Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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# Wildfire Hazard Potential at a glance

## A helpful tool to guide fuels treatment planning

Wildfire managers and agency leaders often want to know where wildfires are likely to occur and how intense they may be. To meet this need, Forest Service Research and Development's Fire Modeling Institute has produced and updated the Wildfire Hazard Potential map since 2012. Updated every 2 to 3 years, Wildfire Hazard Potential is a raster geospatial product that can help managers evaluate wildfire risk or prioritize fuels treatment needs across very large areas, up to regional and national scales. It has become the go-to source for identifying areas of the United States with high wildfire hazard. Targeting fuels reduction work in these high-hazard areas is referenced as a specific goal in legislation and other directives to federal land managers.

### What is the Wildfire Hazard Potential Map?

The Wildfire Hazard Potential map depicts the potential for high-intensity wildfire that would be difficult for firefighters to manage. On its own, Wildfire Hazard Potential is not a map of wildfire threat or risk. Its primary purpose is to highlight places where vegetation treatments may be needed to reduce the intensity of future wildfires—one of several factors managers consider when prioritizing fuels treatment locations and resources. Wildfire Hazard Potential is a tool for long-term strategic planning, but it is not a forecast or wildfire outlook for any particular time of year, as it does not include any information on current or forecasted weather or fuel moisture conditions.

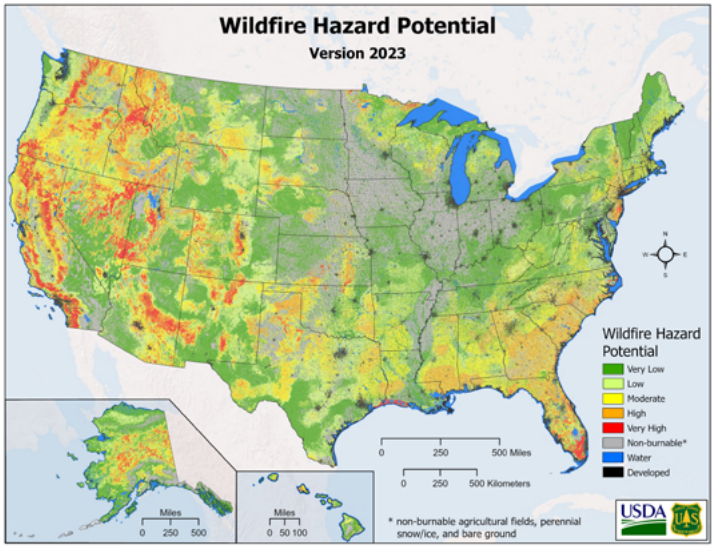
### What's Under the Hood?

The latest version of the Wildfire Hazard Potential map (2023) is built on other spatial data that Forest Service R&D produces or contributes to, including raster datasets of wildfire likelihood and intensity generated with the Large Fire Simulator (FSim), point locations of past fire occurrence, and fuels and vegetation datasets from LANDFIRE. Wildfire Hazard Potential is produced at a 270-meter resolution as both a continuous index with values from zero to 100,000 or as a five-class version with values from very low to very high. Areas with higher values have a higher probability of burning with extreme fire behavior when weather conditions are conducive to fire growth.

### Where Can I Get the Data?

To download the most current national 270-meter raster GIS data, please visit the Forest Service Research Data Archive. Older versions of the Wildfire Hazard Potential are available on the Wildfire Hazard Potential archived products webpage.

Since 2020, the Wildfire Hazard Potential dataset has been integrated into the Forest Service's Wildfire Risk to Communities project. A more refined version of Wildfire Hazard Potential, with a 30-meter resolution, is available through the Forest Service's Research Data Archive Wildfire Risk to Communities downloadable dataset.

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