



Cerro Pelado And Freelove Fire Update Saturday, April 30, 2022

Hours: 8 am-8 pm Phone: 505-312-4593 Email: 2022.CerroPelado@firenet.gov

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8075/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/2022.Cerropeladofire> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SantafeNF>

COMMUNITY MEETINGS: A public meeting about the Cerro Pelado fire will be held tonight, Saturday April 30, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm 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 about current progress and planned activities on the fire.

Another public meeting will be held tomorrow, Sunday May 1, from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Cochiti Lake Fire Department, 6515 Hoochaneetsa Blvd., Cochiti Lake, NM.

Cerro Pelado 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 east part of the fire is burning in the fire footprint from the 2011 Las Conchas Fire. The current fire footprint includes forest units that have previously been treated to reduce fire hazard. Three homes were lost in the fire.

Acreage: 15,650 acres **Containment:** 15 %

Personnel and Equipment: 352 total personnel; 22 engines, 1 Type 1 hand crew, 5 Type 2 hand crews, 1 Type 2 initial attack crew, 3 helicopters, 4 dozers, 1 ambulance, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 5 water tenders.

Yesterday: The fire was active yesterday under Red Flag weather conditions with winds gusting up to 40 mph. The fire spread east into Frazier Canyon and Bland Canyon, and south to Oasis Mesa. Bulldozers placed fireline and sprinklers around structures in the Cochiti Mesa community to provide structure protection. Firefighters continued to mop up from the northwest side of the fire, to the southwest corner, then east to Paliza Canyon. Chipping was completed on the west side of the fire to reduce burnable vegetation. North winds pushed on firelines near the Sierra de Los Pinos community and the lines held. An air quality alert was issued and included areas impacted by the Cerro Pelado Fire including Cochiti Lake and Cochiti Pueblo.

Today: Patrol and mop up will continue on the northwest side of the fire to the southwest corner and, then east. Firefighters will increase the depth of mopup to increase containment. Bulldozer lines that were previously installed on the road systems from Paliza Canyon toward Peralta Ridge will be held. Bulldozers will continue working along road systems around the fires perimeter to widen roads and create additional fireline to slow fire growth and create secondary containment. Firefighters will protect and prepare structures at Cochiti Mesa with water sprinklers and hoselays. Super scoopers may scoop water out of Cochiti Lake to help fight the fire. The Southern Area Red Team will be meeting with the Santa Fe National Forest Staff to develop a long-term plan for the fire.

Freelove Fire: The Freelove Fire is on the west side of the Valles Caldera National Preserve in Freelove Canyon within the old 2013 Thompson Ridge Fire footprint. The cause of the fire is unknown.

Yesterday: Firefighters continued to mop up around the fire perimeter and no smoke was observed.

Today: Firefighters will continue to mop up and patrol the fire.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Today will remain dry with light winds and temperatures in the mid 60s. Winds aligned with the San Juan drainage will increase fire activity moving east with some movement north where burnable vegetation is present. The fire will continue moving east and south toward Oaks Mesa with increased fire activity where winds and topography align. Large stumps and logs will continue to burn in areas off the Forest Road (FR 270) system. Pockets of unburned vegetation may burn actively with single and group torching possible. Spotting of up to half mile is possible.

Evacuations, Shelter Areas: The Sandoval County Fire Department and Emergency Management will provide updated information on evacuations, as needed. The communities of Cochiti Mesa and the Peralta Canyon remain under a “Go” evacuation status. Evacuations for Sierra de Los Pinos remain in “set” mode, meaning being ready to leave at a moment’s notice. If conditions change and the fire threatens the community again, these areas could return to “Go.”

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.

An air quality alert was issued by the National Weather Service that included areas impacted by the Cerro Pelado Fire. Smoke from several large wildfires burning over northern New Mexico were transported to the southeast through Friday evening with increased potential for surface smoke to drift southward along the Rio Grande Valley during the overnight into Saturday morning. The alert is in effect until noon today. Additional information can be found here: [WWA Summary for Air Quality Alert Issued by ABQ \(weather.gov\)](#).

Closures: NM Highway 4 is open to local traffic ONLY from mile marker 47, 14 miles east of Sierra de Los Pinos to mile marker 50, 14 miles west of White Rock. Northbound Highway 4 is closed at mile marker 26 (north of Jemez) due to the Cerro Pelado wildfire. ROAD IS ONLY OPEN TO LOCAL TRAFFIC for evacuations. Motorists should drive slowly along the highway with headlights on. **Fire equipment and firefighters will be traveling along Highway 4 and accessing the fire, especially at intersections with FR 10 and FR 280. If heavy traffic impedes firefighting efforts and endangers firefighter safety, Highway 4 could be closed again.**

The Santa Fe National Forest issued a closure order restricting public access to the area around the fire. Specifically, all Forest Service lands within an area roughly defined by NM Highway 4 on the west, Valles Caldera National Preserve on the north, Bandelier National Monument on the east, and Zia Pueblo and Santo Domingo Pueblo on the south are closed to the public. Order Number 10-506. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/santafe/>

Valles Caldera National Preserve remains closed until further notice.

Fire Restrictions: 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://tfr.faa.gov/save_pages/detail_2_6851.html. Drones over the fire are also prohibited.