



Cerro Pelado Fire Update Monday, April 25, 2022

Hours: 8 am-8 pm

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A public meeting about the Cerro Pelado Fire will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, April 26th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Jemez Mountain Baptist Church, 6 Riverview Court, Jemez Springs, New Mexico. Members of the Southern Area Red Team, and agency representatives will discuss and answer questions regarding plans and current progress made on the fire.

The Cerro Pelado Fire, 7 miles east of Jemez Springs, New Mexico, started on Friday, April 22 during an epic wind event. The cause of the fire is under investigation. It is burning in ponderosa pine and mixed conifer trees and brush. The fire is close to the fire footprint from the 2011 Las Conchas Fire, the 2013 Thompson Ridge Fire and the 2017 Cajete Fire. The current fire footprint includes forest units that have previously been treated to reduce fire hazard. The Southern Area Red Team, a Type 1 Incident Management Team has command of the fire.

Acreage: 4,688 **Containment:** 0 percent

Personnel and Equipment: 88 total personnel; 7 engines, 1 Type 2 Initial Attack Crew, 4 helicopters, and 1 water tender. More people and equipment have been ordered.

Yesterday: Firefighters had good success working on the fire yesterday. The structure protection group continued their assessment of structures across the fire. On the northern perimeter, hand line construction continued. There was a small strategic firing operation north of 270. Helicopters continued reconnaissance and bucket drops on the fire. The Sierra de Los Pinos and Cochiti Mesa communities of about 100 residences remained evacuated, and firefighters continued to protect structures. Firefighters worked with the Jemez Electrical Cooperative to identify downed power lines so power could be safely restored to residences in Cox Ranch, Jemez Falls, Sierra de Los Pinos, and the Valles Calderas National Preserve.

Today: Firefighters will take advantage of the good weather today to make progress on the fire. They will continue to protect structures near the fire, including the Sierra de Los Pinos and Cochiti Mesa communities. Helicopters will also fly reconnaissance missions over the fire assessing fire behavior and dropping water. Firefighters will continue to construct hand line to protect the Sierra de Los Pinos community. They will directly engage close to the fire in some areas to minimize impacts to the community. On the southwest side of the fire, firefighters will strategically fire a small area to keep the fire north of Forest Road (FR) 270. They will consult with resource advisors before conducting any ground-disturbing activities in order to protect sites of cultural importance. Firefighters will also patrol and monitor the fire at night.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Today the weather will give firefighters a reprieve from critical fire behavior. There is a 20 percent chance of rain or snow in the morning. It will be cloudy with southeast to southwest winds. Temperatures will be in the lower 50s. The relative humidity will be in the lower 20 percentiles.

Southeast winds on Monday morning will push the fire toward New Mexico Highway 4. Higher relative humidity will help to ease fire behavior concerns. The Cajete Fire footprint is located in the northeast quadrant and will slow fire spread. The northwest quadrant will experience the most pressure pushing the fire toward NM 4 until winds turn to a southwesterly direction. Moderate fire behavior is expected.

Evacuations, Shelter Areas: The Sandoval County Fire Department and Emergency Management will provide updated information on evacuations, as needed. The Sierra de Los Pinos and Cochiti Mesa communities remain evacuated. Evacuees may seek shelter at the Jemez Mountain Baptist Church, 6 Riverview Court, Jemez Springs, New Mexico, 575-829-4475. Those who evacuated livestock may bring them to the Expo/New Mexico Center at 300 San Pedro Drive NW, Albuquerque or the Sandoval County Sheriff's Posse Arena at 1043 Rodeo Lane, Bernalillo, New Mexico (call Yvette Arnold 505-263-6388).

Air quality: Information on air quality is at New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking, <https://nmtracking.org/fire>. An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Closures: New Mexico State Police have closed NM Highway 4 from the junction with NM 126 east to nearly the NM-501 intersection at the Los Alamos "back gate." Please stay clear of the Jemez Springs area to keep yourself and firefighters safe.

Fire Restrictions: The Santa Fe National Forest is preparing a closure order to restrict public access to the area around the fire. Stage II Fire Restrictions are in effect for the Santa Fe National Forest, which prohibits building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove including charcoal and briquettes. Smoking is also prohibited except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that is cleared of flammable material. For other activities prohibited under Stage II Fire Restrictions, see <https://www.fs.usda.gov/santafe/>.

Also, due to ongoing fire threats, Sandoval County will not issue burn permits.

Temporary Flight Restriction: There is a flight restriction on the area over the fire (10 nautical miles southwest of Los Alamos, NOTAM 2/2366). <https://www.tfr.faa.gov>. Drones over the fire are also prohibited.