



# Little Mesa Fire Update

Saturday, August 12, 2023

**Contact:** Niki Carpenter Public Information Officer (970) 787-2993

**Location:** Approx. 15 miles west, southwest of Delta, CO, Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area

**Discovered:** July 31, 2023, 11:00 AM

**Cause:** Lightning

**Estimated Size:** 642 acres

**Vegetation Type:** Pinyon, Juniper, sagebrush, grass

**Containment:** 0%

**Total Personnel:** 75

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:** Air operations are being conducted on the Little Mesa Fire. For your safety, please stay out of the Potholes Recreation Area. The helicopters are using this water source for fire suppression.

**Current Situation:** Yesterday's Multi-Mission Aircraft flight measured the fire at 642 acres. Resources continued cleaning up unburnt piles of dead and down along Tatum Ridge Rd to secure Escalante Canyon. They also "mopped up" hot spots along the road. Mopping up is the process of manually removing and extinguishing all sources of heat (such as smoldering logs or subsurface burning tree roots) within a certain proximity to the fire line, usually 100 to 300 feet. A fire's edge cannot be considered contained until mop up is complete.

Conditions for aerial ignitions yesterday were not conducive until late in the day. Due to a short flight window, helicopter ignitions were postponed. Some ignitions were performed by UAS between Dry Mesa and Little Canyon to clean up unburnt pockets of fuel. Another attempt will be made at aerial ignitions today to achieve the goal of strengthening the fire line to the south and southwest edges of the fire perimeter. A significant increase in smoke will be observed while ignition operations are performed.

**Weather:** There continues to be a chance of rain over the fire area throughout the day and mostly cloudy conditions are expected. Light winds 8-13 mph are forecast out of the west.

**Evacuations and Closures:** No evacuations have been issued. Temporary road closures in Delta County on Dry Mesa Rd at the intersection with Escalante Rim Rd and on USFS Dry Mesa Rd at Sawmill Mesa Rd junction. The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests have issued a forest closure order for the area around the Little Mesa Fire. Public access to the closure area is limited, and includes National Forest System Road (NFSR) #502 – Dry Mesa road, NFSR #501.1A – South Bench road, National Forest System Trail (NFST) #102 – Picket Corral trail, NFST #102.1A – Picket Corral Spur trail and NFST #104 – Cabin Bench Area trail.

**Smoke:** Smoke is visible from surrounding areas and Highways 50, 550, 92, 65, 141 and C37 Road. Go to [fire.airnow.gov](https://fire.airnow.gov) or [colorado.gov/airquality/](https://colorado.gov/airquality/) to get updates on smoke conditions.

**Aviation Safety:** Incident aircraft may be flying over the Little Mesa Fire air space. Fire aviation resources are flying at different altitudes and speeds. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones must never fly near wildfires. The only UAS or drones able to fly are agency owned and operated, which have been assigned to work on the wildfire and have communication with air operations. **Remember if you fly, we can't!**

**For updated information follow on these outlets:**

**Inciweb:** <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/coupd-little-mesa-fire>

**Facebook:** @LittleMesaFire

**Twitter:** @SWD\_Fire