

# STATE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS

May 16, 2023  
Department Report

## Pre-Season Fire Brief: May-July 2023

Although the South Idaho and Great Basin region received 130%+ of its normal snowpack, much of North Idaho, western Montana, and Washington remain in drought conditions with some areas receiving less than 70% of normal snowpack for this year. The forecast through spring and into July is for normal temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation, transitioning into normal temperatures and below normal precipitation for summer months.

Considering snowpack, moisture, and temperature forecasts, IDL's outlook is that southern Idaho will have a slower start to fire season due to heavy green up and grass growth. As this summer warms up and fuel load dies, the potential for significant fire activity is expected to be high. North Idaho is going into this fire season with below normal moisture in the ground and warmer conditions; the expectation is that heavy fuels will dry out quickly and may contribute to a significant fire potential earlier in the season than normal.

As of this past weekend, IDL had 39 fires for over 200 acres, mostly due to debris burning and grass burning. Hotshot Crews and Incident Management Teams from the U.S. have already responded to large incidents in Alberta, Canada.

## IDL Resources

- 2 medium helicopters staffed 7 days a week coming on contract at the end of June:  
1 ship and crew in CDA, 1 ship and crew in Lewiston
- 2 Water scoopers (Fire Bosses) based in CDA
- 4 SEATS, 2 based in McCall
- Teakean 20-person hand crew based in Deary
- 6-person Fire Suppression Module based in Sandpoint (formally known as the North Idaho booster crew)
- 2 Zone Fire Managers: 1 based in North Idaho, 1 based in Lewiston
- 28 engines at the district offices

IDL expects to bring on 8 contract engines to assist with the additional acres and workload this year due to changes in the Master Agreement.

Due to supply chain issues, IDL has not been able to build the recently approved engines and command vehicles; waiting on cab/chassis from Ford as well as the utility bodies and will begin building the engines as soon as the trucks arrive.