



# BLM UTAH FIRE & AVIATION

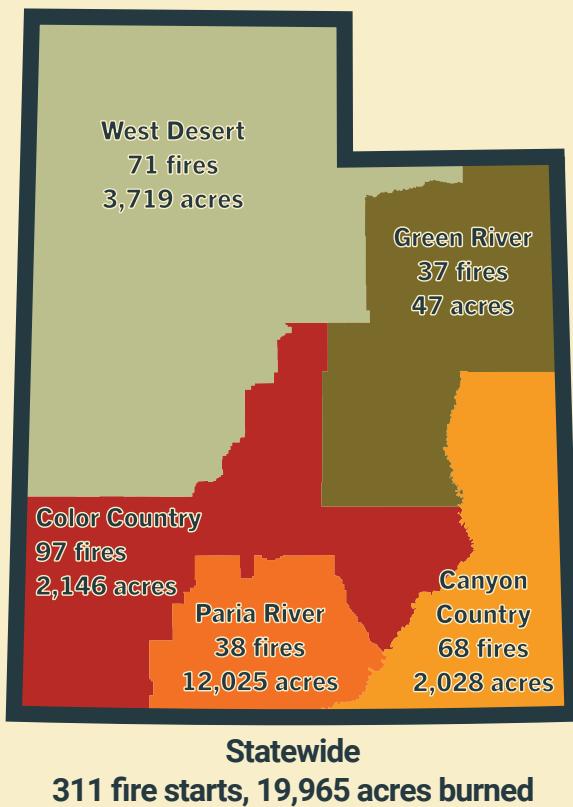
Annual Report

2024

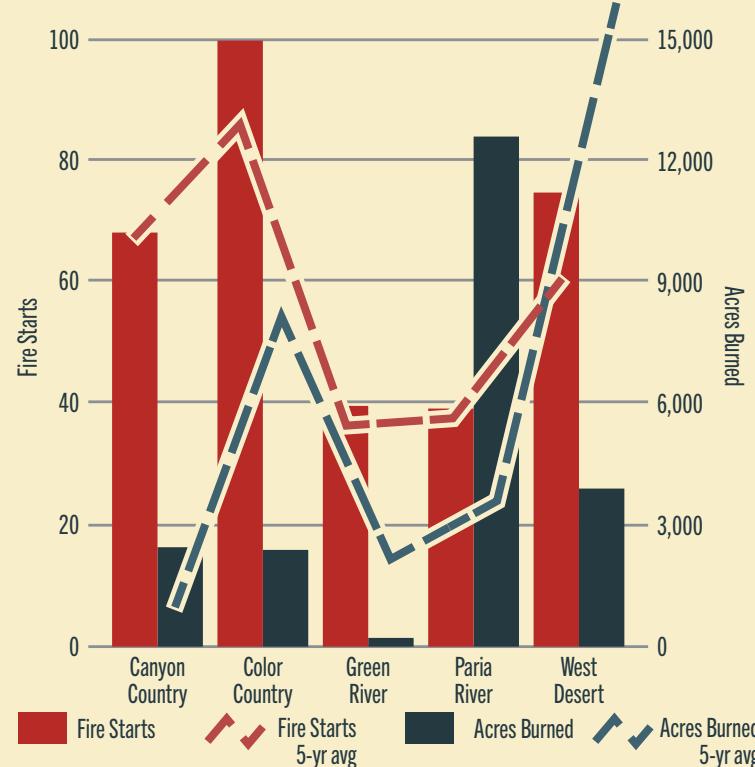
# FIRE YEAR 2024



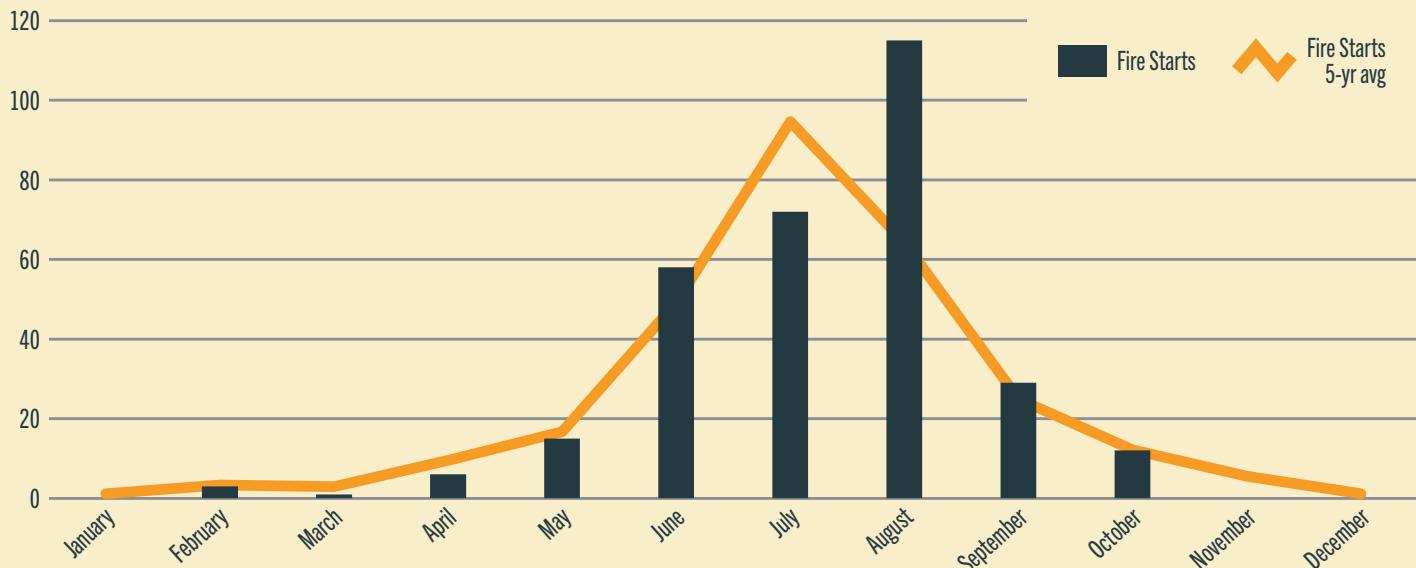
Fire starts and acres burned by District 2024



Fire starts and acres burned by District 2024 &amp; 5-year average



Fire starts by month 2024 &amp; 5-year average



# HUMAN-CAUSED FIRES ON THE RISE?

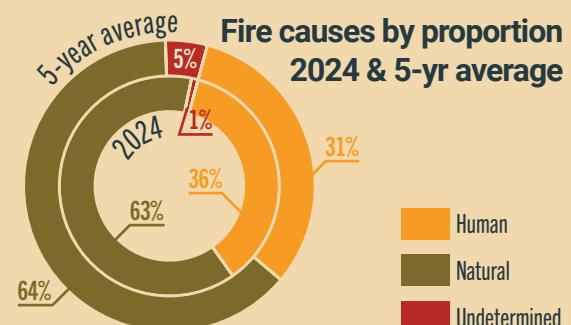
Over the past five years, BLM Utah-managed lands averaged 91 human-caused fires annually. In 2024, we recorded 112. Does this mean human-caused fires are increasing? Possibly, but the situation isn't as alarming as it might seem.

Another trend stands out—undetermined fires are well below the five-year average. Typically, about 5% of fires are listed as undetermined, but in 2024, only three fires remain without a determined cause.

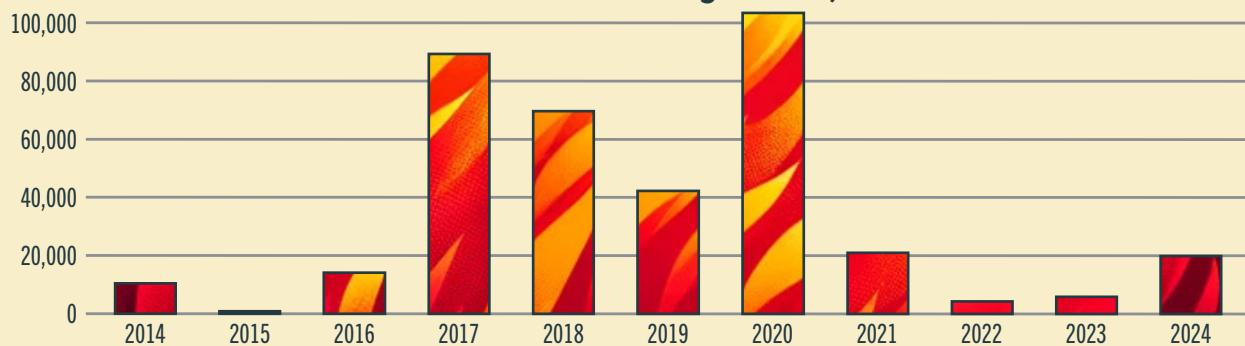
Most undetermined fires are ultimately human-caused, though investigations may take time to confirm details. Fire investigation is a complex process with legal implications, requiring thoroughness and precision.

Improved investigative processes help explain the apparent rise in human-caused fires. When combining human-caused and undetermined fires, the five-year average is 36% of our yearly fires, compared to 37% in 2024. This consistency suggests our investigation methods are improving rather than a dramatic increase in human-caused fires.

Fire Causes		
2024 & 5-year average		
Fire Cause	2024	5-yr avg
Human	112	91
Natural	196	181
Undetermined	3	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>286</b>



Acres burned on BLM Utah-managed lands, 2014 - 2024



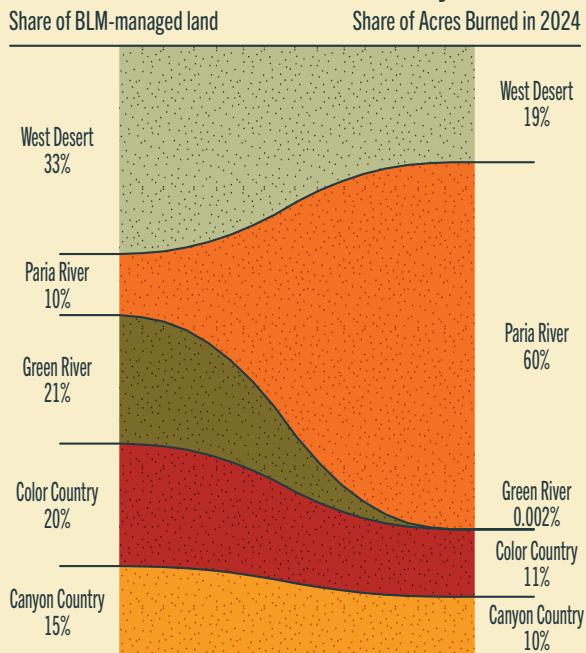
## SEASON SUMMARY

Utah saw higher-than-average precipitation in early 2024, primarily between January and March. While this wet winter may have suggested a quieter fire season, below-average rainfall in the following months, coupled with hot and dry conditions in June and July, set the stage for elevated fire danger. The increased growth of fine fuels from the wet winter further contributed to heightened fire risk across much of the state. This became especially evident in August, which saw a sharp rise in fire starts. Despite experiencing more fires than our 5-year average, acres burned remained well below the 5-year average—thanks in part to our quick and effective firefighting response.

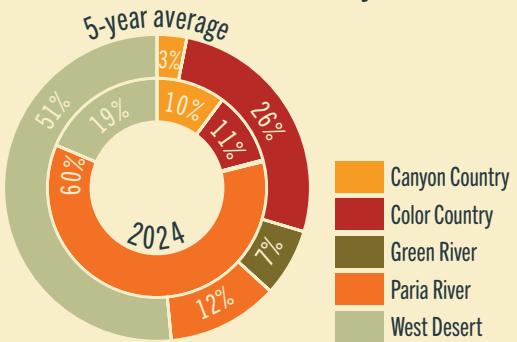


# ALIGNED FOR FIRE

## Land Share vs Acres Burned by District



## Share of Acres Burned by District



While the Paria River District accounts for just 10% of BLM Utah-managed lands, it experienced 60% of the total acres burned in 2024. This is not a reflection of poor fuels management or fire suppression efforts within the district. Instead, it highlights how wildfire activity is heavily influenced by what is referred to as alignment—the combination of environmental factors, such as weather, fuel availability, moisture levels, and topography, that determine when and where a wildfire may ignite and spread.

These factors are continuously measured and analyzed to calculate fire danger ratings, which help predict wildfire potential by assessing fuel moisture, temperature, humidity, and wind patterns.

In the Paria River District, conditions aligned this year to produce the Deer Springs Fire, which burned 11,766 acres—making up 59% of the total 19,966 acres burned statewide. It was BLM Utah's largest wildfire since 2020 and larger than all 310 other fires on BLM Utah-managed lands combined this year.

This year's fire activity demonstrates how quickly large fires can develop when weather, fuel availability, and topography align, underscoring the importance of continued proactive fuels management, public awareness, and rapid response capabilities.

## FIRE RESOURCES

The BLM manages nearly 23 million acres of public lands in Utah, representing 42% of the state. Working in a variety of firefighting and support positions, in 2024 we employed 225 fire preparedness personnel and 62 fuels management personnel. Throughout the state, BLM Utah staffs 31 engines, two helicopters, four Single Engine Airtankers, two air attack platforms, three dozers, five water tenders, and one Hotshot crew.

### BLM Utah FY24 Fire Budget

Program	Budget
Fire Preparedness	\$17,521,000
Fuels Management	\$10,186,000
Provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	\$14,398,561
Deferred Maintenance	\$455,159
Reimbursed	\$4,616,808
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$47,175,528</b>

# FY2024 OPERATIONS SNAPSHOT

Firefighting involves many programs working year-round to ensure safe and effective operations. These programs aim to reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfires, maintain staff readiness, and assist communities in safeguarding their homes and landscapes against wildfire threats.



## COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE



BLM collaborates with communities to prevent and minimize the harmful effects of wildfires.

**This year, BLM Utah awarded a \$150,000 Community Assistance agreement to Tooele County** to perform fire mitigation activities such as roadside mowing, tree limbing, and prescribed burns on private lands. The agreement will also fund an education component to help community residents better understand wildfire mitigation.



### **85 TRAINING COURSES SUPPORTED BY BLM**

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



### **\$105,834 RECOVERED FROM HUMAN-CAUSED FIRES**

Those causing wildfires risk significant fines. Fire Trespass Coordinators investigate fires to reclaim taxpayer dollars used for suppression efforts.

## FUELS



**86  
EDUCATION  
EVENTS**

**60  
COMMUNITIES  
ASSISTED**

# PARTNERSHIPS & INITIATIVES

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

## SPECIAL FUNDING SOURCES

BLM Utah uses funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act to enhance wildfire resilience and restore ecosystems. Together, these programs focus on removing invasive species, reducing fuel loads, and stream restoration. Methods include targeted herbicide application, reseeding native grasses, mastication, and mechanical thinning pinyon-juniper woodlands to reduce fuel loads and improve ecological balance.

**\$6.2 million from BIL supported 17 projects across nearly 46,000 acres of BLM-managed lands.**

Additionally, the law provided over \$2 million to increase firefighter salaries in Utah.

**\$9.7 million in IRA funding supported 19 projects across Southern Utah, while \$9.6 million targeted restoration efforts along the Upper Bear River.**



## WATERSHED RESTORATION INITIATIVE

BLM Utah also uses BIL and IRA funds to contribute to Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative through its partnership with the Utah Department of Natural Resources.

BLM Utah collaborates with over 80 organizations through WRI to fund and implement restoration projects. In FY24, WRI was able to complete **148 projects, treating over 168,000 acres of habitat and completing nearly 120 miles of stream restoration.** This is due in large part to continued contributions from BLM Utah. Since the inception of the initiative in 2006, BLM Utah has invested more than \$100 million into various projects around the state.



## TOOELE AIR CENTER

For over 20 years, the Salt Lake Helitack crew and Single Engine Air Tanker base operated out of subpar facilities. Crews worked in small trailers without running water or restrooms, and loading operations fell short of new environmental standards.

After nearly a decade of planning, BLM Utah opened a modern facility in Tooele this year. It features offices, restrooms, showers, a gym, equipment storage, and improved loading pads. The upgrades ensure safer, more efficient operations with better environmental safeguards.

## RURAL FIRE READINESS PROGRAM

The Rural Fire Readiness Program allows the BLM to provide surplus equipment to our partnering local fire departments at no cost so we can continue to safely and efficiently suppress wildland fires together.

This year, we donated one water tender, a Type 6 engine, and 52 digital radios.



## 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.

**\$40,033 INVESTED INTO THE PROGRAM**

**19 BLM LED COURSES**

**496 STUDENTS TAUGHT**

