

Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – MARK BERNAL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



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Containment Increases Red Flag Warnings Continue

Update 5/04/2022

Acres: 59,359 acres (based on Infrared Flight)

Containment: 89%

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

Start Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022

Cause: Human, under investigation

Fuels: ponderosa pine, oak brush and grass

Fire Update: Yesterday, the Cooks Peak Fire experienced another day of Red Flag conditions, though minimal fire activity was observed. The potential remains for interior pockets of fuel to put up smoke. Ground crews in the west/northwest area of the fire worked with aerial resources, as winds permitted, to hold the fire edge where an infrared flight identified heat sources. Firefighters also patrolled containment lines and conducted mop-up, where necessary. Firefighters in other areas of the fire, including the northern, eastern, and southern areas successfully increased containment, conducted mop-up activities, and monitored containment lines.

Today, the critical fire weather trend will continue with another Red Flag warning issued for the Cooks Peak Fire. Firefighters will focus suppression efforts on areas with unsecured fireline along the perimeter. Crews and engines will monitor and patrol containment lines, holding, reinforcing, and securing, as needed. Suppression repair crews will also continue their efforts.

Current Evacuations for Mora and Colfax Counties: Effective 5 p.m. on Monday, May 2, all “GO” evacuations ordered for the Cooks Peak Fire in Colfax County were reduced. The Cooks Peak Fire now has the following evacuation status’ in place:

Colfax County: SET: Philmont Scout Ranch Back Country West of State Road, Sweetwater, Rayado and Sunnyside; **READY:** Philmont Scout Ranch Headquarters.

Mora County residents previously in the Cooks Peak Fire evacuation footprint may now be under Calf Canyon/Hermit’s Peak evacuation status. Mora county residents should refer to the Mora County sheriff <https://www.facebook.com/moracountysheriffoffice> and Calf Canyon/Hermit’s Peak Fire Information <https://www.facebook.com/santafeNF> for the most current evacuation status.

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 are 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.

Weather: Critical fire weather and a Red Flag Warning will continue today, due to persistently dry fuels and wind. Winds will be lighter (10-15mph, gusts up to 25mph) and experience a shift, coming from the west/northwest. Potential for dry thunderstorms continues.

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: Impacts from smoke will be minimal due to favorable wind directions, and lack of activity on the Cooks Peak Fire. Smoke from fires in the region will be in the moderate to good range today, as winds veer to the west. 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 cannot fly if this restriction is violated by any aircraft including drones. This poses a danger to firefighters on the ground by leaving them without aerial support.

Fire Restrictions: 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: Cooks Peak: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8066/>

Inciweb: Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8069>

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

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

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

Evacuations: <https://www.facebook.com/moracountysheriffoffice/>

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