



## Cerro Pelado Fire Update Thursday, May 5, 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/> **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/SantafeNF>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/2022.Cerropeladofire>

**Team transition:** This will be the last operational day with the Southern Area Red Team Incident Management Team. The Great Basin Incident Management Team will shadow operations today and assume command of the Cerro Pelado Fire at 6:00 a.m. on Friday.

**Acreage:** 29,368 acres **Containment:** 13%

**Personnel and Equipment:** 751 total personnel; 34 engines, 4 Type 1 hand crews, 11 Type 2 hand crews, 5 Type 2 initial attack crews, 6 helicopters, 2 scooper planes, 10 dozers, 1 masticators, 2 ambulances, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 14 water tenders.

**Yesterday:** Firefighters were able to make progress due to favorable weather conditions. Firefighters worked along Highway 4 on the northwest side of the fire toward the northeast by Cox Ranch, thinning dense brush and trees, and preparing to chip removed vegetation. U.S. Department of Energy masticators continued to grind up burnable vegetation along the highway, which remained closed from mile marker 27 to mile marker 59. The fire remained south of the highway. An area near the northwest corner of the fire rekindled and was visible from the Sierra De Los Pinos community, but it was well within the perimeter of the fire and did not threaten structures. Crews continued mop up and patrol on the northwest side of the fire, to the southwest corner and east to Paliza Canyon. Hand crews continued strategic firing operations on the southwest side of the fire to keep fire intensity low near old growth timber. Large and Very Large Air Tankers applied retardant along the east side of the fire along the Alamo Trail to assist with keeping the fire in check and in the bottom of the canyon. Helicopter bucket drops kept a slopover in place.

The structural group continued evaluating and strengthening protection around homes, again with no new structural losses. Super scooper planes scooped water from Cochiti Lake and dropped it on Rabbit Mountain and Cochiti Mesa which kept the fire south of Highway 4. Coordination between the Incident Team and the Pueblo of Jemez and the Pueblo of Cochiti continued to identify strategies for firefighting if the fire moves south. The south side of the fire now has connecting roads and dozer lines, with most of the line constructed and in place.

**Today:** Firefighters will continue to work along the perimeter of the fire along 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 with thinning and chipping. A priority is to improve firelines along the northeast corner of the fire, along the Alamo Trail from Highway 4 to FR 289. Tactical burning with helicopters in the northeast corner of the fire will consume fuels to further secure the firelines. Masticators from the U.S. Department of Energy will continue grinding vegetation along Highway 4. Firefighters will continue to install hoses in this area and expect to be nearly fully plumbed. Firefighters will also coordinate with the National Park Service in this area for structure protection for Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve. Structure protection will also continue in this area, evaluating options for protection. Firefighters will continue coordination with the Pueblo of Cochiti and are still assessing and providing protection for structures in the Cochiti Lake area.

**Weather and Fire Behavior:** Temperatures will be in the upper 60s today. Winds will be westerly at 10 mph with gusts to 20, with the fire continuing with backing towards Highway 4. Weather and fuel conditions will continue to support

active fire behavior across the eastern half of the incident. On the west, fire is expected to continue moving to the south across Oaks Mesa. As the fire moves southeast, a reduction in burnable vegetation will help slow growth in that direction. On the southwest, the fire should hang up when it reaches rock washes and sparse vegetation above the Pueblo of Cochiti, but continue to move through thin strips of mixed conifer in canyon bottoms. In the northeast, winds will continue to support fire spread to the east and north. If it crosses Highway 4, it will rapidly spread in heavy grasses of the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Ground forces should expect very active fire behavior with spotting distances up to ½ mile.

**Evacuations, Shelter Areas:** The communities of Cochiti Mesa and the Peralta Canyon area, including Cox Ranch, remain under a “Go” evacuation status. 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.” Los Alamos County and Cochiti Lake area remains in “Ready” status.

**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 remains closed to all traffic from mile marker 47, 14 miles 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. 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 issued Closure Order Number 10-506 ([www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprd3802009](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprd3802009)), 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. The Forest also issued Closure Order Number 10-507 for the Cerro Pelado Firefighter Camp along FR 376. The purpose of both orders is to protect public health and safety due to extreme fire danger in the Restricted Area.

Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve remain closed due to fire activity 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.