

2019 MONTROSE DISPATCH YEAR END REPORT

Representing the following Cooperating Agencies:

Bureau of Land Management

United States Forest Service

National Park Service

Colorado Department of Prevention and Control

Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache and San Miguel Counties



Cow Creek Fire. Start Date 10/16/2019.

Photo courtesy of Justin Reece.

2019 SUMMARY

The first fire of the year was a human start on February 8th however the season truly began early May with a few small lightning fires within the Uncompahgre Field office area. The first USFS fire was June 7th in the high elevation FDRA of the Gunnison Ranger District. The same FDRA and Ranger district earned the last start of the year on November 17th. This year brought 71 fire days with 21 multiple fire days. A trend outside the average was October with 12 fires and all human starts. Usually October in MTC brings 0-4 new starts with a mix of lightning and human for the cause.

5 YEAR AVERAGE

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | Average | 2019 |
|--------------|------|------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| Fires | 44 | 38 | 71 | 57 | 141 | 70 | 87 |
| Acres | 97.4 | 4.5 | 170.9 | 107.5 | 36557.2 | 7387.5 | 980.1 |

Snowpack was well above average, and coupled with a cool spring, this meant runoff and green up were more prolonged and later occurrence than usual. This hampered spring burn windows, but we were able to successfully complete a handful of broadcast burns in June and July, well outside the usual burn windows. Pre-Monsoonal flow was abundant in May and June, which kept indices low. This year's Monsoonal pattern provided more isolated and short duration coverage with minimal amounts of precipitation. This began a drying trend across the unit that would last from Early July until the next widespread cold front and measurable snowfall occurred in mid-October.

The table below shows the annual departure from the 30-year average since 2010.

| | Temperature in °F | Percent of Average Annual Rainfall |
|------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2019 | -0.4 | 112 |
| 2018 | 3.7 | 56 |
| 2017 | 2.5 | 103.2 |
| 2016 | 0.3 | 98.3 |
| 2015 | 2.1 | 98.3 |
| 2014 | -0.1 | 104 |
| 2013 | -0.3 | 97.9 |
| 2012 | 1.9 | 76.1 |
| 2011 | 0.3 | 99.5 |
| 2010 | -0.5 | 99 |

ERC's across the 4 FDRA's remained at or below average through July, and by September 1, had reached the 91st percentile. All 4 FDRA's recorded new highs for ERC's on multiple days during September and early October. Fire activity mimicked these trends. IA activity was moderate during the Monsoons, and an unusual amount of human starts in the fall, with the largest fire of the year occurring on October 16.

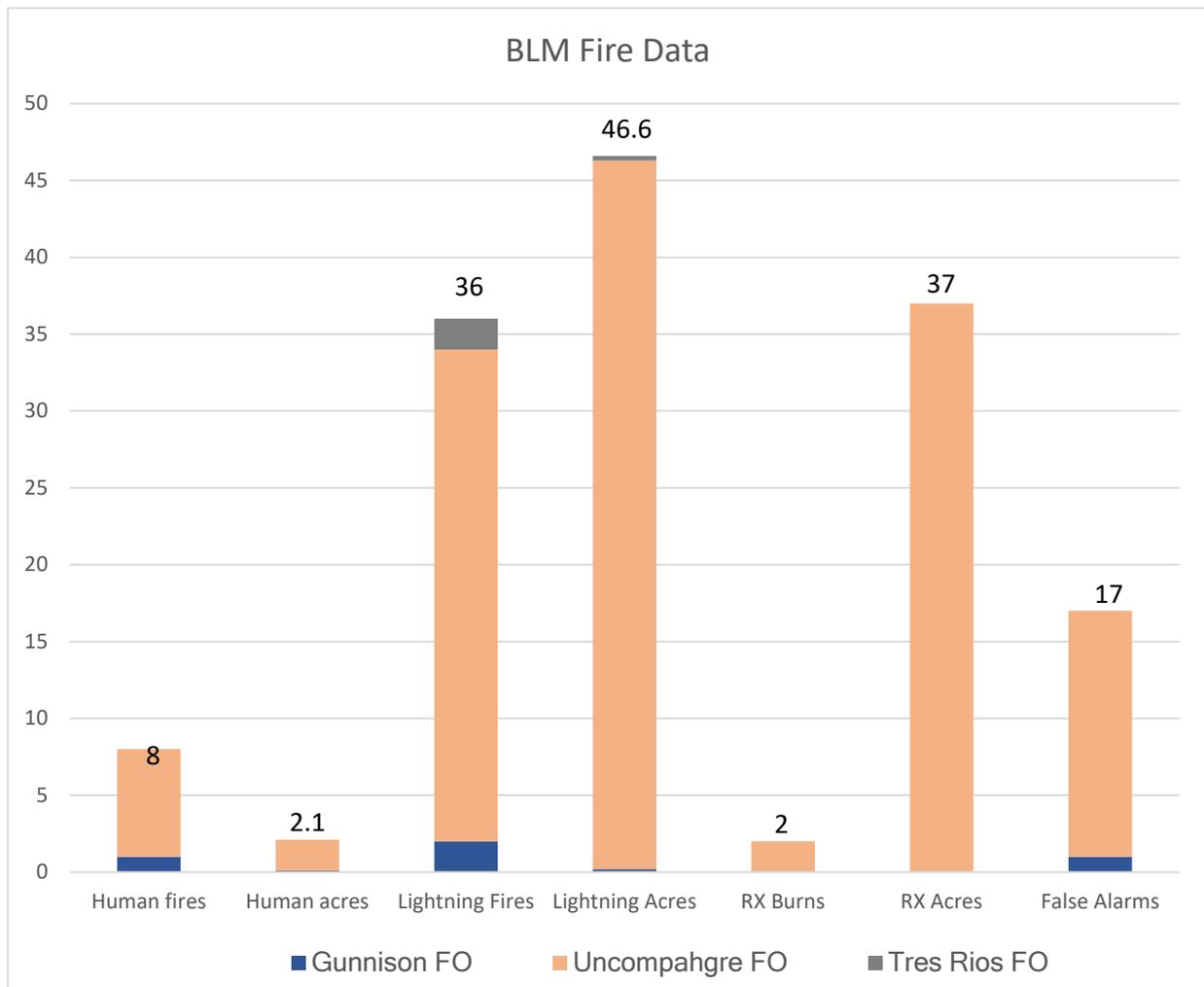
The unit remained at PL2 for the first half of the season. A weak monsoonal flow raised indices and the unit Preparedness level to 3 on August 13th, and PL 4 on August 20 where it would remain until a season ending event in the form of widespread snow and large cold front occurred in mid-October. The local LMAC group did have several discussions in late September regarding fire restrictions. No federal entities initiated fire restrictions, while several counties within the unit employed individual restrictions.

Cow Creek was the largest fire of the year, which started October 16th, and burned 859 acres of mixed conifer, part of which was an old burn scar littered with deadfall and snags. The fire was in a remote and rugged portion of wilderness 9 miles East of Ridgway, CO on the GMUG NF. Due to the challenges of engaging this fire, the socio-political impacts, and fire behavior observed, a Type 2 team (Team Blue) was ordered on October 18th. The fire was turned back to the local unit October 25th and put into a mixed management status until sufficient snowfall was received and this fire could be contained on November 25th.

Montrose Dispatch successfully hired two positions through the USFS firehire event that occurred despite the longest government shut down in history. The lead IA dispatcher was filled with an engine captain from the UCR, Todd King. The USFS seasonal dispatcher was filled with a previous flight school tower operator, Lynn Cirricione. The office was staffed with 4 personnel all season. The Forest hired an AFMO for West Zone as Eric Brantingham was reassigned to the fuels program. Justin Reece came to GMUG as the new West Zone AFMO from Oregon and was in place in April. Several crewmember positions were filled through firehire as the forest realigned its organizational chart to represent the fuels support that the organization is working towards. Forest Service captains became GS8 and permanent full time positions while the assistants became GS7 18/8. Skyway Fire Module hired Kristy Hajny as a squad boss who immediately stepped up to lead the module in a detail for the summer. BLM hired Mike Megel as the FOS and moved two assistants into captain positions. John Wroblewski for E3629 and Brennon Ellis for E3421. Dinosaur National Park Service hired a FOS, Mike Guarino. DFPC maintained a helitack crew to staff a T2 helicopter and hired an engine captain, Joe Duensing, and assistant Laura Hedrick for E4421.

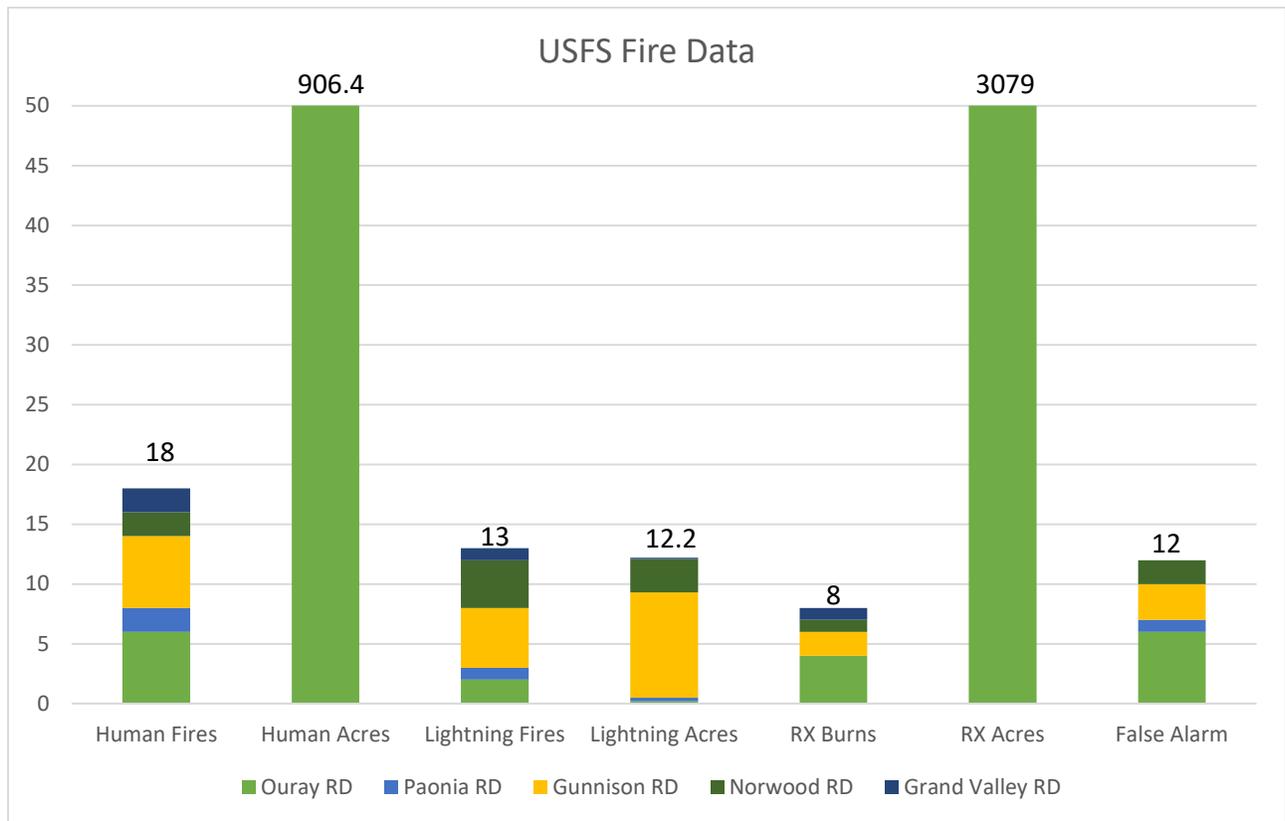
SOUTHWEST BLM FIRE AND AVIATION

| BLM | HUMAN | | LIGHTNING | | TOTAL | | RX BURNS | | FALSE ALARM |
|--------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Burns | Acres | FA |
| Gunnison FO | 1 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Uncompahgre | 7 | 2 | 32 | 46.1 | 39 | 48.1 | 2 | 37 | 16 |
| Tres Rios FO | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 8 | 2.1 | 36 | 46.6 | 44 | 48.7 | 2 | 37 | 17 |



GRAND MESA, UNCOMPAHGRE, and GUNNISON NATIONAL FORESTS

| USFS | HUMAN | | LIGHTNING | | TOTAL | | RX BURNS | | FALSE ALARM |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Burns | Acres | FA |
| Ouray RD | 6 | 861.7 | 2 | .2 | 8 | 861.9 | 4 | 2078 | 6 |
| Paonia RD | 2 | .5 | 1 | .3 | 3 | .8 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Gunnison RD | 6 | 7.5 | 5 | 8.8 | 11 | 16.3 | 2 | 761 | 3 |
| Norwood RD | 2 | .6 | 4 | 2.8 | 6 | 3.4 | 1 | 186 | 2 |
| Grand Valley | 2 | 36.1 | 1 | .1 | 3 | 36.2 | 1 | 54 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 906.4 | 13 | 12.2 | 31 | 918.6 | 8 | 3079 | 12 |



**BLACK CANYON NATIONAL PARK AND CURECANTI NATIONAL RECREATION
AREA**

| NPS | HUMAN | | LIGHTNING | | TOTAL | | RX BURNS | | False Alarm |
|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Fires | Acres | Burns | Acres | FA |
| Black Canyon NPS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Curecanti NPS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

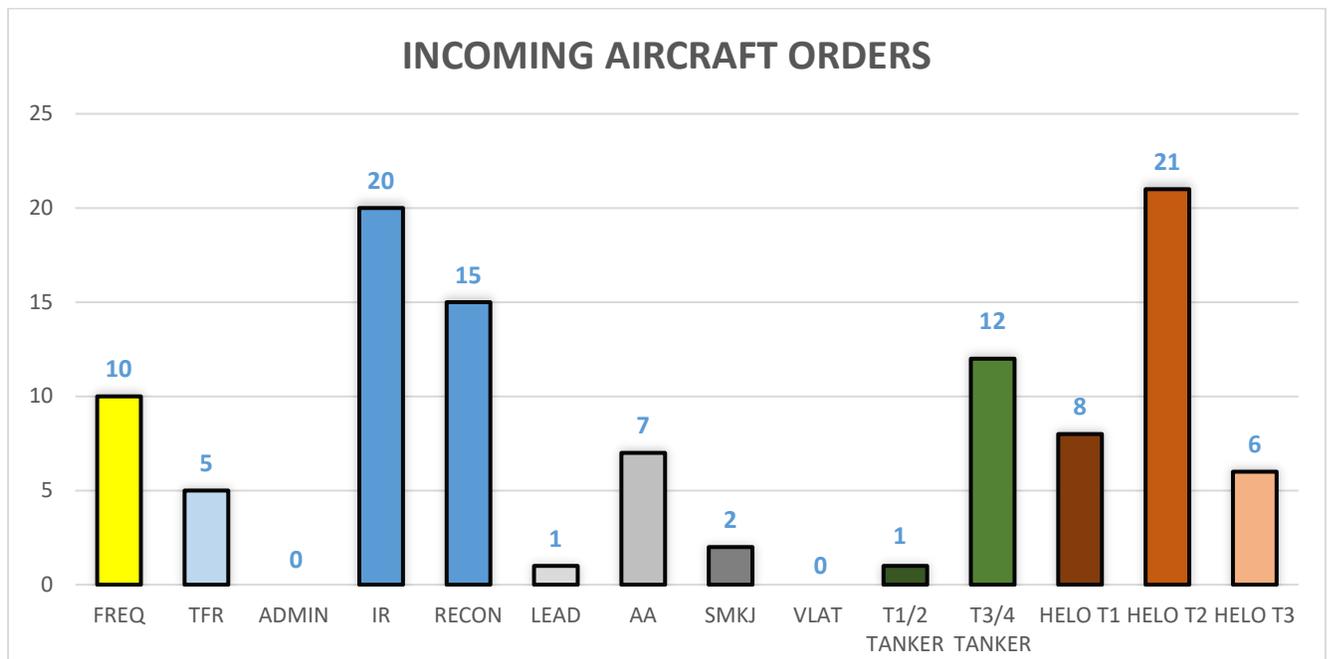
COUNTY FIRE DATA

| County Fires w/Federal Response | False Alarm | Fires | Acres |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Delta | 0 | 4 | 0.4 |
| Gunnison | 2 | 1 | 0.1 |
| Montrose | 0 | 5 | 1.2 |
| San Miguel | 0 | 1 | 0.1 |
| Ouray | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Hinsdale | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Saguache | 0 | 1 | 11 |
| Total | 4 | 12 | 12.8 |

| County Fires w/o Federal Response | Fires | Acres |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Delta | 1 | 3 |
| Gunnison | 1 | 0.75 |
| Montrose | 8 | 25 |
| San Miguel | 2 | 2 |
| Ouray | 0 | 0 |
| Hinsdale | 0 | 0 |
| Saguache | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 12 | 30.75 |

RESOURCE ORDER DATA

| INCOMING AIRCRAFT ORDERS | |
|--------------------------|----|
| FREQUENCIES | 10 |
| TFRS | 5 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE FLIGHT | 0 |
| INFRARED FLIGHTS (MMA) | 20 |
| RECON | 15 |
| LEAD | 1 |
| AIR ATTACK | 7 |
| VLAT | 0 |
| T1/T2 AIR TANKER | 1 |
| T3/T4 AIR TANKER (SEATS) | 12 |
| T1 HELICOPTER | 8 |
| T2 HELICOPTER | 21 |
| T3 HELICOPTER | 6 |



| INCOMING RESOURCE ORDERS LOCAL INCIDENTS | | |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| | ORDERS | INCIDENTS |
| OVERHEAD | 185 | 8 |
| EQUIPMENT | 49 | 7 |
| CREW | 14 | 5 |
| CAMP CREW | 1 | 1 |
| WILDLAND FIRE MODULE | 2 | 2 |
| TOTALS | 251 | 23 |

| OUTGOING RESOURCE ORDERS NON LOCAL INCIDENTS | | |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| | ORDERS | INCIDENTS |
| OVERHEAD | 174 | 67 |
| EQUIPMENT | 20 | 20 |
| CREW | 4 | 4 |
| CAMP CREW | 1 | 1 |
| AIRCRAFT | 9 | 9 |
| WILDLAND FIRE MODULE | 3 | 3 |
| TOTALS | 151 | 94 |

| CREW MOBILIZATIONS | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | ASSIGNMENTS | DAYS |
| BUZZARD CREEK CREW | 1 | 14 |
| GUNNISON RIVER CREW | 2 | 28 |
| JCC CAMP CREW | 1 | 14 |