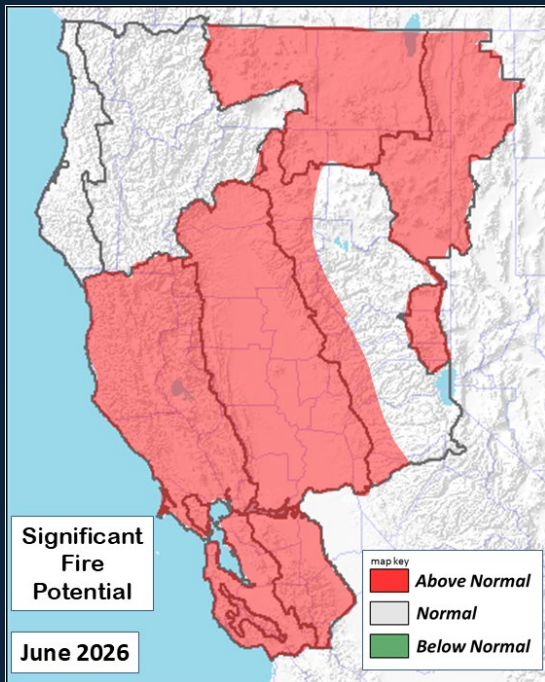


Jason Finney
Assistant Chief – CAL FIRE
North Division Operations



June – September 2026 North Ops Highlights

- Weather patterns are likely to produce warmer-than-normal temperatures with mixed precipitation signals over the next 4 months.
- Alignment of critically dry dead-live fuels is expected to become more noticeable during June but more so from July through September.
- Significant fire potential is projected to be near to above normal during June, then trend above normal July through September across most areas, with the exception of Coastal areas.



Significant Fire Potential Outlook by Month

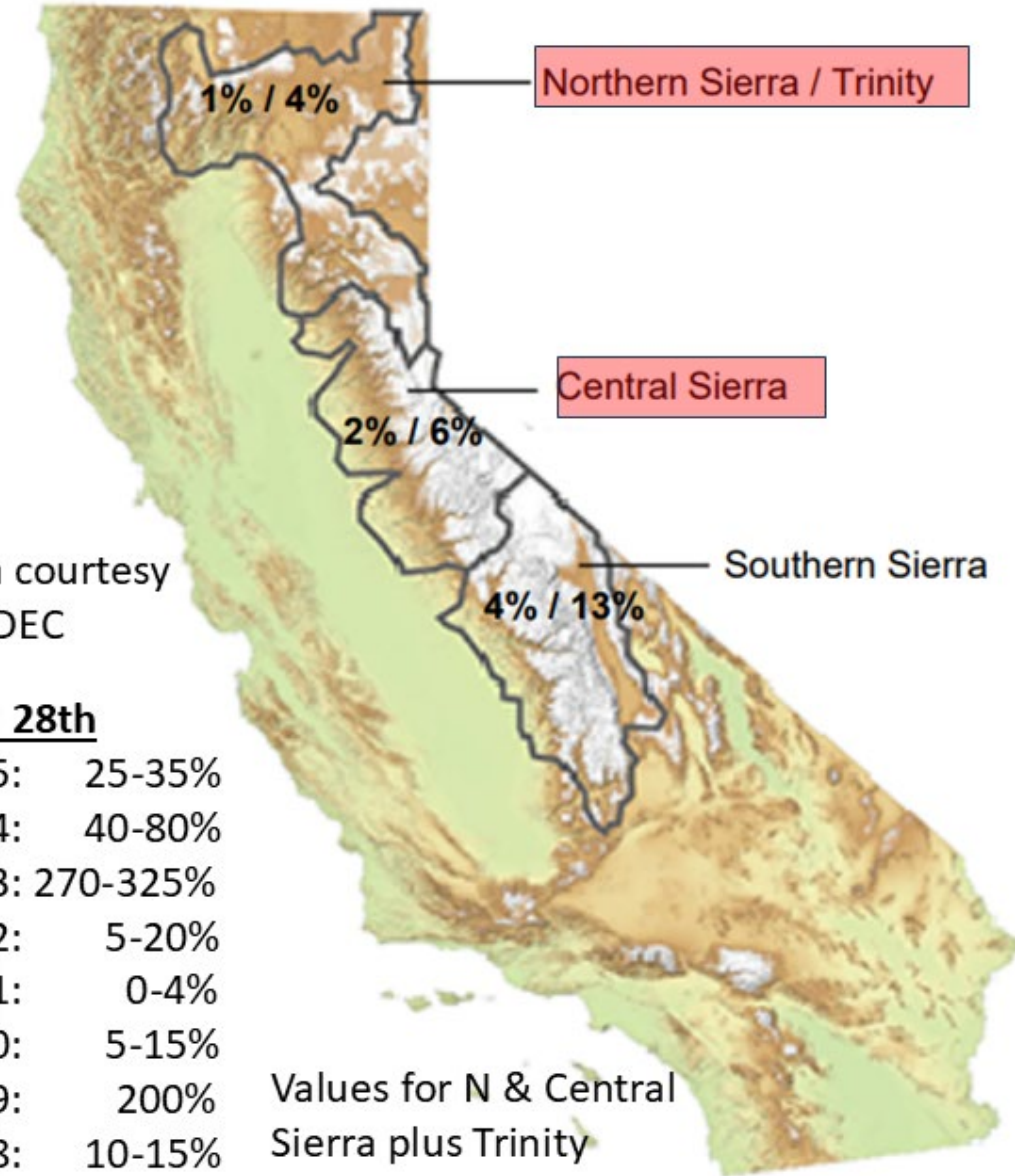
- Maps show elevated risk inland for July–September.



2026 Weather Review

- Hottest March recorded since 1895. Averaged 12.6F above normal for most of Northern California.
- Less than ¼” of precipitation for March. 80% below normal
- Northern California experienced two significant low-pressure systems in May, with stable high-pressure ridging dominating the remainder of the month.
- Precipitation was generally below normal across the region.
- Temperatures were near to above normal.
- Nearly 3,500 lightning strikes occurred during May, primarily from the two low-pressure systems. **Resulted in several small fires in Jarbo Gap area**
- The first Red Flag Warnings of the year were issued May 16–18 and May 25 due to dry wind events.
- May Red Flag Warnings are relatively uncommon, occurring in only 7 years since 2006.

% of April 1 Average / % of Normal for This Date



Data courtesy
of CDEC

May 28th

- 2025: 25-35%
- 2024: 40-80%
- 2023: 270-325%
- 2022: 5-20%
- 2021: 0-4%
- 2020: 5-15%
- 2019: 200%
- 2018: 10-15%
- 2017: 180-215%

Values for N & Central
Sierra plus Trinity

Fuels Review

- **An abnormally hot March**, combined with multiple subsequent rain events, has caused a second growth of the grass crop. Grass is 4-6' in many areas.
- **Dead fuels are highly receptive to ignition**, with below-normal moisture and record-low 1,000-hour fuel moisture values in late May.
- **Fine fuels are rapidly curing**, with widespread grass and cheatgrass drying at low elevations, increasing early-season grass fire potential.
- **Live fuels are in mixed condition**, with continued green-up in many woody species but early drying observed in some brush species due to above-normal early-season moisture stress.
- **Overall fuel trends are accelerating toward drier conditions**, driven by limited snowpack, elevated evaporative demand, and localized drought stress in northern and eastern California.
- **"Snow crush" damage caused by the mid-February snowstorm**, particularly throughout the Sierra foothills.



LFM Current Year vs Average Annual Trends

Courtesy of PG&E

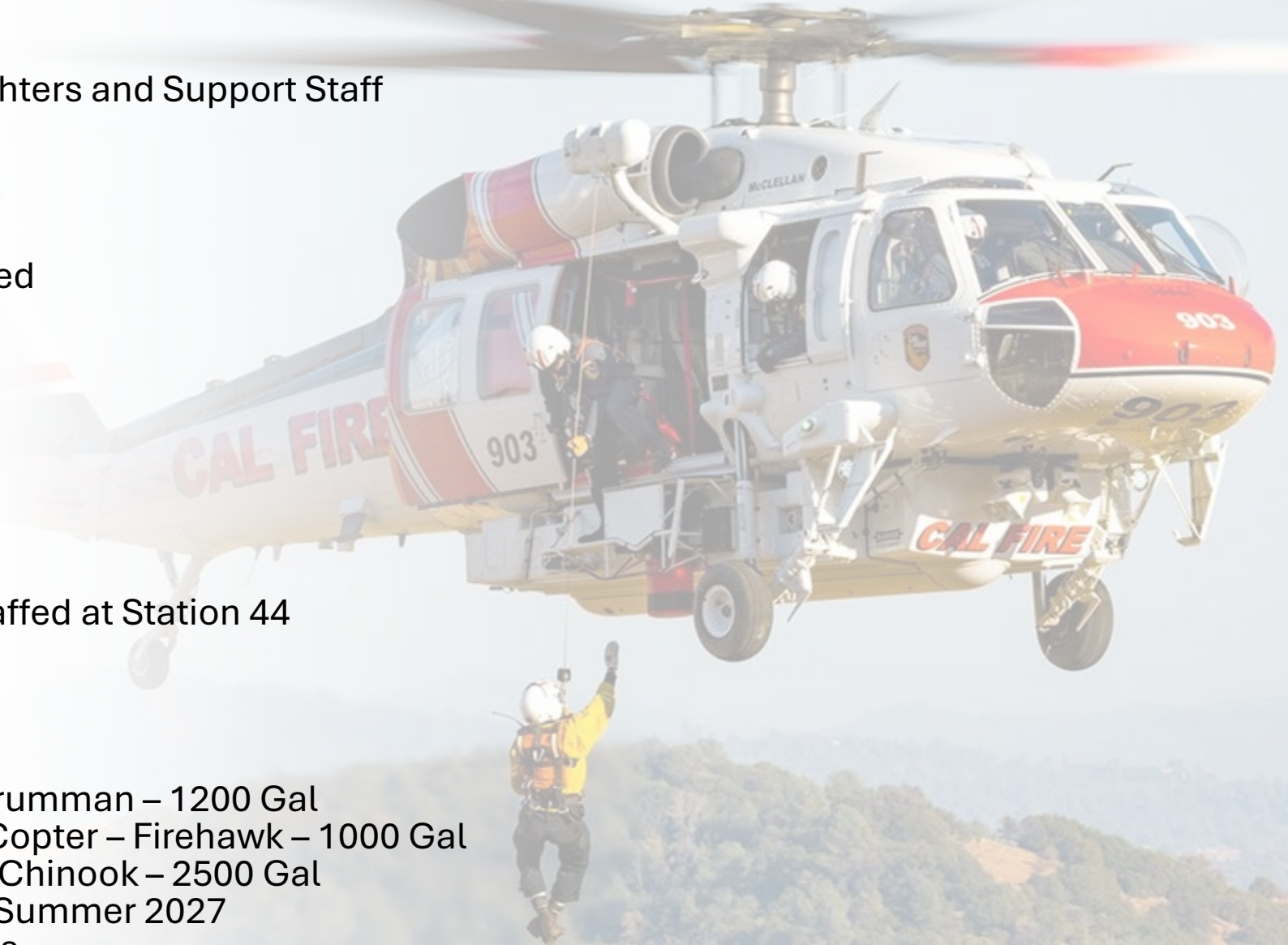


Summer Fire Weather Outlook

- Higher probability of above-normal temperatures through the next four months.
- June is expected to be drier than normal.
- Increased potential for thunderstorms due to:
 - Cut-off low pressure systems
 - Strong Southwest Monsoon activity
 - Active Eastern Pacific tropical cyclone season
- Dry wind events are expected to occur at near-normal frequencies.
- Heat waves are expected to be a major contributor to large fire growth events.

CALFIRE - Butte Unit – Response Capabilities

- **Butte Unit Personnel**
 - 430 CAL FIRE Career Firefighters and Support Staff
 - 151 Volunteer Firefighters
- **23 Fire Stations**
 - 11 State-funded
 - 12 Local Government Funded
 - 2 Paradise FD
 - 1 Oroville FD
 - 9 Butte County FD
- **Staffed Equipment**
 - 13 Type 1 Fire Engines
 - 16 Type 3 Fire Engines
 - 2 Ladder Trucks
 - 1 Type 2 Rescue – Cross-staffed at Station 44
 - 2 Bulldozers
- **Chico Air Attack Base**
 - 1 Air Attack – OV 10 Bronco
 - 1 Type 3 Airtanker – S2T – Grumman – 1200 Gal
 - 1 Type 1 Butte County Fire Copter – Firehawk – 1000 Gal
 - 1 Type 1 EU Copter - CH47 Chinook – 2500 Gal
 - 1 C130 Planned for CAAB - Summer 2027
 - 4 UAS Drones with operators



CALFIRE - Butte Unit – Cooperative Fire Protection

- **Butte Unit Fire Centers**

- Table Mountain Fire Center
 - Located in Oroville
 - 3 CALFIRE Firefighter I Hand Crews
 - 1 Fuels Crew
- Magalia Fire Center
 - Located In Magalia
 - 2 CALFIRE/CCC Hand Crews



OV-10A Bronco



SPECIFICATIONS:

Cruise Speed:

258 mph

Gallon Capacity:

not applicable

Manufacturer

North American-Rockwell,
Columbus, Ohio

Original Owner

United States Navy/Marines, 1968-1993. The OV-10 was used as a counterinsurgency aircraft and close air-support to military ground forces.

Acquired by CAL FIRE

In 1993, CAL FIRE acquired 15 OV-10As from the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program. These have since been converted for use as air attack platforms replacing the original Cessna O-2As that CAL FIRE had been using. The OV-10As are newer, larger, faster, provide a larger field of vision for the pilot and air attack officer and are more maneuverable than the older O-2As. In 2009, CAL FIRE also acquired three OV-10Ds, of which one has been converted and is in use.

Mission

CAL FIRE uses the OV-10s as the primary command and

Air Tactical

Grumman S-2T



SPECIFICATIONS:

Cruise Speed:

270 mph

Gallon Capacity:

1,200 gallons long-term fire
retardant

Original Owner

United States Navy, 1958-1975; The S-2E/G carrier-based anti-submarine warfare airplane.

Acquired by CAL FIRE

In 1996, CAL FIRE acquired 26 S-2E/G planes from the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program. Marsh Aviation converted the planes to a firefighting configuration and were retrofitted with modern, powerful turboprop engines. The completely reconditioned S-2Ts are faster, safer, more maneuverable, and carry a larger retardant payload than the original S-2A airtankers CAL FIRE had used since the 1970s. The final three S-2Ts were completed and delivered in 2005. CAL FIRE has 23 S-2T one of which is in Sacramento at CAL FIRE's Aviation

Type III Ai



CH-47 Chinook

CH-47 Chinook

The Boeing CH-47 Chinook has tandem rotors, and twin turbine engines. The Chinook is powered by two turboshaft engines, mounted on either side of the helicopter's rear end and connected to the rotors by driveshafts. The counter-rotating rotors eliminate the need for an anti-torque vertical rotor, allowing all power to be used for lift and thrust. If one engine fails, the other can drive both rotors. It was originally designed for the U.S. Army in the late 50's as a heavy lift helicopter and was used extensively in Vietnam. The civilian version of the CH-47 is the Boeing 234.

The Chinook is a multi-mission, heavy-lift transport helicopter. Its primary mission is to move troops, artillery, ammunition, fuel, water, barrier materials, and other equipment to the front field.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Cruise Speed:

137 mph

Gallon Capacity:

2,000/bucket

Manufacturer

Boeing Company /

Military





Lockheed C-130 Hercules

Original owner

United States Coast Guard, 1985-present (USCG HC-130H)

Acquired by CAL FIRE

In July 2018, California secured approval to acquire seven C-130H aircraft for CAL FIRE. This addition to the firefighting fleet was solidified in December 2023 with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by Congress. Signed into law by President Biden later that month, the NDAA authorized the transfer of these C-130Hs from the United States Coast Guard to California.

Since 2018, the United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard played a pivotal role in maintaining the aircraft including the replacement of the inner and outer wing boxes, paint and providing spare provisions

SPECIFICATIONS:

Cruise Speed:

360 mph

Gallon Capacity:

4,000 gallons long-term fire retardant

Manufacturer

Lockheed Martin, Marietta

Type I Airtanker Long



Sikorsky S70i CAL FIRE HAWK

Type I Helic

SPECIFICATIONS:

Cruise Speed:

160 mph

Gallon Capacity:

Fixed tank - 1000 gallons of water/foam with pilot controlled drop volumes.

Manufacturer

Sikorsky Aircraft, Stratford, Connecticut (Built in Mielec,

Original Owner

CAL FIRE, 2019

Acquired By CAL FIRE

In 2018 funding was secured for the purchase of 12 Sikorsky S70i helicopters. S70i CAL FIRE HAWKS bring enhanced capabilities including flight safety, higher payloads, increased power margins and night flying capabilities.

In Fiscal Year 2022-2023 additional funding was approved to purchase four additional S70i Fire Hawk Helicopters to increase surge capacity and to maintain operational capabilities during required maintenance cycles.

Mission

The CAL FIRE HAWK has night mission capabilities and performs fire suppression and rescue missions. When responding to wildfires, the helicopter can quickly deliver up to a 9-person Helitack Crew for ground firefighting, which supports with water drops.





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