



Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

Wildfires that occur on state and private lands that aren't inside city limits are managed by the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands and are coordinated through County Fire Wardens.

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Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands



About

THE DIVISION OF FORESTRY, FIRE AND STATE LANDS is responsible for forest health, responding to wildland fires and managing sovereign lands in Utah.

Each year hundreds of wildfires start in Utah's forests, rangelands, and deserts. The Division responds to wildfires on state and private land ensuring that communities, watersheds, rangelands and wildlife habitats don't suffer catastrophic losses.

Private landowners rely on area foresters and fire managers to assist in promoting healthy forested land and planning for safer communities.

Healthy forests are the key to thriving watersheds as well as fit communities. The urban forestry program endeavors to promote trees in communities statewide. Trees provide numerous economic and social benefits. They add to the overall quality of life in cities and towns. Did you know for example that hospital patients have been shown to recover more quickly when they have a view of trees from their hospital room?

Sovereign Land consists of the beds of Utah's navigable rivers and lakes. The beds of the Jordan and Bear Rivers, as well as portions of the Colorado and Green Rivers, are state sovereign lands. The beds of Great Salt Lake, Utah Lake, and Bear Lake are all managed by the Division under the "Public Trust" doctrine.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO, FFSL FIRE PROGRAM

The FFSL Fire Program is the wildfire authority for the State of Utah. By State Statute, FFSL, in consultation with local authorities, shall determine and execute the best method for protecting private and public property by:

- Preventing, preparing for, or mitigating the origin and spread of fire on nonfederal forest, range, watershed, or wildland urban interface land.
- Encouraging landowners to conserve, protect, and manage forest or other land.
- Taking action to manage wildland fire and protect life and property
- Implementing a limited fire suppression strategy, including allowing a fire to burn with limited or modified suppression if the division determines the strategy is appropriate for a specific area or circumstance.
- Enter into agreements with public or private agencies or individual and to establish a predetermined fire suppression plan.
- Enter into a reciprocal agreement with a fire protection organization, including a federal agency, to provide fire protection for land, and an improvement on land, for which the organization normally provides fire protection.

FFSL Mission Statement and Core Values

FFSL Mission: The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands manages, sustains and strengthens Utah's forests, rangelands, sovereign lands and watersheds for its citizens and visitors.



Excellence

FFSL is committed to excellence in its work and accountability to the public.

Respect & Teamwork

FFSL strives to build a culture where everyone brings their best ideas and their best selves to work.

Integrity & Transparency

FFSL upholds the highest standards of integrity and transparency in all its work.

Adaptability

FFSL adapts to change and embraces the future with a proactive and strategic mindset.

Effective Partnering

Through partnerships, FFSL extends its capabilities and increases its impact.



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ABOUT FIRE



Every year, hundreds of wildfires burn on private, state and federal land in Utah. Fires occurring on federal and tribal lands are managed by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Wildfires that occur on state and private lands that aren't inside city limits are managed by the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands and are coordinated through County Fire Wardens.

County Fire Wardens work with federal agencies and local fire departments to coordinate the suppression effort. More than ¾ of all wildfires in Utah are extinguished before they exceed 10 acres.



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The Division's Lone Peak Conservation Center employs Hotshot Crews, Initial Attack Crews, Fuel Crews, and Engine Crews. These crews are dispatched all over the state to put fires out in difficult terrain. When in-state fire activity is reduced, the crews are dispatched to help in other states. When Utah needs help, the same types of resources are dispatched from outside the state. This national resource sharing allows national fire managers to allocate firefighting resources where they are needed most.

The first priority for firefighters is protecting human life, then preserving property and valuable natural resources. Somewhere around half of all fires in the state are preventable, human-caused events.

How is Wildfire Fought in Utah



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When a wildfire is reported through 911, the call is referred to one of five Regional Interagency Fire Centers (RIFC). Fire center personnel then dispatch the closest local resources with the capability of fighting the fire. The first fire fighter on scene takes command and conducts a "size-up" to report back to the RIFC.

The commander will then direct the firefighting action using the resources on scene and, if needed, order more firefighters and equipment to be dispatched. Most of the time, brush trucks and other high clearance engines can get to the fire in short order. Fire crews often hike long distances to access the fire.

Often, aircraft are the first on scene. Sometimes, a "Helitack Crew" (10-12 person crew flown in by helicopter) arrives and can get to remote, high-elevation areas.

Sometimes an "Air Attack" platform (a fixed-wing plane with a pilot and spotter) will fly over the area first and provide valuable intel on location, fire behavior and accessibility. This plane is also in place as an airborne traffic control point for planes and helicopters working on the fire. Helicopter bucket ships are another valuable aerial firefighting resource and can drop anywhere from 100 to more than 2,000 gallons of water or fire retardant. Air tankers including Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs) and Heavy Air Tankers (Heavies) drop a fire retardant mixture that slows the progress of fire in light to medium fuels.

A wildfire typically begins as a "Type 5" incident. This "typing" classifies the fire into a standardized scale of complexity with 5 being least complex and 1 being most complex.



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A "complexity analysis" is performed within the first few hours of the fire's start in order to determine the type of management structure needed on the fire. A type 5 fire will be handled locally within a few hours and not involve more than a handful of firefighters. A type 4 fire will involve more personnel, but will still be handled by local firefighters and resources within the first day. Once a fire is classified as type 3, it will usually go beyond the first day and will require more management personnel. Firefighting resources from out of the local area will be dispatched and can number up to 200. Type 2 and type 1 fires require a higher level of skill, training and experience to manage. When a fire reaches this level of complexity, a pre-formed Incident Management Team will be given the authority to oversee the fire by the local city, county, forest or other agency. All wildfires are fought with the same priorities in mind:

1. Safety of firefighters and public
2. Safety of homes, businesses and property



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Useful and informative links.

<https://utahfiresense.org/>

<https://ffsl.utah.gov/>

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc>

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/>

<https://utah-fire-info-utahdnr.hub.arcgis.com/>

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/dispatch/ut-mfc/index.php>

