



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 16, 2021

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Routt County Commissioners Enact Stage 1 Fire Restriction

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 to enact Stage 1 Fire Restriction **effective at 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 16, 2021**, and will remain in force until rescinded.

Fire restrictions are considered only when very high or extreme fire danger exists and is predicted to persist. This determination is based upon current conditions, long-term weather forecasts, and upon the heavy, dry fuel loading which creates the potential for uncontrollable fires.

Wildfires can affect entire communities by destroying homes and natural habitat and by killing wildlife, as well as creating widespread poor air quality, which can cause problems for people outdoors, particularly those with respiratory ailments. People must take all necessary safety precautions in wildlands and forests. According to Routt County Emergency Operations Director Mo DeMorat, “we put these 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.

“Federal, state, and local partners throughout the region study and discuss weekly several factors to determine when restrictions are recommended or necessary, such as moisture content of the fuels, current and forecasted weather conditions, and availability of suppression resources throughout the region. These factors and the associated criteria that are measured provide a more scientific and accurate process for determining when fire restrictions are necessary.”

DeMorat noted that while not every agency in the region will enter fire restrictions together, they work to present a cohesive, coordinated approach to the action, ensuring geographic predictability across federal, state, county, and other unincorporated lands.

Routt County Sheriff Garrett Wiggins added that among other considerations taken into account before enacting a fire restriction is that of business and industry. “Fire restriction impacts business and industry,” he said. “There are agricultural and industrial interests, and when we move into these stages, it prohibits some of their activities. We’re conscious of that, but human activity must be responsible in order to prevent disastrous wildland fires in the current extreme conditions, which include an ongoing historic drought.”

“Routt County was primed for a large fire last summer,” Wiggins said. “Fortunately for us, we didn’t see that. It was not because the fuels were not ready; they were, and the conditions were primed for it. But it was partly because weather cooperated, and then because the people of Routt County took extra steps to be extremely careful. That made it so we didn’t have human starts.”

STAGE 1 RESTRICTION:

The following acts are prohibited on all private and state owned lands outside of municipal boundaries. This does not affect federal lands within Routt County.

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using any fire to burn trash, debris, fence rows, irrigation ditches or vegetation; any campfire, warming fire, or charcoal grill, except in designated campgrounds, picnic areas or developed recreational sites.
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreational site, or while stopped in an area of at least (3) feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.
3. Operating a chainsaw without a USDA or SAE approved spark arresting device (muffler) properly installed and in effective working order, and a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher of not less than eight (8) ounce capacity by weight, and one (1) round pointed shovel with an overall length of at least 36 inches. The extinguisher will be with the chainsaw operator. The shovel may be kept with the fueling supplies but readily available for quick use.
4. Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame; except within an area that is barren or cleared of all flammable material at least 10 feet on all sides from the equipment.
5. Using explosives requiring fuses or blasting caps.

Exemptions from Stage 1 Restriction:

1. Persons 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 Routt County Emergency Operations Director after consultation with the Routt County Sheriff if subject 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.
3. Any fires contained within stoves, fireplaces within buildings, charcoal grill fires, recreational fires at private residences with valid permit from district chief, and permanent fire pits or fire grates in developed picnic grounds and campgrounds.
4. Burning of irrigation ditches located within and completely surrounded by irrigated farm lands where such burning is necessary for crop survival with proper permit from: (a) fire protection district chief if subject land is within a fire protection district; (b) or Routt County Emergency Operations Director after consultation with the Routt County Sheriff if subject land is not within a fire protection district.

5. Hot air balloon activities and the use of UL approved liquid-fueled or gas fueled "Camp Fire in a Can."
6. Campfires or bonfires required in religious ceremonies where a specific written permit has been granted in advance by: (a) the fire protection district chief if subject land is within a fire protection district; or (b) the Routt County Emergency Operations Director after consultation with the Routt County Sheriff if subject land is not within a fire protection district.

Fine Schedule and Penalty Assessment Procedure. Any person who violates this order commits a class 2 petty offense and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than six hundred dollars (\$600) for each separate offense. However, the following fine schedule shall apply:

First Offense	Not more than \$100
Second Offense	Not more than \$200
Third or Subsequent Offense	The maximum fine permitted by law – \$1,000 as of March 31, 2013

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.

<p>North Routt Fire Protection District Mike Swinsick – (970) 879-6064</p>

<p>West Routt Fire Protection District Trevor Guire – (970) 276-3511</p>

<p>Oak Creek Fire Protection District Chuck Wisecup – (970) 736-8104</p>

<p>Yampa Fire Protection District Machia 'Ky' Cox – (970) 846-2169</p>

<p>Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue Chuck Cerasoli – (970) 879-7170</p>

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