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NOAA Forecasters Predict Critical Fire Weather Conditions In Southwest U.S.

ScienceDaily (July 16, 2005) — June 28, 2005 -- Weather conditions on Tuesday have the potential to create a significant fire weather situation across parts of southeastern Nevada, southwestern Utah and northwestern Arizona, according to forecasters with the NOAA Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla.

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- Derecho
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A very high to extreme fire danger coupled with strong gusty winds, low afternoon humidity and the chance of dry thunderstorms are all coming together across this area of the southwest Tuesday, said Phillip Bothwell, NOAA Storm Prediction Center senior development meteorologist.

"Thunderstorms have occurred across parts of the area early this morning," he explained. "The timing of the events will be critical for fire weather concerns. Some of the storms may produce wetting rains, although most are expected to be dry thunderstorms with little precipitation reaching the ground. It is the combination of the timing of the thunderstorms, the amount of rainfall they produce, the location of lightning strikes and the very hot, dry and windy surface conditions that could cause a significant fire weather threat."

The greatest threat for wildfires would be expected to follow after the lightning strikes where little precipitation has occurred across the very dry vegetation when dry southwesterly winds of 20 mph with gusts of 40 mph can be expected. Those involved with fire weather across southeastern Nevada, southwestern Utah and northwest Arizona should monitor the weather conditions and stay alert for the latest statements from their local NOAA National Weather Service forecast offices.

The next few days will bring somewhat lighter winds but continued hot and dry conditions, Bothwell said.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources.

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NOAA image of wildfire hot spots in the western United States taken June 27, 2005, at 6:04 p.m. EDT. (Image courtesy of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration)

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