



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stage 1 fire restrictions starting Friday May 7th, 2021

Holbrook, AZ – On Monday May 3rd, the voting members of the White Mountain Fire Coordinating Group met to discuss the current conditions of the forests throughout the region. At that meeting a majority of the members voted to recommend the enactment of fire restrictions throughout Apache and Navajo County. Stage 1 Fire Restrictions will go into effect throughout unincorporated areas of both Apache and Navajo County on Friday May 7th, 2021.

The group considers a multitude of criteria each week during the meeting. These criteria include forest conditions and fire behavior, weather forecast information, an increase in human and/or lightning ignited fires, an increase of events that attract visitors or local citizens to the forests such as hunts, and availability of firefighting resources in the region/state. The partners that provide reports are from local, state, federal and tribal entities that are experts in their fields.

Under Stage 1 Fire Restrictions The following acts are prohibited until further notice:

- Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire or campfire (unless noted in the exemptions below).
- Smoking outside of 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.
- Use of **any** and all fireworks.
- Use of explosive targets.
- Use of tracer round ammunition.

Exemptions:

***An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity.**

- Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- Fires used only for the cooking of food or for providing warmth for human beings or recreational purposes (campfires and charcoal fires) in an area that is designated for that purpose and is barren or cleared of all debris.
- Persons using a device solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the device.
- Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.



- All land within a city boundary is exempted unless otherwise stated by city ordinance.
- Other exemptions unique to each agency/tribe.

“All of the fires we have seen so far have been human caused this year, except one. There have been a variety of causes including abandoned campfires, improper disposal of ash materials and dragging chains or vehicle parts touching dry vegetation on roadsides. All of these fires could have been easily prevented if we all take the time and make sure to do everything in our power to prevent fires!” said Catrina Jenkins, Navajo County Emergency Manager

As a reminder: all fires should be completely and thoroughly extinguished before leaving campsites for any reason. Fires can quickly spread outside of barriers and quickly become out of control. Drown, Stir and Feel are the 3 steps to ensuring your fire does not cause a wildfire in our community!

“I appreciate the partnerships between the local communities and the USFS in the making sound, collective decision on implementing the Stage One fire restrictions. It is unfortunate we are in the position to have to implement the restrictions, but it is necessary to ensure the safety of our forest and the safety of our citizens,” said Sheriff David Clouse.

Additional agencies entering into Stage 1 Fire restrictions include the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (in Navajo and Apache Counties), and USFS Apache-Sitgreaves Forest. There have been several campgrounds designated for use with specific rules for fires within the forest service area so please make sure to visit their website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/asnf/alerts-notice>.

As a reminder, Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are in effect year-round for the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

“One less spark means one less wildfire!”

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