

San Luis Valley
Bureau of Land Management



San Luis Valley Public Lands



Rio Grande
National Forest



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News Release

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--

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Small Fire on Handkerchief Mesa

SOUTH FORK – A small, lightning-sparked wildland fire is burning on Handkerchief Mesa, on the Rio Grande National Forest, about 11 miles south of South Fork. The five acre fire probably started on August 4th or 5th, when several thunderstorms passed over the area.

Fire personnel from the San Luis Valley Interagency Fire Management Unit have been monitoring the Handkerchief Mesa Fire since August 10th. Currently, the fire is being allowed to burn in order to allow it to play its natural role in the environment. The Handkerchief Mesa Fire is burning in a spruce-fir forest and is reducing fuels that have accumulated in the area resulting from bug-killed trees.

“The recent rains put a damper on the fire, but it is still smoldering and will probably kick up again if the current drying trend continues,” said Randy Chappell, fire management officer for the Divide Ranger District. “Unless we get a lengthy wet period, we expect this fire to continue to burn until it snows.”

Smoke may be visible from the Park Creek Road and depending on the weather and fire activity; the smoke may be light and white or a dark column. Due to the rockiness of the terrain and natural fire breaks, the fire is not expected to go on any sustained hot runs.

Public use of Forest System Road 374 may be limited depending on the behavior of the fire and administrative needs while the Handkerchief Mesa Fire continues to burn.

For updated information about the status of fire or Forest System Road 374, contact the Divide Ranger District at 719-657-3321.

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