



**DURANGO INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP (DRCG)**

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PRESS RELEASE

**18 Fires Break out on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation**

*Durango, CO* – Durango Interagency Coordinating Group (DICG)

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Southern Ute Indian Reservation – 18 Fires broke out yesterday on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. *The North Cinder Butte Area Fires* are located throughout the west side of the reservation. Fire crews responded to 12 fires yesterday, June 18, 2021

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Southern Ute Agency Fire Management and Los Piños Fire Protection District, Fort Lewis Mesa, and Colorado State helicopter have responded.

Current Apparatus:

- 1 Type 2 helicopter with a Helitack crew of 9,
- 1 Type II Interagency (IA) Crew,
- 4 Engines,
- 1 Tender (water taker), and
- 1 20 Person IA crew from the Lolo National Forest

Operational Directive for 6/19/21:

- 1) Check for hotspots from fires suppressed on 6/18
- 2) Recon and map fire area with Type 2 helicopter
- 3) Prioritize fires for suppression

Fire Conditions for 6/19:

Weather will continue to be hot, dry and windy. High temperatures between 87 & 97 degrees, humidity below 15% after 1200, and wind gust up to 25 MPH this afternoon. Thunderstorms with dry lightning are expected this afternoon.

Smoke is visible from the CO Hwy 140 corridor. Individuals should avoid County Road 136 and the west end of County Road 100. Smoke will be visible to the local communities. For information related to air quality, please go to: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>

The public is encouraged:

- 1) To avoid areas with active fire and where fire operations are occurring,
- 2) Slow down and use caution while driving through, and in the area of, fire operations,
- 3) Continue to observe Stage 1 Fire Restriction, and
- 4) Understand that the current weather conditions combined with extremely low fuel moisture content greatly increase the potential for fire starts and growth – please use caution with any activity that produces heat and sparks.

The cause of the North Cinder Butte Area Fires is the result of the recent lightning storm. The Tribe is coordinating with local agencies to ensure the safety of the public and to minimize the impact of the fire. The Tribe is also working with oil and gas operators in the area to shut-in facilities in the vicinity of the fire to mitigate any potential impact from those operators to first responder's ability to contain the fire.

As a reminder, Stage 1 fire restrictions were enacted for Southern Ute Indian Reservation on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 and will remain in effect until conditions improve.

Stage I Fire Restrictions prohibits acts for the general public, commercial operators and industrial oil and gas operators performing work on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

## STAGE I Fire Restrictions

### General Public:

#### Prohibited acts:

- 1) OPEN BURNING. Burning of trash and/or yard waste is prohibited.
- 2) AGRICULTURAL BURNING. Burning of crop land, fields, rangeland, debris burning, slash piles, prescribed burning and weed burning are prohibited.
- 3) CAMP FIRES. Building, maintaining or using a warming fire or campfire outside of officially designated or developed camp sites is prohibited. The fire restrictions do not include charcoal fires (in suitable containers) for barbecues or fires for sweat ceremonies, however, such fires are not to be left unattended and are to be fully extinguished after use.
- 4) FIREWORKS. Possession, discharging or use of any type or fireworks is prohibited.

Commercial and Industrial restrictions can be obtained from the BIA Fire Office at 575 County Road 517 or by calling (970) 563-4571.

Anyone violating the provisions of this fire ban may be subject to prosecution outlined in the Southern Ute Indian Criminal Code.

For more information on the North Cinder Butte Area Fires, please visit the Southern Ute Indian Tribe website, and follow the Southern Ute Indian Tribe on social media.

To report fires contact:

DURANGO ZONE DISPATCH (970) 385-1324

For more info or to report Fire Restriction Violations contact:

BIA FIRE MANAGEMENT (970) 563-4571 OR SOUTHERN UTE POLICE  
DEPARTMENT (970) 563-4401

## Durango Interagency Coordinating Group (DRCG) Information

The Durango Interagency Coordinating group has been established in 1990 to unite all local fire response agencies, local, state, and national agencies including: BLM, USFS, BIA, NPS, Colorado State, Montezuma, La Plata, Archuleta, San Juan (CO), Dolores and San Miguel Counties, and local fire departments within those counties. The DRCG is tasked to assess current wildfire conditions and release coordinated messages to inform and educate concerning fire danger and current fire restrictions. Wildfires do not know jurisdictional boundaries and therefore having a cooperative environment to collaborate on conditions and how best to approach fire safety and response.

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