



Little Mesa Fire Update

Monday, August 14, 2023

Contact: Deana Harms 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: 3,378 acres

Vegetation Type: Pinyon, Juniper, sagebrush, grass

Containment: 10%

Total Personnel: 84

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, fire resources continue to mop up and secure the Tatum Ridge Road by moving smoldering logs farther into the interior. These actions assist in protecting values at risk and obtaining containment. Conditions were ideal to conduct helicopter aerial ignition operations to achieve resource benefits in a confine and contain suppression strategy from Black Point Road to Dry Mesa, Little Canyon, and the north end of Dry Mesa on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The helicopter covers more area, which contributed to the increase in acres. Aerial ignition operators use a plastic sphere dispenser (PSD) that look like ping pong balls. These balls are in a hopper that inject the balls with a chemical, then disperses them from the helicopter. The PSD then ignite and burn up once they reach the ground. This tool allows fire managers to target specific areas of vegetation to be burned.

Today fire crews will utilize the Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) drone and hand ignition to clean up unburned islands on mesas tops where there is heavy dead and down vegetation. Smoke will be visible in the afternoon as ignition operations begin.

Weather: Monsoon moisture is making its way into southwest Colorado bringing a chance of scattered showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon with slightly cooler temperatures. Winds will be terrain driven then become southwest with gust to 10 to 15 mph. Gusty and erratic winds are expected near showers and thunderstorms.

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 GMUG National Forests have issued a forest closure order for the area around the Little Mesa Fire. Public access to the closure area is limited, visit <https://bit.ly/3YwXNz0> for more information.

Smoke: Smoke is visible from surrounding areas and Highways 50, 550, 92, 65, 141 and C37 Road. Go to fire.airnow.gov or 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