

# Mesa County

## Local Planning Summary

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



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***MESA COUNTYWIDE LAND USE PLAN, 2000***

<p><b>Summary &amp; Key Issues</b></p>	<p>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]. The Plan was prepared in part because of the “widespread perception and fear that Mesa County was rapidly losing its rural and agricultural lifestyle”. The first land use goal of the County is “to protect existing rural property rights and the agricultural economy”.</p>
<p><b>Historical Abstract</b></p>	<p>The 1996 Countywide Land Use Plan (updated in 2000) was the first such effort made by the County.</p>
<p><b>Economic Values</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The services and retail sectors constituted 50% of the Mesa economy in the early 1990s, (p.26).</li> <li>• “Generally, the capacity of existing public facilities and services does not appear to be a constraint to the continued growth of Mesa County”, (p.30).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Values</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environmental sections of the Plan focused on private land [identifying hazards, etc], (p.27).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social &amp; Cultural Values</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Plan was prepared in part because of the “widespread perception and fear that Mesa County was rapidly losing its rural and agricultural lifestyle”, (p.3).</li> <li>• [From a survey] 58% of residents favor public purchase of open space as a tool for growth management, (p.33).</li> <li>• The first land use goal of the County is “to protect existing rural property rights and the agricultural economy”, (p.43).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Forest-Specific Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Manti LaSal Forest lies in the Gateway / Unaweep section of the unincorporated County area, (p.18).</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Public Lands Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 76% of the land is publicly owned and controlled, (p.3).</li> <li>• The first implementation strategy of the conservation goal is to establish regular coordination meetings with public land managers, (p.50).</li> <li>• The County is interested in sustainable ecosystems and preserving public access to public lands, (p.51).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Demographic Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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], (p.7&amp;70). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The County is establishing incentives to encourage growth around existing communities, (p.137).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><i>MESA COUNTY 2003 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN</i></b>  <b><i>MESA COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN, 2001</i></b>  <b><i>MESA COUNTY AREA PROFILE (online), 2002</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Summary &amp; Key Issues</b></p>	<p>Mesa County experienced exceptional population and economic growth through the 1990s, and this trend is expected to continue through the next two decades. However, the County is still concerned with community-wide economic vitality. The Manti LaSal Forest isn’t mentioned in the documents reviewed, and development is not expected to take place near it.</p>
<p><b>Historical Abstract</b></p>	<p>The Strategic Plan used an earlier version of the Environmental Scan as a background document. The Area Profile was available on the County website.</p>
<p><b>Economic Values</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first “critical challenge” to the County was community-wide economic vitality, (p.5 Strategic).</li> <li>• The local economy has grown consistently since 1990, (p.35 Scan). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Between 1990 and 2000, the metropolitan areas grew by 25%, which was the 38<sup>th</sup> fastest in the nation.</li> <li>○ Most of the employment is in the service and retail sectors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Forest-Specific Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Mesa County is blessed to have the Grand Mesa National Forest”, (p.3 Area). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No mention of Manti LaSal.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No natural gas areas or oil/gas pipelines within 20miles of Manti LaSal, (p.67 Scan). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two areas of “potential prime agricultural land if irrigated” land near the Manti LaSal Forest, (p.63 Scan).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mesa County Wildfire Hazard Study Areas map does not include show the Manti LaSal, (p.62 Scan).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Demographic Issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesa experienced exceptional population growth through the 1990s, and this trend is expected to continue through the next two decades, (p.1 Scan).</li> <li>• County poverty rates are higher than the state and natural averages, (p.1 Scan).</li> <li>• “The City of Grand Junction is the largest city in Mesa County and also the largest in western Colorado”, (p.1 Area).</li> </ul>