

Lowline Fire Update

Thursday, August 3, 2023 – 9:00 p.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.



Current Situation:

Today's weather conditions and moderate fire behavior allowed firefighters to complete fireline in several sections, advancing containment to 54%. Across nearly all divisions, work included firefighting resources constructing fireline, patrolling, mopping up, and extinguishing spot fires. Firefighters will continue to build on previous days' success working to secure firelines along the perimeter and build contingency lines. Uncontained firelines remain the highest priority.

In the coming days, firefighters will remain alert as the area enters a warming and drying trend. A fire weather watch is predicted for Sunday, which means an increased risk of fire danger due to strong winds, low humidities, and warm temperatures.

Division A: Additional containment was reached in Division A where it intersects with Middle Creek. This wet drainage augments the fireline because of the available water and high moisture content in the adjacent vegetation. Aerial ignition did not occur today because fuels were not dry enough to burn at the level needed to reduce fire potential. Fire managers will evaluate conditions tomorrow morning and may conduct an aerial burning operation in interior pockets of unburned fuel. In other parts of the division, fireline patrol and mop up continued.

Division Z: Firefighters searched for heat sources and extinguished them by mopping up. Containment rose in this division, and the entire division is now fully contained.

Division Y: Contingency firelines have been established at the ridge edge and further out with an indirect line connecting to the wilderness boundary. Fire managers do not anticipate needing these contingency lines as a large aspen grove is providing the predominate fuel break. The aspen groves have not shown a susceptibility to the fire behavior exhibited in the conifer tree stands. Several helicopter landing spots have been established over the last several days to provide access on the west side. These "helispots" support firefighter and operational logistical needs including food, water, supplies, and aerial reconnaissance. They also allow for rapid medical extraction should it be needed.

Division X: This division remains unstaffed by firefighters performing suppression work, although fire managers are continuing to evaluate next steps through scouting missions and the use of technology.

Division W: Work continued on primary and secondary firelines with firefighters connecting several wet meadows together as part of the indirect fireline development. These contingency lines provide a secondary line of defense to keep the fire within the current perimeter. Should additional actions be needed, firefighters have identified an ability to conduct burnout operations on short notice, weather permitting, because preparation work is complete. Firefighters searched for hotspots and extinguished them in other parts of the division.

Structure Protection: Structure protection assessments are complete on the homes in Mill Creek. Firefighters will continue these efforts on all homes in the fire's vicinity, focusing currently on structures north of the fire. 125 structure assessments have been completed across the fire.

Weather & Fuel Conditions:

With warmer and drier weather and gusty afternoon winds, fuels are drying out at an accelerated rate. These conditions

will support more active fire behavior and easier fire spread where fuels are dense in the interior. The warm and dry weather with gusty afternoon winds will continue for the next several days. Tomorrow, temperatures will be slightly warmer in the mid-70s, humidity in the low 30% range, and winds at 5-10 mph with afternoon gusts.

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 . BLM has implemented a temporary closure in the fire vicinity. For details see this link: www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire/fire-and-aviation/regional-information/colorado/southwest-district . 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/> .

Daily Smoke Outlook reports can be found at this link: <https://outlooks.airfire.org/outlook/ed63b240> .

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

<p>Lowline Fire Statistics: Size: 1771 acres Containment: 54% Total Personnel: 393 Location: 14 mi. NNW of Gunnison, CO Reported: 8:00 am July 26, 2023 Cause: lightning</p>	<p>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</p>
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