



Photo courtesy Micah Benson



COMMISSIONERS Corner

News & Updates from Grand County's Board of County Commissioners

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STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTION ENACTED

At the recommendation of **Sheriff Schroetlin**, the BOCC unanimously voted to enact Stage 1 Fire Restrictions effective at noon on Wednesday, June 16. How fire restrictions are put in place, and what is included in each stage, can be confusing. As an overview of the process:

The Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit in Craig coordinates discussion with all agencies in the zone on fire restrictions, and has a fire restriction matrix that is part of a wildland fire prevention plan. The matrix uses science, weather, and other criteria such as live and “dead” fuel moisture levels. How many criteria boxes can be marked “yes” determines the fire restriction stage to consider, and that the Sheriff – in coordination with multiple fire and federal agencies – recommends to the BOCC.

Despite the dry, windy conditions Grand County is experiencing, we currently also have a lot of “green” fuels that would serve to dampen the spread of a wildland fire. That is one of the reasons we are now in Stage 1, but could approach Stage 2 as those “green” fuels become dryer without precipitation.

What IS allowed during Stage 1 Fire Restrictions:

- Open fires in **established** 3'x3' fire pits with metal rings on private property and **developed** camp and picnic sites
- Charcoal grills at private residences and **developed** camp and picnic sites
- Propane and liquid fueled stoves and grills
- Fires on private property and **developed** sites in portable pits and chimineas
- Permitted, professional fireworks displays

What is NOT ALLOWED during Stage 1 Fire Restrictions:

- Open fires at **dispersed** campsites and burn barrels
- Smoking, except in an enclosed vehicles, buildings or developed camp or picnic sites
- Welding or operating torches with an open flame except in an area of at least ten feet in diameter free of combustibles
- Operating a chainsaw without a USDA or SAE approved spark arresting device
- Incendiary devices such as explosives, exploding targets, tracer ammunition

In October of 2020, the East Troublesome Fire destroyed nearly 400 Grand County homes and structures in a matter of days.

It will take us *years* to recover.

As you enjoy our Grand outdoors, please be aware of and comply with our current Fire Restrictions. Help us protect our forests, our homes, and our communities.



Meeting minutes, support materials and full audio are available at:
co.grand.co.us/AgendaCenter
co.grand.co.us/Archive

SEVERE DROUGHT DECLARED

Water Quality Specialist **Katherine Morris** and Water Quality Technical Assistant **Kayli Foulk** presented the Grand County Drought Preparedness Plan that was developed via a grant from the Sonoran Institute awarded to the Drought Education and Outreach Committee. The Committee applied for a second grant, and was awarded \$10,000 that will be used to develop an advertising campaign to educate and raise community awareness about planning for drought and water conservation.

On June 10, the Drought Preparedness Committee declared Grand County in Stage 2 Severe Drought, and recommended the following voluntary actions be taken by community members:

- Outdoor watering no more than one day per week, between 6 p.m. and 10 a.m.
- Encourage sports fields and parks to reduce water use by 20 percent
- Discourage new landscape establishment between June and August
- Permit municipal water providers to use drought pricing

Following the presentation, Commissioners discussed creating a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about conserving water, and had questions for Morris and Foulk regarding where conservation efforts could be concentrated to have the biggest effect.

So how dry is it?

- 2020 was Colorado's 2nd driest and 7th warmest
- 2021 below average snowpack
- Soil moisture levels were exceptionally dry since October 2020, so soil took a lot of the runoff this year
- What we're seeing here is the combination of below normal snowpack and extremely dry soils

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Several County employees were recognized by their supervisors and other leadership for going above and beyond their calls of duty in the last several months:



Grand County Public Health Director Abbie Baker nominated **Tekoa Shalom, Martha (Marty) Pack, Magli Escobedo, Katlin Miller** and **Michelle Mitchell** for their commitment to the health and well being of the Grand community during the coronavirus pandemic.

Community Development staffer **Elaine Henrekin** was nominated by the Veteran Services Office, Finance Department and Community Development. Miss. Henrekin was not present for a photo, but her nomination included recognition of her work in several County departments, and volunteerism - including most recently answering phones at the Joint Information Center during the East Troublesome Fire.



GIS Coordinator **Greg Thorne** was recognized by the Sheriff's Office, Veteran Services Office, Community Development, and the County Manager for his significant contributions to many County offices, in particular creating maps during the East Troublesome Fire that helped the Sheriff's Office quickly and effectively evacuate thousands of residents.

Nominees were presented with a Challenge Coin of Excellence.

On behalf of our entire community - THANK YOU ALL for the contributions you have, and continue to make, in both your "official" and unofficial capacities!

FIRE RECOVERY UPDATE

Emergency Manager **Joel Cochran** and Recovery Manager **Alyssa Ingles** provided the BOCC with an in-depth update of the work Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has performed to date. The report included that over 13,000 hazard trees have been identified that are in public rights of way, or on private property that could potentially fall and obstruct rights of way.

The cost of having a FEMA-directed program remove the trees is estimated at \$1,000 per tree. The Office of Emergency Management has been in contact with Team Rubicon, which - like Southern Baptist - is a credentialed, volunteer-based organization specializing in tree removal. The OEM has not yet received cost estimates from Team Rubicon, but will update Commissioners when more information is received.

Cochran and Ingles asked the BOCC for direction regarding asking the State for a six-month extension to perform Emergency Work projects, and whether to pursue a FEMA debris removal program, or continue with the current community based programs.



COUNTY RD 522 TASK 1: CULTURAL SURVEY UPDATE

In April, Metcalf Archaeological Consultants was retained to conduct a cultural resource investigation and obtain archival research into the location, specifically regarding the extent of a World War II POW camp located in the area of the proposed Fraser Valley Parkway.

Their report stated that a satellite work camp associated with the Greeley POW Camp 202 was open from 1945 to 1946, and housed 200 prisoners who worked in the lumber industry. Aerial imagery supported that the camp was located at the west end of Eisenhower Drive on the west side of the Town of Fraser.

The current proposed alignment of the southern section of County Rd 522 crosses the camp; construction of the FVP would impact about 15 percent of the area of the camp. Metcalf's recommendations included considering placing the camp on the National Register.

To read Metcalf's report in its entirety:

- At www.co.grand.co.us, click on "Agendas & Minutes"
- Click the Jun 15, 2021 agenda link under County Commissioners
- When the PDF of the Agenda opens, click the blue "Click Here to Access Agenda Item Support Documents" link, and navigate to the June 15 folder



Historic photo, winter season, view to the west-southwest from a point just north of the cattleguard, Feature 32 (out of frame to left). Feature 7, presumed to be a headquarters building, and the flagpole, Feature 28, are to the left; four of the five barracks/mess hall buildings are seen behind the Camp's perimeter fence. Feature 1, a barracks/mess hall building seen in 1947 aerial imagery, is not present here; its location would be just beyond Feature 2. Photo provided by and used with the permission of the Grand County Historical Association, image no. 88-53-1; annotations by the senior author.

Figure 8. Historic photo of the Fraser POW Camp, GCHA image 88-53-1, with annotations

Now Hiring!

Grand County has MULTIPLE positions open in nearly every office:

- Housing Authority
- Public Health
- Road & Bridge
- Human Services
- Clerk & Recorder
- Sheriff's Office

Most are benefited, full-time positions. Learn more at www.co.grand.co.us/jobs

MANAGER'S UPDATE

County Manager **Ed Moyer**'s update included:

- The Town of Hot Sulphur Springs will be making a request for an easement or land acquisition related to a trailhead for access to their new Himebaugh land purchase off of GCR 55(Cottonwood Pass) just east of the town; Grand County owns the property where the town would like to locate the trailhead and parking.
- Namaste has announced it is opening an office in Grand County to provide Home Health and HOSPICE services possibly beginning in early July. Look for more info and a press release from them.
- Today the Governor is expected to sign Senate Bill 240 which allocates \$30 million toward the EWP match for all counties.
- Regarding the fencing outside of building envelopes matter in Aspen Pines Estates (in Sun Valley), Colorado Parks & Wildlife is meeting with the HOA and property owners of adjacent properties.
- Manager Moyer will be presenting a Windy Gap Reservoir and Colorado River Connectivity Channel update to the Grand County Open Lands, River, and Trails (OLRT) Committee and the BOCC on Wednesday - 3PM at Windy Gap.

Manager Moyer gave an in depth report regarding water flows and reservoir levels:

At the request of the Learning By Doing Partners to address water temperatures and flows in the Colorado River near Kremmling and downstream, Denver Water is bypassing 300-450 cfs from the Moffat Collection System in the Fraser Basin. Although Northern Water is still pumping, they are bypassing flows above the minimum at Windy Gap Reservoir and making cycled releasing between 200 cfs and over 300 cfs in the early a.m. to allow for transit time to Kremmling and address irrigator rights.

Denver Water will also begin ramping cycled releases from Williams Fork Reservoir between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., up to 120 cfs and back to 17 cfs overnight. The Colorado River District is also making additional releases from Wolford Reservoir to address the water temperature.

Shoshone Outage Protocol (SHOP) is anticipated to begin next week due to a unit being down at the Shoshone Power Plant when flows at Dotsero are forecasted to hit the 1,250 cfs call.

HUMAN SERVICES UPDATE

Grand & Jackson County Human Services Director **Deb Ruttenberg** gave a bi-annual update, which included statistics about the number of community members enrolled in the County's social programs. Highlights included:

- Child care facilities are operating on waitlists because they can't hire the staff needed, in some cases due to the inability to find housing in Grand County
- An on-going juvenile case highlighted the lack of facilities and services available for youth experiencing a mental health crisis following a hospital stay
- The number of new applications for food and medical assistance have decreased over 2020

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS...

- Weekly vouchers and wire payments were approved with no discussion.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Grand County and the State Department of Human Services for Grand County Human Services to administer the Colorado Works and Colorado Child Care Assistance programs was approved with no discussion.
- Community Development held a public hearing for the Amended Final Plat, Lot 26A, the Shores of Shadow Mountain & Vacation of Utility Easement. Staff recommended approving the Plat with conditions listed by the Planning Commission. Commissioners approved the Plat with those conditions.
- Granby Rotary Club's request to sell concessions at the Flying Heels Arena September 5 was approved with no discussion.