



## Cerro Pelado And Freelove Fire Update Sunday, May 1, 2022

**Hours:** 8 am-8 pm **Phone:** 505-312-4593 **Email:** [2022.CerroPelado@firenet.gov](mailto: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 today from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Cochiti Lake Fire Department, 6515 Hoochaneetsa Blvd., Cochiti Lake, NM. Members of the Southern Area Red Team and agency representatives will discuss and answer questions about current progress and planned activities on the fire.

A public meeting will be held in Los Alamos on Monday May 2, from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm at the Los Alamos County Municipal Building, 1000 Central Ave, Los Alamos, 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:** 17,885 acres **Containment:** 10 % The decrease in containment is due to growth of the fire.

**Personnel and Equipment:** 441 total personnel; 23 engines, 1 Type 1 hand crew, 8 Type 2 hand crews, 2 Type 2 initial attack crews, 3 helicopters, 4 dozers, 2 ambulances, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 6 water tenders.

**Yesterday:** Firefighters continued mop up and patrol on the northwest side of the fire, to the southwest corner and east to Paliza Canyon. They increased mop up depth for containment. On the east side of the fire in Bland Canyon and the south near Oaks Mesa, the fire did not move much because it ran into rock outcrops. Tactical firing operations were completed in Cochiti Mesa to control a spot fire and protect homes. Firefighters also protected structures with sprinklers and hoselays.

**Today:** Increased fire activity is expected on the northeast corner of the fire due to windy conditions and alignment with topography in canyons. Firefighters will be added in this area for primary attack of the fire. Patrol and mop up will continue on the northwest side of the fire to the southwest corner and then east. Bulldozers will improve roads to tie handlines into Highway 4 on the northwest side of the fire by Cox Dip. Firefighters will do a firing operation with aerial ignition on the southwest side of the fire near Peralta Ridge to keep fire intensity low near old growth timber. Firefighters will install fireline on the north side of the fire from Forest Road (FR) 270 toward the southeast corner of the fire. Wind gusts may restrict aviation operations this afternoon

**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 little smoke was observed.

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

**Weather and Fire Behavior:** The National Weather Service has issued a red flag warning for gusty winds and low relative humidity from 11 am to 10 pm. Southwest winds will be strong in the afternoon with gusts up to 35 mph, which may restrict aviation operations. A cold front will move in this evening. From 9 pm to 3 am strong wind gusts will turn northwest. Fire is expected to move east and north with increased activity where wind and fuels align. Large stumps and logs will continue to burn. Pockets of unburned vegetation may burn actively with single and group torching 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.

Smoke production at times may cause limited visibility over the eastern part of the fire. The air quality alert that was issued by the National Weather Service, which included areas impacted by the Cerro Pelado Fire has been extended to Sunday. Smoke from several large wildfires burning over northern New Mexico will expand and increase eastward this afternoon before gradually moving to the north this evening. Smoke will continue to significantly impact areas across much of southern Colfax, Mora, Los Alamos, southern Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Miguel and Santa Fe counties. This includes the communities of Espanola, Kewa Pueblo, La Cueva, Las Vegas, Los Alamos, Ocate, Pueblo of Cochiti, Pueblo of San Felipe, Santa Fe, Sapello, Wagon Mound, Watrous and White Rock. 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. The 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 most updated road closure information can be found here: <https://www.nmroads.com/mapIndex.html>

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\\_6919.html](https://tfr.faa.gov/save_pages/detail_2_6919.html). Drones over the fire are also prohibited.