

Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – MARK BERNAL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Phone Line: 505-357-0683; Hours: 8 am – 8 pm

Media Phone Line: 505-445-8278

Email: 2022.cookspeak@firenet.gov

Containment increases Winds ease Saturday, critical fire weather returns Sunday

Update 4/30/2022

Acres: 56,276 acres

Location: North of Ocate NM, approximately 46 miles north of Las Vegas, NM

Containment: 56%

Start Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022

Cause: Human, under investigation

Fuels: ponderosa pine, oak brush and grass

Current Evacuations for Mora and Colfax Counties:

Colfax County – As of 6:00 p.m., Friday, April 29, 2022, the evacuation status on the Cooks Peak Fire, for Colfax County has changed. **GO:** Philmont Scout Ranch Back Country West of State Road 21. **SET:** Sweetwater, Rayado, and Sunnyside. **READY:** Miami and Philmont Scout Ranch Headquarters. **Mora County** – **GO:** Los LeFebres and Los Huerros, residents east of County Road 009 and north of NM Highway 120. **Set:** Los Cocas.

The Mora and Colfax County Sheriff's Offices are using the [Ready! Set! Go!](#) program for evacuation status that provides information on evacuation and evacuation preparation.

An Evacuation center is set up at Old Memorial Middle School, 947 Old National Rd, Las Vegas. The Colfax County Fairgrounds have been closed.

Livestock: The Taos Rodeo Grounds is available to residents from Mora if they need a place for horses. Contact: Livestock Inspector Ruben Baca 505-770-1490.

Public Meeting: A community meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, at 6:00 p.m. at the Cimarron High School located at 165 N Collison Ave, Cimarron, NM 87714. The meeting will also be live streamed to the Cooks Peak Fire Information Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/CooksPeakFireInfo/>.

Fire Update: Yesterday, the Cooks Peak Fire experienced Red Flag weather conditions, with 30-40 mph sustained winds and 50-60 mph gusts. Ground resources, including hand crews and heavy equipment, were able to continue making progress across the fire area. Due to extreme winds, aircraft was grounded.

Firefighters patrolled containment lines and worked to make sure the Cooks Peak Fire didn't move any closer to structures, property and natural resources. Suppression repair work continued in the Gallinas Mesa and Halls Peak area and monitored interior flames and smoke. Crews continued to construct fireline along the western edge and mop up where needed. Hand crews responded to reports of interior smoke near Rayado, on the northeast side of the fire, and monitored the area overnight.

Today, mop up and suppression repair work, including returning dozer lines to a more natural state, building water bars where needed and mending fences, will continue in areas where firelines has been secured and the fire is no longer a threat. Firing Operations may occur on the western flank of the Cooks Peak Fire to secure additional fireline. Aerial ignitions are also planned to remove the unburned pocket of fuel in Agueje Canyon, to

strengthen firelines south of Sweetwater, if weather conditions cooperate. Aviation resources will also assist with water drops to help suppress fire in the heavily timbered, rugged terrain and challenging topography of the north end of the fire near Urraca Mesa.

Weather: On Saturday, winds will be lighter, and temperatures climb by a few degrees. Relative humidity will remain unseasonably dry. On Sunday, another critical fire weather day is possible with strong gusty winds and low relative humidity.

Highway Closures: New Mexico Highway 120 remains closed from mile marker 26 to 3 miles west of Ocate due to fire activity and equipment entering the area to support firefighting efforts. Motorists are advised to delay travel or to seek alternate routes. State Road 21 from Polo Ranch to Cimarron is open to local traffic only, and remains closed to through traffic. Visit <https://nmroads.com/mapIndex.html> for additional information.

Smoke: Good air quality is expected this morning, with air quality dropping to moderate this afternoon due to the effects of Southwest winds, and large fires in northern New Mexico. Periods of unhealthy for sensitive groups is possible in Miami this afternoon into early evening. Smoke may affect I-25 between Wagon Mound to Springer this afternoon into early tonight. Residents are encouraged to stay informed of potential changes by visiting the interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>, which allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Aviation Restrictions: There is a Temporary Flight Restriction over the Cooks Peak Fire. Firefighting aircraft fly at very low altitudes, typically just a couple hundred feet about the ground. This creates the potential for a mid-air collision. Any aircraft entering the fire area, including drones, could lead all firefighting aircraft to be grounded until they have left the fire area. Stay out of the airspace over the Cooks Peak Fire.

Fire Restrictions: Fire restrictions are being implemented to help reduce the chance of a wildfire. The New Mexico State Forester has implemented statewide fire restrictions. Smoking, fireworks, campfires open burning and open fires are prohibited. For more information see <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/forestry-news/>. The Bureau of Land Management, Farmington District has also implemented fire restrictions. Fireworks, campfires, smoking and operating machinery, including off road OHV use are restricted. Visit <https://www.blm.gov/programs/public-safety-and-fire/fire-and-aviation/regional-info/new-mexico/fire-restrictions> for details.

More Information:

Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8066/>

New Mexico Fire information: <https://nmfireinfo.com/>

Smoke Outlook: <https://outlooks.wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlook/b335b9f4>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CooksPeakFireInfo/>

Evacuations: [Mora County Sheriff's Office | Facebook](#)

Colfax County: http://www.co.colfax.nm.us/government/sheriff_s_department.php