



## TAOS COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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### PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT

Friday, July 22, 2011 – The Taos County Office of Emergency Management, upon consultation with the US Forest Service Carson National Forest, has reduced its current fire restrictions for all properties within the jurisdiction of the County to Stage 2.

Contributing to this decision are the recent sporadic rain showers and increase in atmospheric humidity, lowering the combustibility of materials in some areas. The low amounts of precipitation that have arrived, as compared to historical levels associated with the monsoon season for our region, continue to be a concern with regard to how long and intense the fire season may last this year.

The County is therefore urging residents to take advantage of this downgrading in fire restrictions to clear brush, grasses, branches, leaves, pine needles and other debris from around their homes, garages, and other structures to a radius of at least 30 feet, and to a distance of 100 feet in steep slope or densely wooded areas.

**On private lands in Taos County under the jurisdiction of the County Government, the following prohibitions continue to apply:**

1. No new burn permits will be issued and all permits issued are revoked.
3. There shall be no open burning of any kind, including campfires, outdoor chimineas, bon fires, the burning of grass, weeds, brush, or other ground cover, piles of slash, trimmings, or other natural vegetative material, burning of construction debris or scrap wood, or burning of undercover, regardless of purpose.
4. Smoking is prohibited, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, on a paved street or parking lot, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material and the cigarette shall be extinguished in a fireproof receptacle or on a hard surface.
5. Barbeque grills and outside cooking by open flame other than with an electric or pressurized gas grill is prohibited.
6. The sale of all fireworks and use of most fireworks, including aerial fireworks, in Taos County is prohibited and those possessing or using fireworks may be fined up to \$300 per violation.
7. It is prohibited to use an ATV, dirt bike, motorcycle, motor vehicle or other off-road or on-road vehicle off of established paved or graveled roads.

8. The use of chain saws, welding torches or any device with a flame or combustion engine shall be limited to paved, indoor or cleared areas.

9. The use of indoor fireplaces is restricted, except for essential heating and cooking and only with spark arresting screening on exhausts and chimneys.

10. The commercial or private use of explosives for any purpose, whether previously licensed or permitted, is prohibited.

11. The discharge of guns, for hunting, target shooting and other recreational uses is prohibited, except by authorized law enforcement personnel.

**Activities that are now authorized on private lands within the County include:**

1. The use of lawnmowers, weed eaters and landscaping equipment on landscaped private yards and business properties.

2. Pressurized gas or electric grills, where kept at least 10 feet from structures, weeds, grass and combustibles.

The County reminds residents and visitors that you could be held personally liable for the costs of controlling and putting out a fire you cause, as well as any and all damage to life and property that may result from it.

**While the prescribed fire restrictions continue to be in effect throughout the County, the Rio Grande Gorge, portions of the Carson National Forest, and other recreation areas are now open for hiking, camping, kayaking and all the other outdoor activities that Taos County is well known for.**

For information on which recreational sites are open and the current status of any restrictions, residents, campers and visitors can check the USFS website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson>, the New Mexico Fire Information site at <http://www.nmfireinfo.com>, or the Taos County webpage at <http://www.taoscounty.org>.

Enjoy the Fiestas, and please be careful with our County's forests and fields so that we can celebrate for generations to come the many natural wonders of our communities.

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*Members of the news media needing further information may contact the acting public information officer for this release, Rick Bellis, Deputy County Manager, at 575-737-6304 (office) or 575-776-7564 (cell).*