



Cerro Pelado Fire Update Tuesday, May 3, 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 virtual public meeting about the Cerro Pelado fire will be held today from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. You can join the meeting on Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/1mTocL75I>. Members of the Southern Area Red Team and agency representatives will discuss and answer questions about current progress and planned activities on the fire.

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: 22,314 acres **Containment:** 10 %

Personnel and Equipment: 566 total personnel; 32 engines, 2 Type 1 hotshot crews, 9 Type 2 hand crews, 3 Type 2 initial attack crews, 4 helicopters, 8 dozers, 2 ambulances, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 9 water tenders.

Yesterday: The fire moved to the northeast and is burning at the base of Rabbit Mountain near Highway 4, but stayed on the south side. On the north side of the fire, firefighters improved firelines along Highway 4 by Cox Ranch. Structure protection continued in this area. Sandoval County will assess structure damage on the ground. Firefighters worked along the perimeter of the fire on Highway 4 on the north, Forest Road (FR) 266 on the west, FR 270 on the south and FR 289 on the east to improve firelines. Close communication and coordination continued with the Los Alamos Wildland Fire Division, Los Alamos National Laboratory and Los Alamos Fire Department as well as the Jemez Pueblo and Cochiti Pueblo. The fire burned into tribal lands on the southeast corner of the fire where further growth was slowed by rock outcrops.

Today: On the north side of the fire, firefighters will improve firelines along Highway 4 near FR 289 moving west. They will use masticators and brushing equipment along Highway 4 in the road closure area. Aircraft will help cool hotspots on the northeast side of the fire. Firefighters continue to mop up and protect structures near the Sierra De Los Pinos community and on the northeast side of the fire in the Cochiti Mesa and Peralta Ride communities (including Cox Ranch). They will install hoselay along the Alamo trail to FR 289 on the northeast corner of the fire. On the east side of the fire, bulldozers will improve firelines along FR 289 and more firefighters will work in this area in anticipation of fire activity in canyons. Firefighters will do another firing operation with aerial ignition on the southwest side of the fire near Peralta Ridge to keep fire intensity low near old growth timber. They will continue working along the perimeter of the fire along FR 266 on the west along FR 270 on the south to improve firelines and continue mop up.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Temperatures will be in the mid 60s to low 70s. The National Weather Service issued a Red Flag warning from noon to 9 pm. Wind gusts will be up to 35 mph. Southwest winds will transition to the northwest after sunset. Another cold front will approach this evening. The high winds will cause active fire behavior, particularly where winds and topography align. Torching and spotting may occur during the heat of the day. The fire is expected to continue moving south. Fire activity will decrease when the fire reaches rock washes above Cochiti Pueblo, but will continue to move through mixed conifer in the canyon bottoms. Southwest and south winds will support fire spread to the east and north. If the fire crosses Highway 4, there will be high rates of spread in the Valles Caldera National Preserve due to heavy grasses. If the fire crosses the Caldera it will be in mixed conifer with dead stumps and logs. If the fire gets established in this area, expect extreme fire behavior and long range spotting.

Evacuations, Shelter Areas: The communities of Cochiti Mesa and the Peralta Canyon area remain under a “Go” evacuation status. Four additional residences remain evacuated in the Cox Ranch area between mile marker 36 and 40 along Highway 4. The Sandoval County Fire Department and Emergency Management will provide updated information on evacuations, as needed. 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.

Closures: Highway 4 is closed to all traffic from mile marker 34, east of Sierra De los Pinos to mile marker 50, 14 miles west of White Rock due to fire activity. Highway 4 is also closed to **non-local traffic** at mile marker 35 (2 miles east of Sierra De los Pinos). 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. The most updated road closure information can be found here: <https://www.nmroads.com/mapIndex.html>

The Santa Fe National Forest has issued another closure order for the Cerro Pelado Firefighter Camp. The camp is along FR 376. Closure Order No. 10-507. The purpose of the order is to protect public health and safety due to extreme fire danger. The Order will remain in effect until December 31, 2022, or until rescinded. Closure Order No. 10-507 is posted at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1017995.pdf

The Army Corps of Engineers Elk Run Campground by Cochiti Lake is closed. The Bandelier National Monument has been evacuated due to fire activity. Valles Caldera National Preserve remains closed until further notice.

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. Closure order 10-506 is posted at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/alerts-notice/?cid=stelprd3802009>

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. Drones over the fire are also prohibited.