Fire Danger Ratings and Interpretations

Fire danger ratings are used in daily risk assessments and for operational preparedness by fire management agencies. Temperature, RH, winds, solar radiation, and precipitation estimates are the primary inputs.

Fire danger information is useful during initial fire sizeup, initial attack, extended attack, and in fire prescriptions.

Both the U.S. National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) and Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System's Fire Weather Index (CFFDRS FWI) System are used in the U.S.

Energy Release Component (ERC-NFDRS) and **Buildup Index (BUI-CFFDRS)** serve as good indicators of local seasonal fire danger trends resulting from the cumulative drying of fuels over days and weeks. They depend heavily on slower drying 100-hr., 1000-hr., and duff fuels.

Burning Index (BI-NFDRS) and **Fire Weather Index (FWI-CFFDRS)** reflect changes in fine fuel moistures and windspeed and are highly variable day to day. They represent fireline intensity/flame length in a general sense.

These are relative indices and should be compared to historic trends and thresholds on local area PocketCards. They can and should be reviewed along with morning forecasts.

PocketCards are a tool for field personnel to locally track key fire danger outputs. PocketCards for a given area can be found at https://www.wildfire.gov/application/pocket-cards or by searching for Fire Danger PocketCard on the internet. Do not use the PocketCards for site-specific fire behavior predictions or fireline actions without an interpretative briefing.