



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Routt County Commissioners Move to Stage Two Fire Restrictions

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO – Pursuant to Ordinance No. 2013-002, an ordinance to restrict fires in unincorporated portions of Routt County during periods of high fire danger, the Routt County Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously today to move from Stage One Fire Restrictions to Stage Two Fire Restrictions effective at 00:01 a.m. Thursday, August 20, 2020.

The fire danger has increased in Routt County. The elevated risk of wildland fires is rated very high, meaning a fire can spark easily and spread rapidly. Stage Two fire restrictions are considered only when very high or extreme fire danger is predicted to persist. This determination is based upon current conditions and long-term weather forecasts which create the potential for uncontrollable fires. Continued hot, dry and windy weather, low fuel moistures, and, and several large fires already burning in Northwest Colorado have caused added concern and prompted the need for additional restrictions.

Interim Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue Fire Chief Chuck Cerasoli commented, “We haven’t seen dry conditions like this in quite some time. It will take commitment from everyone to help spread the word on the Stage Two fire restrictions and the very real danger we all face of a wildfire start in our area. I think we can all agree that the last thing we need is the stress of a wildfire burning close to or in our community. Please help keep each other safe!”

Oak Creek Fire Protection District Chief Chuck Wisecup said, “With the ever increasing number of large fires and predicted hot and dry weather patterns, resources are extremely thin right now. Extremely low relative humidity as well as other burn indices currently are at levels not seen in the area since the early 2000’s. These conditions attribute to extremely rapid fire spread and growth which we have already witnessed in several large fire in our surrounding area. It is vital that even with Stage 2 Fire Restrictions in place that the public is diligent in helping prevent fires.”

“North Routt has not experienced fuel conditions like this since 2002, and we are exceeding those daily. Some may recall that 2002 is the year we had the Zirkel Complex (Hinman and Burn Ridge Fires), so do your part to reduce the risk of starting a devastating fire in our area by not having that campfire, or produce ember/sparks that will scar our landscape or burn down your neighbor’s home,” said Mike Swinsick, North Routt Fire Protection District Chief.

The fire restrictions apply to all county, state, and privately owned lands outside of municipal boundaries. The following restrictions and enforcement measures shall apply to the Stage 2 Fire Restrictions and supersede the Stage 1 Fire Restrictions previously declared on July 16, 2020.

Stage Two Fire Restrictions:

1. All open fires and campfires are prohibited except petroleum-fueled stoves, lanterns, and heating devices that are underwriter approved.
2. Smoking is restricted to enclosed vehicles and buildings.
3. All chainsaws and other internal combustion engines, including motorcycles and ATVs, must have spark-arresting devices that are properly installed and in working order.
4. Use of explosives is prohibited.
5. Outdoor use of welding and cutting torch devices are prohibited.
6. Use of tracer rounds or incendiary targets are prohibited for all shooting activities in the county.
7. Individual agencies (such as fire protection districts, or state or federal organizations) may further restrict commercial activities not included in this Declaration such as construction, logging, or oil and gas operations.

Exemptions:

1. Individuals with a valid written permit which specifically authorizes the prohibited act: (a) from the fire protection district chief if subject land is within a fire protection district; (b) or from the Routt County Emergency Operations Director after consultation with the Routt County Sheriff if subject's land is not within a fire protection district.
2. Any federal, state or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an actual duty.

NOTE: Any permit issued by a fire protection district within unincorporated Routt County prior to this Declaration is rescinded until these restrictions are lifted by the Board of County Commissioners of Routt County.

Fine Schedule and Penalty Assessment Procedure:

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes section 30-15-402, any person who violates this order commits a class 2 petty offense and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished as set forth in the graduated fine schedule established in Ordinance No. 2013-002 as follows:

First Offense	Not more than \$100
Second Offense	Not more than \$200
Third or Subsequent Offense	Maximum find permitted by law - \$1,000 as of March 31, 2013

The penalty assessment procedure provided for in Section §16-2-201, C.R.S. may be followed by any law enforcement officer issuing a citation for a violation of this Declaration and Ordinance No. 2013-002.

Wildland fires can affect entire communities by destroying homes, damaging and degrading natural watersheds, and destroying natural habitat and killing wildlife. People must take all necessary precautions in wildlands and forests. According to Routt County Commissioner Tim Corrigan, "We put restrictions in place to reduce the likelihood of human-caused fires." The restrictions will remain in effect until officials determine that conditions have changed sufficiently to reduce the risk of a human-caused wildfire. Rescinding the restrictions will be considered when the critical elements diminish.

The fire restriction applies to all private and state-owned lands outside municipal boundaries. There may also be restrictions within city/town and federal lands.

We thank the public for their support and continued cooperation to comply with fire restrictions. Conditions in Colorado and throughout the West are ripe for wildfire. Preventing human-caused fires will help keep the public and firefighters safe and also help prevent destruction of federal lands and private property. We appreciate your help!

Should you have any questions, please call your Fire Protection District Chief or the Routt County Office of Emergency Management at (970) 870-5551. Thank you for your cooperation.

North Routt Fire Protection District
Mike Swinsick – (970) 879-6064

West Routt Fire Protection District
Trevor Guire – (970) 276-3511

Oak Creek Fire Protection District
Chuck Wisecup – (970) 736-8104

Yampa Fire Protection District
Machia 'Ky' Cox – (970) 846-2169

Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue
Chuck Cerasoli – (970) 879-7170

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