



BLM UTAH **FIRE & AVIATION**

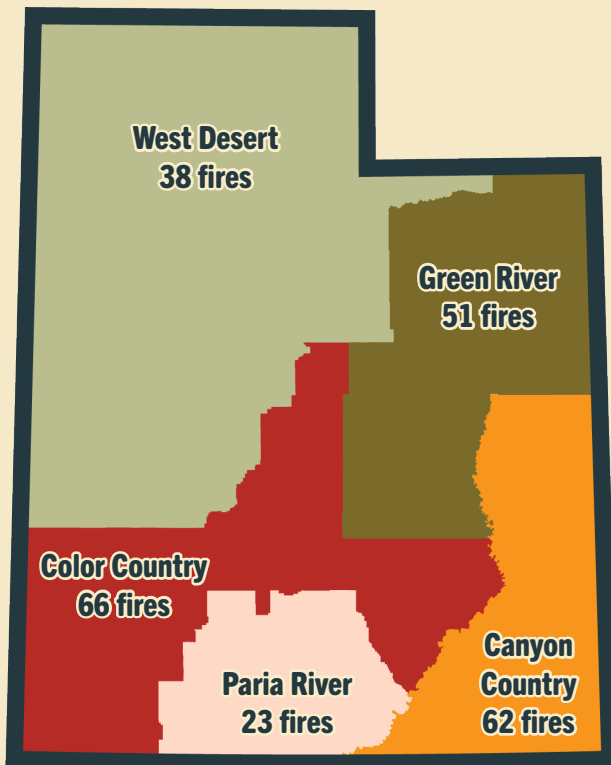
Annual Report

2023

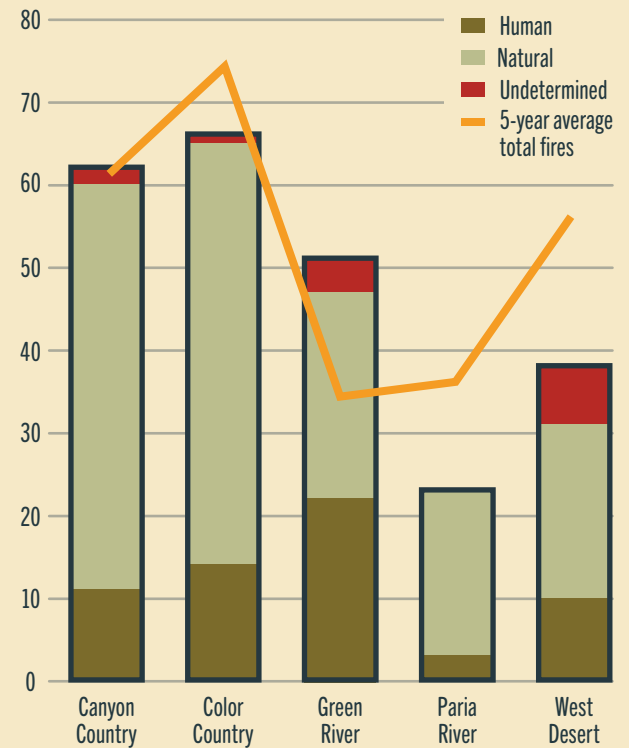
FIRE YEAR 2023



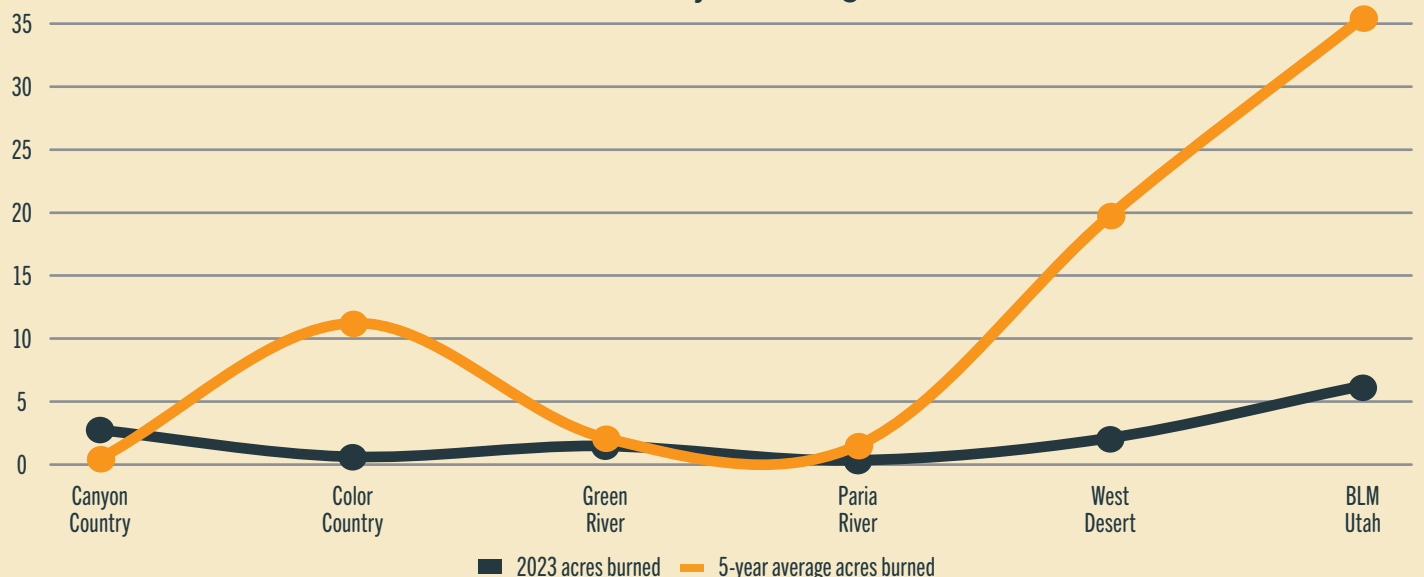
Total number of fires by District



Number of fires by cause and District
2023 & 5-year average



Acres burned by District and BLM Utah, by thousands
2023 vs 5-year average



AN ODD YEAR

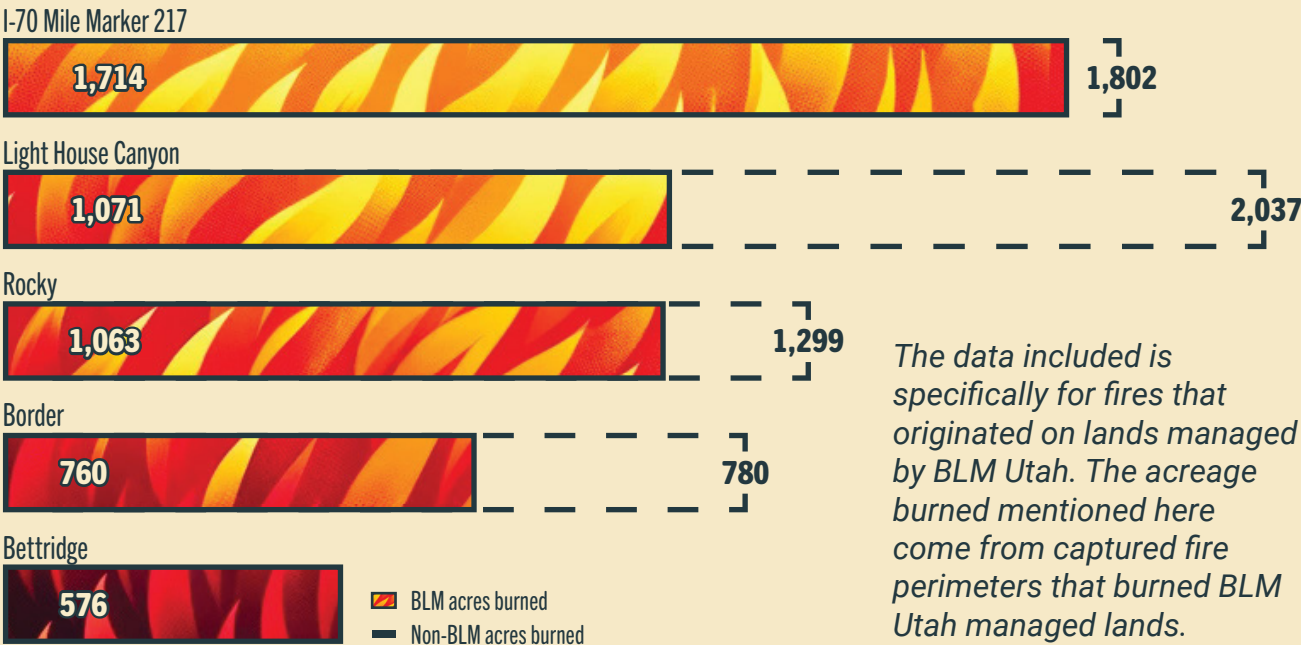
Proportion of acres burned by District

District	2023	5-yr Average
Canyon Country	43%	5%
Color Country	6%	24%
Green River	20%	9%
Paria River	1%	1%
West Desert	30%	62%

Typically, the West Desert District represents about 62% of the annual burned acreage on BLM Utah managed lands. In 2023, though, Canyon Country was the primary District impacted, accounting for 43% of BLM Utah's total burned acres, while the West Desert District comprised only 30%.

Canyon Country saw more acres burned in 2023 than in its past 13 years combined. Most of this is the result of this year's largest fire, the I-70 Mile Marker 217 fire.

Top 5 fires with most BLM acres burned

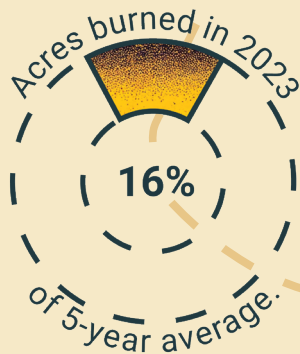
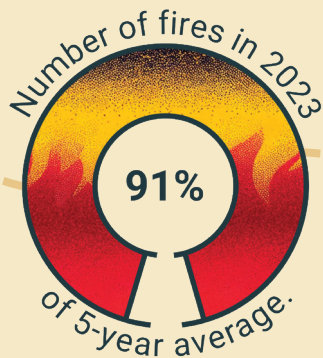


The data included is specifically for fires that originated on lands managed by BLM Utah. The acreage burned mentioned here come from captured fire perimeters that burned BLM Utah managed lands.

WEATHER SUMMARY

The 2023 fire season started after a record snowpack in late 2022 and early 2023. On average, Utah experienced 25% more rain across the state than usual in the summer. Most of this rain came in August as fuels were drying. This summer's intense heatwaves created conditions for wildfires, with the hottest periods in July and early August. St. George, Cedar City, and Salt Lake City all recorded one of the hottest Julys. However, occasional monsoonal flows prevented the vegetation from drying out, reducing the risk of large fires. This shifted our fire season later into the year, which, followed by heavy September rains, resulted in one of our least active fire seasons in recorded history.



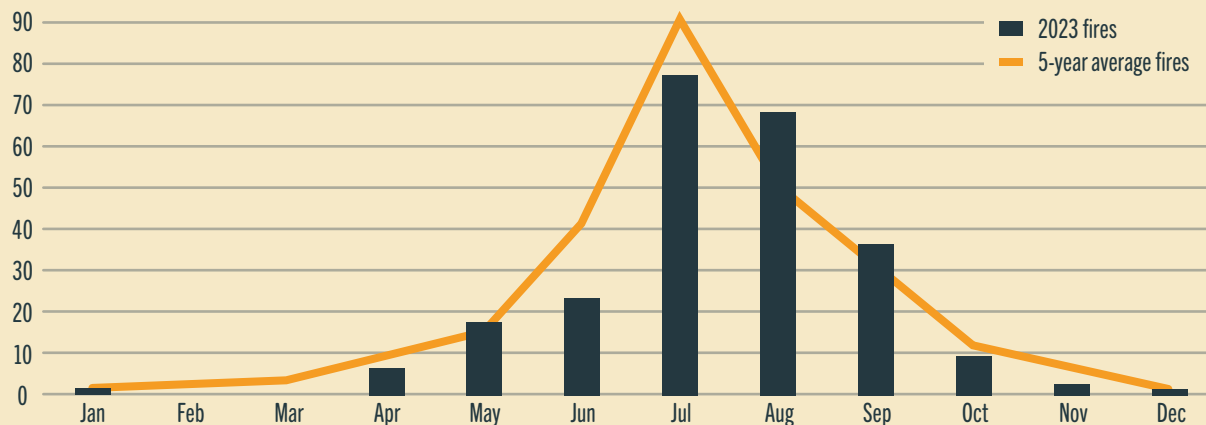


WHAT'S GOING ON?

The number of fires does not always directly correlate with the total area burned. The vast majority of fires are small, less than an acre in size, and are caught before they spread. However, when conditions are right, these fires can spread quickly before firefighters can access them. The climate this year was favorable in reducing wildfire spread.

Most fires start as a result of natural processes such as lightning. There is nothing to prevent these natural starts but hazardous fuels management can help mitigate fire growth.

Fires by month



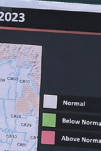
FIRE RESOURCES



The BLM manages nearly 23 million acres of public lands in Utah, representing 42 percent of the state. Working in a variety of firefighting and support positions, in 2023 we employed 199 fire preparedness personnel and 72 fuels management personnel. There are 31 engines located throughout the state and two helicopters with firefighting crews.

BLM Utah FY23 Fire Budget

Program	Budget
Fire Preparedness	\$14,192,000
Fuels Management	\$11,342,00
Provided by Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	\$16,207,823
Deferred Maintenance	\$1,608,813
Reimbursed	\$5,130,940
TOTAL	\$48,481,576



FY2023 OPERATIONS SNAPSHOT

While 2023 was a slower fire year, the work didn't stop. Firefighting involves many programs working year-round to ensure smooth operations. These efforts aim to reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfires, maintain staff readiness, and assist communities in safeguarding their homes and landscapes against wildfire threats.

232,277

**GALLONS OF
RETARDANT**
used in
fighting wildfires.

CURRENT FLEET



2 helicopters



4 single engine
air tankers



2 aerial
supervision

\$170,660

**RECOVERED FROM
HUMAN-CAUSED FIRES**

Those causing wildfires risk significant fines. Fire trespass coordinators identify them to reclaim firefighting costs.



64 TRAINING COURSES SUPPORTED BY BLM

These courses were coordinated and attended by BLM and interagency fire operations partners.



66,723

ACRES TREATED
reducing
hazardous fuels.

**UTILIZING \$8.9M
WITH \$6.3M
PROVIDED BY
THE BIPARTISAN
INFRASTRUCTURE
LAW**



\$23,451 INVESTED INTO THE PROGRAM

The Local Cooperator Assistance Program allows BLM staff to train local, often volunteer, first responders in wildland firefighting. Training covers basic skills, refreshers, and advanced tactics for experienced firefighters. The program fosters a broader understanding of fire management, promotes coordination, and integrates BLM's protective strategies.

**22 BLM LED
COURSES** **403 STUDENTS
TAUGHT**



PARTNERSHIPS & INITIATIVES

Numerous agencies in Utah are involved in firefighting, which also includes a focus on prevention and mitigation efforts. Working together is crucial for the effective management of wildfires throughout the state.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$16.2 million to BLM Utah in FY23 to fund fuels treatment projects, modernize our radio infrastructure, and increase partnerships with communities and Tribes. BLM Utah committed \$3.8 million of this funding in its partnership with the Utah Department of Natural Resources for the Watershed Restoration Initiative.

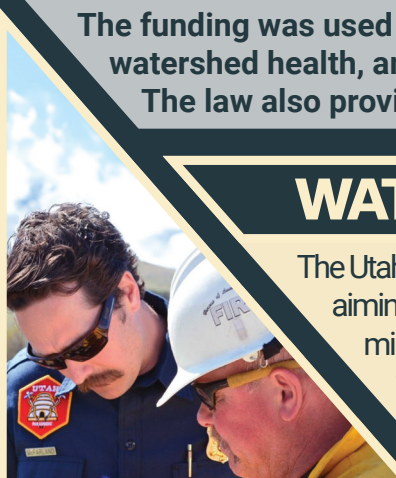
The funding was used on 17 projects focusing on restoring habitat, improving watershed health, and reducing the risk of wildfire on 21,293 acres of BLM public lands. The law also provided over \$3 million to increase BLM Utah firefighter salaries.



WATERSHED RESTORATION INITIATIVE

The Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative is a program consisting of over 50 partners across Utah aiming to improve watershed health and biological diversity, increase water quality and yield, minimize risks of catastrophic wildfires and invasive species, and facilitate sustainable uses of natural resources.

As of September 2023, BLM Utah has contributed over \$65 million to the current partnership, resulting in the treatment of 2.4 million acres of upland habitat and the enhancement of 2,269 miles of stream and river corridors.



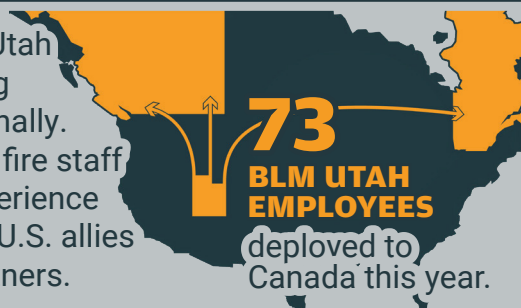
COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

BLM collaborates with communities near wildlands on strategies and actions to lessen the harmful effects of wildfires and to prevent fires started by humans.

In FY23, BLM Utah treated over 4,000 acres of non-federal lands - protecting 192 homes across 45 communities.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

When possible, BLM Utah supports firefighting efforts internationally. This offers our fire staff valuable experience and helps U.S. allies and partners.



WILDFIRE PREVENTION

BLM Utah collaborated with the state of Utah and federal agencies on the Fire Sense campaign, an effort focused on reducing human-caused wildfires in Utah. The campaign uses TV, radio, billboards, magazines, and social media for wide-reaching impact. The work was honored in 2023 with the Bronze Smokey Bear Award.

