

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Lee Ann Loupe, Public Information Officer
Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit (MIFMU)

Phone: 970.874.6717 (o)
970.596.0246 (c)

Email: lloupe@fs.fed.us

Website: http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/



FEDERAL LANDS RETURN TO STAGE I FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Montrose, CO – Recent precipitation has left many people wondering if “Fire Restrictions” are still in effect on federal lands and within local counties. While the area has received rain, it is spotty in places. Federal lands are returning to Stage I Fire Restrictions in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG), as well as the Uncompahgre Field Office and the Gunnison Field Office of the BLM. Stage I Fire Restrictions may also be in effect for several local counties, pending discussions among County Boards of Commissioners this week for San Miguel, Delta, Ouray, Montrose and Gunnison Counties.

While the recent rains have provided some relief, fire managers are monitoring and evaluating whether the rains will have a lasting impact on long-term fire conditions. Rainfall amounts have been variable across the area and were accompanied by lightning which has produced numerous small fires. Long-term weather forecasts call for continued hot, dry conditions with high temperatures returning. The area has experienced severe drought conditions and significant precipitation will be needed to recover from these conditions.

According to Acting Forest Supervisor Sherry Hazelhurst, “We appreciate the public’s cooperation and support in respecting fire restrictions. Fire managers will continue to monitor weather and vegetation conditions across the area, discussing them with the Counties and other partners to coordinate needed restrictions.” She went on to explain, “Should conditions warrant a change, we will provide media announcements and update information on the MIFMU, GMUG and BLM websites to ensure that people working in or recreating in the area are kept aware of current fire restrictions.”

Stage one fire restrictions on BLM and USFS lands prohibit: “building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire except a fire within a permanent constructed fire grate in a developed (fee) campground; Smoking except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials; and operating or using any internal combustion engine without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order is also prohibited.” Campers are permitted to use, “petroleum-fueled stoves, lanterns or heating devices that meet the fire underwriters’ specifications for safety.” The use of fireworks, flares or other incendiary devices is always prohibited on federal lands.

For information on wildfires and restrictions in the area, call the MIFMU Fire Information line (970.240.1070), visit the MIFMU website (http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/), or follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MIFMU>).

The Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit covers the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest (USFS), the Gunnison Field Office (BLM), the Uncompahgre Field Office (BLM), Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (NPS), Curecanti National Recreation Area (NPS), and public lands in the counties of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel.

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