

News *fire information*

Bureau of Land Management AZ
Dixie National Forest
Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands

Bureau of Land Management UT
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Saddle Fire Information, Ph/text: (435) 994-9353, cvenhuizen@blm.gov

Pine Valley Fire District- Saddle Fire

Note: Get the latest fire updates on Twitter @UtahWildfire

(Use hashtag #SaddleFire)

PINE VALLEY, Utah – All aerial firefighting efforts at the Saddle Fire came to an indefinite halt Monday when a drone passed within feet of a firefighting helicopter.

“This is an attack on the safety and wellbeing of our flight crews and our aircraft,” said Chris Henrie, the Saddle Fire incident commander. “News articles, videos, social media posts, flyers, posters...our message isn’t getting out to the right people. This stopped a significant effort to protect the residents of Pine Valley and could have killed our flight crew.”

This is the third drone intrusion in as many days at the Saddle Fire. All requests by Henrie to get firefighting aircraft airborne again were rejected because the firefighting pilots are defenseless against drones that come too close.

The first Saddle Fire encounter had a drone fly over a helicopter just after it landed. The second was spotted by an aerial tanker that was about to drop retardant, the crew immediately aborted the mission and returned to its base in Cedar City. The third incident occurred during water dropping operations on the fire.

“We told the residents of Pine Valley and Central that the objectives of the incident are to ensure firefighter and public safety through the use of sound risk management and hazard mitigation, and protect infrastructure in communities, campgrounds, private lands, water systems, and municipal watersheds,” Henrie said. “We can’t do that with these drones.”

Local residents received reverse 911 calls regarding the drone pilot and the suspension of aerial resources responding to the fire. A door-to-door campaign is also planned by the incident management team.

Those with information regarding drones flying in the area of the Saddle Fire should contact the Washington County Sheriffs Office at 435-634-5734.

For further information please follow the Dixie National Forest on Facebook, Twitter, and utahfireinfo.gov.

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For more information on fires in Utah visit www.utahfireinfo.gov.

