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Sheriff Lou Vallario
Garfield County, Colorado

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 25, 2020

Time: 2:45 PM

Title: **STAGE I FIRE RESTRICTIONS BEGIN JUNE 26, 2020**

IMPORTANT: Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

STAGE I FIRE RESTRICTIONS BEGIN JUNE 26, 2020

Garfield County, CO, The Garfield County Sheriff, and the seven Fire Districts in Garfield County are implementing Stage 1 Fire Restrictions effective at 12:01 a.m. Friday, June 26, 2020. This applies to all of unincorporated Garfield County.

This decision was not made without thoughtful consideration. We look at the data, the potential for significant wildfires and balance it with the impacts to our community. Our concern, with the level of fire danger we are seeing; one spark could quickly spread into a dangerous wildfire threatening lives, property and natural resources.

Fire restrictions are implemented based on specific criteria to include moisture content of vegetation, weather outlooks, human risk factors and firefighting resource availability. It's been hot, dry, and unseasonably windy. So far this year, we've had 15 Red Flag Warnings which is more than what we typically see over an entire year. The National Weather Service is forecasting above average temperatures and dry conditions with no relief from rain anytime soon.

With increasingly dry vegetation, severe drought conditions, and Fourth of July celebrations approaching, the danger for human caused wildfires increases even more.

WHAT STAGE I FIRE RESTRICTIONS MEAN IN GARFIELD COUNTY

- Fireworks are not allowed under Stage I Fire Restrictions. Professional fireworks shows may be allowed through the permitting process.
- All burn permits are postponed/Canceled until further notice.
- Campfires are only allowed within designated fire grates in **Developed Areas** (i.e. a permanent in-ground containment structure or store bought fire pit) A temporary fire pan and rock campfire rings will not be acceptable.
- No fires of any type including charcoal in **Undeveloped Areas**.
- No smoking except within a designated area, enclosed vehicle or building, a developed area or in an area free of combustibles.
- No use of fireworks or explosive materials, including “exploding” targets or bullets and tracer rounds.
- Exercise common sense and industry safety practice when welding or operation of an acetylene or other similar torch with open flame always cleared safe area of vegetation and combustibles.

Penalties

Causing a fire during fire restrictions can be a class 6 felony and can be punishable by fines. Other possible charges include Fourth Degree Arson (M2) and Intentionally Setting a Wildfire (F3). You may also be held financially responsible for damage caused.

Federal Lands

The use of fireworks, flares, or other incendiary devices, including exploding targets, are always prohibited on Federal lands.

By Definition:

A "**Developed Area**" is an area, whether within city limits or rural, that is groomed, manicured and or watered, where grasses, brush and trees are regularly attended to by land owner. This includes residential and business areas, improved recreational areas, parks and other common areas.

An "**Undeveloped Area**" are lands that are not groomed, manicured, or watered, where grasses, brush and trees have been allowed to grow in a natural environment. This includes green belts that are not landscaped or manicured, open space lands, non-manicured park lands, and other areas where the fire hazard presented by the vegetation is determined by the authority having jurisdiction or designee to be an undue wildland fire hazard.

Additional information will be released as it becomes available.

The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.

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