



**Justin Perry, Sheriff**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Board of County Commissioners Enacts Limited Fire Ban and Authorizes Sheriff to Impose Fire Restrictions

Ouray County, Colo. – At their regular meeting on May 24, 2022, the Board of County Commissioners updated and finalized Resolution 2022-022, which implements Ordinance 02-01 authorizing the Ouray County Sheriff to impose fire restrictions and limited fire bans within the unincorporated areas of Ouray County.

Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watch alerts have been a prevalent and regular message seen throughout southwest Colorado this spring, and with worsening severe and extreme drought conditions in combination with high winds, and above-average temperatures this spring, the likelihood of wildfires continues to be high.

A “Red Flag Warning” is defined as a forecast warning issued by the National Weather Service to inform area firefighting and land use management agencies that conditions are ideal for wildland fire ignition and propagation. Likewise, a “Fire Weather Watch” is issued when there is a high potential for development of conditions for a Red Flag Warning in the next 12-72 hours.

For the remainder of calendar year 2022, the Sheriff is authorized to impose immediate fire restrictions based on any Red Flag Warning and/or Fire Weather Watch. For those days on which a fire ban has been imposed by the Sheriff, the initiation of open fires, open burning, and use of fireworks excluding public fireworks displays, shall be prohibited. The Sheriff also has the authority to implement and lift other fire restrictions within the unincorporated areas of Ouray County as he deems necessary to protect Ouray County from wildfire danger.

Open fires shall mean: any open burning including camp and cooking fires; except smoking within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while in an area at least ten feet (10’) in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material; or welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame. Open fires also do not include any fires in camp stoves or grills fired by bottled gas or pressurized liquid, fires in permanent fireplaces, and fires in commercially operated grills. Open fires and fireworks subject to the restrictions are more fully defined in Ordinance 02-01.

Ouray County encourages all residents and visitors to enroll to receive emergency notifications, prepare a plan for action in the event of a wildfire and evacuations, and prepare an emergency kit. Please visit our website to learn more and to enroll: [www.ouraycountyco.gov](http://www.ouraycountyco.gov).

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