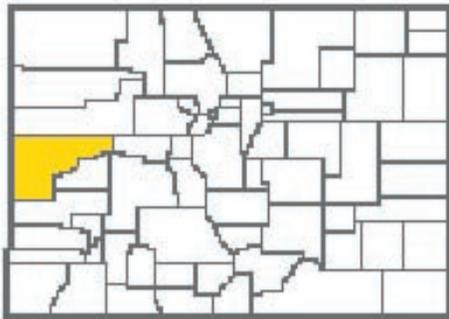


# Mesa County Profile

*Prepared for the:*  
**Dixie, Fishlake & Manti-La Sal National Forests  
Forest Plan Revision  
Social and Economic Assessment**

*Prepared by:*  
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## MESA COUNTY OVERVIEW



*Mesa Countywide Land Use  
Plan, 2000*

*Mesa County 2003*

*Environmental Scan*

*Mesa County Strategic Plan,  
2001*

*Mesa County Area Profile  
(online), 2002*

### **County Land Ownership\***

43.5% — Bureau of Land Mgt.

27.5% — Private

0.27% — State Trust Lands

25.7% — Forest Service

0.9% — National Park

0.3% — Dept of Defense

0.1% — Water Bodies

*This overview contains observations drawn from the maps, economic and demographic trend data, and a review of county plans contained in this profile. In addition, it contains comments and explanations of county leaders and residents, gathered at workshops conducted to review this assessment.*

### ***Landscape***

Approximately 76% of Mesa County is publicly owned and controlled. However, the County's forest-related planning efforts seem to be proportional to the acreage of their respective National Forests. The Grand Mesa is mentioned extensively, and there is virtually no mention of the Manti-La Sal in any of the documents reviewed. Similarly, direct contact with the County was difficult. There were two areas of "potential prime agricultural land if irrigated" land near the Manti-La Sal Forest.

### ***Population***

The County boasts the largest population of any county along the Western Slope. Mesa County experienced exceptional population and economic growth through the 1990s, and this trend is expected to continue through the next two decades. Most of the County's population growth took place in or near the urbanized areas, but new development is expanding outside municipal boundaries [near Grand Junction].

### ***Economy***

The local economy has grown consistently since 1990. Despite their significant growth, the County is still concerned with community-wide economic vitality because the services and retail sectors constituted 50% of the Mesa economy. Consequently, Grand Junction continues to be a regional trade and distribution center. The allocation of employment sectors has changed little since 1980.

## MESA COUNTY OVERVIEW

### **County Planned Uses**

**94.9%** — *Agric & Forestry*

**0.8%** — *Residential*

**0.1%** — *Commercial/Industrial*

**3.41%** — *None*

*source: Mesa County*

### **Current Issues**

*preserving rural and  
agricultural lifestyle  
agricultural sustainability  
poverty rates  
growth management*

The County's growth has led to concern about the necessity and viability of agriculture operations. Consequently, the County adopted a "Right to Farm and Ranch" policy that was intended to reduce the perceived need for litigation over agriculture-related disputes. This policy essentially protects and encourages agriculture by establishing an Agricultural Advisory Panel.

### *Planning*

The Land Use Plan was prepared in part because of the "widespread perception and fear that Mesa County was rapidly losing its rural and agricultural lifestyle". Consequently, the first land use goal of the County is "to protect existing rural property rights and the agricultural economy".

The Manti-La Sal Forest isn't mentioned in the documents reviewed, and development is not expected to take place near it.