



Cerro Pelado Fire Update Sunday, May 8, 2022

Hours: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. **Phone:** 505-312-4593 and 303-918-4004 **Email:** 2022.CerroPelado@firenet.gov
InciWeb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8075/> **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/SantafeNF>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/2022.Cerropeladofire>

Acreage: 37,425 acres **Containment:** 11%

Personnel and Equipment: 872 total personnel; 42 engines, 8 Type 1 hand crews, 11 Type 2 hand crews, 6 Type 2 initial attack crews, 9 helicopters, 2 scooper planes, 10 dozers, 1 masticator, 2 ambulances, 1 rapid medical extraction unit and 15 water tenders. 2 Air National Guard helicopters are on standby. 2 additional Type 1 helicopters are enroute to the fire.

Yesterday: Firefighters are patrolling the northwest perimeter of the fire. U.S. Department of Energy masticators continued to grind up burnable vegetation along Highway 4 west of the tactical burns from two days ago. Highway 4 remains closed from mile marker 34 to mile marker 50 (junction of Hwy 4 and 501). Hand crews secured the spot fire from Thursday on the west side of the fire (north of Meadow helicopter dip site). The fire continued to slowly back towards the constructed west firelines along Forest Road (FR) 266. On the south side of the fire, there was minimal movement, and fuels on the south side of the fire are sparse. The southwest corner of the fire had little movement, advancing only when drainages with timber had some fuel to consume. On the eastern side of the fire FR 289 is considered a primary line as the fire continued to advance towards FR 289 with 35 mph winds. A spot fire crossed FR 289 late in the afternoon. Night operations called conditions on the line “unbearable” due to wind, dust, smoke and heat. Crews engaged the fire spot starting around 3:00 am when visibility had improved. Most eastward movement occurred in steep canyons. FR 289 has been prepped and plumbed with extensive hose lines. There was little movement of the fire on the south half of the eastern perimeter. Fire operations continued to prep firelines on roads east of FR 289. No new structural losses were reported. Super scooper planes continued to drop water on the eastern perimeter until high wind conditions prevented further flights. Safety and operations reported a minor injury which did not involve lost time. AM Radio 1610 was designated to operate as a public service to give news of firefighting efforts on Friday and continued that broadcast.

Today: Firefighters will continue to work along the perimeter of the fire along Highway 4 on the north, FR 266 on the west, FR 270 on the south. Southward progression of the fire is expected to slowly back towards containment lines due to sparse fuels. Masticators from the U.S. Department of Energy will continue to grind vegetation along Highway 4. On the north side of the fire, the fire is expected to continue backing slowly towards Highway 4.

FR 289 will be the major focus of fire operations today due to Red Flag wind conditions and expected 50+ mph winds. Firefighters will use hose lines and dozers on the northeast and eastern perimeter and expect to be in defensive positions. Operations will focus on continuing to suppress the spot fire east of FR 289, connecting and flanking the fire. Additional efforts are being made to get more dozers on the fire. Air operations have started one hour earlier to get a start before winds become too strong to fly. Firefighters will also coordinate with the National Park Service for structure protection for Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve. Structure protection has continued in this area, and the structural group has been moving through all areas with homes and structures. Firefighters will continue coordination with the Pueblo of Cochiti and are still assessing and providing protection for structures in the Cochiti Lake area. Due to extreme conditions, firefighters and line safety officers are using lookouts, communications, escape routes and safety Zones (LCES) to protect line personnel.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Today's weather calls for a Red Flag Warning due to gusty winds 50+ mph, low relative humidity in the single digits and high temperatures. Weather predictions are expecting near historic levels of wind over the next three days. Expect flanking fire on the north, with active fire near Kitty Lake. The fire is expected to continue backing on the west side of the fire towards containment lines on FR 266. As the fire moves southeast and east, there is potential for rapid fire spread, especially if winds align with drainages. In the northeast, winds may align with canyons and there is potential for high spread rates. The east side of the fire has the greatest potential for fire growth up to 5 miles if it exceeds suppression action. Fire spread potential for the south side is expected to slow with backing fire, and is moving to containment lines.

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 and Valles Caldera National Preserve 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, Jemez Springs, La Cueva and Cochiti Lake area remain in "Ready" status. No evacuation levels have changed at the time of this update.

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 34 to mile marker 50 (at the junction of Hwy 4 and 501) due to fire activity. Fire equipment and firefighters will be working 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 has issued a [closure order](#) for the Cerro Pelado fire area and a second [closure order](#) 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 all campfires and other hazardous activities. 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.