

Introducing the Utah Forest Institute

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The Utah Forest Institute (UFI), a science-based outreach and engagement organization hosted by the [Department of Wildland Resources](#) and the [S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources](#) at [Utah State University](#), has already accomplished a great deal to promote the understanding of forest health and wildfires in Utah since its establishment in the fall of 2018. [Dr. James A. Lutz](#), who has been with Utah State University since 2013, serves as the director. Dr. Megan K. Nasto joined UFI in the summer of 2019 as the Senior Technical Analyst. UFI currently employs three Undergraduate Technical Analysts and collaborate with three graduate students.

- They have begun building what will be a publicly accessible database of Utah fires with their burn severity attributes and products – otherwise known as the Utah Fire Atlas. In its current state, the database contains over 1,300 fires. This database will provide scientists and land-managers with the data they may need to conduct their own research or design their own management plans. It will be continuously updated through time.
- They have employed, trained, mentored 11 Utah State University undergraduate students, as well as four field technicians in the summer of 2020.
- They began research collaborations with [Dr. Larissa Yocom](#) and her graduate students, Jamela Thompson, Alex Howe, and Kipling Klimas.

- They have presented their work at two forums: The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes' Cross Boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop in Albuquerque, NM in March, and in a session that they organized at the Ecological Society of America Virtual Meeting in August.
- They were [interviewed](#) by KSL in May detailing their fire database for prevention efforts.

Among those many accomplishments, they also completed their first field season in the summer of 2020. The primary objective for this field season was to calibrate the remotely sensed techniques of analyzing fire burn severity with on-the-ground measurements. They assigned four field technicians to collect data from four wildfires that occurred in 2019 on US Forest Service land in Utah. These fires occurred at higher elevations in mixed-conifer forests. The data collected will help them provide accurate information in their publicly accessible database. To continue learning about UFI's 2020 field season, check out this [infographic](#).

You can learn more about UFI by visiting their [website](#) or contacting Megan K. Nasto at megan.nasto@usu.edu.