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The Pack Creek Fire has cost \$2.6M to fight and could burn for weeks before it's contained.

The blaze was started by a campfire, and "someone left that fire without thought or regard to what it could do," ranger says.

By Sara Tabin

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Photo Caption: A charred National Forest sign is left in the remnants of the Pack Creek Fire south east of Moab, June 14, 2021. Zak Podmore for the The Salt Lake Tribune.

The Pack Creek Fire near Moab is now over 8,400 acres, and officials say it could be weeks until it is fully contained.

The fire, which has cost about \$2.6 million to fight so far, is 26% contained, said Nick Howell, a fire information spokesperson with the Bureau of Land Management, during a Tuesday news briefing. The blaze was started by an abandoned campfire.

High temperatures, rugged terrain and drought have made fighting the fire especially difficult. Tim Roide, the incident commander for Great Basin Team 4, which is managing the fire, said the current fuel conditions in the mountains haven't been seen in 90 years. He said it will likely be weeks until the fire is fully contained. He asked the public to respect evacuation orders and closures as firefighters work.

It has been difficult for residents to see the Pack Creek Fire burning in the places they recreate, said Brian Murdock, recreation trail manager for the Moab/Monticello District of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. He said the fire is burning in areas that people love.

"It is pretty devastating to sit down here and feel helpless, but this team really is doing everything they can to get this thing out," he said.

He asked people to stay off of closed trails, even if they seem like they are far from the fire.

Officials also asked people to be careful in preventing future wildfires.

"The cause of the [Pack Creek Fire] is an abandoned campfire," said District Ranger Michael Engelhart. "It means someone left that fire without thought or regard to what it could do."

He said people who build fires need to bring tools and plenty of water to make sure the flames are completely out, and he asked people who find abandoned campfires to help put them out.

Engelhart said there have been no major injuries because of the Pack Creek Fire so far.