BLM UTAH FIRE & AVIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

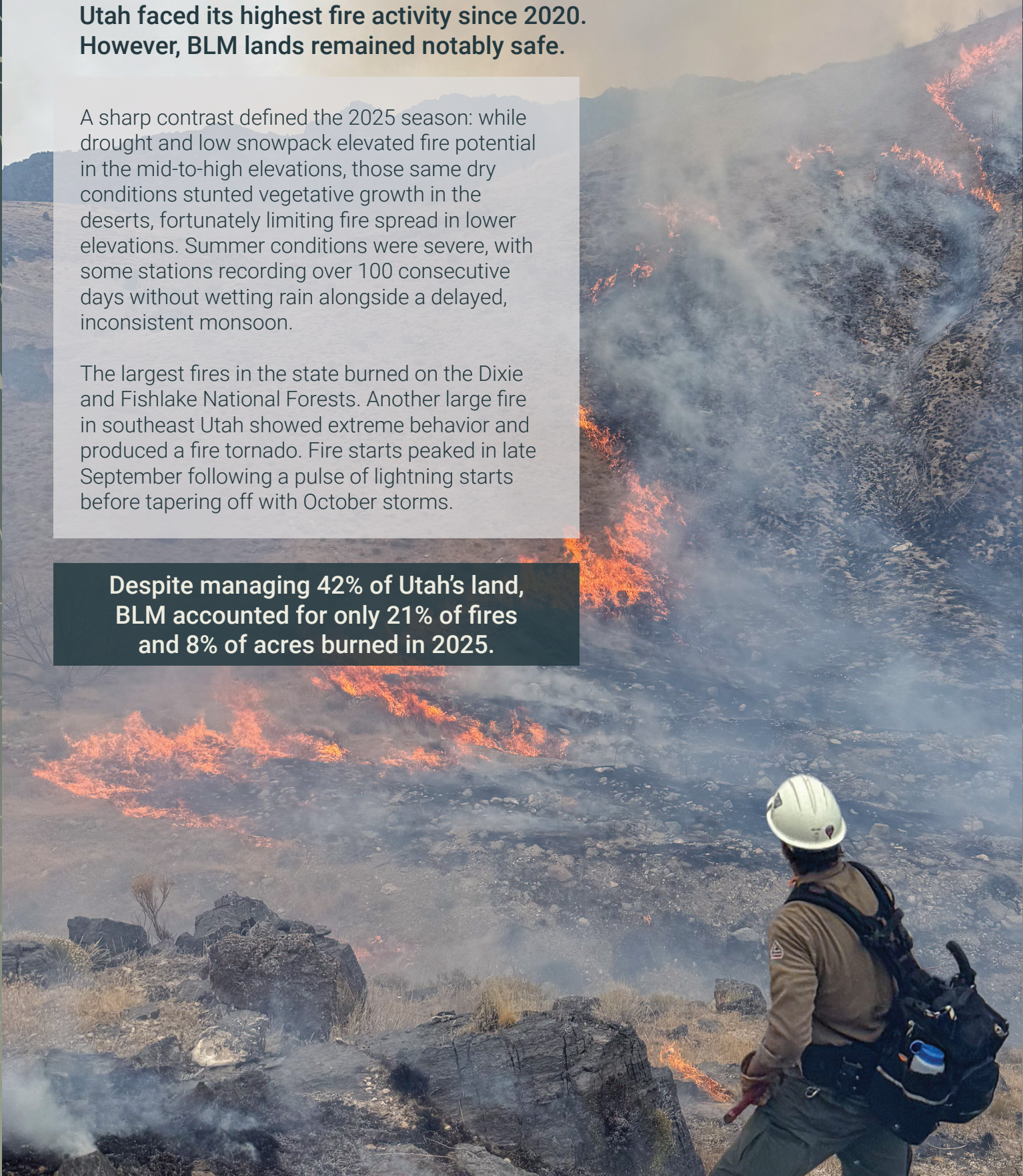U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SEASON SUMMARY

Utah faced its highest fire activity since 2020. However, BLM lands remained notably safe.

A sharp contrast defined the 2025 season: while drought and low snowpack elevated fire potential in the mid-to-high elevations, those same dry conditions stunted vegetative growth in the deserts, fortunately limiting fire spread in lower elevations. Summer conditions were severe, with some stations recording over 100 consecutive days without wetting rain alongside a delayed, inconsistent monsoon.

The largest fires in the state burned on the Dixie and Fishlake National Forests. Another large fire in southeast Utah showed extreme behavior and produced a fire tornado. Fire starts peaked in late September following a pulse of lightning starts before tapering off with October storms.

Despite managing 42% of Utah's land, BLM accounted for only 21% of fires and 8% of acres burned in 2025.
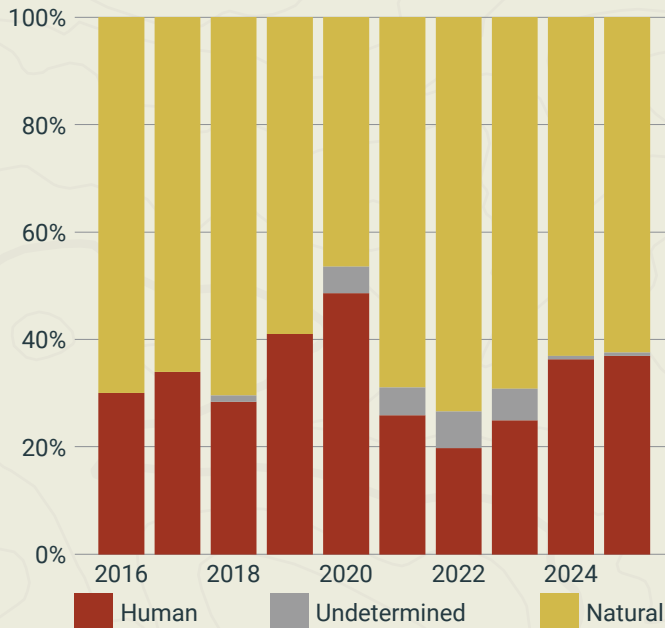
Distribution of Fire Starts by Cause
2016 – 2025

Legend:
- Human (red)
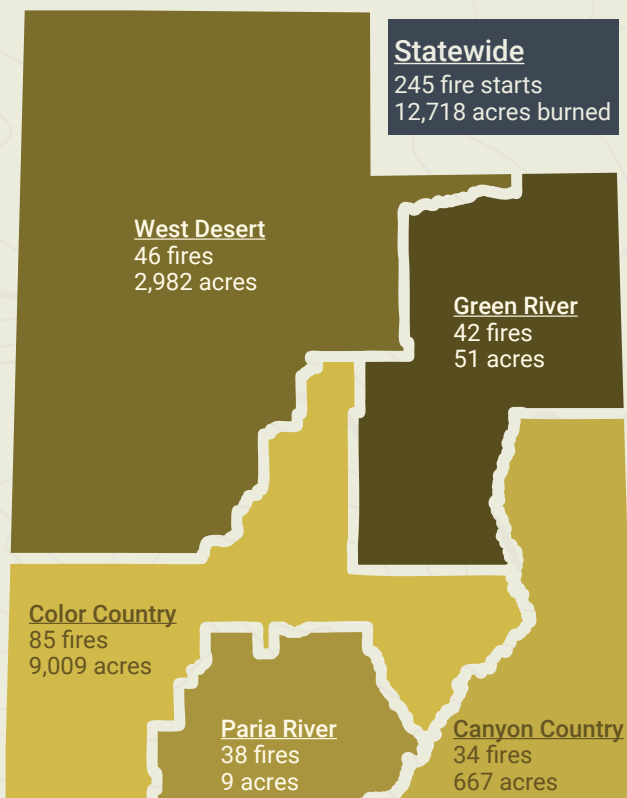- Undetermined (gray)
- Natural (yellow)

Lightning drove the majority of fire starts, yet nearly 70% of the acres burned were the result of a single, human-caused fire.

Natural ignitions dominated the 2025 landscape, comprising over 60% of starts on BLM Utah lands. This activity was most intense in Color Country, where volatile mid-to-high elevation conditions drove 85 fire starts—significantly outpacing the 10-year average. While ignitions were frequent, acres burned were more concentrated. The human-caused Monroe Canyon Fire (73,721 acres) burned 8,714 BLM acres, accounting for 97% of the district's burned acreage and nearly 70% of the bureau's statewide total.
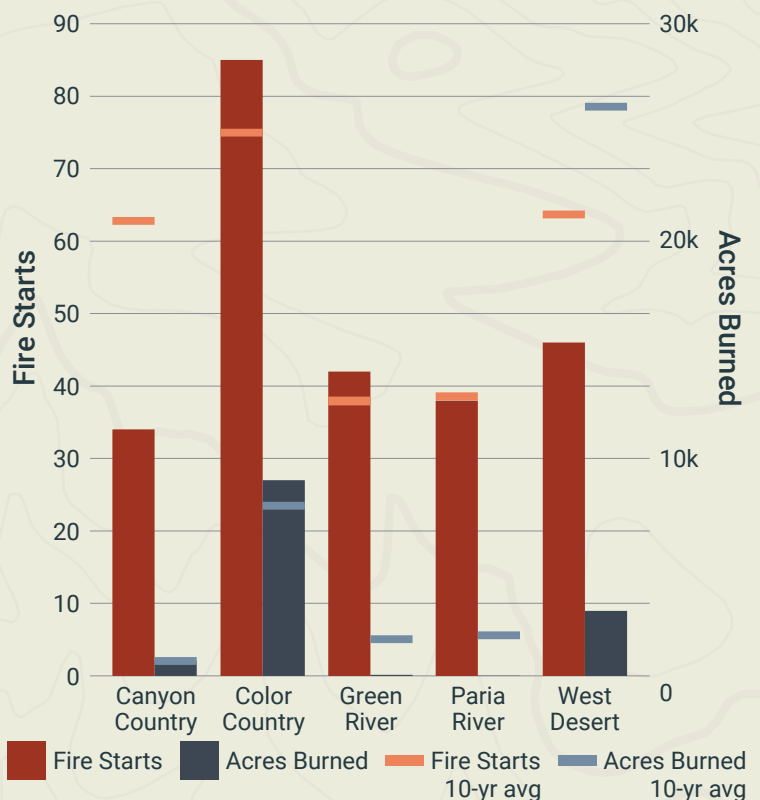
Fire Starts and Acres Burned
by District, 2025

Statewide
245 fire starts
12,718 acres burned

West Desert
46 fires
2,982 acres

Green River
42 fires
51 acres

Color Country
85 fires
9,009 acres

Paria River
38 fires
9 acres

Canyon Country
34 fires
667 acres

Fire Starts and Acres Burned
by District, 2025 & 10-year average

Legend:
- Fire Starts (red)
- Acres Burned (dark blue)
- Fire Starts 10-yr avg (orange)
- Acres Burned 10-yr avg (blue)

FUELS MANAGEMENT

Over the last decade, proactive management has outpaced suppression on BLM Utah managed lands.

While weather and topography are beyond human control, land managers can effectively influence fire behavior through the strategic management of hazardous fuels. By utilizing tools such as mastication, herbicide application, and prescribed fire, BLM Utah creates fuel breaks that protect communities and improve rangeland resilience.

920,283
ACRES TREATED SINCE 2016

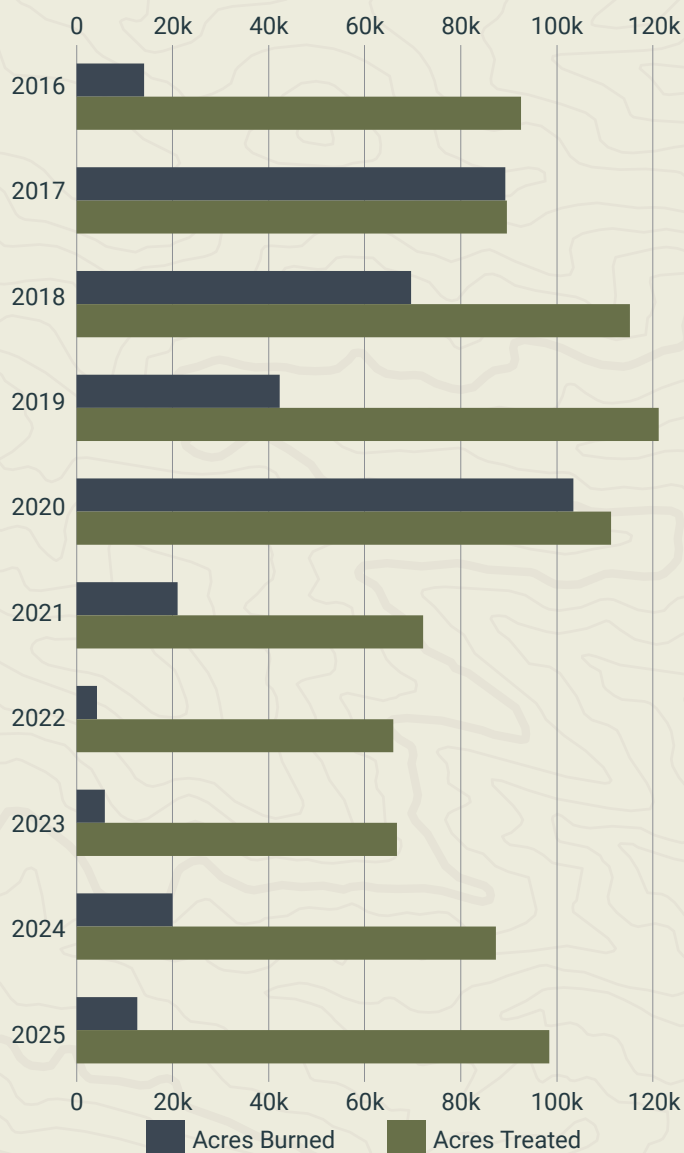More than double the 382,639 acres that were burned by wildfire during this same timeframe.

155
INSTANCES

Since 2021, instances where fuels treatments directly altered fire behavior or aided control efforts.

53% **FUNDED BY IIJA**

Since 2023, 53% of our fuels management funding has been provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Acres Burned and Acres Treated
2016 – 2025

Legend: Acres Burned, Acres Treated

COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Through the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative, BLM collaborates with over 80 partners to restore landscape health while providing wildfire mitigation.

FY25: 120 projects, 168,000 acres treated, and 120 miles of stream improvement.

$100M+ invested by BLM Utah in WRI since 2006.

TRIAL BY FIRE

Strategic treatments moderated fire behavior, turning a volatile front into a suppression success.

Long before the Monroe Canyon Fire ignited, BLM Utah and interagency partners implemented strategic vegetation management on the landscape. These projects were designed to target habitat restoration while simultaneously creating critical defensible space.

When the wildfire reached these treatments, the disruption in fuel continuity yielded immediate results. Flame lengths dropped significantly and the rate of spread slowed. This transformed a high-intensity fire front into a manageable situation, giving crews safer access and reliable anchor points for safe and effective firefighting.

Once the smoke cleared, the priority shifted to stabilization. Because burn scars are highly susceptible to erosion and invasive weed encroachment, crews quickly mobilized to reseed the majority of the burned BLM acreage. This rapid response was essential to secure the soil and jumpstart native recovery.

This holistic approach of balancing suppression, restoration, and rangeland health has garnered national attention. The National Interagency Fire Center recently featured this team's work, highlighting how strategic fuels management benefits everything from fire mitigation to ranching operations.

Scan the QR code to see the full impact of BLM Utah's Fuels Management Program.

SUPPORTING THE MISSION

FY25 BUDGET

Program	Funding
Fuels Management	$ 22,526,000
Base Funding	*10,829,000*
From IIJA	*11,697,000*
Fire Preparedness	$ 18,620,000
Total	**$ 41,146,000**

OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

The BLM manages nearly 23 million acres of public lands in Utah, representing 42% of the state.

Working in a variety of firefighting positions, in 2025 we employed 222 fire preparedness and 55 fuels management personnel.

BLM Utah Staffs:
- 32 Engines
- 3 Dozers
- 6 Water Tenders
- 1 Hotshot Crew
- 2 Helicopters
- 2 Air Attack Platforms
- 4 Single Engine Airtankers

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

In FY25, BLM Utah bolstered community wildfire resilience through providing 131 fire education events and $1.3 million in agreements. Initiatives included:

- Expanding the fire camera network for earlier detection.
- Coordinating fuels reduction to protect critical infrastructure.
- Providing communities with fire mitigation training and tools.

To support rural response, we transferred a water tender, three engines, and 39 radios to local partners, and invested $36,000 to train 397 firefighters.

A HISTORIC YEAR FOR AERIAL SUPPORT

Supporting heavy fire activity across the Great Basin, BLM Utah's Tooele and Cedar City airtanker bases delivered 2,152,650 gallons of retardant — nearly double the annual average and the second-highest total on record. Driven by activity in southcentral Utah and northern Arizona, the Cedar City base reached 1 million gallons by mid-July (the earliest ever) and set a single-day record of 130,000 gallons.