

Lowline Fire Update

Saturday, July 29, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.



Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team 1

Dan Dallas, Incident Commander

Information Phone: 970-648-4470 (public), 970-765-7123 (media)

Email: 2023.lowline@firenet.gov

Information Staffing Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Special Note: Fire officials appreciate the support and generosity shown to our firefighters by the community. Our firefighters are well cared for while on assignment. They are fed a high calorie diet to sustain them during arduous work, and they receive the gear and equipment they need to perform their jobs at a high level. If you wish to donate in a way that helps both local families affected by the fire and the firefighters, please consider donating to Gunnison Food Pantry or to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation (<https://wffoundation.org/>), a nonprofit group that provides support to injured and fallen firefighters and their families.

Current Situation: The Lowline Fire now stands at 798 acres and is 1% contained. Fire crews, heavy equipment, and aerial firefighting resources continue to focus tactical efforts on limiting fire spread to the east towards County Road 730, while securing direct fireline around the southern flank and planning strategic operations for the more remote western side of the fire where fuels are heaviest.

On large, complex fires, supervisors divide the fire perimeter into geographic subdivisions called “divisions” to provide for better management and safer operations. Our daily updates will describe the fire’s activities and our suppression actions within these divisions, which are shown on the accompanying fire maps. Note that division letters don’t always run sequentially in order to allow for expansion if the fire grows.

In **Division A**, structure protection crews performed fuels mitigation work to limit potential damage in the event the fire approaches structures. The objective is to prevent the fire from progressing eastward toward County Road 730. In pursuit of the objective, indirect fireline was constructed around the timber stringers where fuels change from conifers to grass and shrubs. Firing operations will safely burn out these stringers, possibly beginning as early as today, in order to prevent eastward fire, spread and protect valuable resources, including homes, rangeland, sage grouse habitat and numerous other values at risk. Burning out under controlled conditions eliminates fuels between the fire and values at risk, preventing further fire spread.

Crews in **Division Z** worked on direct fireline around a spot and the main fire perimeter yesterday and made good progress. That work will continue today, and firing of a timber stringer on the southern end of the fire may occur. Before ignition occurs, weather conditions will be monitored and the work will be closely coordinated with a variety of other agencies to ensure mutual objectives for resource protection are met.

Division Y is a new Division that was split off from Division W. The area has been scouted, and plans developed to build indirect fireline up a ridge running west from the southwest corner of the fire.

Division W will be scouted today to determine the best strategy for suppressing the fire in this remote and heavily timbered area.

Weather & Fuel Conditions:

Afternoon and evening showers and thunderstorms are likely today, with gusty outflow winds and lightning being the primary concerns. Chances for wetting rains will likely stay under 20% today, increasing to 40 to 60% Sunday into next week.

Fuels in the fire area are mixed conifer with a heavy dead and down component, as well as grass and shrubs. The fire was active yesterday, spreading in heavy conifer fuels, but holding in grass. Similar activity is expected today. Any rain received could temporarily dampen fire behavior, but likely only briefly.

Evacuations, Closures, and Fire Restrictions:

Mandatory evacuations are in place in the Squirrel Creek and Mill Creek drainages. For specific evacuation information, see Gunnison County Emergency Management at www.gunnisoncounty.org. You may sign up to receive emergency alerts on your phones or other devices at: <https://bit.ly/3QhZVZg> .

An area, road, and trail closure has been implemented on National Forest System lands near the fire area. For specifics see this link: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1126172.pdf . County Roads in the fire vicinity are barricaded. In the interest of public safety, fire officials ask visitors to be aware of fire traffic and avoid the area.

There are currently no fire restrictions in Gunnison County. Should restrictions be implemented, they will be posted at this site: <https://westslopefireinfo.com/gunnison-county/> .

Wildfires are a no-fly zone for unauthorized aircraft, including drones. **If you fly, we can't.** For more information, visit <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org>.

Lowline Fire Statistics: Size: 798 acres Containment: 1% Total Personnel: 166 Location: 14 mi. NNW of Gunnison, CO Reported: 8:00 am July 26, 2023 Cause: lightning	For More Information: Information Phone: 970-648-4470 (public), 970-765-7123 (media) Email: 2023.lowline@firenet.gov InciWeb: https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/cogmf-lowline-fire Facebook: www.facebook.com/GMUGFireInfo
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