

**National Interagency Coordination Center**  
**Incident Management Situation Report**  
**Friday, July 17, 2020 – 0730 MT**  
**National Preparedness Level 3**

**National Fire Activity:**

Initial attack activity:	Light (138 new fires)
New large incidents:	5
Large fires contained:	9
Uncontained large fires:***	28
Area Command teams committed:	0
NIMOs committed:	1
Type 1 IMTs committed:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	3

Nationally, there are 12 large fires being managed under a strategy other than full suppression.

\*\*\* Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

[Link](#) to Geographic Area daily reports.

[Link](#) to Understanding the IMSR.

NIMO (Houseman) has been assigned to COVID-19 support at Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.

One RC-26 aircraft with Distributed Real-Time Infrared (DRTI) capability and support personnel from the 141st Air Refueling Wing (Washington Air National Guard) has been deployed to St. George, UT, in support of wildland fire operations in the Southwest, Rocky Mountain and Great Basin areas.

Active Incident Resource Summary						
GACC	Incidents	Cumulative Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel
AICC	2	17,669	0	0	0	16
NWCC	1	9,330	1	18	0	92
ONCC	0	5,513	0	0	0	0
OSCC	2	19,485	23	116	11	1,390
NRCC	2	2,954	0	19	4	94
GBCC	11	206,791	36	61	12	1,237
SWCC	20	364,892	46	70	22	1,287
RMCC	12	28,473	15	63	15	815
EACC	1	204	0	0	0	0
SACC	7	30,587	1	54	2	195
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>685,898</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>5,126</b>

### Southwest Area (PL 3)

New fires:	19
New large incidents:	2
Uncontained large fires:	12
Type 2 IMTs committed:	1

**Blue River 2**, San Carlos Agency, BIA. IMT 2 (SW Team 4). IMT is also managing Valley incident. Fifteen miles northeast of San Carlos, AZ. Timber, brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior with backing, creeping and smoldering. Structures threatened. Road and area closures in effect. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping.

**Valley**, San Carlos Agency, BIA. Six miles northeast of San Carlos, AZ. Brush and grass. Minimal fire behavior with backing, creeping and smoldering. Road and area closures in effect.

**Cub**, Gila NF, USFS. Fifteen miles southeast of Mogollon, NM. Timber, brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

**Polles**, Tonto NF, USFS. Thirteen miles west of Payson, AZ. Brush, short grass and slash. Minimal fire behavior with smoldering. Road, trail and area closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

**Trementina Canyon**, Las Vegas District, New Mexico State Forestry Division. Fifteen miles northwest of Trementina, NM. Tall grass. Moderate fire behavior. Residences threatened. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

**Bighorn**, Coronado NF, USFS. Five miles northeast of Tucson, AZ. Timber, brush and short grass. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and backing. Road, trail and area closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

**Mangum**, Kaibab NF, USFS. Twenty-four miles southeast of Fredonia, AZ. Timber, brush and short grass. Minimal fire behavior with smoldering. Road, trail and area closures in effect.

**Vics Peak**, Cibola NF, USFS. Thirty miles north of Truth or Consequences, NM. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with backing, flanking and creeping. Road, trail and area closure in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

**Yankee Joe**, Tonto NF, USFS. Twenty miles north of Globe, AZ. Brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior.

**Bringham**, Apache-Sitgreaves NF, USFS. Twenty-two miles north of Morenci, AZ. Timber, brush and short grass. No new information.

**Monument**, Northern District, Arizona DOF. Thirty miles northwest of Ash Fork, AZ. Brush and short grass. No new information. Last report unless new information is received.

**Chiltepines**, Tucson District, Arizona DOF. Forty-six miles southwest of Tucson, AZ. Brush and tall grass. No new information. Last report unless new information is received.

\* **Pine**, Prescott NF, USFS. Sixteen miles west of Cordes Lakes, AZ. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with backing and single tree torching. Road, trail and area closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday. Last narrative report unless significant activity occurs.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Blue River 2	AZ-SCA	26,600	-900	5	Ctn	7/19	320	255	7	6	4	0	1.4M	BIA
Valley	AZ-SCA	28,959	28,450	46	Ctn	7/18	136	-1	6	5	1	2	790K	BIA

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli				
Cub	NM-GNF	23,216	0	25	Ctn	7/25	62	18	4	0	2	0	151K	FS
Polles	AZ-TNF	628	0	92	Ctn	UNK	103	-74	2	2	9	0	5.1M	FS
Trementina Canyon	NM-N4S	825	0	29	Ctn	7/19	44	2	1	5	0	0	180K	ST
Bighorn	AZ-CNF	119,741	0	90	Ctn	8/10	79	11	1	4	1	2	44.4M	FS
Mangum	AZ-KNF	71,450	0	95	Ctn	7/24	12	0	0	3	0	4	21.1M	FS
Vics Peak	NM-CIF	14,624	0	53	Ctn	7/31	31	0	2	0	1	1	3M	FS
Yankee Joe	AZ-TNF	425	0	75	Ctn	7/20	9	-7	0	1	0	0	20K	FS
Bringham	AZ-ASF	23,142	---	85	Ctn	7/31	0	---	0	0	0	2	9.4M	FS
Monument	AZ-A1S	1,785	---	30	Ctn	7/20	42	---	1	2	0	0	390K	ST
Chiltepines	AZ-A3S	334	---	75	Ctn	UNK	1	---	0	0	0	0	50K	ST
* Pine	AZ-PNF	300	---	0	Comp	8/10	0	---	0	0	0	0	10K	FS
Tadpole	NM-GNF	11,159	0	100	Ctn	---	13	-3	0	1	1	0	3.9M	FS
* Naranjos	NM-N4S	2,580	---	100	Ctn	---	8	---	0	3	0	0	5K	ST
Ojo de Los Casos	NM-CIF	180	0	100	Ctn	---	25	-29	1	1	0	0	1.2M	FS
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Jackson	AZ-GID	2,436	---	10	Comp	7/24	154	---	5	2	2	0	523K	BLM

GID –Gila District, BLM

### Great Basin Area (PL 3)

New fires:	25
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	4
Type 2 IMTs committed:	1

**Big Summit**, Ely District, BLM. IMT 2 (GB Team 5) mobilizing. Seventeen miles northeast of Panaca, NV. Timber, brush and short grass. Extreme fire behavior with running and flanking. Structures threatened. Evacuations, road, trail and area closures in effect.

**Turkey Farm Road**, Southwest Area, Utah DOF. Four miles north of St. George, UT. Timber, brush and short grass. Moderate fire behavior with group torching, creeping and smoldering. Numerous structures threatened. Road, trail and area closures in effect.

**Veyo West**, Cedar City Field Office, BLM. One mile west of Veyo, UT. Timber, brush and short grass. Minimal fire behavior with smoldering. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, trail and area closures in effect.

**Pole Canyon**, Northwest Area, Utah DOF. Three miles southwest of Cedar Fort, UT. Timber, chaparral and short grass. Moderate fire behavior with creeping, isolated torching and smoldering. Numerous structures threatened. Road closures in effect.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli				
Big Summit	NV-ELD	7,099	2,023	10	Ctn	7/27	331	-32	11	11	5	1	2M	BLM
Turkey Farm Road	UT-SWS	11,993	0	40	Ctn	7/24	205	63	8	9	0	1	1.6M	ST

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Veyo West	UT-CCD	2,618	0	40	Ctn	7/20	203	-72	5	16	0	7	1.2M	BLM
Pole Canyon	UT-NWS	488	188	30	Ctn	7/31	158	86	6	7	2	0	250K	ST

### Rocky Mountain Area (PL 2)

New fires: 18  
 New large incidents: 2  
 Uncontained large fires: 6  
 Type 2 IMTs committed: 1

**Fawn Creek**, White River Field Office, BLM. IMT 2 (RM Team Blue). IMT is also managing Stewart incident. Twenty-six miles southwest of Meeker, CO. Timber and tall grass. Moderate fire behavior with backing, torching and creeping. Structures and energy infrastructure threatened.

**Stewart**, White River Field Office, BLM. Twenty-two miles southwest of Meeker, CO. Timber, brush and slash. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering.

**Neiber**, Wind River/Bighorn Basin District, BLM. Seven miles south of Worland, WY. Brush and short grass. Extreme fire behavior. Energy infrastructure and sage-grouse habitat threatened.

\* **Grassy**, White River Field Office, BLM. Nine miles west of Meeker, CO. Brush and tall grass. Moderate fire behavior with torching.

**Goose Creek**, Rio Grande NF, USFS. Fourteen miles southeast of Creede, CO. Timber and grass. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Structures threatened.

**Sand Creek**, San Juan NF, USFS. Twenty miles northwest of Pagosa Springs, CO. Timber and slash. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Trail and area closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Fawn Creek	CO-WRD	3,208	78	5	Ctn	7/20	232	147	4	3	4	0	601K	BLM
Stewart	CO-WRD	212	0	78	Ctn	7/21	144	71	6	6	0	0	183K	BLM
Neiber	WY-WBD	17,606	9,606	30	Ctn	7/18	200	12	2	17	3	0	1.8M	BLM
* Grassy	CO-WRD	956	---	30	Ctn	7/19	80	---	1	4	6	0	NR	BLM
Goose Creek	CO-RGF	171	0	75	Ctn	8/15	16	0	0	1	1	0	1.5M	FS
Sand Creek	CO-SJF	107	0	20	Ctn	8/31	10	0	0	0	0	0	3M	FS
CO-RGD-001206	CO-RGD	303	0	100	Ctn	---	0	-35	0	0	0	0	900K	BLM
* 25	WY-JOX	2,500	---	100	Ctn	---	63	---	0	19	0	0	200K	C&L

Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned

Streeter	CO-MFX	1,639	0	90	Comp	7/25	2	-4	0	0	0	0	360K	C&L
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RGD – Royal Gorge Field Office, BLM      JOX – Johnson County      MFX – Moffat County

### Southern California Area (PL 2)

New fires:	28
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	2
Type 1 IMTs committed:	1

**Mineral**, Fresno-Kings Unit, Cal Fire. IMT 1 (Cal Fire Team 2). Nine miles west of Coalinga, CA. Timber, chaparral and tall grass. Extreme fire behavior with running and short-range spotting. Residences threatened. Evacuations and road closure in effect.

**Coyote**, San Benito-Monterey Unit, Cal Fire. Ten miles west of Panoche, CA. Brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Mineral	CA-FKU	18,085	3,785	25	Ctn	7/24	1,272	350	19	101	11	4	5.7M	ST
Coyote	CA-BEU	1,400	0	80	Ctn	7/18	118	-23	4	15	0	7	200K	ST

### Northern Rockies Area (PL 2)

New fires:	9
New large incidents:	1
Uncontained large fires:	1

\* **Witcher**, Custer County. Started on private land 46 miles south of Miles City, MT. Timber, brush and tall grass. Extreme fire behavior with crowning, group torching and spotting. Structures threatened.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
* Witcher	MT-LG14	300	---	60	Ctn	7/18	42	---	0	8	2	2	75K	PRI
Seventy-Six	MT-LG22	1,010	0	100	Ctn	---	0	-35	0	0	0	0	80K	PRI
Black Butte	MT-LG29	1,400	977	100	Ctn	---	0	6	0	0	0	0	200K	PRI

LG22 – Big Horn County    LG29 – Rosebud County

### Southern Area (PL 2)

New fires:	5
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	3

**Gate 5**, Texas A&M Forest Service. Started on private land 18 miles northeast of Brady, TX. Brush and tall grass. Extreme fire behavior with crowning and spotting. Structures and energy infrastructure threatened.

**Blue Creek**, Texas A&M Forest Service. Started on NPS land 20 miles southeast of Dumas, TX. Brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior with smoldering.

**Game Ranch**, Texas A&M Forest Service. Started on private land 26 miles southwest of Abilene, TX. Brush and tall grass. Active fire behavior with single tree torching and smoldering.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Gate 5	TX-TXS	6,500	2,000	50	Ctn	7/18	139	79	0	41	2	0	NR	PRI

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Blue Creek	TX-TXS	4,355	0	95	Ctn	7/17	19	-2	1	2	0	0	NR	NPS
Game Ranch	TX-TXS	3,000	0	90	Ctn	7/17	0	-22	0	0	0	0	NR	PRI
Buffalo Creek	TX-TXS	3,507	0	100	Ctn	---	18	3	0	6	0	4	NR	ST

### Alaska Area (PL 1)

New fires: 0  
 New large incidents: 0  
 Uncontained large fires: 0

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Sheenjek River	AK-UYD	5,505	0	0	Comp	10/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	143K	FWS
Coleen	AK-UYD	1,542	0	0	Comp	10/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5K	FWS
Billy Hawk Creek	AK-GAD	2,240	0	95	Comp	9/15	0	0	0	0	0	0	6K	FWS
Wapoo Creek 2	AK-GAD	1,693	0	95	Comp	9/15	0	0	0	0	0	0	3K	ST
Tivehvun Lake	AK-UYD	829	0	0	Comp	10/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2K	FWS
Old Lost	AK-UYD	477	0	0	Comp	10/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5K	FWS
Wapoo Creek	AK-GAD	600	---	0	Comp	9/15	0	---	0	0	0	0	10K	ST
Iwaktok Hill	AK-SWS	13,030	---	0	Comp	UNK	0	---	0	0	0	0	3K	FWS
Clear Creek	AK-MID	1,285	---	0	Comp	UNK	0	---	0	0	0	0	10K	BLM
Bearpaw Mountain	AK-TAD	700	0	100	Comp	---	0	0	0	0	0	0	5K	NPS

UYD – Upper Yukon Zone, BLM    GAD – Galena Zone, BLM    SWS – Southwest Area, Alaska DOF    MID – Military Zone, BLM  
 TAD – Tanana Zone, BLM

**Fires and Acres Yesterday (by Protection):**

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Area	FIREs	2	0	0	0	10	5	17
	ACRES	1	0	0	0	261	2	263
Northern California Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	14	2	16
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	389	0	389
Southern California Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	27	1	28
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	409	0	409
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	3	0	0	0	6	0	9
	ACRES	4	0	0	0	303	0	307
Great Basin Area	FIREs	1	11	0	0	9	4	25
	ACRES	0	3	0	0	14	0	17
Southwest Area	FIREs	4	3	0	0	1	11	19
	ACRES	286	125	0	0	8	5	424
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	1	9	0	0	5	3	18
	ACRES	1	16,563	0	0	802	0	17,366
Eastern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Southern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	1	4	0	5
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	31	0	31
<b>TOTAL FIRES:</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>TOTAL ACRES:</b>		<b>292</b>	<b>16,691</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,217</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19,207</b>

### Fires and Acres Year-to-Date (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	130	0	0	156	15	301
	ACRES	0	45,057	0	0	131,467	25	176,548
Northwest Area	FIREs	152	93	36	2	547	244	1,074
	ACRES	2,147	3,338	9,848	0	12,388	264	27,985
Northern California Area	FIREs	7	19	1	15	1,756	198	1,996
	ACRES	2	1,822	0	2	19,445	540	21,811
Southern California Area	FIREs	17	72	3	12	2,514	306	2,924
	ACRES	28	695	1	1,095	20,464	1,850	24,133
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	588	20	4	0	425	121	1,158
	ACRES	3,880	133	780	0	17,846	375	23,014
Great Basin Area	FIREs	26	444	16	30	569	130	1,215
	ACRES	122	268,724	64	65	71,802	34,219	374,996
Southwest Area	FIREs	548	168	14	21	427	772	1,950
	ACRES	41,078	13,577	1,803	88	42,176	514,032	612,754
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	275	197	10	7	558	289	1,336
	ACRES	3,150	34,092	365	47	79,922	3,188	120,764
Eastern Area	FIREs	329	0	33	9	6,052	382	6,805
	ACRES	297	0	3,278	52	20,620	1,585	25,832
Southern Area	FIREs	244	86	23	42	8,972	297	9,664
	ACRES	18,479	404	3,419	32,835	292,824	22,784	370,745
<b>TOTAL FIRES:</b>		<b>2,186</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>21,976</b>	<b>2,754</b>	<b>28,423</b>
<b>TOTAL ACRES:</b>		<b>69,182</b>	<b>367,842</b>	<b>19,558</b>	<b>34,184</b>	<b>708,954</b>	<b>578,863</b>	<b>1,778,583</b>

<b>Ten Year Average Fires (2010 – 2019 as of today)</b>	<b>31,584</b>
<b>Ten Year Average Acres (2010 – 2019 as of today)</b>	<b>3,261,134</b>

\*\*\*Changes in some agency YTD acres reflect more accurate mapping or reporting adjustments.

\*\*\*Additional wildfire information is available through the Geographic Areas at <https://gacc.nifc.gov/>

**Prescribed Fires and Acres Yesterday (by Ownership):**

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern California Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	87	0	87
Southern California Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Rockies Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Basin Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwest Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rocky Mountain Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Area	FIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Area	FIRES	0	0	1	0	11	0	12
	ACRES	0	0	600	0	76	0	676
<b>TOTAL FIRES:</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL ACRES:</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>763</b>

\*\*\*Prescribed fire acres are for reference only and may not reflect the most up-to-date information.

\*\*\*Official prescribed fire accomplishment reporting occurs through agency specific systems of record.

## Canadian Fires and Hectares

PROVINCES	FIRES YESTERDAY	HECTARES YESTERDAY	FIRES YEAR-TO-DATE	HECTARES YEAR-TO- DATE
BRITISH COLUMBIA	1	0	205	676
YUKON TERRITORY	0	10	18	6,989
ALBERTA	0	0	389	753,588
NORTHWEST TERRITORY	0	1	56	14,159
SASKATCHEWAN	1	0	87	42,056
MANITOBA	1	0	83	45,349
ONTARIO	14	88	376	5,446
QUEBEC	0	0	609	67,533
NEWFOUNDLAND	1	0	44	1,012
NEW BRUNSWICK	1	0	316	1,138
NOVA SCOTIA	0	0	118	643
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	0	0	9	8
NATIONAL PARKS	1	9	27	86
TOTALS	20	108	2,337	938,683

\*1 Hectare = 2.47 Acres

**Predictive Services Discussion:** The monsoonal moisture plume over the Southwest will shift west further into Arizona and southern Utah as the Four Corners High slowly begins to expand westward to cover the entire southern half of the country. Temperatures across the southern half of the nation will be well above average, and humidities will be high in the Southeast. Scattered storms are expected across Colorado, northwestern New Mexico, and Arizona. Most storms should be wet. Isolated dry storms may be possible across southeastern Idaho, southern Montana, and western Wyoming as a weak cold front passes. Dry conditions with seasonal temperatures are expected across the upper Midwest and in the Great Lakes region as high pressure builds into the regions from the south. In Alaska, a breezy westerly flow will develop over the Interior along with scattered showers by afternoon.

<http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>



**This Day in History** is a brief summary of a powerful learning opportunity and is not intended to second guess or be judgmental of decisions and actions. Put yourself in the following situation as if you do not know what the outcome will be. What are the conditions? What are you thinking? What are **YOU** doing?

## Battlement Creek Fire

**Incident Summary:** It's 1976 and western Colorado is experiencing an unusually severe fire season caused partly by unusual fuel conditions and heavy lightning activity during dry weather. A severe frost in June kills a high percentage of the leaves on Gambel oak which remain on the branches and is considered one of Colorado's most flammable fuels. 10 hour fuels are at 3-5%. A large-scale high-pressure weather pattern sits over western Colorado allowing for local weather to be influenced by terrain and diurnal winds averaging 10-15 mph in the afternoon with higher gusts. The weather is fair and hot with the temperatures at Grand Junction and Rifle reaching into the mid and upper 90's. A fire is reported 40 miles northeast of Grand Junction, in the Battlement Creek drainage. The fire is burning over an elevation range of 6200-8400 ft on a steep west-facing slope.

Friday July 16, 0630, two hotshot crews from the Coconino NF Arizona arrive at the Battlement Creek fire. This is the seventeenth fire of the first season for the newly formed Mormon Lake Hotshot Crew. The strategy is to prevent western and southern spread. The crews begin a major burnout of the catline (dozer line) from the rocky bluffs (Point A) at about 1615, downhill along the catline toward the Battlement Creek road at the bottom (Point C) ending about 2030. The fire makes an uphill run in oak brush burning out a large portion of the drainage (from the road east to the ridgeline) in about 20 minutes. Two "impressive" fire whirls are observed between 1600-1700. The night shift continues the burn out (Point C-D and beyond along the road) but is spotty with considerable unburned fuel remaining. Other night shift crews construct line along the ridgeline (Point E to G). Based on Friday's fire behavior, the E-G line is a crucial spot on the fire. Saturday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 0700, at morning briefing the Mormon Lake crew is assigned to burn out this section of line.

**Saturday morning, July 17<sup>th</sup>** – Due to a delay with the helicopter, the Mormon Lake crew does not get to the base of the rock bluff (Point E) until 1100. They are instructed to improve and burn out the line from the rocky bluff to the helispot (Point E-G). The burnout squad consisted of the crew boss, squad boss, and 2 crewmembers. The rest of the crew is improving the handline down the ridgeline.

At this same time, another crew is burning out in the bottom of the draw (Point C-D). The draw burns readily, uphill toward the ridge and the Mormon Lake crew. Neither crew knew of the specific location or assignment of the other.

**1400** –1/3 the way from the rock bluff to the upper helispot, there is a noticeable increase in smoke from the draw below (where the other crew had been burning). The crew boss is instructed to speed up the line improvement squad on toward the safety zone (Point G) and to narrow down and speed up his burnout on down the ridgeline to join the remainder of the crew in the safety zone when his burnout was done. Upslope winds have increased to 25-35 mph.

**1425-1440** – The line improvement squad just makes it into the safety zone when the flame front hits the ridge. 200 yards back, the burnout squad radios that they are “trapped”. Their escape is blocked by heavy smoke and flames.

**1440-1445** – The squad removes their canvas vests to cover their head and face, moistened the vests and their clothes with water from their canteens, and lays face down in the mineral soil of the fireline.

**1448 – All four firefighters are very badly burned.**

**Three will lose their lives.**

## Discussion Points

The day prior to the burnover, an airtanker crashed during a retardant dropping mission on the Battlement Creek fire killing the pilot.

- ✓ Discuss how incidents and distractions can affect our judgment and situational awareness.  
The crew all wore aluminum hardhats, canvas vests, Nomex shirts and non-fire-resistant work pants. Fire shelters were not used. Fire shelters may have prevented serious burns and death at this incident. Policy on issuing and carrying shelters had not been established yet. This incident became the catalyst for the mandatory use of fire shelters and fire-resistant clothing.
- ✓ ***Take this opportunity to inspect, repair, or replace your PPE and fire shelter if needed to ensure that it protects you as well as possible***



