



United States Wildland Fire Service
& United States Forest Service

3833 S Development Ave
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354



Date: 6/30/2026

Route To: Christopher Wilcox, United States Wildland Fire Service, Designated Agency
Safety and Health Official
Sarah Fisher, Deputy Chief for Fire and Aviation Management, US Forest Service

Subject: 72 Hour Preliminary Report: Gore and Knowles Fires

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Location: SW of Loma, Colorado, Gore and Knowles Fires

Date of occurrence: June 27, 2026

Time of occurrence: Approximately 1600

Team leader: Chuck Russell, Assistant Director, Fire Coordination, US Wildland Fire Service
Deputy team leader: Mark Pieper, Fire Management Specialist

Activity: Fire suppression

Number injured: 2

Number of fatalities: 3

Narrative: Firefighters from the Rifle Interagency Helitack Crew, staffed by both USWFS and USFS employees, were involved in a burnover event while responding to initial attack fires in the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit. Two firefighters were evacuated with burn injuries and are currently in a Level I burn center receiving care. Firefighters Emily Barker, Nick Hutcherson, and Sydney Watson did not survive the burnover.

A Wildland Fire Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT) jointly led by USWFS and USFS is in place in Colorado.

cc: Thomas Heinlein, Bureau of Land Management - Colorado
Paul Hohn, United States Wildland Fire Service
Erin Phelps, United States Forest Service
Scott Sugg, United States Forest Service
Jake Nuttal, United States Forest Service