

Investigators look at deadly Utah fire

by UPI

NEOLA, Utah - Federal officials were investigating the cause of a Utah wildfire that had burned 33,000 acres and killed three people by Monday.

Witnesses said the Neola North Fire started Friday morning at the base of a power pole on Ute tribal land, the Deseret Morning News in Salt Lake City reported.

A man who offered to fight the fire with his bulldozers when it was a quarter-acre or smaller said he was stopped by a tribe member who apparently believed the fire would burn itself out.

"He pretty much shut us down," Jeremiah Warren told the Morning News. "I feel a little guilty about it ... (I) could have stopped it and saved some lives."

Roger Roberson, 75; George Houston, 63; and his son, Tracy Houston, 43, died in the fire Friday. Tracy's son, 11-year-old Duane Houston, escaped by running through smoke and jumping two fences, the Morning News reported.

On Sunday afternoon, fire officials said 5 percent of the fire was contained.

Two communities were evacuated Sunday but officials said some residents could return to their home Monday. The fire threatened a Girl Scout camp and 150 homes in Dryfork Canyon, officials said.

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