



Little Mesa Fire Update

Tuesday, August 15, 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:** 92

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, the southern end of the fire received low to moderate rain. Fire crews worked on mesa tops from Black Point to Dry Mesa cleaning up pockets of unburned vegetation. Today, firefighters on the northern end will work on cleaning up vegetation on the east side of Dry Mesa with hand ignition. The rest of the fire crews will hold and secure the fire edge. Throughout the Little Mesa Fire, there has been low intensity fire activity. The great work of the firefighters is reducing the chances of future high intensity fires that could have catastrophic effects.

The Little Mesa Fire was ignited by lightning. Natural fire starts can be a benefit for environmental resources by bringing fire back into a fire adapted ecosystem. The Little Mesa fire is helping to decompose dead and down trees left behind from the Ips beetle infestation approximately 20 years ago. Periodic fire stimulates new native plant growth by using the nutrients and minerals from the dead wood and plant matter being released back into the environment. This process also improves wildlife habitat by enhancing the desired vegetation and opening thick forest.

Weather: Subtropical moisture will remain in place through much of the week which will lead to the potential for showers and thunderstorms each day. Storms will favor the higher terrain to the south of the fire. The main threats from any storm will be lightning and erratic, gusty outflow winds. Temperatures will be in the low 80's with winds out of the west, southwest at 10 to 15 mph in the afternoon.

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