



2008

*Fire Suppression * Prescribed Treatments * Wildland Fire Use
Education * Dispatch * Contracts * Community Relations*



MONTROSE INTERAGENCY



FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT



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Montrose Interagency Dispatch Center

2008 Year End Report

The Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit (MIFMU) experienced a below average fire season during 2008. For the third year in a row, fire occurrence and numbers of acres burned were well below annual averages for the unit.

Record winter snowfall in most of the Colorado mountain ranges resulted in a snowpack that lingered well into late summer in the higher elevations. Summer temperatures were warm and the region received less than average rainfall due to a weak monsoon pattern, yet fuel conditions remained near average across most of the unit. The diminished thunderstorm activity resulted in significantly less lightning-caused fires across the entire state.

The unit had the opportunity to manage four lightning-caused fires utilizing the Wildland Fire Use (WFU) strategy during this fire season, all within the Norwood Zone. The Rock Flats, Beehive, and Wickson fires which occurred on BLM lands in the Nucla area were identified as appropriate candidate fires for WFU implementation, but weather conditions limited spread and these fires remained fairly small.

The Albin Draw WFU fire on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest near Norwood was ignited by lightning in an area that had previously been mechanically treated by roller chopping equipment. This area was identified for secondary treatment as a future prescribed burn, and fuel and weather conditions were conducive for spread through the roller chopped unit. Over the period of a week, multiple fire runs of varying intensity resulted in 424 acres burned at a relatively low cost, before the fire was extinguished by monsoon rains.

In the Gunnison Zone, the West Elk fire was monitored remotely under a confine/containment management strategy due to concerns for firefighter safety. This lightning-caused fire was reported on July 4th in a rugged and inaccessible area of the West Elk Wilderness, and continued to burn in decadent fuels for well over four months. The West Elk fire grew to over 1,500 acres, exhibiting many types of fire behavior, from lying dormant for weeks to significant runs when the weather was favorable for fire growth. Fire managers and line officers were challenged with a prolonged incident that included updating public information, signing of a major U.S. highway, and implementing an area closure during the popular muzzle-loading hunting season.

The Ouray Zone experienced several suppression fires on BLM lands that required a heavier commitment of resources due to higher complexity and burning conditions. The Dominguez fire burned 95 acres of desert area northwest of Delta, fueled by cured grasses and driven by nighttime winds. The Oak Mesa and Jay fires burned 45 and 115 acres respectively, in an area north of Hotchkiss that comprises a thermal belt with a southwest aspect on the southern flanks of the Grand Mesa. Pinyon/Juniper, oak, and cheat grass fuels in this area are susceptible to rapid fire growth, and impact the wildland urban interface. In late September, MIFMU resources assisted the Cedaredge and Hotchkiss Fire Departments on the Redlands Mesa fire, which was located on private lands just west of this area and burned 152 acres and five structures. The unit continues to work with cooperating agencies on fire planning and mitigation efforts in these communities.

And finally, one of the most significant events MIFMU experienced this summer was when Unit FMO Steve Ellis abruptly announced his retirement in September. Steve spent his entire career with the BLM in Montrose, and it was under his leadership that the current MIFMU organization has developed and flourished. Steve has been recognized nationally for his tireless contributions to the interagency fire community, and we wish him success in his new position with the Colorado State Forest Service, as FMO for the Montrose and Durango area.

Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit

2008 Community Assistance/Mitigation and Education Program

Community Assistance: This year the MIFMU distributed a combined total of \$115,790.36 in Community Assistance (CA) and Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) grants. (Administered 20 assistance agreements)

Community Assistance (CA): Total = \$56K

- West Region Fire Council \$6K (covers both field offices)
 - \$6K = grant writer for \$\$ for DOLA/infrastructure grant and FEMA/risk assessment and mitigation treatment grants
- Uncompahgre Field Office (\$30K)
 - \$10K = San Miguel County - county-wide CWPP
 - \$10K = Ouray County - GPS unit - CWPPs
 - \$10K = Montrose County - Risk Assessments
- Gunnison Field Office (\$20)
 - \$10K = Gunnison County – Ohio City/Gunnison Highlands/Wilderness Streams CWPPs
 - \$10K = Gunnison County – Marble Fire Protection District CWPP

Rural Fire Assistance (RFA): Total = \$59,790.53

- Uncompahgre Field Office (\$47,580.53)
- Gunnison Field Office (\$12,210)

CWPPs Completed: Delta County/Hotchkiss Fire District CWPP; Ouray County/ Four Communities CWPP in Ouray County (Lake Lenore, Whispering Pines, Panoramic Heights and Dexter/Cutler). **CWPPs Near Completion:** Horsefly Fire Protection Association/Cornerstone Association CWPP; San Miguel County county-wide CWPP; **GPS/Structure Risk Assessment:** Delta County completed the GPS and structure evaluations in the Cedaredge area and working to complete Paonia; Montrose County started their GPS and structure evaluations; Telluride Fire Protection District is installing 11 dry hydrants in outlying areas surrounding Telluride. **West Region Fire Council:** Continued to support the council in developing CWPP standards and risk assessment/survey standards for the counties.

Collaboration: Developed the process and facilitated the North Rim Landscape Strategy Group.

Planning: Began updating the UFO FMP. Developed operational fire plan and developed the outline for a unit-wide Fire Prevention, Mitigation, and Education Plan.

Region2 Fire Prevention Team Coordinator: Compiled a list of available prevention resources and made them available for national-level assignments.

Education/Outreach: Complete three “Why the Smoke” prescribed fire brochures and one “Take Aim Against Wildfire” prevention brochure for Gunnison Zone.

Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit

2008 Training Summary

For 2008 the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit (MIFMU) issued a total of 207 Incident Qualification Cards (red cards). Approximately 50 new position taskbooks were initiated in 2008 covering all facets of the Incident Command System (ICS). A total of 26 taskbooks were completed this season.

The following is a breakdown of taskbook totals by unit:

	Active Taskbooks	Certified Taskbooks
BLM	31	10
USFS	47	14
NPS	18	2
Totals	96	26

MIFMU has a very active training program; including on-the-job and local, state, regional and national classroom settings. MIFMU sponsors, coordinates and instructs numerous courses throughout the Rocky Mountain Region each year.

The Interagency Qualifications Review Committee met to review taskbooks of Single Resource Bosses, Unit Leaders and above to determine personnel qualifications and taskbook completions. The committee reviews the Incident Qualifications Card System (IQCS) cards each year for validity. After this review, unit shortage categories are determined and positions within these categories are focused on for training and further qualification.

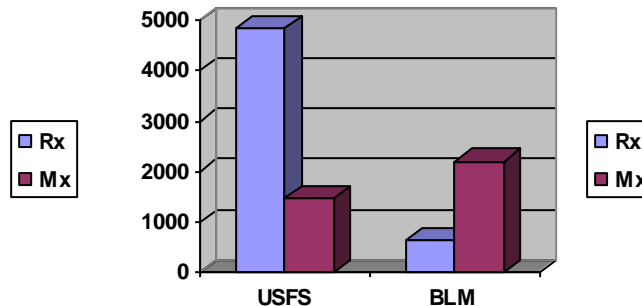
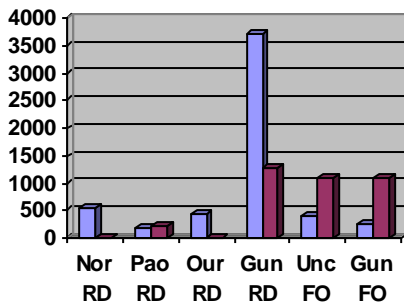
Montrose Interagency Fire Management

Fuels Management Accomplishments

Over 9,000 acres of fuels were treated with Wildland Urban Interface and Hazardous Fuels funding in the Montrose Unit. Both prescribed fire (~5,500 acres) and mechanical treatment (~3,700 acres) were used across the unit by USFS and BLM. Mechanical treatments ranged from chainsaw/hand piling to fecan flail, hydroaxe and roller chop treatments. Prescribed burning occurred in fuel types as diverse as grass/sage, sage/pinyon-juniper, oakbrush, slash (roller chops), ponderosa pine understory, and piles.

Office Totals	Prescribed	Mechanical	Total Acres
Gunnison Ranger District	3700	1260	4960
Norwood Ranger District	529	0	529
Paonia Ranger District	165.25	215	380.25
Ouray Ranger District	443	0	443
Uncompahgre Field Office	391	1093	1484
Gunnison Field Office	254	1107	1361
Unit Totals:	5482.25	3675	9157.25
Agency Totals			
US Forest Service	4837.25	1475	6312.25
Bureau of Land Management	645	2200	2845
Unit Totals:	5482.25	3675	9157.25

Within the Unit 2 Burn Bosses trainees got significant experience and one was signed off on as a Burn Boss. Additionally, 2-3 new Firing Bosses were qualified through the taskbook process, maintaining the total number of Firing Bosses at approximately 15. 3-4 personnel became single resource qualified and will now be able to serve as Holding Specialists and Firing Boss Trainees in FY09.

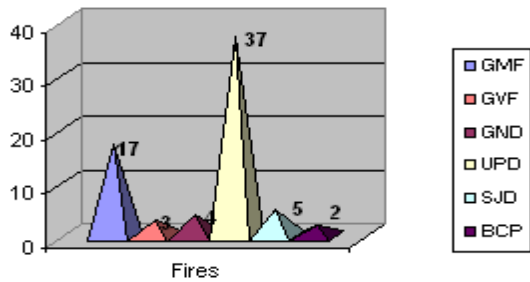


FIRES BY AGENCY

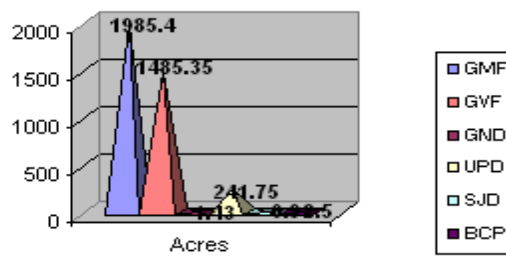
Agency	HUMAN		LIGHTNING		WFU		TOTAL	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
GMF	2	0.2	14	1561.2	1	424	17	1985.4
GVF	0	0	2	0.35	1	1485	3	1485.35
GND	1	0.88	3	0.55	0	0	4	1.43
UPD	3	0.7	31	203.05	3	38	37	241.75
SJD	0	0	5	0.9	0	0	5	0.9
BCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCP	1	1	1	1.5	0	0	2	2.5

TOTAL	7	2.78	56	1767.55	5	1947	68	3717.33
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TOTAL # OF FIRES BY AGENCY



TOTAL # OF ACRES BY AGENCY

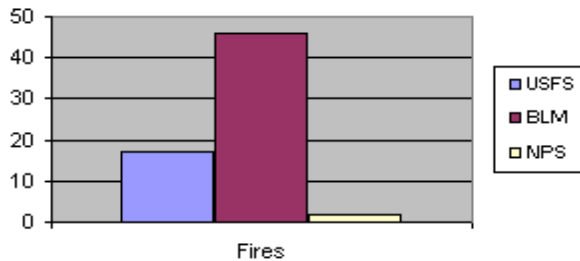


MIFMU FIRES BY ZONE

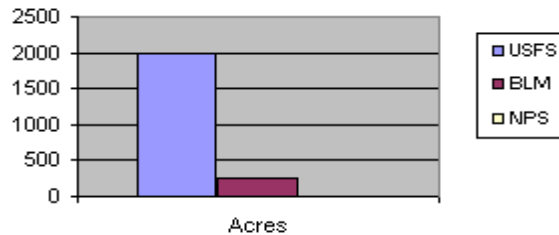
Agency	Gunnison Zone		Norwood Zone		Ouray Zone		TOTAL	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
FS	6	1550.5	5	430.7	6	4.2	17	1985.4
BLM	4	1.43	31	42.05	11	200.6	46	244.08
NPS	2	2.5	0	0	0	0	2	2.5

TOTAL	12	1554.43	36	472.75	17	204.8	65	2231.98
<i>*Fires from top chart not included in Zones (GVF):</i>							3	1485.35

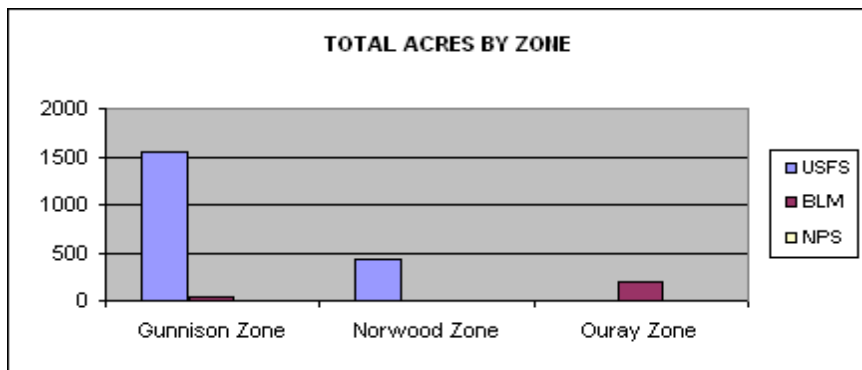
TOTAL # FIRES



TOTAL ACRES



TOTAL ACRES BY ZONE

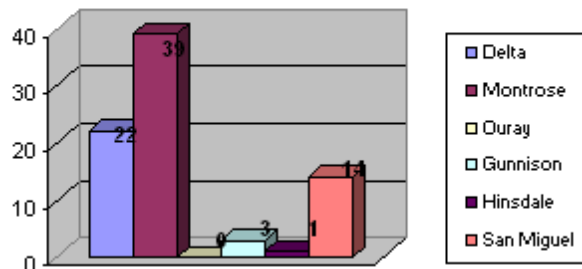


FIRES BY COUNTY

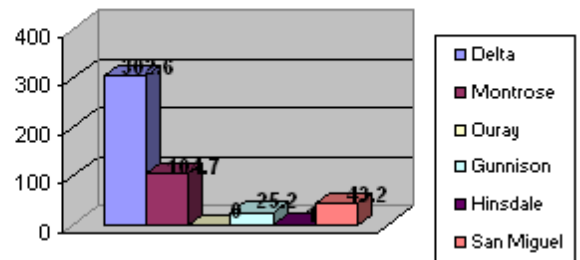
County	DEPARTMENT	HUMAN		LIGHTNING		TOTAL	
		Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
DTX	Cedaredge FPD	5	164	3	8.5	8	172.5
	Crawford FPD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Delta FPD	6	116.2	0	0	6	116.2
	Hotchkiss FPD	5	2.9	0	0	5	2.9
	Paonia FPD	3	11	0	0	3	11
	TOTAL		19	294.1	3	8.5	22
MRX	Montrose FPD	36	100.75	1	0.1	37	100.85
	Olathe FPD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Nucla/Naturita VFD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Paradox VFD	1	3.6	1	0.25	2	3.85
	Sheriff/Posse	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL		37	104.35	2	0.35	39
OUX	Horsefly FA	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Log Hill Mesa FPD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ouray VFD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ridgway FPD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL		0	0	0	0	0
GUX	Arrowhead	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Crested Butte FPD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gunnison FPD	2	25.1	1	0.1	3	25.2
	Pitkin VFD	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL		2	25.1	1	0.1	3
HIX	Lake City FPD	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.1
SLX	Egnar/Slickrock	0	0	2	3.1	2	3.1
	Norwood VFD	9	39.8	1	0.1	10	39.9
	Telluride FPD	0	0	2	0.2	2	0.2
	Sheriff	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL		9	39.8	10	3.4	14

GRAND TOTALS		67	463.35	17	12.45	79	475.8
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TOTAL # OF FIRES BY COUNTY



TOTAL # OF ACRES BY COUNTY

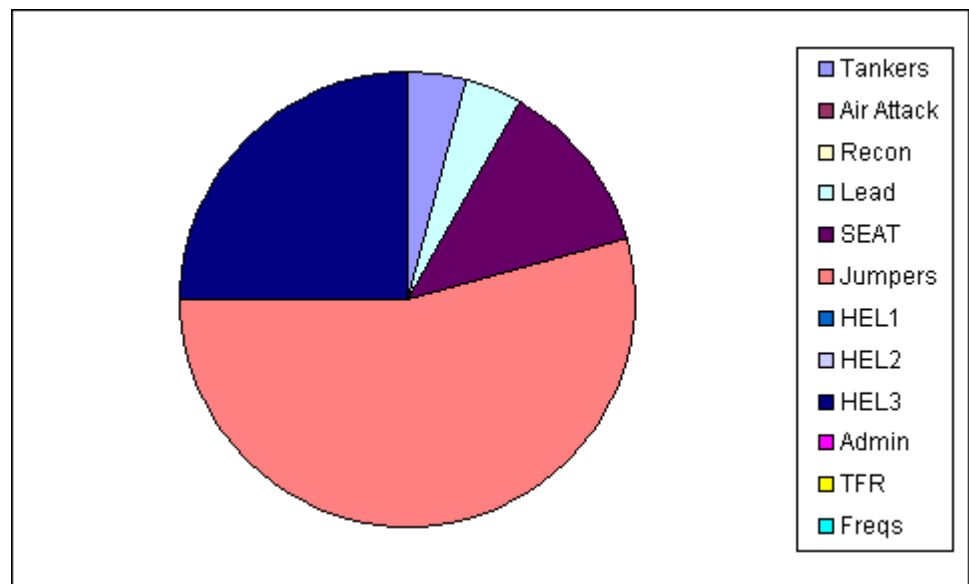


RESOURCE ORDERS

RESOURCE TYPE	# Incidents	# Requests
Overhead	78	185
Crews	4	5
Equipment	18	78
Aircraft	9	11
TOTAL	100	252

AIRCRAFT ORDERS

Tankers	1
Air Attack	0
Recon	0
Lead	1
SEAT	3
Jumpers	13
HEL1	0
HEL2	0
HEL3	6
Admin	0
TFR	0
Freqs	0



GUNNISON RIVER CREW MOBILIZATION

DATE	INCIDENT NAME	STATE	UNIT ID
7/27/2008	Gunnbarrel	WY	SHF
7/28/2008	Cascade	MT	CNF

MIFMU FIVE YEAR AVERAGE - FIRES

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average	+/- AVG
# Fires	161	98	110	72	65	101.2	-36.2
# Acres	6,008	1,783	628	497	2,232	2,230	2

MTC FIVE YEAR AVERAGE - RESOURCE ORDERS

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average	+/- AVG
Overhead	554	254	168	165	185	265.2	-80.2
Crew	30	12	8	7	5	12.4	-7.4
Equipment	443	121	16	20	78	135.6	-57.6
Aircraft	150	78	22	12	11	54.6	-43.6